kabiri

The Official Journal of the

North American Schelling Society

The Method and Structure of Schelling's Late Philosophy
Thomas Buchheim

Speculative Geology
Dale E. Snow

"The Unity that is Indivisibly Present in Each Thing": Reason, Activity, and Construction in Schelling's Identity Philosophy
Benjamin Brewer

To Break All Finite Spheres: Bliss, the Absolute I, and the End of the World in Schelling's 1795 Metaphysics
Kirill Chepurin

The Productive Nature of Landscape in Schelling's Philosophy of Art
Sakura Yahata

Schelling and the Satanic: On *Naturvernichtung*
Jason M. Wirth

New Translation

Schelling's Late Political Philosophy: Lectures 22-24 of the *Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy*
Kyla Bruff

Book Reviews

VOL. 2

2020

kabiri

The Official Journal of the
North American Schelling Society

Kabiri is a peer-reviewed, invitation only, open-access publication, which appears once a year. The North American Schelling Society would like to acknowledge the financial and in-kind assistance of the Lillian og Dan Finks Fond, the Department of Philosophy at Memorial University, and the Queen Elizabeth the Second Library at Memorial University. Please direct all correspondence to the editor at the address below or by email to ***smcgrath@mun.ca****.*

230 Elizabeth Avenue, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada, A1C 5S7

VOLUME 2
Table of Contents

The Method and Structure of Schelling's Late Philosophy
Thomas Buchheim 1

Speculative Geology
Dale E. Snow 15

"The Unity that is Indivisibly Present in Each Thing": Reason, Activity, and Construction in Schelling's Identity Philosophy
Benjamin Brewer 28

To Break All Finite Spheres: Bliss, the Absolute I, and the End of the World in Schelling's 1795 Metaphysics
Kirill Chepurin 39

The Productive Nature of Landscape in Schelling's Philosophy of Art
Sakura Yahata 67

Schelling and the Satanic: On *Naturvernichtung*
Jason M. Wirth 81

New Translation

Schelling's Late Political Philosophy: Lectures 22-24 of the *Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy*
Kyla Bruff 93

Book Reviews

Schelling's Naturalism: Motion, Space and the Volition of Thought, by Ben Woodard, Edinburgh University Press, 2019
Phoebe Lily Page 136

The Absolute in History: The Philosophy and Theology of History in Schelling's Late Philosophy, by Walter Kasper, Paulist Press, 2018

The Ages of the World (1811), by F.W.J. Schelling, State University of New York Press, 2019

Philosophy of Revelation (1841-42) and Related Texts, by F.W.J. Schelling, Spring Publications, 2020

Sean J. McGrath 139

kabiri
The Official Journal of the
North American Schelling Society

The Method and Structure of Schelling's Late Philosophy

THOMAS BUCHHEIM[1]

The period of Schelling's final mature philosophy started with his appointment to Berlin (1840), where he undertook a profound revision of his Philosophy of Mythology and Revelation (which he still considered to be purely "positive" during his time in Munich). The chief concern of the later Schelling is a philosophically legitimate knowledge, that is, a knowledge established under the conditions of the Kantian critique, of the *actuality* of a first principle of things, a principle the tradition referred to as "God" and recent philosophies up until that time as "the absolute."

Before Schelling's latest period, philosophy—including Schelling's own philosophy—proceeded in *three paths* towards one goal of metaphysical knowledge, none of which, however, fully overcame the Kantian critique or led to possible knowledge of the real:

1. As a practical postulate of classic but now critically obsolete metaphysical certainties;
2. As speculative ways for mobilizing internal structures of reason itself (e.g., Schelling's intellectual intuition of absolute identity or Hegel's theory of the speculative proposition);
3. As (pace Kant) a critically purified way to legitimately connect the upshot of the cosmological argument, i.e., the proof of an *ens necessarium* of a completely unknown kind, with the goal of the ontological argument, that is, a rich concept of God (*ens realissimum*).

1 I wish to thank Marcela García (Los Angeles) and Nora Angleys (Munich) for the translation of the original German paper into English and their very helpful comments on its theses, and last but not least Kyla Bruff for her careful and accurate revision of the whole manuscript.

Schelling's new and different path can be described as a strategy of "*divide et impera*" of philosophical thinking itself. As long as philosophical thinking undertakes to bring the principle to knowledge as a factual actuality in *one* go, it *must* fail according to the standards of the critique. However, if philosophy splits itself in two consistently different movements of thought, which are not connected by *inner* coherency or logic, but only through the *external* circumstances of those who entertain these lines of thought, philosophy can win back a rational claim to knowledge regarding the factual actuality of the principle in question and can defend itself in every aspect against the Kantian critique. These essentially different movements of thought are Schelling's "negative philosophy" on the one hand and his "positive philosophy" on the other.

Schelling's Fundamental Idea

The fundamental idea in Schelling's late period is that, although our reason is not equipped to capture in conceptual knowledge that which we assume in religious worship (which would correspond to the second path mentioned above), there is, rather, another way, a certain kind of thinking that is, in principle, not averse to the intentions of religion. This approach would be capable of integrating the achievements and demands of pure reason in such a way that first, there would be no obvious incompatibility between knowledge that is gained through pure rationality and the intention of religion, and, second, the results of pure rational thinking could be applied, in a methodological and target-oriented way, for the promising endeavor of collecting positive knowledge about the focal point of all religious worshipping. In its entirety, the late Schelling describes this turned about procedure (similar to a glove turned inside out) by which reason and the intention of religion can act in concert in the project of "philosophical religion."[2]

"Philosophical religion," which might initially appear as a willful oxymoron, is based upon factually unifying two different sorts of operations or movements of thought. These movements, i.e., the negative or purely rational philosophy on the one hand, and the positive philosophy of mythology and revelation on the other, are distinct from each other in terms of their internal, that is, conceptual or inferential consequences. The philosophy of mythology and revelation comprises all former and current variations of human religion and reveals their shared orientation towards *one and the same* divine source of actuality to which they all supposedly have a real relation. Negative philosophy systematically isolated a conceivable principle of all actuality

2 Cf. SW XI: 247; 250; SW XI: 255; 258; 267; 386; 568f.; SW XIII: 193; Schelling's Literary Testament from February 1853, published by Horst Fuhrmans under the title "Dokumente zur Schellingforschung IV: Schellings Verfügung über seinen literarischen Nachlass," *Kant-Studien* 51 (1959/60, 14-26, hereafter *Nachlassverfügung*), 16. I attempt to explain this key concept from Schelling's late philosophy through eight theses in my paper "Was heißt '*philosophische Religion*'?", in *Religion und Religionen im Deutschen Idealismus*, ed. Friedrich Hermanni, Burkhard Nonnenmacher, and Friedrike Schick (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 425-445.

from everything else that is possible to conceptualize through purely rational thought, while, at the same time and necessarily, *excluding* conceptual, factual knowledge of such a principle from the realm of reason. Hence, this unification takes place, *if* at all, not in the form of a philosophy, that is, a rational and conceptual development and consistent merging of thoughts, but in the form of a particular *religion*, namely, philosophical *religion*. All religion, however, including its inherent turn towards its focal point, is an *external* life praxis of thinking human beings (a Wittgensteinian 'form of life' so to speak), not the conceptualization of an idea that is merely the *inner content* of the thoughts humans nurture.

The relation to God or to the so-called absolute in the unification of both movements of thought will no longer be an ideal relation or one that is mediated by a consistent thought process, and therefore no longer a relation of consciousness constituted by its conceptual content, but a *real relation* that God or the sought-after principle of actuality has to all actually existing religions to which humans profess or have professed.[3] For this reason, it is possible to specify the question about a problematic *factuality* of God or the absolute as a question that is, at least in principle, open to rational knowledge, without having to conceptually demonstrate the completeness of this knowledge. This approach is similar to the way we may consider positive objects of physics or any other empirical science to be, in principle, rationally knowable, without requiring a comprehensive and complete physical science. The question is then not one about the current status of our rational knowledge of these matters, but rather a question of how the being of the objects of our knowledge relates to our own existence. In physics, we ourselves belong to the same sphere of entities of which we have physical knowledge.[4] That is why, for instance, ancient "physics"—say Aristotelian or Platonic—could be about *strictly* the *same* realities (water, fire, air, and so on) as our contemporary physics of elementary particles. Similarly, as Schelling attempts to demonstrate in his positive philosophy, we belong, in a way that is consistent with the application of rational and coherent concepts, to the same sphere of entities that can stand in a real relation to what the religions of humanity *as well* as all philosophical thinking have always meant to describe by the notion of "God" or "the absolute."

3 See my above-mentioned paper "Was heißt *'philosophische Religion'?*" (at 429-432) for a detailed explanation of how this supposed "real relation" between God and human consciousness, as Schelling describes it, is to be understood.

4 Obviously, this "real relation" need not be manifest as what we commonly refer to as "empirical." A comparable example would be the "real relation" between us and extra-terrestrial intelligent living beings, if such beings exist. This relation would hold whether we have empirical evidence of their existence or not.

In modern expression, "God" or the "absolute" are *rigid designators*[5] of that actuality which is claimed to have a real relation to us.[6] This actuality has been understood or characterized differently by all religions and the respective concepts of rational philosophy. That this is actually the case (and not rather *not* the case) is a philosophical *hypothesis* of the late Schelling, one which he examined and successively demonstrated through the procedural unification of negative and positive philosophy.

The project of a "philosophical religion," then, is *philosophical* because it applies a purely rational approach to show that first, reason, based on its internal logical consistency (that is, *qua* negative philosophy) allows for isolating a principle as a limiting concept, whose content and factual givenness cannot be grasped or known by reason itself; and, second, that a reason that prohibits the isolation of such a concept would be an artificially constricted reason, a reason that falls short of reason's potential.

The same project (i.e., that of 'philosophical religion') is *also* specifically oriented towards *religion* because a rationally adequate positive philosophy shows, *firstly*, that behind *all* religions and mythologies of humanity there can be, if at all, only *one* God, and if this God existed, these religions and mythologies (or rather, their followers) would all have a *real* relation with it. *Secondly*, these religions stand in a historical order, which is vectorially oriented towards an ever more adequate revelation or self-explication of this one God to human consciousness. *Thirdly*, in view of a rational examination and evaluation of all evidence that can be extracted from the historically available material and the standard of pure rationality already achieved, the hypothesis concerning the factual existence of the one self-revealing God is to be deemed more probable and in agreement with reason than the opposite

5 Saul Kripke coined this term in his essay *Naming and Necessity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980). For my purposes, I refer to a more recent paper by Kripke, entitled "Vacuous Names and Fictional Entities," in his *Philosophical Troubles: Collected Papers*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 52-74. In this paper, Kripke challenges the claim (often based on his own notion of a rigid designator) that a given name, i.e., a rigid designator, actually designates an existing individual. The basis for this challenge is what Kripke calls the "pretense principle" (p. 58). Namely, that for any condition names must fulfil to constitute a reference to a real individual, one could simply pretend these conditions to be fulfilled. Therefore, according to Kripke, the question is not *how* can there be empty names? "On the contrary, one has virtually *got* to have empty names because given any theory of reference—given any theory of how the conditions of reference are fulfilled—one can surely *pretend* that these conditions are fulfilled when in fact they are not." Kripke, "Vacuous Names," 60.

6 There is, of course, the ineradicable possibility that such claims might be false or empty. A person who is a parent to only daughters could name their never begotten son 'Peter' and say things like 'I'm playing with Peter' or 'Peter is keeping goal' etc. These propositions would be the same as propositions uttered by ancient scientists about ether, e.g., 'ether evenly fills the space between the spheres of the stars', and so on.

hypothesis of the non-existence of God or the absolute.[7]

Obviously, an exhaustively enlightened thinking which would hold these three positions would not itself be a religion only by asserting them. It is only a religion insofar as each person who takes on these positions turns towards the one God of all religions in religious worship as well. Reason, in the negative as well as in the positive form, can therefore never incorporate that which religion makes accessible to the human person. In it its fullest extent, however, reason can very well be imbedded in what religion makes accessible to the human person.

The Structure of Schelling's Last System

The systematic parts that belong to Schelling's last system and their proper arrangement are specified beyond any suspicion of falsification or faulty compilation in two independent sources.[8] First, we have Schelling's dictation of the order of the parts of his last philosophy that Schelling's son, Paul, took down from his father in 1852. K.F.A., Schelling's son responsible for the edition of the complete works, enclosed this dictation as a system *program* in a letter to Waitz from January 12th 1855. Second, there is Schelling's written will from February 1853 (*Nachlassverfügung*). According to both sources, the last system consists of five parts:

1. The *Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology* (SW XI: 1-252);
2. *The Philosophical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*, that is, the *Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy* (SW XI: 253-572);
3. The lectures on *Monotheism* (SW XII: 1-131);

7 Traditionally, philosophies of the absolute (as we find them in Spinoza, Hegel, or even in the early Schelling) have been conceptualized in such a way that the concepts employed for describing non-absolute reality already imply the concept of the absolute. Since we assume these concepts to be valid for non-absolute reality, we are inclined to assume that, based on the inferentially necessary connection between these concepts, we can ascribe the same status of reality or existence to the concept of the absolute. In other words, such philosophies tacitly import, as it were, the absolute in their use of concepts for describing non-absolute reality. They are inflated conceptual tautologies and describe reality by merely unfolding the internal relation between these concepts. In this sense, they are under an illusion: the absolute in such philosophies is merely a conceptual strategy of immunization against the suspicion that what religion calls "God" might not exist.

8 The systematic structure of Schelling's late philosophy is one of the most intricate problems of research in this field, since Schelling's son K.F.A., in his role as editor, has fallen under suspicion of deviating from the instructions specified by Schelling in his will and compiled and/or inserted additional text in individual passages at his own discretion (see e.g., Schelling, *Darstellung der reinrationalen Philosophie*, SW XI: 553n.). See the discussion of this problem in Anna-Lena Müller-Bergen, "Karl Friedrich August Schelling und die 'Feder des seligen Vaters.' Editionsgeschichte und Systemarchitektur der zweiten Abteilung von F.W.J. Schellings Sämmtlichen Werken," *Internationales Jahrbuch für Editionswissenschaft* 21 (2007): 110-132.

4. The "actual development"[9] of the *Philosophy of Mythology* (SW XII: 133-674);
5. The two parts of the *Philosophy of Revelation* (SW XIII: 175-530; SW 14: 1-334) without the *Berlin Introduction* (*The Grounding of the Positive Philosophy*, SW XIII: 1-174).

Taken together, these five parts should make possible the systematic goal of a previously nonexistent "philosophical religion."[10] In his will, Schelling characterizes the second part explicitly as "negative philosophy," distinguishing it from a positive philosophy that begins with the actual development of *The Philosophy of Mythology* (that is, the fourth part). The *Monotheism* treatise constitutes a transition between negative and positive philosophy, and, in terms of its methodology, clearly follows the *Historical-Critical Introduction*. Both are not *philosophical* conceptual analyses in the strict sense, but rather trace certain historical concepts (that of mythology or of monotheism respectively) in their internal presuppositions, and thereby explicate "analytically," but not synthetically or in the form of a theory, a gradual philosophical systematization of the relevant facts.

In the late systematic context, these lectures on *Monotheism*, which had previously been an introductory part within the positive Philosophy of Mythology and Revelation,[11] become a relatively independent treatise which represents the "transition" to the "actual development" of positive philosophy; this "transition" was not needed in the Munich versions of the Philosophy of Mythology, since these versions did not possess a self-contained negative or purely rational philosophy as the philosophical justification for the undertaking of a positive philosophy. Without the particular kind of antipodal philosophy there can be no "transition" to a movement of thought that in turn is of a different kind than its antipode.

Considered closely, it is precisely the analysis of "monotheism" that is suited to bridge the gap between negative and positive philosophy because, according to Schelling, "monotheism" is a defining concept from a *philosophical* perspective referring to pure reason *as well as* for all *religions* and mythologies (at least for those that are divine hierarchies), but whose true meaning is often left obscure (see *Monotheism*, SW XII: 8). To accept this concept as an ubiquitous fact, that is, as subsisting in all human thinking concerning religion, and to carve out its true meaning through "analysis"[12] of the concept, would be to pursue the kind of thought procedure that starts out from a purely *factual finding* which characterizes Schelling's positive philosophy in general. Only the apparently irrefutable implications of a factum that

9 See Schelling, *Nachlassverfügung*, 16, and cf. SW XII: 131.
10 Schelling, *Nachlassverfügung*, 16.
11 Cf. Schelling, *Urfassung der Philosophie der Offenbarung*, ed. Walter E. Ehrhardt, 2 vols. (Hamburg: Meiner, 1992), 95, and the following lectures 16 to 21.
12 Cf. SW XII: 8: "We now come back to our previous (analytic) method of investigation."

has been positively diagnosed in its meaning and is then further analyzed enable us to arrive at and perhaps verify plausible hypotheses concerning the background of the development and the true structures of the actuality to which we ourselves belong.

According to Schelling, when it comes to the "actual development" of such a background structure of our own existence in positive philosophy, it is necessary to systematically locate the developmental stage of a philosophy of mythology and thus of the "natural" religion of humans (as Schelling calls it) *before* the stage of a philosophy of revelation (this is precisely what Schelling's son K.F.A. found so confusing during the edition of his father's late works). Consequently, even Christian revealed religion, for example, which defines itself in viewing mythology as irreligion, must be far from delivering, in philosophical terms, the true unification point of the religious development of humanity and of reason independent from God together with religion as a real relation to God.

There are two additional important details that Schelling emphasizes in the same context. First, a philosophical introduction to the Philosophy of Revelation such as Schelling presented several times in Berlin *does not* belong to the scope of his latest system as it was intended to be published. Rather, as Schelling emphasizes in his will, the method by which the "principles (-A, +A, ±A) are *deduced from God*" that he lays out in his Berlin lectures of 1841/42 no longer corresponds to "the more correct" procedure he proposes and demonstrates in detail in the *Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy*, and for which the short treatise "On the Source of the Eternal Truths" (SW XI: 575-590)[13] contains an "excellent" justification.[14]

This means nothing more and nothing less than that Schelling himself excluded the most consulted text in his late philosophy, the one considered the most helpful to obtain a better understanding of his thought system—the so called *Berlin Introduction*[15]—from the system of his latest philosophy since he no longer considered the philosophical method it recommended to be correct. As long as this method of positive philosophy that had now come under criticism remained valid in Schelling's system, it was possible and mandatory to *tie* the train of thought of positive philosophy to the end of negative philosophy or the *Presentation of the Purely*

13 Schelling, *Nachlassverfügung*, 17. This methodological remark refers directly to the first Berlin lecture of the entire series of lectures on the Philosophy of Revelation in 1841/42 which was illegitimately published by H.E.G. Paulus (F.W.J. Schelling, *Philosophie der Offenbarung 1841/42*, ed. Manfred Frank (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1977), 146; 156; 162-168. However, it also pertains to the 7th and 8th lectures of the later Berlin Introduction or *The Grounding of the Positive Philosophy*, trans. Bruce Matthews (Albany: SUNY Press, 2008), (cf. esp. 199-208; SW XIII: 157-170) and consequently to the manner in which Schelling sought to demonstrate that the pure *necessario existens* also possesses three potencies, which conceptually represent all possible things. This specific conception of the *necessario existens* was the main hypothesis to be developed and made evident in the Philosophy of Revelation. Giving up this methodological approach right at the beginning means to forfeit what has been described by Schelling in earlier versions of his work as a pivotal procedure.

14 Schelling, *Nachlassverfügung*, 17.

15 Schelling, *The Grounding of the Positive Philosophy*, SW XIII: 3-174.

Rational Philosophy.[16] With the abandonment of this method, i.e., the deduction of potencies or "principles (–A, +A, ±A)" from the *unprethinkable* actuality of God, the necessity for directly connecting both trains of thought lapses as well.

Secondly, according to the new arrangement of the five parts specified in the very late original sources mentioned above, a direct connection of the positive to the negative philosophy is no longer needed or intended. Instead, the treatise on Monotheism (and, still before that, the 1850 "On the Source of the Eternal Truths," which, although systematically detached from the *Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy*, belongs according to Schelling, to negative philosophy[17]) must serve as the transition to the actual development of the positive philosophy. This new transition has a completely different configuration in terms of conceptual possibilities than the previous deduction of "principles" from the necessary and unprethinkable existent.

Clearly, making room for the *possibility* of obtaining cognitive access to anything at all is, as in all negative philosophy, not a "derivation" of any sort that begins a new development of thought from a presupposed starting point, or one that has been accepted as justified by other reasons. Rather, everything that might be predicated truthfully of the one God emerges from the analysis of a diagnosed and *factual* finding, which is precisely what the concept of "monotheism" is. This new method indicates a much more indirect and cautious way of transition to positive philosophy, which is, without doubt, "demanded" by the end of the negative philosophy. In this way, the radical difference between both movements of thought is no longer undermined by a direct connection of the second philosophy to the end of the first.

On the Systematic Connection Between the Five Parts: The Outer Brackets

On the basis of the previous explanations, one might assume that the newly established five parts lack any systematic connection and that they rather constitute a mere sequence of unconnected texts. However, one remark in Schelling's will, and a related one in the opening of the *Monotheism* treatise, explicitly contradict such an assumption. In his will Schelling states the following:

> In the last Lecture (X) of the previous part [i.e. of the *Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*] religion is divided into (1) natural (i.e. mythological) religion; (2) revealed religion, and (3) philosophical religion, which should comprehend the other two, but does *not exist*, because the philosophy does not exist that would be able to comprehend these (the positive one). This is taken as the occasion to present the whole, merely

16 Cf. Schelling, *Philosophie der Offenbarung*, SW XIII: 159-162.

17 Cf. the editor's preface to *Philosophie der Offenbarung*, SW XIII, p. viii f.

> rational or negative philosophy, in order to show how it ultimately results in the demand for the positive philosophy.[18]

This is precisely what has been affirmed from the outset without any further proof, namely, that it is *religion*, in its manifold manifestations, and *not* philosophy or a conceptual context, which provides the bracket and thus the connection between the parts of the system. Indeed, the three different kinds of religion are such that one of them "really comprises" the other two, that is, in its own real quality it includes the others *realiter*. Such inclusion or real comprehension is always given where an order of a higher level presupposes a hierarchical incorporation of lower levels as a basis for its own elevation. For example, ordinal numbers are arranged in such a way that each higher number "really comprises in itself" any previous numbers. Thus provided such a religion of a clearly "higher" level of development really existed, it could be stated that it comprehended, at least potentially, in itself, in a real way, the previous levels, i.e., comprised them hierarchically. So far it has become clear *how*, in such a case, a bracketing and unification of the individual parts of the system would come about.

However, as Schelling emphasizes, at this point (at the end of the *Historical-Critical Introduction*), philosophical religion does "not exist" and can therefore not function as the bracket of the whole. Its existence as a higher level religion is required if we are to understand or comprehend in what sense it is at all possible for one religion to be of a higher level than another. To understand what this could mean and why there are higher levels of religion at all, we would require, as Schelling further stresses, a kind of philosophy that is different from all existing philosophy, namely, a kind of philosophy that is able to clarify once and for all, in what sense God, or the principle of all actuality, is disclosed to consciousness more clearly and adequately in one particular religion than in another, which could therefore be considered of a lower level. However, *this* kind of philosophy, that does not only consider itself capable of such a claim but also answers and justifies it in a comprehensible way, this kind of philosophy not only does *not* exist but is also exposed to severe objections on behalf of an enlightened and critically instructed reason from the outset.

In any case, we can see now how Schelling places within the overall bracket of religion an inner bracket of philosophical conceptual thinking: a higher level religion could only be practiced if one could understand and recognize as justified its superiority over previous stages of religion. And this in turn requires a *positive* philosophy. A new kind of religion could only *really* comprehend all the others under the condition that a new kind of philosophy comprehends the existing religions *ideally*. Yet a convincingly justified higher ranking of a religion vis-à-vis any other requires a religiously neutral benchmark according to which one religion is deemed to be superior or more advanced than the another. One central task of Schelling's positive philosophy is therefore to uncover this benchmark hidden in the collected historical materials of mythology

18 Schelling, *Nachlassverfügung*, 16.

and revelation. Schelling does indeed find and dissects this benchmark (at least that is what he affirms). He characterizes it as the unavoidable and historically objective "theogonic process in human consciousness."[19] This benchmark is not only neutral against any particular religion because it is diagnosed objectively and coherently in the historical material. It is also neutral because it objectively pertains to that which is shared by different existing religions, even though this commonality as well as the development of the process is, and can only be, in human consciousness (and not in God himself).[20] This means that each religion adequately *understands* itself only when it can correctly determine its own place within the objective theogonic process in human consciousness. This is not to say, however, that a religion is only a *religion* in the complete sense if it sufficiently *understands* itself. Every religious praxis and form of addressing oneself towards divinity is independent of conceptual understanding.

The Inner Bracket

The fulfillment of the unifying condition for the five parts of the system stated above (namely, the existence of a positive philosophy able to ideally comprehend existing religions) faces great obstacles, as I said before. Not only because religion always had to guard itself from philosophy's ambition to comprehend it; and because, conversely, philosophy believes, as several examples show, that it can replace what religion offers in a naïve way to human life through enlightened concepts; or because each and every religion defends itself with the same reason against being seen as a more rudimentary level of religion than another; but also and finally because reason, which recognizes itself as autonomous, does not bow down to any external authority. For these reasons, Schelling must again insert an even smaller bracket as the philosophical condition for the possible bracketing of his systematic parts by religion itself. All that to which reason refers in its justified claims remains unaffected in its autonomy and leads a purely rational philosophy to the point of recognizing its own insufficiency regarding that which is the focal point of religion and which must remain opaque to reason as long as there is no positive philosophy to explain it. This line of reasoning, taken this far, definitely represents a *threat* to autonomous reason. It finds itself inevitably compelled to bring something into the scope of its attention that is of a kind that is nonidentical to any of its ideas and whose problematic actuality cannot be decided through any epistemological efforts available to reason. In this sense, according to Schelling, it must be first shown that the "demand of positive philosophy" emerges

19 See, e.g., Schelling, *Der Monotheismus*, SW XII: 10; 108; 128 ff.

20 This shared focus of all the real religions is meant to be the "unique" God, i.e., "der eine Gott, der seines Gleichen nicht hat." Schelling, *Der Monotheismus*, SW XII: 98; cf. Schelling, *Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology,* trans. Mason Richey and Markus Zisselsberger (Albany: SUNY Press, 2007), 115; 132; SW XI: 164; 190. This focal point is captured in the historical concept of monotheism (cf. Schelling, *Historical-Critical Introduction*, 173; SW XI: 197; 249ff.).

from the exhausted negative philosophical development of autonomous reason itself.[21]

Where this inner bracket of a purely rational philosophy in relation to a positive philosophy would apply, the positive philosophy would make it comprehensible to rank one religion higher than the other, without having to fear any of the still valid rational objections. In this way, it would be possible for *philosophical* religion to really comprehend all other religions, which would allow for the parts of the system to be bracketed together into one system, at least in one direction, based on their own and specifically different knowledge and contextualizing capacities.

In the opposite direction, however, the question remains: whence originate these claims, raised by pure reason, which is aware of its autonomy, and which can only be legitimately appeased through the exhaustion of a purely rational philosophy? It seems that, from this other direction, ultimately, it is not *religion* that realizes the bracketing of both sides of the system, but rather reason with its inherent critical impetus. Schelling's will is silent on this point. However, the *Philosophical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology* makes it sufficiently clear that it was the second type of existing religions, the religion of revelation in its Christian and especially in its reformed version, that had most "contributed" to the liberation of reason from all religious authorities.[22] Schelling writes:

> Through an unstoppable progress, to which Christianity itself contributed, after consciousness had become independent from the church, it also had to become independent from revelation itself, and brought out of an unfree knowledge in which it still remained regarding revelation, enabled to a thinking that is completely free against revelation and of course initially free of knowledge (SW XI: 260).[23]

This state of freed reason stripped of knowledge brings to mind Descartes' aim to break free from the chains of so called "natural" knowledge and metaphysics and lead reason out of itself to a kind of fully universally valid science in virtue of its own autonomy (SW XI: 267).[24] Schelling affirms this step of discovering an autonomous and fully universally valid knowledge of reason, which is liberated from all religion, be it mythological or revealed, as "a new step in the realization of free religion, a religion that we have previously called the philosophical one" (SWXI, 267).[25] A reason that obtains knowledge completely freed from all concerns with religion or God is thus ultimately an *offspring* of religious consciousness as well as the

21 Schelling, *Nachlassverfügung*, 16.
22 See Schelling, *Darstellung der reinrationalen Philosophie*, SW XI: 260; 266.
23 Schelling, *Darstellung der reinrationalen Philosophie*, SW XI: 260.
24 Schelling, *Darstellung der reinrationalen Philosophie*, SW XI: 267.
25 Schelling, *Darstellung der reinrationalen Philosophie*, SW XI: 267.

root of a free and therefore philosophical religion. So it is also from the other direction that religion—not philosophy—brackets the whole five-part system.

The Method of Positive Philosophy

It has already been stressed that the procedure of positive philosophy ceased to be one of a *deduction* from an initial (if only hypothetical) presupposition[26] (as was still the case in the Munich lectures and in the beginning of the Berlin period) and became one of *ascertaining* a close to undeniable *finding* which then serves as the starting point for constructing structural and explanatory *hypotheses* concerning the investigated field of actuality.[27] These hypotheses must be shown to be adequate through further testing of the material.[28]

It could be said that this procedure is precisely the one of positive science, as it was in vogue in Berlin at the time. The examined "material" are the historical documents of all mythology and actual revealed religions of humanity; the "real relation" between human consciousness as such and the being referred to by the religiously used name, or rigid designator, "God" (or "deity" or "the absolute"), is the field of actuality considered in a scientifically positive way. As already stated, this does not exclude the possibility that, *ontologically* speaking, this comes to nothing in the end. Otherwise Schelling could not assert that he wants to carry out an empirical examination, which does not lead to a definitive conclusion, just as empirical positive sciences such as physics do not reach a definitive conclusion. Admittedly, there is less doubt about the truth of physics capturing and explaining physical actuality than in the field of investigation to which Schelling's positive philosophy applies. The decisive change of thought that is required if philosophy is to proceed "positively" in this manner consists in refraining from presupposing a concept or certain ideas *in advance*, working out their implications and asking whether they can assumed to be

26 This not only applies to the "derivation of the principles" or potencies from God as the unprethinkable *necessario existens* explained above, but also to the derivation of all the main historical phases and formations in which mythology and revelation emerge from a hypothetical starting point in an assumed *urkundlicher Folge*. Schelling, *Philosophie der Offenbarung*, SW XIII: 129; 249.

27 See Schelling, *Der Monotheismus*, SW XII: 8: "The next investigation must therefore focus on this concept (that of monotheism), and not in such a manner, that we attempt to derive it from the beginning, i.e., the most general principles, but as in the Mythology earlier, we will treat this concept as a fact, and we will only ask, what it meant, what its actual content was, whereby nothing will be assumed in advance, except this, that this content has meaning."

28 Cf. e.g., Schelling, *Der Monotheismus*, SW XII: 10: "Assuming then … we found in the comprehended concept (of monotheism) those elements that enabled us to comprehend a theogonic process as such, we will dispose of the means to understand a theogonic process of consciousness as possible, and under certain prerequisites necessary, as well, and only then, when there is the possibility of a theogonic process in consciousness, we will (3) be allowed to think about proving the reality of such (theogonic) movement of the consciousness in the Mythology itself. Only the latter will be the immediate explanation, the philosophy of mythology itself."

factually actual. Such an approach is, generally speaking, the procedure of negative philosophy. In contrast, the approach of positive philosophy acknowledges certain findings such as materials or phenomena in a given (or deemed to be given) domain of actuality. The analysis and evaluation of these findings allow for the construction of a *theory* that *explains* these findings and the whole field of actuality, which is considered valid as it is in accordance with universal points of view of rationality.

Usually, we permit such a field of actuality for empirical objects and their scientific examination only. We are, however, not obliged to follow such a stipulation whose rationality is itself dubious. In any case, what we definitely need in order to do this meaningfully are certain somewhat robust phenomena with which we are confronted in general, as well as the possibility to refer to elements of the field of actuality in question through rigid designators.[29] This last point shows that we perceive ourselves in a "real relation" with that to which we refer with these designators. After close scrutiny, however, it becomes clear, that it has not been decided yet what that which we are referring to actually is. It can turn out to be completely different from what we initially thought it was, or it can become evident that there is nothing to it, that it is a hallucination shared by many people, for instance. The investigation procedure would nevertheless be completely different and precisely the reverse of the negative philosophy. The actuality in relation to us, which is presumed through the rigid designator, comes first. Any concepts or ideas obtained from the relevant phenomena would be applied in a second step only, in order to achieve a theoretical understanding of that to which we believe we refer. And precisely this specific turn from the negative to the positive is also described in Schelling's will.

> To facilitate this transition, I want to add the following, which will be understood by those who read the previous lectures (from XI on).—In the negative philosophy, that is, the one that is a rational science, being is the *prius*, and that which is being (God) the *posterius*. The end of the negative philosophy is that the I demands the reversal, which is at first a mere willing (analogous to Kant's Postulate of practical reason, but with the difference that it is not reason, but the I, turned practical, which itself as personal demands personhood and says: *I am willing* that which is above being). However, this willing is but the *beginning*. For that which is above being to turn out as existent, such that there was a science of it, that is, a positive philosophy, there must be something on which it proves itself as existent, and this is again being, but only now as posterior and consequent of that one.[30]

29 Cf., Schelling, *Der Monotheismus*, SW XII: 4-5: "Philosophy has never made real progress (which is to be well distinguished from formal improvements, prompted mostly by philosophy itself), other than as a result of an expanded experience; not always in terms of new facts presenting themselves, but rather one was forced to see something in the familiar which is different than what one was used to see in it."

30 Schelling, *Nachlassverfügung*, 16-17.

While in negative philosophy we tried to direct ourselves towards a principle whose actuality we could never bring to knowledge through the concept of general being, in positive philosophy, we *demand* such a principle as a rigidly designated actuality that, altogether, would have priority with respect to what we already know as the real being (in relation to us). This real being in relation to us is being *a posteriori*, that is, a being we cannot apprehend a priori from pure reason, a being that we rather encounter insofar as we are ourselves real existing beings. In the light of this encountered being, which we generally regard and refer to as factual actuality, it should become "evident" (through analysis of all relevant phenomena), that the rigidly designated being, "God" or "principle, creator of all actuality" belongs to actuality as well, and therefore stands in a real relation with us.

kabiri
The Official Journal of the
North American Schelling Society

Speculative Geology

DALE E. SNOW

We are not at peace with nature now. Whether it is the record-setting rain on the east coast or the raging wildfires in the west, distant news of melting permafrost or bleaching coral reefs, or the unexpected eruption of Mount Kilauea a few miles from here, things seem increasingly, and increasingly violently, out of control. I would like to suggest that there are resources in Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* we can use in the twenty-first century to help us think differently about both the power of nature and our own relationship to it. Although Schelling saw himself, and was seen by many, as antagonistic toward the mechanical science of his own time, it would be a mistake—and a missed opportunity—to see his view as a mere Romantic reaction. It is a speculative rethinking of the idea of nature itself that finds a place for even those phenomena which seem most distant and alien. Schelling described his philosophy of nature as "speculative physics" both to distinguish it from what he calls the dogmatic or mechanistic model of nature, and to announce a new approach to natural science, concerned with the original causes of motion in nature (SW III: 275). Since every "natural phenomenon ... stands in connection with the last conditions of nature" (SW III: 279), speculative physics can bring us to an understanding of nature as a system. Geology presents an illuminating case of this approach, as can be seen from Schelling's characteristically enthusiastic introduction to a paper published by Henrik Steffens in Schelling's *Journal of Speculative Physics* (*Zeitschrift für speculative Physik*) on the oxidization and deoxidization of the earth.[1] After praising Steffens' work on a new and better founded science of geology, Schelling reflects darkly on the too long dominant mechanical approach to geology. However, a new light has dawned, he

1 "Vorbericht zu Steffens Abhandlung über den Oxydations- und Desoxydationsproceß der Erde," *Fernere Darstellungen aus dem System der Philosophie*, SW IV: 508-510.

declares, and as is well known, there are two ways forward—one can proceed from the lowest to the highest processes, or from the highest to the lowest. Steffens has elected the first method, and promises to connect the most general chemical processes to the "highest dynamic forces" (SW IV: 509), including the most powerful, the volcanic.

Like many an editor before and after him, Schelling then proceeds to tell Steffens what he should have written:

> We dare to hope that the author will take the other path, and that he will, by means of fortunate and carefully observed correspondences between the way magnetism expresses itself at the different latitudes and the lines which stretch between volcanoes on the earth's surface, be able to join the two extremes in a general dynamic process of the earth, and thus lead to the proof for the dynamic graduated series in the construction of every real product in general (SW IV: 509).

In other words, Schelling wants a speculative geology, and hints strongly at the vital role of magnetism in constructing it. Already in the introduction to the *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature* he had argued that since nature is originally identity, duplicity is its condition of activity:

> Thus it is the highest problem of natural science to explain the cause that brought infinite opposition into the universal identity of Nature, and with it the condition of universal motion .... But we know of no other duplicity in identity than the duplicity in magnetic phenomena. It can only be noted in anticipation that magnetism most likely stands on the boundary of all phenomena in Nature—as a condition of all the rest (SW III: 161).[2]

What does Schelling hope for from a speculative geology? First, it would form the basis for all other sciences. In 1802 he writes: "Geology, when it has been fully developed, will be the history of nature, the earth merely its means and starting point. As such it would be the truly integrated and purely objective science of nature, to which experimental physics can only provide a means and transition" (SW V: 329-220).[3]

Secondly, a speculative geology would provide an illustration of the dynamic approach to physics, which is described in the *First Outline* as "this great interdependence of all nature" (SW III: 320).[4] This dynamic system would show the same forces as animating the inorganic and the organic realms.

2 F. W. J. Schelling, *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature*, trans. Keith Peterson (Albany: SUNY Press, 2004), 117.

3 F. W. J. Schelling, *On University Studies*, trans. E. S. Morgan, (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1966), 128.

4 Schelling, *First Outline*, 228.

Finally I will argue that both Henrik Steffens' Schelling-inspired *Contributions to the Internal Natural History of the Earth* (*Beyträge zur innern Naturgeschichte der Erde*, henceforth referred to as simply *Beyträge*)[5] of 1801 and Schelling's own texts point to the conclusion that a true speculative geology would lead to the idea of the unconditioned whole, for only the unconditioned can be a final ground. This unconditioned ground will embrace all finite, conditioned beings.

Henrik Steffens

The *Beyträge* was Steffens' first major publication. We have an unusually detailed picture of its genesis, thanks to his ten-volume autobiography, *What I Experienced* (*Was ich erlebte*).[6] Steffens' father was German and his mother Danish. His early life was marked by an intense search for a vocation, which brought him by means of a study grant from the Danish Nature Research Society to Bergen in Norway. The austere and rocky landscape of the Sammanger-Fjord caused him to fall into a deep depression, which was characterized by "a feeling of abandonment [and] a fearsome loneliness"[7]:

> The region between Bergen and Sammanger-Fjord offered a picture of the most blood-curdling confusion .... This was one of the most frightening regions I have ever encountered .... Huge shattered boulders covered the barren mountains, and the wildly plunging floods were concealed behind the boulders and came foaming around them. The whole presented a horrifying mix of chaotic rigidity and wild unrest. Every spark of connection seemed to have vanished from this lifeless chaos.[8]

Almost exactly fifty years later, Henry David Thoreau had a similarly disorienting experience while climbing Maine's Mount Ktaadn, one that permanently affected his understanding of nature and caused him to reject Transcendentalism's more Romantic view:

> The mountain seemed a vast aggregation of loose rocks, as if some time it had rained rocks, and they lay as they fell on the mountain sides, nowhere fairly at rest, but leaning on each other .... Aeschylus had no doubt visited such scenery as this. It was vast, Titanic, and such as man never inhabits. Some part of the beholder, even some vital part, seems to escape through the loose

5 Steffens, *Beyträge zur innern Naturgeschichte der Erde*, "Erster Theil" (Freiberg: Verlag der Crazischen Buchandlung, 1801). Primary Source Edition, reprinted by Nabu Public Doman Reprints.

6 Steffens, *Was ich erlebte. Aus der Erinnerung niedergeschrieben*, 10 vols. (Breslau: Josef Max und Komp, 1841).

7 Steffens, *Was ich erlebte*, vol. 3, 62.

8 Steffens, *Was ich erlebte*, vol. 3, 113-114.

> grating of his ribs as he ascends. He is more lone than you can imagine.[9]

Thoreau's experience on Mount Ktaadn helped provide the inspiration for what some scholars call his wilderness philosophy, which became a complete revisioning of nature and man's place in it. Steffens too seemed consumed with the need and desire to rethink traditional ideas about the earth. He decided that to accomplish this, he needed to complete his education, which he chose to do in Germany, receiving a doctorate in mineralogy from the University of Kiel in 1797. In addition to mineralogy he plunged into the study of literature and philosophy and found himself fascinated with the latest sensation, Schelling's *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*. He called reading it the decisive turning point of his life:

> It seemed to me that I was hearing a first meaningful heartbeat in the quiescent unity, as if a divine life were awakening, to speak the first hopeful words of the future consecration [*Weihe*] .... I read this work, may I say, with passion. *The World Soul*, too, I received as soon as it was published, and the most profound hope of my entire life took hold of me, to grasp nature in its multiplicity, and determined my work for the rest of my life.[10]

My purpose in this paper is to look at one part of that life's work, Steffens' *Beyträge*, which comes closest to focusing on "the great interdependence of nature" which animated Schelling's *Naturphilosophie*. It was composed in part in Jena, where he was in close contact with Ritter, Goethe and Schelling. He described this work as his breakthrough as a *Wissenschaftler*:

> That which I tried to develop in this work was the basic theme of my entire life .... Most of all I was possessed by the hope that grew ever stronger, to give the elements of physics more importance. And this epoch of my existence I owe to Schelling ... The whole existence [of the earth] ought to become history[;] I called it the inner natural history of the earth.[11]

What Steffens called the basic theme of his life, describing the inner natural history of the earth, also explains how he understands the purpose of geology. It is striking how closely Steffens' discussion of the origins of the earth parallels Schelling's in the *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*, a description which is itself inspired in part, as Schelling notes, by Kant's 1785 essay, "On the Volcanoes in the Moon."[12] Kant

9 Henry David Thoreau, *Maine Woods* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), 82.
10 Steffens, *Was ich erlebte*, vol. 3, 338-339.
11 Steffens, *Was ich erlebte*, vol. 4, 286-288
12 Originally appeared as Immanuel Kant, "Über die Vulkane im Monde," *Berlnischer Monatsschrift* (*Berlin Monthly*) 1, no. 3 (1785). Cited by Schelling, SW II: 101, *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*, trans. Errol Harris and Peter Heath (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 79-80.

argued, and Schelling agreed, that "the earth only gradually evolved from a liquid to a solid state, and that the change gave rise to the production of vapors which expanded in the heat set free by this process, and so threw up matter in great masses as mountain ranges. They themselves decomposed and compressed one another until the air, having come into equilibrium with itself, rose of its own accord. Part of it, however, precipitated as water, which, on account of its weight, soon poured into the craters of that universal eruption. Only now did it break its own way through the interior of the earth, and so gradually by its flow formed the regular shape of the mountain ranges, and by continual floodings, in the course of the centuries, brought about those regular strata of calcareous, vitrified or petrified vegetable or animal bodies in the interior of the mountains" (SW II: 102).[13]

For Steffens the different strata to be found in the mountains are of two main types, carbon-based or nitrogen-based. After a detailed discussion of the geological differences that in his view constituted the two great oppositions, that of plant life and animal life, he concludes by observing that despite the obvious differences, inorganic nature and organic nature have the same structure. This symmetry "allows us to suspect a deep rooted opposition of actions. We have found it in the dead residue of completed actions through observation .... [Now] I climb slowly out of the grave of nature, to find its restless, active life."[14] Steffens has examined the bones, as it were, and found patterns of interdependence, but these must also be in evidence in organic nature. He argues that the "opposed series" he has discovered are also maintained in nature in general, which through their remaining residues is still always capable of reproducing these opposed series. He declares that this result, despite being found on the lowest level of observation, can still serve us as a secure guide (*Leitfaden*).[15]

He thought of himself as striving for a harmony between philosophy and science, but this goal was fulfilled in the way of which Schelling had been critical in his preface, e.g., from lowest to highest. Indeed, the bulk of the *Beyträge* is a detailed account of (an unsympathetic reader might say, a slog through) many empirical observations, and along the way, discussions of other related scientific contributions made by Lavoisier, Werner, Fourcroy, Humboldt, Kielmeyer, Parmentier, Ritter and many others. Out of the welter of observations about carbon, nitrogen, and the metals, with which he was particularly fascinated, we learn that a philosophical natural science is not primarily concerned with empirical objects, but rather with the "original organizing *spirit* of nature, which spoke to us from its works; but the key to the secrets of its production must be sought in the inner depths *of our own spirit*."[16]

This is why the purely empirical chemist is bound to fail. "It is a truly wonderful characteristic of human nature," Steffens observes dryly, "to stick to a

13 Schelling, *Ideas*, 79.
14 Steffens, *Beyträge*, 34-35.
15 Steffens, *Beyträge*, 34.
16 Steffens, *Beyträge*, 90.

chosen method come hell or high water."

> Inspired by the great strides made by the application of mathematics to the movement of heavenly bodies by Kepler and Newton, the men who succeeded them came to believe that even the innermost secrets of nature could be reduced to mathematical formulas. Even if Lavoisier had largely succeeded in reducing many chemical processes to the interactions of just a few, still it was a mistake on his part to give into the hope that by means of chemical analysis one might be able to penetrate the holy ground [*Heiligthum*] of organic life.[17]

Lavoisier's attempts to do so shows that he failed to recognize the absolute limit of chemistry.

Steffens argues that even if it should someday prove possible to derive the entire system of chemical elements from the oppositions between carbon and nitrogen, hydrogen and oxygen—it still would remain impossible to explain this opposition itself.

> It is possible through interaction of the elements [*Stoffe*] to build limits within limits, by means of which new, still narrower and more restricted relationships develop. The chemist sees it; they arise under his hands; but how can he explain it? His elements [*Stoffe*] are heavy. That which is heavy is inert.—His analysis *kills* nature, the living principle slips out of his hand, and the dead mass—unseen, indeed—remains to him as mere stuff [*Stoff*]—*What could bring this stuff to life?*[18]

Earlier in the text, Steffens had hinted that the source of life cannot be sought chemically, but only through a leap (*Sprung*),[19] not further defined except to say that it involved a turn inward (*nach innen*), an echo of his full title, *Contributions to the Internal Natural History of the Earth* (*Beyträge zur inner Naturgeschichte der Erde*). With respect to geology, if the question becomes how the earth and everything on it arose, we need to ask: how do qualities arise out of a homogenous mass? By opposition. How does this opposition arise? The answers to this question cannot be ascertained by experience, therefore we need *Naturphilosophie*.[20]

As we know from Schelling's remarks on Steffens' publication on oxidization, he hoped that Steffens would "by means of fortunate and carefully observed correspondences between the way magnetism expresses itself at the different latitudes and lines which stretch between volcanoes on the earth's surface, be able to

17 Steffens, *Beyträge*, 37-38.
18 Steffens, *Beyträge*, 80.
19 Steffens, *Beyträge*, 41.
20 Steffens, *Beyträge*, 96.

join the two extremes in a general dynamic process of the earth" (SW IV: 509). This idea is developed through considering the magnetic properties of the various metals and an elaborate account of their relationship to each metal's density (or weight), ductility, coherence and expansibility. Steffens gives as many examples as he can, while admitting that there is some missing and contradictory information in the case of the more rare metals. He concludes that his research revealed that it is as if the metals "are arranging themselves, and these relationships [in the patterns he describes] are really grounded in nature, and produce the key to the laws of the properties of metal."[21] He cites the work of Ritter and Arnim, who also pursued this connection, but points out that Schelling had had the idea first:

> That Herr Professor Schelling earlier than Ritter and Arnim found a priori the idea of the connection between magnetism and the maximum on absolute coherence, and thereby led to a highly salutary revolution in natural science, is shown by a letter he wrote me, dated the 21st of October 1799, which contains the following passage: 'The circle gives me the liquid. First light about the great difference between liquid and solid here dawned on me. Consider, if the two poles A and B of a magnet *touch*, there is *no* magnetism. The *cause* of *length*, or what is the same, the cause of *solidity*, is also the cause of magnetism, and the reverse.'[22]

It is clear to Steffens that magnetism is the key to understanding the fundamental structure of the earth. He may have the claim from the *Ideas* in mind that

> ... the cause of magnetic phenomena must be related to the first active causes in Nature, or that unknown to which it is related, and which perhaps contains the reason for all its individual affinities (to iron, for example) must be spread over the whole earth (SW II: 163).[23]

Steffens develops the suggestion that magnetism permeates the earth and has a particular relationship to the metals. He waxes poetic as he explains that metals are suggestive precisely because they display the simplest properties; they are the most invariable [*unveränderlich Beharrende*] and the hardest to decompose: these characteristics demonstrate that here something is "*bound*," that in all other bodies is "*separated*."[24] Thus we are now in a position to better understand the common origin of the opposition which constitutes every polarity, by examining the case of metals.

21 Steffens, *Beyträge*, 129.
22 Steffens, *Beyträge*, 155.
23 Schelling, *Ideas*, 127.
24 Steffens, *Beyträge*, 198.

> Here is to be found united in invariant, law-governed form, that which was lost in the infinite depths of evolution, [and] seems more confused, lawless and willful. But it is certain that nature is never left in willful hands, [and] that a still, even if often dark and concealed law, holds all of the apparent chaos in its power, and it is equally certain that we must untangle the endlessly convoluted knot by beginning with the metals.[25]

Ultimately the same structures (of opposition as constitutive) must prevail everywhere, so it is understandable why Steffens insists that "the mass of the earth is the true root of life on earth."[26] and "all activity in nature is in embryonic form in mass itself."[27] The *Beyträge* then turns to what might informally be called a geography of magnetism: Steffens reflects upon patterns of the distribution of iron and the other so-called coherent metals and their distance from the equator, which leads him to state the law governing these phenomena, which again, he insists, is not artificial and forced, but *grounded* (no pun intended) in nature: the quantity and distribution of iron (as well as the coherent metals copper, nickel, cobalt, and molybdenum) stands in a direct relationship with their distance from the equator, increasing with distance.[28] These reflections lead to the formulation of his "laws" of the distribution of metals.

Steffens then launches into an almost lyrical appreciation of the pageantry and irrepressibility of life, which he points out, first began and is still most wildly prolific in the region of the equator. It is not just the profusion of organic life; most volcanoes are to be found in that region, where the primal forces that are manifested everywhere on earth are closest to the surface. This shows that both the organic and the inorganic flourish and are most active under the same conditions, and moved by the same power.

What is that power? Schelling had already anticipated, in the *First Outline* that "there must be one force that reigns throughout the whole of Nature and by which Nature is preserved in its identity" (SW III: 145n),[29] and that that one force was magnetism. Steffens is convinced that this is true; however, his regret is palpable that he cannot find compelling evidence of the presence of the power of magnetism beyond the metals.

On Magnetism in Nature

In June of 2018 an article appeared in *Current Biology* with the title "The Earth's Magnetic Field and Visual Landmarks Steer Migratory Flight Behavior in the Nocturnal Australian Bogong Moth." The abstract reads, in part:

25 Steffens, *Beyträge*, 198.
26 Steffens, *Beyträge*, 198-200.
27 Steffens, *Beyträge*, 214.
28 Steffens, *Beyträge*, 168.
29 Schelling, *First Outline*, 79n.

> Like many birds, numerous species of nocturnal moths undertake spectacular long-distance migrations at night. Each spring, billions of Bogong moths (*Agrotis infusa*) escape hot conditions in different regions of southeast Australia by making a highly directed migration of over 1,000 km to a limited number of cool caves in the Australian Alps, historically used for aestivating over the summer. How moths determine the direction of inherited migratory trajectories at night and locate their destination (i.e., navigate) is currently unknown. Here we show that Bogong moths can sense the Earth's magnetic field and use it in conjunction with visual landmarks to steer migratory flight behavior.[30]

One can only imagine how gratified Steffens and Schelling would have been to learn that Bogong moths have joined the ranks of Monarch butterflies,[31] nocturnal songbirds[32] and sea turtles[33] as creatures who have been proven to use the earth's magnetic field for navigation. Recently scientists were able to demonstrate that a variety of different fish, such as rainbow trout, zebra fish, yellow-fin tuna, and tilapia possess magnetite based magnetic receptor cells in their olfactory epilethium. In a sense they are literally magnetic themselves.[34] Even animals as large as foxes,[35] dogs,[36] and whales have been shown to orient themselves using the earth's magnetic fields.[37]

---

30 David Dreyer et al., "The Earth's Magnetic Field and Visual Landmarks Steer Migratory Flight Behavior in the Nocturnal Australian Bogong Moth," *Current Biology* 28, no. 13 (2018): 2160-2166, abstract. https://www.cell.com/current-biology/fulltext/S0960-9822(18)30632-8.

31 See Jim Fessenden, "Scientists show that monarch butterflies employ a magnetic compass during migration," *UMass Med News*, June 24, 2014.
https://www.umassmed.edu/news/news-archives/2014/06/scientists-show-that-monarch-butterflies-employ-a-magnetic-compass-during-migration/.

32 See William W. Chochran, Henrik Mouritsen, and Martin Wikelski, "Migrating Songbirds Recalibrate Their Magnetic Compass Daily from Twilight Cues," *Science* 304, no. 5669 (2004): 405-408. http://science.sciencemag.org/content/304/5669/405.

33 See Kenneth J. Lohmann and Catherine M. Fittinghoff Lohmann, "A Light-Independent Magnetic Compass in the Leatherback Sea Turtle," *The Biological Bulletin* 185, no. 1 (1993): 149-151. https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.2307/1542138.

34 See Stephan H. K. Eder et al., "Magnetic characterization of isolated candidate vertebrate magnetoreceptor cells," *PNAS* 109, no 30 (2012): 12022-12027. http://www.pnas.org/content/109/30/12022.

35 See Daniel Cressey, "Fox 'rangefinder' sense expands the magnetic menagerie," *Springer Nature, nature.com newsblog*, January 12, 2011. http://blogs.nature.com/news/2011/01/fox_rangefinder_sense_expands.html.

36 See Vlastimil Hart et al., "Dogs are sensitive to small variations of the Earth's magnetic field," *Frontiers in Zoology* 10, no. 80 (2013). https://frontiersinzoology.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1742-9994-10-80.

37 See Margaret Klinowska, "Geomagnetic Orientation in Cetaceans: Behavioural Evidence," in Jeanette A. Thomas and Ronald A. Kastelein (eds.), *Sensory Abilities of Cetaceans. NATO ASI Series A* 196 (1990): 651-663. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-1-4899-0858-2_46.

Steffens' argument that everything in and on the earth is ruled by magnetic forces has been considerably extended, and in a more direct way than even he could have imagined.[38]

Steffens does not doubt that these same principles could also be applied beyond the earth to a theory of the universe, but observes in a footnote that in their correspondence, Schelling told him of the imminent publication of just such a theory; therefore he finds that any further efforts on his part in this area are at present superfluous.[39]

The *Beyträge* closes with a final sentence expressing both a pious hope and a promise: "He who nature permits to find it in its harmony—he carries an entire infinite world inside himself—he is the most individual of creations, and the holy priest of nature."[40] This portrait of the true scientist/researcher seems to have made a lasting impression on Schelling. He uses a similar turn of phrase in the *Statement on the True Relationship of the Philosophy of Nature to the Revised Fichtean Doctrine* (1806) to distinguish the authentic man of science from the mere mechanic:

> For the true physicist, the one worthy of the name, the irrational is an object of treatment but not of knowledge; he has only the relationship of a technician to it; as a man of knowledge, however, and one who strives for science, he is solely focused on being; he sets being free, the true priest of nature, who sacrifices that which does not have being, so that being can become transfigured into its true essence (SW VII: 100).[41]

Was Steffens Schelling's true man of science? Certainly he was the most rigorously scientifically educated of Schelling's many admirers. Steffens himself says of their first meeting that Schelling received him "not just with friendliness but with joy. I was the first natural scientist who allied with him unconditionally and with enthusiasm."[42] Even if we do not wish to give Steffens as much credit as those who claim that he achieved a unified theory of nature "as an integrated, hierarchical and dynamically

38 Schelling also appears to have anticipated this in the *First Outline*, when in an aside in the discussion of the connection of the organic realm to the rest of nature, he remarks: "If it is certain that the force of production is intertwined in the most intimate way with the *universal* organism, then this will hold as well for *all* drives of the animal—(should we believe that a universal alteration of nature, e.g., correlates with the drive of the migratory bird, which, in the very season when the magnetic needle reverses in order to point in the opposite direction, initiates the flight to another climate?)—It has to hold for *all* drives" (SW III: 206). Schelling, *First Outline*, 138.

39 Steffens, *Beyträge*, 20n1. This may have been a reference to "Betrachtungen über die besondere Bildung und die inneren Verhältnisse unseres Planetensystems," which appeared in the *Fernere Darstellungen* of 1802 (SW IV: 450ff.).

40 Steffens, *Beyträge*, 317.

41 Schelling, *Statement on the True Relationship pf the Philosophy of Nature to the Revised Fichtean Doctrine*, trans. Dale E. Snow (Albany: SUNY Press, 2018), 89.

42 Steffens, *Was ich erlebte*, vol. 4, 76

evolving chain of being,"[43] it must be conceded that above and beyond all of its detail and many cross references, the *Beyträge*'s animating spirit is a thoroughly *naturphilosophischen* one.

The final section of the *Beyträge* contains Steffens' most sustained reflections on nature as a whole, including the claim that a geology based on magnetism (along with a meteorology based on electricity) would form the empirical basis for a *Natur-Theorie*.[44] It seems indubitable to him that since all entities on what he calls the "lowest level" (*niedersten Stuffe*) have been shown to be fully understandable only in terms of the conflict of opposed activities, a means has been found to gain insight into the perpetual strife, and "never-ceasing life of nature."[45]

Life is motion, or conflict, and just as we do not take account of the births and deaths of our cells, whose life sustains and constitutes our own larger life, so Steffens sees all the parts of the earth, each of which comes to be, exists or lives for a longer or shorter time, and ceases to be, as truly understood only as parts of that larger life which is nature. Life is the unconditioned ground which sustains all conditioned and finite creatures.

The conclusion of the *Beyträge* briefly sketches what Steffens calls the web of animal life, although he refers to these descriptions as the "presentiments of the natural researcher" rather than as completed proofs. First he argues for the existence of a formative power (*bildende Kraft*) extending throughout the entire realm of animal life: it takes the form of a web, with the lines closest together at the center, representing the simplest jellyfish and mollusks, and then widening to accommodate animals of greater and greater complexity. As the different species of animals become more differentiated, the presence of individuality also increases; in each of these life forms "nature is seeking itself."[46] How does nature produce all this variety? This is the fundamental question Steffens sees himself as posing to future natural scientists.

Finally there is the matter of having a genuine love of and openness to nature. Steffens asks how it is possible for one who has observed the endlessly changing rain and movement, the eternal play of interconnected activity, or who has so much as observed the life in still water on a warm spring day, or the lively population of a hedgerow on a hot summer day, who loves nature with true devotion, would not confess that as he was doing so he had cast a wondering glance into the endless, holy, mysterious abyss of all?[47] This high estimation of the power of observation was shared by Schelling.[48]

---

43 Andrew D. Wilson, "Introduction," in *Selected Works of Hans Christian Oersted*, ed. and trans. Karen Jelved, Andrew D. Jackson, and Ole Knudsen (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), xxvii.

44 Steffens, *Beyträge*, 270.

45 Steffens, *Beyträge*, 269.

46 Steffens, *Beyträge*, 306.

47 Steffens, *Beyträge*, 306.

48 "The natural scientist belongs in the country .... Observation is still the best. How much is there to observe from early morning right up to the complete silence of nightfall outside, from living through one

What do we gain from *Naturphilosophie* in the 21st century? The towering scientific achievement of our time, quantum physics, has been claimed to be

> ... best understood by departing from the traditional scientific realism which works well enough for understanding non-quantum physics. The point of a quantum theory is neither to conform our thought to the world by describing or representing it the way it is nor to create or mold the world, but to tell us what to make of it.[49]

Even experienced physicists struggle to find the words and images to convey the reality and meaning of dark matter. However powerful these theories may be for grasping sub-microscopic or galactic reality, this is not the world we live in. Contemporary science has led us in directions almost aggressively unrelated to what we can conceptualize, yet physics has remained privileged in our minds as that branch of science which comes closest to genuinely grasping reality. The implication that reality cannot be known and it is pointless to try is both the product of and contributes to our estrangement from nature.

The spirit of *Naturphilosophie*, as I have identified it in Schelling, Steffens, and Thoreau, offers not the most scientifically accurate description of nature (Schelling knew well how quickly scientific discovery proceeds), but rather that which answers best to what Steffens called the "depths of our spirit," once we have been confronted by the power and violence of a nature that can seem alien and to have no place for us. A Schellingian theory/science of the earth would be most powerful and useful at the scale of our human bodies and the range of our powers of observation. One example can be found in the current research on the movement of the magnetic North Pole, which has garnered the most public attention at the rather homely level of understanding and accounting for the effects of this movement on the programming of GPS-dependent technologies. Most people at least occasionally rely on GPS, and the idea that the magnetic field of the earth is changing must be unsettling. We may not have magnetic receptor cells in our noses like the yellow-fin tuna, but we have them in our pockets, and arguably we are just as dependent on them.

There are two complementary explanations for why this movement of the magnetic pole is taking place. The earth's magnetic field is generated by the dynamo effect, discovered by Gary Glatzmaier and Paul Roberts in 1995, which arises from the interaction between the solid inner iron core of the planet and the liquid outer core of molten iron, which is electrically charged and in constant chaotic motion.[50] This

long summer's day .... Here I have observed things about the most universal effects of nature." SW IX: 26, Schelling, *Clara*, trans. Fiona Steinkamp (Albany: SUNY Press, 2009), 19.

49 Richard Healey, *The Quantum Revolution in Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 236.

50 See NASA, "Earth's Inconstant Magnetic Field," *NASA Science* (online). https://science.nasa.gov/science-news/science-at-nasa/2003/29dec_magneticfield/. "Using the equations of

theory reflects the power and dynamism of the most fundamental forces in nature just as Schelling and Steffens depicted it, as well as the idea that although law-governed, natural forces such as magnetism emerge from an unknowable chaotic origin.

The second theory attributes some or all of the movement in the earth's magnetic field to climate change, specifically the changes in the pattern of distribution of water on the earth's surface due to drought and the melting of the polar ice sheets. Surendrik Adikhari and Eric Ivins, authors of "Climate-Driven Polar Motion 2003-2015," in *Science Advances* in 2016, warn that the connections they have discovered between polar motion and the movement of water on the earth's surface have "broad implications for the study of past and future climate."[51]

This theory could be employed to illustrate the fragility of nature and the direct interconnectedness of human activity with its most fundamental forces. Our actions have implications for the stability and maintenance of the earth's magnetic field, to the extent that we contribute to climate change. This perspective has the potential to endow the claim that the life of nature is our unconditioned ground with a newly vital significance, and help to return us, just as Schelling always intended, to a recognition of our place in nature that relies upon the recognition and acceptance of the commonalities among all parts of that larger life.

---

magnetohydrodynamics, a branch of physics dealing with conducting fluids and magnetic fields, Glatzmaier and colleague Paul Roberts have created a supercomputer model of Earth's interior. Their software heats the inner core, stirs the metallic ocean above it, then calculates the resulting magnetic field. They run their code for hundreds of thousands of simulated years and watch what happens. What they see mimics the real Earth: The magnetic field waxes and wanes, poles drift and, occasionally, flip. Change is normal, they've learned. And no wonder. The source of the field, the outer core, is itself seething, swirling, turbulent. 'It's chaotic down there,' notes Glatzmaier. The changes we detect on our planet's surface are a sign of that inner chaos."

51 Surendrik Adikhari and Eric Ivins, "Climate-Driven Polar Motion 2003-2015," *Science Advances* 2, no. 4 (2016). http://advances.sciencemag.org/content/2/4/e1501693. The full abstract for their article is as follows: "Earth's spin axis has been wandering along the Greenwich meridian since about 2000, representing a 75° eastward shift from its long-term drift direction. The past 115 years have seen unequivocal evidence for a quasi-decadal periodicity, and these motions persist throughout the recent record of pole position, in spite of the new drift direction. We analyze space geodetic and satellite gravimetric data for the period 2003–2015 to show that all of the main features of polar motion are explained by global-scale continent-ocean mass transport. The changes in terrestrial water storage (TWS) and global cryosphere together explain nearly the entire amplitude (83 ± 23%) and mean directional shift (within 5.9° ± 7.6°) of the observed motion. We also find that the TWS variability fully explains the decadal-like changes in polar motion observed during the study period, thus offering a clue to resolving the long-standing quest for determining the origins of decadal oscillations. This newly discovered link between polar motion and global-scale TWS variability has broad implications for the study of past and future climate."

kabiri
The Official Journal of the
North American Schelling Society

"The Unity that is Indivisibly Present in Each Thing": Reason, Activity, and Construction in Schelling's Identity Philosophy

BENJAMIN BREWER

> *But a unity of principles is unsatisfactory if it does not return to itself through an infinite series of individual effects. I hate nothing more than the mindless striving to eliminate the multiplicity of natural causes through fictitious identities. I observe that nature is satisfied only by the greatest dominion of forms, and (according to the claim of a great poet) that it delights in* arbitrariness *in the deathly management of decomposition* (SW II: 347-348).[1]

On May 15th, 1801, Schelling sent Fichte a copy of his recently published *Presentation of my System of Philosophy* along with a letter. In the letter Schelling claims to "stand on a point whose discussion falls outside this circle on which, for this very reason, the whole meaning of your system depends." He continues, "I indeed do not know whether the kind of enlargement I provide is of the same sort or is harmonious with that which you have intended for idealism."[2] The letters between the two men after the *Presentation* are marked by deep mutual misunderstanding and wounded pride, and it is clear that an important philosophical break between them is at stake in Schelling's new work. Whereas in previous writings, Schelling was concerned with

1 F.W.J. Schelling, "On the World Soul," trans. Ian Hamilton Grant, *Collapse* 4 (2010), 16.

2 Schelling, "Correspondence 1800-1802," in *The Philosophical Rupture Between Fichte and Schelling: Selected Texts and Correspondence (1800-1802)*, ed. and trans. Michael G. Vater and David W. Wood (Albany: SUNY Press, 2012), 51. Cf. also Schelling, "Briefwechsel 1800-1802," *Historisch-krtische Ausgabe*, vol. III.2, ed. Thomas Kisser (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 2010), 347-348.

unifying the systems of idealism and nature philosophy, he now seeks a unity prior to the very distinction between them. Schelling names this unity "absolute reason," and he further claims that "construction" is the method for doing philosophy from such a standpoint.

In this paper, I focus on the issue of construction in the *Presentation of My System of Philosophy* and the subsequently published *Further Presentation of My System*. Looking at recent literature on the subject, I will first explicate Schelling's concept of the absolute in this period in terms of both "absolute reason" and "absolute identity." I then rehearse the idea of geometrical construction which Schelling often presents as analogous (though not identical) to philosophical construction. Finally, I argue that, for Schelling, construction is not only a philosophical method for examining the absolute but must be conceived as itself a moment of the activity of absolute reason, which I propose to call absolute construction. That is, insofar as philosophical construction is an activity 'of' the philosopher, it is so only as a (particularly reflexive) instance of the auto-poietic activity of absolute reason itself and cannot be understood on the basis of subjectivity or representation.

Absolute Reason

Schelling begins the text of the *Presentation* by redefining reason as the absolute: "I call *reason* absolute reason, or reason insofar as it is conceived as the total indifference of the subjective and the objective" (SW IV: 114).[3] The absolute does not admit of the distinction between subject and object because it precedes such a division. It is not, however, a transcendental being that floats above subjects and objects or a first cause that gave rise to them from without; rather, "outside reason is nothing, and in it is everything" (SW IV: 115).[4] That is to say that reason is absolute totality, not as aggregate, but as that which is "simply one and simply self-identical" (SW IV: 116).[5] Reason is no longer a faculty of human cognition or even a principle of speculation but rather absolute infinity (SW IV: 118),[6] absolute indifference (SW IV: 114),[7] and absolute totality (SW IV: 125).[8] In place of Spinoza's scandalous equation of God and nature (*Deus sive Natura*), Schelling pronounces the identity of reason and the absolute, indeed reason *as* absolute identity.

It is here that Schelling introduces a distinction between form and essence. In its *essence* absolute identity is simple, infinite, and absolute, but it expresses itself

3 Schelling, "Presentation of My System of Philosophy," in *The Philosophical Rupture Between Fichte and Schelling: Selected Texts and Correspondance (1800-1802)*, ed. and trans. Michael G. Vater and David W. Wood (Albany: SUNY Press, 2012), 145.

4 Schelling, "Presentation of My System of Philosophy," 146.

5 Schelling, "Presentation of My System of Philosophy," 147.

6 Schelling, "Presentation of My System of Philosophy," 148.

7 Schelling, "Presentation of My System of Philosophy," 145.

8 Schelling, "Presentation of My System of Philosophy," 152.

in the *form* A=A: "*Absolute identity* IS *only under the form of the proposition A = A*, or this form is immediately posited through its being" (SW IV: 118).[9] The *essence* of identity is expressed in the *form* of the proposition A=A; the equation of A with itself thus expresses absolute identity in a formal proposition, and is indeed the *only* possible formal expression of absolute identity as essence. This is both the sole possible expression of identity and also its *necessary* expression; Schelling continues that "*Absolute identity simply IS and is as certain as the proposition A=A is*. Proof. Because it is immediately posited along with this proposition." Irreducible to one another, essence and form are nonetheless inseparable from one another. In the corollary to this proposition, Schelling further elaborates: "Absolute identity cannot be conceived except through the proposition A=A, *yet it is posited through this proposition as an existing being* [*Seiend*]." Absolute identity *cannot be thought* otherwise than as A=A, and in being so expressed, it is immediately posited as an existent being. It is absolute identity that makes any being what it is, and yet none of these beings can be posited as equal to being itself. In Schelling's schema, then, any existent being is *essentially* absolute identity (i.e., it is absolute identity that makes it what it is) but is not therefore the same as or homogenous with absolute identity. It is a particular form, variation, or expression of this essence; it *is* absolute identity, even though absolute identity remains "beyond" any particular existent being.

Essence and form, then, necessarily appear together, but it is only *form* that establishes the ground for differentiation and individuation. In the *Further Presentation*, Schelling, foreshadowing the *Ages of the World* and the Freedom Essay, provides a religio-mythological analogy for the form/essence distinction:

> The essence of the absolute in and for itself reveals nothing to us, it fills us with images of an infinite enclosure, of an impenetrable stillness and concealment, the way the oldest forms of philosophy pictures the state of the universe before he who is life stepped forth *in his own shape* [*eigener Gestalt*] in the act of self-intuitive cognition (SW IV: 404-5).[10]

Here the difference is narrativized and thus schematized into successive time, but the point is clear—only with the self in-forming of its own essence, does essence come into being as *existing beings*. In an 1803 book review of Benjamin Höyer's *Treatise on Philosophical Construction as an Introduction to Lectures in Philosophy*, Schelling remarks that this unity of essence and form is a necessary condition for being called philosophy at all: "No philosophy can be counted as true and absolute ... if it has not had insight into the *indivisibility of essence and form* and made this into its lodestar

9 Schelling, "Presentation of My System of Philosophy," 148, emphasis in original.

10 Schelling, "Further Presentation from the System of Philosophy [Extract]," in *The Philosophical Rupture*, 221.

and principle" (SW V: 126).[11] To reiterate, this unity of essence and form is not homogeneity or indistinguishability but mutual irreducibility.

From here, Schelling proceeds to show how individual forms can be developed out of the formal difference between subject-A and object-A. In this way, the *Presentation* proceeds from the disclosure of the absolute and to the construction of individual forms from out of this absolute. The potencies (matter, magnetism, and electricity) are simply increasingly complex variations on the *form* of absolute identity (via a numerical preponderance of either subjectivity or objectivity). These potencies are not "deduced" from the absolute as a first principle but are rather constructed *within it*; they are potential variations of form that belong *to* absolute reason. And, indeed, if we recall that the totality and unity at stake is not one of aggregation or homogeneity, then we see more clearly that the potencies are not "caused" by absolute identity in the sense of separable and distinct effects. They are its ownmost possibilities and are not drawn out of it by an external force. Absolute identity, then, is neither transcendent first cause nor a homogenous substrate, but rather the immanent formation of all possible forms, the very activity of form*ing*.

This is reminiscent not only of Spinoza's third kind of knowledge, but it also harkens back to an earlier period of Schelling's own writing in which he took geometry's construction of the pure line out of the intuition of pure space to be a model for philosophical speculation. In such a construction, to use Daniel Breazeale's formulation, "mathematics treats space and time as the absolute itself and then proceeds to 'demonstrate' the universality of the properties of the particular figures or relationships with which it is concerned by actually 'constructing' them in pure space and time."[12] Or, as Schelling puts it, one can then construct a point out of this unlimited line, and then a limited line, and then a line which changes direction at every instance and thereby construct a circle, in which the unlimited and the limited are united (SW I: 444).[13]

The constructed intuition of the original unlimited line, of course, never appears in empirical experience: "a line [drawn on a blackboard] is not the *straight line itself* but only its *image*" (SW I: 445).[14] It is, nevertheless, the very form of all straight lines. No particular line will ever contradict this construction, and, importantly, abstraction from every straight line ever given would not give you the self-identical form of the straight line: "You cannot develop an understanding of the straight line

11 Schelling, "On Construction in Philosophy," trans. Andrew A. Davis and Alexi I. Kukuljevic, *Epoché* 12, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 272.

12 Daniel Brezeale, "'Exhibiting the Particular in the Universal:' Philosophical Construction and Intuition in Schelling's Philosophy of Identity (1801-1804)," in *Interpreting Schelling: Critical Essays*, ed. Lara Ostaric (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 102.

13 Schelling, "Treatise Explicatory of the Idealism of the *Wissenschaftslehre*," in *Idealism and the Endgame of Theory: Three Essays by F.W.J. Schelling*, ed. and trans. Thomas Pfau (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), 133-134.

14 Schelling, "Treatise Explicatory," 133-134.

by means of the mark on the blackboard, but, on the contrary, *you understand the mark on the blackboard by means of the straight line*" (SW I: 450).[15] The particularity of any straight line is already potentially contained in the universality of the original (unlimited) line; what is thus exhibited is the "universal in the particular, the infinite in the finite, the two united in a living unity ... [It is] to see the plant in the plant, the organism in the organism, in a word to see the concept or indifference within difference" (SW IV: 362).[16] It is not that the particular is deduced from the universal or that, in reflecting on an aggregate of particulars, we abstract to the universal; the particular is grasped *immediately* in its universality, or rather, it is seen in terms of its being a variation on the form of which it is an instantiation.

In the philosophical construction of the identity philosophy, however, it is not pure shapes or empirical concepts that are constructed, but forms or ideas. Schelling says explicitly that his philosophy and philosophical construction are not concerned with the empirical world of appearances:

> Construction is thus, from start to finish, an absolute kind of cognition and (for exactly this reason) it has nothing to do with the actual world as such but is in its very nature idealism (if idealism means the doctrine of *ideas*). For it is precisely this world that is commonly called actual that is abolished by construction (SW IV: 408-9).[17]

At this point, it is worth noting that Schelling is not only paying homage to Spinoza but is also crossing the Rubicon, so to speak, with regard to Kantian critical philosophy. Schelling's understanding of construction establishes itself in opposition to the Kantian idea of construction as it appears in the final division of *The Critique of Pure Reason*, "The Transcendental Doctrine of Method":

> Philosophical cognition is rational cognition from concepts, mathematical cognition that from the construction of concepts. But to construct a concept means to exhibit *a priori* the intuition corresponding to it. For the construction of a concept, therefore, a non-empirical intuition is required, which consequently, as intuition, is an individual object, but that must nevertheless, as the construction of a concept (of a general representation), express in the representation universal validity for all possible intuitions that belong under the same concept.[18]

15 Schelling, "Treatise Explicatory," 137, emphasis added.
16 Schelling, "Further Presentation," 206.
17 Schelling, "Further Presentation," 223.
18 Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), A714/B742.

The gap that separates Kant and Schelling can be already be seen here. First, there is the limitation of philosophical cognition to discursive cognition, that is, the subsumption of particulars (objects given in intuition) under universals (concepts of the understanding). For Kant, philosophical cognition cannot abolish the divide between the particularity of intuitions and the universality of concepts. Thus, the geometer and the philosopher are called to different vocations; the Kantian critical philosopher not only institutes a new method of philosophy, but also a new regime of discipline, which is intended to truncate precisely such philosophical excesses. Concepts, in their universality, remain guarantors of truth only insofar as they do not lose their fixed orientation towards the data of empirical intuition. Whereas mathematical cognition "considers the universal in the particular," philosophers, if they are to steer clear of falling into the old metaphysical traps, must resign themselves to "consider the particular only in the universal."[19]

Here, then, the Kantian system rejects philosophical construction insofar as construction eliminates the very differences on which its entire edifice is built, the oppositions of particular and universal, of intuitions and concepts. These distinctions are indispensable to the "negative education" of the *Critique*, i.e., the deflation of the pretensions of pre-critical metaphysics: "The *more geometrico* is to be shown up in the illegality of its pretense. Mathematics and philosophy are once again to be assigned their rightful places and all contamination prevented. The demarcation is commanded by the articulation of the fourfold: universal/particular, intuition/concept."[20] Insofar as Schelling's philosophical construction precedes the intuition of space and time that would be necessary for geometrical construction, then, it also precedes the distinction between concepts and intuitions more generally, between universality and particularity at all. Schelling's wager is that Kant's critique of construction is a result of him having started "too far down the line," so to speak. In the next section, I will clarify this specificity of philosophical construction, differentiating it from geometrical construction in order to argue that these various *forms* of construction must themselves be thought as forms of an *absolute* construction, understood as the in-forming, expressive activity of absolute identity.

Absolute Activity

Philosophical construction thus operates at a level which precedes even the distinction between space and time that geometrical construction requires (insofar as it requires pure space); indeed, the analogical relationship of mathematical and philosophical construction is helpful only to a degree, and if taken too literally can prevent one from grasping what is really at stake in Schelling's talk of the absolute *essence* which is

19 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A714/B742.

20 Alberto Toscano, "Philosophy and the Experience of Construction," in *The New Schelling*, ed. Judith Norman and Alistar Welchman (London: Continuum, 2004), 112.

exhibited in everything. Geometrical constructions are not separated completely from the empirical, because the geometer begins from the forms of empirical intuition (space and time). Philosophical construction, on the other hand, operates fully removed from the empirical, prior to any realm of sensible appearance, even in its most abstracted and geometrical form.

What Schelling is attempting to name with the *unitary essence* of the absolute is precisely the *pure activity* that alone makes any particular thing possible as a variation of this in-forming activity. Whereas scientific construction saw within a plant the concept of plant, Schelling claims that absolute construction must construct "the plant, *as form of the universe*" (SW IV: 409).[21] What is at stake is the exhibition of *absolute* identity in the *form* of plant (as opposed to exhibiting the form of plant in an empirical plant). The identity philosophy is thus the unification of the transcendental and nature philosophies, insofar as it recognizes that the exact same *essential activity* was at stake in both, only under the aspects of objectivity and subjectivity respectively. The identity philosophy "abstract[s] from what does the thinking" (SW IV: 114)[22] and thereby aims to think from the "indifferent" standpoint prior to even the differentiation of subject and object, in order to become, to borrow Schelling's terminology, *absolute idealism* (SW IV: 404).[23] Understood properly, then, this absolute standpoint is not the dialectical overcoming of already-existing or already-posited differences, but an attempt to think the differentiating activity that produces difference, the "unified" activity *of* differentiation.

The various archetypes (*Urbilder*) of the absolute (absolute plant, absolute animal, etc.) are the transcendental ideas that then become expressed in the world of appearances (*Abbilder*). Schelling's identity philosophy, then, presents a tripartite ontology of the absolute, which expresses itself in its variations (archetypes) of its own absolute form, which then are actualized in the world of appearances. The philosopher, according to Schelling's schema, becomes like the blind seer who sees beyond the world of appearances. It is, for example, the ability to see the very form of plant as merely a formal modification of the living unity of the absolute. Whereas discursive cognition subsumes the particular under the universal and thereby abolishes its particularity, construction traffics in the genesis of ideas, which are at once both universal and particular, are particular forms *of* the universal. Philosophical construction gives us, to use Schelling's terminology from the Höyer review, "*possible* objects" (SW V: 135), which is to say the forms or ideas of empirical objects.[24] Dalia Nassar names this non-discursive, constructive cognition "archetypal cognition":

21 Schelling, "Further Presentation," 224.
22 Schelling, *Presentation*, 146.
23 Schelling, "Further Presentation," 221.
24 Schelling, "On Construction," 278.

> Because archetypal cognition grasps the particular within the universal, it does not grasp it as a part of a successive series, but as a member of self-causing, self-determining unity, wherein each part is both cause and effect in a living process. What it sees is not isolated parts effecting change in other isolated parts, but *a unity that manifests itself in the different activities of its inherently connected parts*.[25]

As we already saw, then, Schelling's construction is similar to the "third kind of knowledge" in Spinoza with the twist that one intuits directly the *natura naturans* rather than simply one of God's attributes.[26] And from here we could begin to mark out how Schelling understands his construction to be both deeply indebted to and yet moving beyond the geometrical method of Spinoza. In the Höyer review, Schelling remarks, "if Spinoza erred, it is because he did not go far enough back in his construction" (SW V: 127).[27] Schelling thus sees himself taking up the mantle of Spinoza's project and carrying it to the conclusion Spinoza failed to reach. More specifically, the claim seems to be precisely that Spinoza never reached absolute construction and remained too tied to an arithmetic or geometrical notion of construction.

In thus pushing beyond Spinoza, however, it seems Schelling has encountered a problem of his own. Daniel Breazeale notes that there is a certain contradiction or paradox in Schelling's presentation, a tension that an attentive reader may have already picked up on. On the one hand, Schelling is "unambiguously committed" to the *reality* of the process of in-forming (*Ineinbildung*), that is, to the status of construction as an ontological and indeed ontogenic truth.[28] On the other hand, Schelling has also explicitly presented construction as a philosophical method, as the *only* properly philosophical method. For Breazeale, this leads to the conclusion that "the philosopher's construction, his exhibition of the particular ... in the universal ... is perhaps best understood as a purely ideal construction (or reconstruction), one that follows a path that is just the reverse of the one followed by the absolute in its real self-construction."[29] Philosophical construction is recapitulation of the process of construction, a retrospective survey of a separate ontogenetic process. Breazeale is right to point out, however, that this seemingly "reasonable" solution to the problem opens up an unbridgeable distinction between reality and ideality, objective and

25 Dalia Nassar, *The Romantic Absolute: Being and Knowing in Early German Romantic 1795-1804*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 244-5, emphasis added.

26 Benedictus de Spinoza, *Ethics*, In *The Collected Works of Spinoza*, ed. and trans. Edwin Curley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 1:408–620: "This [third] kind of cognition proceeds from an adequate idea of the formal essence of certain attributes of God to an adequate cognition of the essences of things" (IIP40S2).

27 Schelling, "On Construction," 272.

28 Brezeale, "Exhibiting the Particular in the Universal," 116.

29 Brezeale, "Exhibiting the Particular in the Universal,"116..

subjective activity, the very chasm that the identity philosophy and the method of construction were supposed to obviate.[30] If the "real" side of the activity (absolute construction) is thus only absolute insofar as it knows itself as absolute (i.e., insofar as it is taken up in philosophical construction), then it seems this absolute activity is not so absolute after all. The only other option, Breazeale argues, would requires us to think of construction as "purely logical," which directly contradicts Schelling's texts, not only in letter but also in spirit.

Breazeale poses this as an open question and moves on to further concerns. Given what we have laid out above, however, my wager is that the problem is one of perspective. Schelling's entire system does indeed rest on in-difference, this cleaving of being and knowing, of essence and form. If, as we saw above, absolute identity is only *known* under the proposition A=A, which *necessarily and immediately* expresses this essence in a propositional form, then this strange parallax of real and ideal construction is a feature and not a bug. Construction, as the absolute activity of the universe, is thus *expressed* and *given form* in philosophical construction. Philosophical construction is a form of absolute construction, in the same way that A=A (which is, of course, a form of knowing) *expresses* absolute identity. Philosophical construction is thus a *privileged form of absolute construction itself* as it is able to exhibit its own identity with the absolute activity of construction, its special status as a formal expression of this activity. Alberto Toscano puts it nicely: "Philosophical construction is not to be conceived as simply a repetition ... of productivity as such, but as an instance of production *sui generis*."[31] To occupy the standpoint of the absolute in philosophical construction is not merely to rehash the processes of construction, but to expose oneself to a moment of the activity of construction that exceeds one's own particularity. This is what is at stake in Schelling's claim that the "thought of reason is an imposing demand on everyone [*Das Denken der Vernunft ist jedem anzumuthen*]"—the standpoint from which reason can be thought absolutely is especially onerous because it requires that one "abstract from what does the thinking [*daß vom Denkenden abstrahieren muß*]" (SW IV: 114).[32]

To occupy the standpoint of reason, then, is precisely *not* the intellectual intuition of the self, and the suspension of "all success and externality" that occurs

30 Brezeale, "Exhibiting the Particular in the Universal," 17.

31 Toscano, "Philosophy and the Experience of Construction," 124.

32 Schelling, *Presentation*, 146. Wood and Vater translate "*Das Denken der Vernunft ist jedem anzumuthen*" as "The thought of reason is foreign to everyone." While *anmuten* is indeed most often used in contemporary German in connection with the word *seltsam* in order to indicate something that seems strange or out of the ordinary ("*Es mutet ihn seltsam an*," "it seems strange to him"), *seltsam* (strange) does not appear here in Schelling's text. It seems rather that Schelling is using *anmuten* in the now-antiquated (then current) sense of *zumuten*, that is, to make an imposing or even inordinate demand upon someone. Indeed, Grimm *only* lists the (now-antiquated) sense of making an extraordinary demand upon someone and its nominalization as *Anmuten* (imposition or demand). Thus, the rendering of "*jedem anzumuthen*" as "is strange to everyone" is anachronistic.

in reason does not denote the absolutization of the interiority of the subject, but rather the abolition of the subject as a discrete or self-enclosed entity. This is precisely what is at play in Toscano's chiasmatic formulation of the identity philosophy: "The construction of experience is replaced by the experience of construction."[33] The subject itself (and its conditions of experience) no longer occupy the privileged locus of productivity, but rather become products that must be constructed from this absolute standpoint, a construction towards which Schelling gestures at the end of the *Presentation* with the cryptic analogy, "just as the plant bursts forth in the bloom, so the entire earth blossoms in the human brain, which is the most sublime flower of the entire process of organic metamorphosis" (SW IV: 211).[34]

And if we return briefly to the above comparison with Kant, we can also see how this marks a decisive break with the Kantian schema. Kant's critical edifice depends on an absolute privilege of the faculties of the subject, and accordingly it only ever can speak legitimately about *representations* (*Vorstellungen*). This dissolution of the subject's priority back into the ur-activity of ontogenic construction, however, undercuts this privilege, and it no longer makes sense to speak in terms of representation (*Vorstellung*), for there is no longer a perspectival-subjective before (*vor*) or for whom such representations might appear. Instead, what is at stake in Schelling's absolute construction is the very possibility of an unfolding process whose course would *include* the constitution of the representing subject but would not be limited to it.

Perhaps it is this overcoming of the priority of subjectivity as a starting point that not only takes Schelling's construction beyond the confines of the Kantian project, but indeed also of the Fichtean "circle" Schelling alludes to in his letter. What is at stake is a movement beyond subjectivity and its representations into the movement of *Darstellung*, of presentation, constitution, or even figuration. Insofar as the title of *Presentation* announces a system, we can now see that the unity of this system is no longer grounded in the unity of consciousness but rather in the univocity of a constructive activity of which that system would be an expression rather than a representation.

With this understanding of construction as an instance of the essential activity of the absolute, Schelling's own philosophy becomes a moment of actualization, in which the activity of absolute reason encounters itself, exhibits itself in its in-different unity with itself. Schelling's absolute construction, then, is not merely a *more geometrico* bent to the will of idealism; it is rather an activity that expresses the original and absolute activity in which forms are constructed. Schelling states this characteristic nicely in the Höyer review: "Philosophy is not only a knowing, but always and necessarily at the same time a knowing of this knowing, not in endless procession, but

33 Toscano, "Philosophy and the Experience of Construction," 115.

34 Schelling, *Presentation*, 204.

an always present infinity" (SW V: 127).[35] In this always present infinity, Schelling sees the universal in the particular by grasping the absolute activity of which all activities and all products brought about by this activity are merely particular variations. The forms that in-form the world of appearance here are encountered in their unity-in-difference, as instances of a singular activity of their *formation*, and the philosopher's own activity is thoroughly sunk back into the generative activity of which it is a particularly potentiated expression.

To return to where we started, then, we can see just how far Schelling has gone beyond not only the bounds set by Kantian critical philosophy but also the "circle" within which Fichte's transcendental idealism moved. In the preface to the *Presentation*, Schelling calls Fichte by name and marks the difference quite clearly: "Fichte, e.g., might have conceived idealism in a completely subjective sense, whereas I situated myself and the principle of idealism at the *standpoint of production*" (SW IV: 109, emphasis added).[36] This standpoint of production, as I have tried to show, is not a "unity" prior to subject and object in the sense of a being (or a unity of being and knowing) that is then divided into a subject and an object; it is rather a "unity" in the sense of a unified activity that produces *both* subjectivity and objectivity as it potentiates and develops itself. In this way, the "indifference" of this unity is not the erasure of differences by way of abstraction back to a prior unity, but an attempt to think the activity of differentiation, the force that *produces* difference. It is an experience of this production itself that is at stake in Schelling's "construction." Such an experience would not be reducible to the subjectivity that might "undergo" that experience but would be instead an exposure of that subjectivity to an origin prior to itself. The break with Fichte, then, is quite clear—Schelling's identity philosophy liquidates the privilege of the subject, seeking not to bridge the gap between subjectivity and objectivity, but to trace the immemorial genealogy of their *differentiation*.

35 Schelling, "On Construction," 273.

36 Schelling, *Presentation*, 142, emphasis added.

kabiri
The Official Journal of the
North American Schelling Society

To Break All Finite Spheres: Bliss, the Absolute I, and the End of the World in Schelling's 1795 Metaphysics

KIRILL CHEPURIN

Reality is messianic
apocalyptic
my soul is my terror
Etel Adnan

"The ultimate end goal of the finite I and the not-I, i.e., the end goal of the *world*," writes Schelling in *Of the I as Principle of Philosophy*, "is its *annihilation* as a world, i.e., as the exemplification of finitude" (SW I: 200-1).[1] In this paper, I will explicate this statement and its theoretical stakes in Schelling's 1795 writings: *Of the I* and *Philosophical Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism*, written later in the same year. In these works, antagonism (*Widerstreit*), opposition (*Gegensatz*) and striving (*Streben*) are central characteristics of finitude. The finite world is here a world of negativity, alienation, separation. It is, as Schelling defines "the world" in the above quotation, a structure of subject opposed to object, "the finite I and the not-I" in their original division. Finding itself in the world, the I is faced with external reality as something other, yet to be known and appropriated—something over and against which the I asserts itself. What the I finds in this external world of incessant change (*Wandel*) and transition, is an endless chain (*Kette*) of things and causes. Attempt as one may to

1 Translations from the SW are mine, although I have consulted the ones found in F.W.J. Schelling, *The Unconditional in Human Knowledge: Four Early Essays*, trans. Fritz Marti (London: Associated University Presses, 1980). The references in this article to *Of the I as Principle of Philosophy* and *Philosophical Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism* are accordingly to the SW; however, this SW pagination is provided in-text in Marti's translation of both the aforementioned essays (published together in *The Unconditional in Human Knowledge*) for those readers who wish to consult the full English translations.

find one way's *out* by following this chain, one will never arrive at anything other than further things—always remaining within the sphere (*Sphäre*) of finite knowledge and existence (*Daseyn*).

The reason that, faced with external reality as what delimits it, the I seeks a way out of it—out of the I–not-I structure itself, a striving that defines the I's activity—is that it somehow recognizes or intuits its essence (*Wesen*) to *not* itself be of the world. Three lines of questioning arise here. First: what is this essence which makes the I strive to assert or, as Schelling puts it, "save" itself as it finds itself in the world? Second: why is the I, its essence not of the world, caught up *in* the world in the first place? More speculatively: why a world at all—this world of conflict, negativity, and thingness? And finally: what happens to the I in the world? What is the dynamic of their encounter?

As we will see, rather than merely a systematic presentation, the textual surface of *Of the I* conceals an overarching story, one that will resonate into *Philosophical Letters*, of how the I finds itself in the world, strives to break free from it towards absolute freedom or bliss—but ultimately ends up reproducing the world as it is, doing so, paradoxically, *through* the striving to break free. To reconstruct this story, let us consider the above three lines of questioning in order.

Ungrounding the Transcendental

Introducing the Absolute I

In keeping with the post-Kantian framework, in *Of the I* Schelling begins with what may be called the point of view of the I. All reality is "for the I," i.e., insofar as the not-I is "posited" in the I. This structure may be called empirical-transcendental. There is the "original opposition" of the not-I to the I, due to which the I feels itself limited: the finite I as opposed by the not-I. This corresponds broadly to the empirical character of cognition in Kant, where sense-impressions come to the subject from a not-I that is, however, in itself uncognizable, only becoming (re)cognizable when posited in the I. Hence Schelling's calling the not-I a pure manifold (*Vielheit*) not yet endowed with reality (*Realität*). It is as posited in the I that the not-I first becomes object; and it is in this way that reality is for the I, possessing a certain a priori structure—that of the Kantian categories and forms of intuition—and defining the entire "sphere of our knowledge" (SW 1: 165) and "all that there is (*da ist*)" (SW I: 162), the finite world in which the subject exists.

Crucially, the subject is itself determined as part of the I–not-I opposition, or is always subject *in* the world. If we ask with Schelling, seeing as all reality is for the I, *what is the ground of reality of the finite I itself?*—then it might be tempting to look for it in the unity of self-consciousness, or the transcendental subject. Schelling, however, refuses this move. We can only speak of the subject as "that which is definable solely

in opposition to and yet *in relation* to an already posited object." Subject and object are mutually "determined" or "conditioned" (SW 1: 165-6). Accordingly, the I of *I think* is too fleeting to serve as the ground of reality. As Schelling observes, echoing Kant's first *Critique* (B423):

> The empirical I ... announces itself through "I *think*," i.e., it is not through its mere being (*Seyn*), but through the fact that it thinks *something*—that it thinks *objects* .... The empirical I therefore ... disappears (*verschwindet*) if one cancels out (*aufhebt*) objects in general and the unity of their synthesis (SW I: 180).

What, however, if the ground of reality were to be discovered precisely *in* this disappearance of the transcendental? What if letting the subject-object structure—this world of division and condition—disappear would disclose an (absolute) reality that this structure used to obscure? Such is Schelling's speculative gambit here, and it is this absolutely-Real in which the world disappears that he will call "the absolute I."

How does Schelling arrive at this idea? First, in contrast to the structure of I and not-I as mutually conditioned, he theorizes "the unconditioned" as that which, in order not to fall within this structure, must be thought of *preceding* it. There must be no gap between the being of the unconditioned and its being-thought. "The principle of its being and the principle of its thinking"—or "cognition"—"must coincide," must be *immediately* one. "Its affirmation (*Bejahen*) must be contained in its thinking" (SW I: 163). It should not be possible to inscribe it into the world of mediation and divisive relationality. Therefore, only that can be (the) unconditioned which "*can never become object at all*." Defined in this way, it is without transition to the logic of thinghood; as immediately one, it contains no possibility of division or conditionality (hence Schelling's "cannot *become*"). This is what Schelling calls "the absolute I," at first defining it precisely as that which can never become object (SW I: 166-167).

If it is the immediate oneness of being and being-thought, why does Schelling call it the absolute *I*? This move, indexing *Of the I*'s "idealistic" residue that Schelling will later abandon, is only understandable within the transcendental framework, in which all reality is for the I. There are, as it were, two aspects to the finite I: it is finite (delimited by the not-I) *and* it is the principle of reality. Crudely put, there is, within the I, the source of all reality, the Real itself, obscured by its inscription into the structure of finitude. This Real is the essence (*Wesen*) of the I. The move here is to see the I's essence as preceding and exceeding its character as finite and conditioned. One may approach this by focusing on the way the I immediately gives reality *to itself*. I cannot, says Schelling, think my being as conditional ("*if* I am, *then* I am") without already thinking that I am—without "the conditioned determin[ing] the condition," and so without the proposition "canceling itself out as conditioned and turning into

the unconditioned: *I am because I am*." In this canceling-out, we can (intellectually) intuit the I's essence as that which simply *is*, *at once* with its being-thought—or that which immediately "realizes (*realisirt*) itself." I might as well, notes Schelling, simply say "*I am*" (SW I: 167). To focus on this "am" is to reveal a being free of otherness or division. It is to this standpoint that intellectual intuition transports us (SW I: 181).

It is crucial that, for Schelling, the standpoint of this "am" is not subjective. It is only *within* the I–not-I opposition that the distinction between subjective and objective appears—an opposition absent at this standpoint, which reveals what simply *is* (absolute being), without the possibility of division or gap (absolute oneness), and what is solely "through itself" (absolute identity). "My I contains a being that *precedes* all thinking and all representing" (SW I: 167); that precedes the very possibility of the transcendental. Not only any *I think*, but all proper sense of the I vanishes with the disappearance of the I–not-I opposition, disclosing "immediately all truth and all reality" (SW I: 193), a being that is immanent only to itself. I may glimpse this being within my I, but it is nothing to call my own. As absolute identity, this being is neither subject nor object; what is revealed in *I am therefore I am* is the being of pure identity, the "=" itself.[2] As such, this being cannot contain any otherness. Within the finite world, this identity is separated into subject and object, and the absolute being is enclosed into a being-there (*Daseyn*); the absolute itself, however, is a zero-point that precedes and refuses this division.

Nonrelation, Preclusion, Annihilation

The central part of *Of the I* lays out what may be called a positive metaphysics of absolute immanence: the categories appropriate for describing the way the absolute I functions, as it were, within itself. "Absolute identity" is the first such category. The absolute "simply is what it is" (SW I: 177), "without relation to anything opposed, i.e., to a not-I" (SW I: 231). As without relation to the logic of the world, it is "without condition or limitation" (SW I: 202). This identity should not be conflated with finite identity, which presupposes otherness and relation. The absolute is nonrelational and radically "without."

It is these aspects of the absolute—the negative (nonrelation) and the positive (being)—that Schelling terms "absolute freedom." Viewed "positively," it is the way the absolute "unconditionally posits all reality in itself through absolute selfpower (*Selbstmacht*)," the unmediated power of the Real. In this, it functions at the same time absolutely-negatively, without (relation to) any outside or otherness.

2 Cf. §6 of Schelling's 1801 *Presentation of My System of Philosophy*, where the first that is revealed in any statement of identity, A=A, is but "*the being of identity itself*," the pure "=." Schelling, "Presentation of My System of Philosophy," in *The Philosophical Rupture Between Fichte and Schelling: Selected Texts and Correspondence (1800-1802)*, ed. and trans. Michael G. Vater and David W. Wood (Albany: SUNY Press, 2012), 147. SW IV: 117.

Absolute freedom is infinite; as such, it has no place and no need for a world. "Defined *negatively*," it functions "as complete independence from, indeed, even complete incompatibility with all not-I" (SW I: 179). This "complete independence" is precisely nonrelation: not an independence from something opposed, but the full *absence* of anything opposed. Schelling has another term for this nonrelation: *Ausschließung*, here best translated as "preclusion," not "exclusion." The absolute "precludes all object" (SW I: 169), cannot become object or be inscribed into the subject-object structure. *Ausschließung* is not an operation that would exclude something opposed in order to repress it. It signals the absolute as preceding and ruling out the world, as "prior to any not-I and precluding all not-I" (SW I: 170). *Ausschließung* is therefore different from *Entgegensetzung*; to "preclude" the not-I is not to oppose it—it is to function as prior and without relation to it. The original opposing of the not-I (the structure of finitude) is explicitly contrasted by Schelling with "the absolute I" that "simply *precludes*" all not-I (SW I: 189).

The absolute is absolutely annihilative of the world—an annihilation that transports us to the zero-point preceding and precluding the world's possibility. The power of the absolute is that of the absolute *nihil*:

> The highest idea ... is the idea of *absolute power*. Can one measure the pure with [an] empirical measure? ... This idea is so distant from anything empirical that it not only stands far above it but even *annihilates* (*vernichtet*) it (SW I: 195).[3]

No common measure applies to absolute being, so that, from the empirical point of view, the absolute "can be neither object nor not-object, i.e., cannot be anything at all [*gar nichts*]" (SW I: 177)—can only be a "nothing at all (= 0)."[4] The absolutely-Real is foreclosed by the world, from within which it appears as no-thing and no-where. Conversely, since absolute being has no place for otherness, it is the world that is nothing at all, annihilated by the power of the absolute. Not only does the absolute I *not* disappear with the disappearance of the world, but it functions *as* the full absence of a world. Not that it would need any world. Absolute freedom does not lack or desire. It possesses "no will" (SW I: 196) and "is never [the] will"[5] to anything. It is freedom from even the need for a world. It is the power not to dialecticize itself, not to fall prey to relationality and otherness. The world is a world of mediation and striving, but "the absolute can never be mediated" (SW I: 184) and there is "no *striving*" in it (SW I: 180).

3 In the historical-critical edition, this passage contains additionally the following sentence, omitted from SW: "The I ... completely annihilates (*zernichtet*), through absolute selfpower, all that strives towards opposition." See F.W.J. Schelling, *Historisch-kritische Ausgabe*, vol. I. 2, ed. Hartmut Buchner and Jörg Jantzen (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1980), 122.

4 Schelling, *Historisch-kritische Ausgabe*, vol I. 2, 119. Cf. SW I: 193.

5 Schelling, *Historisch-kritische Ausgabe*, vol. I. 2, 123. Cf. SW I: 196.

There are further names for this, at once, absolute Yes and absolute No. In fact, in §§IX-XV, Schelling goes through the Kantian table of categories, *subverting* them one by one so as to re-configure them as expressions, not of the transcendental structure of finitude, but of the absolute. Schelling's move is twofold: first, it is to take the positive categories—oneness, reality, substance, and causality—and make them expressive of absolute identity and freedom; second, it is to refuse the modal categories altogether by thinking what is absolutely amodal. In this way, Schelling lays out "the attributes" of the absolute I (SW I: 182), all naming "the same unconditionality" and the same absence of a world.

The first of these is "*utter oneness (Einheit)*," which is in no way compatible with "empirical oneness" and "indeterminable through number." This oneness is nonconceptual (nonsynthetic), since concept is "what gathers multiplicity into oneness," whereas the absolutely-one precedes all multiplicity. Finally, it cannot be a universal, either, "for the universal is *conditioned* through the particular" (SW I: 182-4). In terms of quality, absolute identity can only be defined as absolute reality (*Realität*). This reality cannot have any "border" or outside, or be inscribed into the relation of part and whole (SW I: 192) or any divisive relationality of the world. Next, the category of substance becomes Spinozistic: as "the unconditioned," the absolute is "the *only* substance." This substance is, again, no-thing, "nothing at all (= 0)." Accordingly, one may call a finite thing a substance only figuratively, in a "transferred" (*übertragen*) way. As substance, absolute identity is an "immanent cause" that "does not posit anything outside itself" (SW I: 192-5). The absolute is absolutely nonproductive of otherness.

Finally, Schelling contrasts this world of possibility, actuality and necessity, all characteristics of *conditioned* being (SW I: 209-10), and the absolute as what is "eternal" and "simply *is*." It is eternal in the sense of being utterly atemporal: not a "being-there at all times," but a being "without any duration [*Dauer*]," "in *no* time" (SW I: 202). There is, in absolute identity, no before or after. Accordingly, no process of actualization can take place in it, and the distinction of modal categories makes no sense with regards to it. "For the absolute I, there is no possibility, actuality or necessity" (SW I: 232). Another fundamental characteristic of the world is thereby refused. If the absolute is the "primal ground" (SW I: 162), the "absolute condition" (SW I: 170), or the unconditioned condition (SW I: 176), this ground and condition are of a very strange, nonproductive kind. Considered immanently, absolute identity does not condition anything other than itself—and the entire categorial logic of the world is, in this absolute ground, absolutely un-grounded.

Let It Go Down: Schelling against the World

This (Derivative) World—or, How To Think Finitude

"Absolute freedom" is "utterly immanent" and "has no need to go outside itself"; it is annihilative of any outside—and is generally without any need or care, any striving, any *Sollen* or *Handlung* (SW I: 233-5). This leads to a crucial issue. If the absolutely-first is without world—and non-productive of a world—then why must the world be there? And how is its being-there possible? There is *no transition* from the absolute to the world; to think the absolute immanently is to remain within absolute identity and freedom, without the possibility or need to proceed to anything else.

It is, however, clear that, to think finitude, we need to think otherness. The world is, after all, identity *and* difference. *Daseyn* "is determined not *solely* through its identity, but [also] through something other than [*ausser*] itself" (SW I: 178). This is where the "original opposition" of the not-I to the I comes in—which makes possible the structure of the empirical. From the empirical point of view, the not-I is to be thought as prior to the I and providing it with the material of sensation—as the empirical limit faced by the finite I. Vis-à-vis the absolute as preceding even the possibility of otherness, however, the not-I can only be thought of as *secondary*. To think the principle or "form" (SW I: 189) of otherness, is to think what is completely outside (*ausser*) the absolute I (SW I: 192).

Resulting from this is a twoness that *cannot* be derived from oneness: "No not-I can originate [*hervorgehen*] from the absolute I" (SW I: 187). This twoness is divisive: the "form of opposition" (SW I: 180, 187), "the form of the not-I," as opposed to the I. To be opposed to the absolute I is to be opposed to all reality: an "absolute negation," "absolute not-I" (SW I: 188-9). The category of negation is employed here in a pre-transcendental sense; hence the adjective "absolute." The absolute not-I is not an object; "nothing can be spoken of the absolute not-I other than its pure opposition to all reality." This is not a lack *of* some-thing. It is the "absolute *nothing (Nichts)*" or "absolute nonbeing" (SW I: 188-9, 214)—but also, as the negation of absolute oneness, pure multiplicity (SW I: 194). This multiplicity, too, is not a multiplicity *of* something. It is multiplicity as such, mere difference-in-itself.

Finally, from this binary, Schelling proceeds to *synthesize* the two. The world is synthetic: a mixture of being and non-being (a binary that itself only appears with the I–not-I opposition). A finite thing is (insofar as it is identity) and is not (insofar as it is not through itself). In fact, as soon as we think the absolute not-I, we cannot but think synthesis because, without synthesis, the concept of the absolute not-I leads to contradiction. All positing can, after all, only be done by the I, and so the original opposition must be posited by it, too; but to think the positing of what is absolutely opposed to the I, is to "cancel out" the I.[6] The I thus cancels out or suspends the not-I,

6 Already here one may discern the logic that will be foundational for Schelling's *Naturphilosophie*. I am

and the not-I suspends the I. The original opposition turns out to be an "antagonism between the I and the not-I"; to assert one is to undo the other. In positing the not-I, the I cannot but "transfer" its form (identity) onto the not-I (multiplicity) (SW I: 189-90). Therefore, in thinking this opposition, we are led to think the synthesis of multiplicity *into* unity, as a synthesis of form and as the activity of the I.

"It is from this transferred form of the I, the original form of the not-I, and their synthesis that all the *categories* emerge" (SW I: 190)—all the categories or forms of finitude that we saw subverted in the absolute. It is in synthesis that limitation and condition appear. "For all synthesis," says Schelling, "proceeds in such a way that what is posited *utterly* in the thesis and the antithesis, gets in the synthesis posited with limitation, i.e., in a *conditioned* manner" (SW I: 214). The contradiction of absolute nonbeing and absolute being is thereby resolved, and we get empirical categories as reciprocally conditioned (e.g., empirical oneness as determined in relation to empirical multiplicity). In this way, we have come back to the divisive relationality of the world, its logic of separation and mediation (through synthesis). The form of identity in synthesis is "derived" (*abgeleitet*) and figurative. That is why Schelling calls the empirical category of substance a derived category: not in the sense that it is derived from absolute identity itself (which annihilates all finitude)—but as derived through synthesis once the I–not-I opposition is given. The world, as a result, never expresses identity except in a negative, relational way.

Interlude: Paradise Lost

We now approach the third of our three lines of questioning: what happens to the I within the world? As opposed by the not-I, the I is now finite. "The empirical I is determined only through the original *opposition*, and is nothing outside it" (SW I: 180). The empirical or finite I is the I to which the not-I is always already opposed. In this consists its difference from the absolute I (which, we recall, precludes the not-I). It is as conscious of its limitation through the not-I that the I becomes aware *of itself*—a reflective doubling at the origin of self-consciousness:

> *Self-consciousness* harbors the danger of losing the I. It is not a *free* act of the immutable but an imposed striving of the mutable I which, conditioned through the not-I, strives to save [*retten*] its identity and to grab hold of itself again in the sweeping stream of change .... But this striving of the empirical I, and the consciousness that proceeds from it, would not themselves be possible without the freedom of the absolute I ... Your *empirical* I would never strive to save its identity if the *absolute* I had not originally been posited *through itself* as pure identity (SW I: 180-181).

---

grateful to Daniel Whistler for this observation.

The I is finite, and yet its essence remains absolute identity and freedom—an essence that *precedes* but is *foreclosed* by the world, and so appears to the I from within the world as something that it is in danger of losing, or that has already been lost and needs to be saved ("grab hold of itself *again*" suggests that it *has* been lost, if momentarily). This creates a striving that is simultaneously nostalgic and future-oriented: a longing for the lost essence and for a future salvation from the world. From within the world, the atemporal essence appears to the I at once as the idealized past and the wished-for future. The finite I always exists in-between, in transition. It is in this in-betweenness that the two main logics of the I's activity of striving emerge: *synthesis* and *morality*—both aimed at the state of *bliss* as, precisely, at once the nostalgic past and the desired future.

Falling away from the Absolute

Far from replacing the Kantian duality of sensibility and the understanding with simply one principle, Schelling thus carefully preserves the structure of the empirical as the I–not-I opposition. He does so precisely because this opposition is *underivable*, and yet *required* to think the world as empirical and finite, and the very possibility of the world, which cannot be thought from the standpoint of absolute identity. "To the critical philosopher," observes Schelling in *Philosophical Letters*, "the absolute in us [i.e., the absolute I] is more comprehensible than everything else; it is, however, incomprehensible how we exit the absolute, so as to oppose something." The latter is, to the philosopher, "the most mysterious" (SW I: 310).

"The main business of all philosophy consists," accordingly, "in resolving the problem of the being-there of the world" (SW I: 313). The world is a mystery because, as we recall, "no not-I can originate from the absolute I." We cannot think otherness from within absolute identity; to think otherness is to already find ourselves *at* the standpoint of otherness. If, says Schelling, we were only to intuit the one absolute reality, we would all be "at one" (*einig*) and there would be no possibility of difference. Therefore, "the problem ... of all philosophy" is the question, "How does it even happen that I go out of the absolute and towards an opposition?"—the question of "the stepping out from the absolute" (*Heraustreten aus dem Absoluten*; SW I: 294). If we were simply to intuit absolute identity, this question would not arise.

However, that is not what we do. Instead, we are already *in the world*—and therein lies the problem:

> If man succeeded at some point in leaving this realm [of finitude], in which he found himself through the stepping out from the absolute, that would spell the end of all philosophy and even of that realm itself. For it arises only through the antagonism, and has reality only as long as the antagonism continues (SW I: 293).

The possibility of the world as the "realm of experience" can only be thought under the assumption of the world:

> I ask anew: why is there even a realm of experience at all? Any answer that I provide to this question, itself already assumes the being-there of a world of experience. In order to be able to answer this question, then, we need already to have left the realm of experience; if we were at some point to leave this realm, however, then the question itself would cease to apply (SW I: 310).

There is thus no answer to the question *Why must the world be?* To think the possibility of the world, we need to think the original opposition—and yet there is *no reason* for this opposition; the absolute I cannot transition to otherness or go outside itself.

Already in *Of the I*, Schelling insists that the mystery of the origin of the world—the mystery of the original opposition—cannot be solved: "For *the fact that (Daß)* the I opposes to itself a not-I, one cannot provide any further reason, any more than for the fact that it simply posits itself" (SW I: 187n). The *Daß* of the world is simply there, underivable from absolute identity, just as absolute identity is itself "groundless" (*grundlos*; SW I: 308). In the later Schelling, this will be conceived as the free act of creation—and we discover the term "creation" here, too, defined as the "exhibition (*Darstellung*) of the infinite reality of the I within the limits of the finite" (SW I: 215), which takes place in synthesis. The absolute opposing of the not-I is the beginning of creation—coinciding with the beginning of the activity of synthesis. The I is constantly "creating" the world: at every moment, the world is re-produced.

To find oneself outside the absolute, one's essence lost, is to *fall away* from the absolute. The beginning of creation is grasped in *Philosophical Letters* in terms of the Fall (*Sündenfall*)—a term introduced here through a reference to Condillac:

> A French philosopher says: since the Fall, we have stopped intuiting *things in themselves* .... [W]e must suppose this philosopher to have been thinking of the Fall in the Platonic sense, as the stepping out from the absolute state. But in this case he should have said, conversely, that it is since we stopped intuiting the things in themselves that we have been fallen beings. For if the word *thing in itself* is to have any meaning, it can only mean ... a something that is for us no longer an *object*, no longer offers any resistance to our activity. It is, after all, precisely our intuiting of the objective world that tears us out of intellectual self-intuition—out of the state of bliss (*Seligkeit*) (SW I: 325-326).

The I is fallen, and so strives to save its essence. The negativity of the world is evident already in *Of the I*—but the term *Sündenfall* adds a *theodical* dimension to it. As

fallen, the I strives to break free from this world of negativity and suffering (this striving is, we may recall, "imposed," forced upon the I by the world)—towards an absolute freedom from any negativity or need. This freedom coincides with what the I sees as its essentially-original state, "the state of bliss."

The world is determined as the negation of bliss; as long as there is bliss, there is no world, and vice versa. We may observe the ambivalent temporality of bliss in these passages—mapping onto the temporality of salvation in the I's striving to save its identity. It indexes, on the one hand, the absolute past preceding the Fall; on the other, Schelling speaks of intellectual intuition as that which is consequent upon the world and cancels it out—a future state in which we intuit something that is "*no longer* an object for us," "*no longer* poses any resistance" (SW I: 325-326). Bliss is thus introduced to designate the absolute oneness from which the I is torn away and towards which it strives. If so, however—if the structure of finitude is constitutively negative and unblissful—then really, must this world even be? The question is intensified.

Enacting Absolute Identity (in Synthesis)

The I's essence is absolute identity, and so, when confronted with the not-I, it is forced to continuously assert its identity vis-à-vis multiplicity. This is where Schelling's reconfiguration of synthesis as the I's striving for salvation comes in: the I finds itself in a world of antagonism, and strives to save its identity by imposing the form of identity *upon* the not-I. In this way, the (synthetic) subject of self-assertion in its relation to the (synthetic) object is born—but also the *temporality* and *spatiality* of the world:

> In order to save the immutable identity of your I, you must necessarily *elevate* the not-I, whose primal form is multiplicity, to identity—and so, as it were, assimilate it to the I. In order for it not to coincide with your I *as* the not-I, i.e. as multiplicity, your imagination posits it in *space*. In order, however, for your I not to become completely dispersed as it receives multiplicity for the purpose of accomplishing synthesis, you posit this multiplicity as change or [temporal] succession—and for every point of this succession, you posit again the same subject, determined by an identical striving. In this way, through the mediation of synthesis itself, and through the forms of space and time (produced simultaneously with the synthesis), you get an object that persists in space and time despite all change (SW I: 193-194).

Space and time are synthetic forms, the I's way to cope with multiplicity without losing its identity. The temporality of finitude is thus the temporality of synthesis[7]—

7 "*Time* is the condition of all synthesis," but is also "produced by the imagination in and through synthesis." The logic of possibility and actualization, too, arises in relation to the temporality of synthesis

and of the continuous self-assertion to which the presence of the not-I forces the I. To this corresponds the general idea of time as a continuum in which objects persist: the temporality of duration, "only thinkable in relation to objects." The absolute simply *is*, whereas the finite I, and the finite world, temporally endure (*dauern*) (SW I: 202-3).

Through the logic of synthesis, we have now come to think the world as a world of change, distance, and temporal succession. All synthesis is nothing but the I's striving to "save" its essence—nothing but the operativity *of* identity *in or upon* multiplicity in the givenness of multiplicity. As *Philosophical Letters* reiterate, once there is the original opposition, there is synthesis: "*Synthesis* in general ... arises only through the antagonism of multiplicity with the original oneness. For no synthesis is necessary in the absence of antagonism" (SW I: 294). Oneness and twoness are *both* conditions of synthesis, as the operativity of oneness upon twoness. "The complete system" must therefore proceed from absolute identity (SW I: 297)—but since it must also think multiplicity, this leads to thinking the bringing of multiplicity into oneness, so that oneness becomes *telos*. In this way, again, absolute oneness becomes, in the givenness of multiplicity, at once what the I proceeds from and the *telos* towards which its striving is directed:

> *Firstly*, synthesis [must] be *preceded* by an *absolute* oneness, which only first becomes *empirical* unity in the synthesis itself, i.e., in the givenness of something antagonistic, a multiplicity....
> *Secondly*, no synthesis is thinkable except under the assumption that it itself *end* (*endige*) in an absolute *thesis*. *The goal of all synthesis is thesis* (SW I: 296-7).

Note the dynamic of oneness and twoness at work here: to think the possibility of the world vis-à-vis the absolutely-first, we need to think at once oneness and twoness, where oneness *suspends* twoness (there is no twoness at the standpoint of absolute oneness) and is operative *in* it (as bringing it into unity). Considered immanently, absolute identity does not ground—but completely "precludes"—the world; it only becomes the transcendental ground within the structure of opposition or twoness. Note also how what is, considered immanently, absolutely-first without transition to otherness, becomes second or *telos* from the perspective of finitude. This is how teleology emerges. As soon as multiplicity is given, oneness starts to function as empirical synthesis whose goal is, however, its self-termination in and as absolute identity.

In this way, the status of finite reality is complicated. Synthesis is what produces the world. And yet, synthesis becomes, on this account, the direct operativity of absolute identity upon multiplicity, whose goal is not the synthetic product (the

(SW I: 228).

world) as such, but the dissolution of multiplicity in identity, and thus of all synthesis in absolute thesis. Faced with the not-I, the I proceeds to posit it under the form of identity, whereby the world gets produced. The I could not, however, care less about the process of synthesis—and it only cares about the synthetic *product* (the world) to the extent that it represents identity. The I has no interest in the finite *as* finite. All it does is re-assert identity in the striving to save itself—simply because identity is what it is, and so it must remain what it is amidst multiplicity. The world is only getting in the way, and is only produced as the by-product of the I's simply *doing* what it *is* when confronted with multiplicity. Synthetic reality has, in this, the core of the immanent enactment of absolute identity. Absolute identity remains, as such, without relation to the world—and yet, from within the world (in the givenness of multiplicity), it gets re-mediated through a process in which identity becomes the goal. The world re-mediates identity as *telos*.

Gathering the Dispersed—or Annihilating It

Synthesis "ultimately aims for absolute oneness" (SW I: 297), because this oneness is where it proceeds from. Synthesis is thus a way in which the absolute manifests or "reveals" itself in the world: all activity of the I "reveals an original freedom of the absolute I" (SW I: 205). Let us observe the double-sided character of synthesis, corresponding to the I–not-I structure of the empirical. On the one hand, synthesis brings the not-I to the form of identity, "assimilating" it to the I: the objective side. On the other, the I insists on *its own* identity, its essential oneness with the absolute. Considered from either side, the goal of this process is the same: absolute identity. And yet the logic is different, corresponding to the Kantian division between theoretical and practical. As Schelling says, "reason aims in its theoretical as well as in its practical use at nothing other than ... the statement $I = I$" (SW I: 229). To reach this *telos* of identity would be to abolish the world as the structure of opposition. The theoretical and the practical constitute the I's two paths towards this goal.

The theoretical logic is synthesis considered from the point of view of multiplicity. There is multiplicity, and so it needs to be synthesized; the more it is gathered into unity, the closer is the end goal of "absolute thesis." This leads to the progressive "identification of the not-I with the I" as the "ultimate end goal" (SW I: 197; cf. 223). In this manner, synthesis progresses towards the goal of unifying *all* multiplicity. It is through synthesis that limitation emerges; however, synthesis aims to overcome all limitation. Theoretical philosophy seeks to unite all "finite spheres" into "one infinite sphere," coinciding with "all reality" as fully "encompassed" by the I (SW I: 215). At the conclusion "of all *theoretical* philosophy" stands "the highest synthesis." In this way, the I seeks, as "theoretical reason," to "resolve the antagonism between the I and the not-I" by uniting them into "one ultimate exemplification of all reality" (SW I: 190).

"In its theoretical use," reason "strives to elevate the not-I to the highest unity with the I." And yet—a Kantian motif—in doing so, it falls into contradiction with itself as the I. In the statement $I = I$, the I is "posited [simply] *because* it is posited." In the highest synthesis, the I strives to posit all not-I under the same form: "to posit the not-I [simply] because it is posited, that is, elevate it to unconditionedness" (SW I: 229). To elevate the *not*-I to unconditionality is, however, to let it swallow the I. "The ultimate exemplification of all reality" becomes thereby "the I = *not-I*," "cancel[ing] out the absolute I" (SW I: 190). "The highest possible synthesis (I = not-I) expresses" again only "the antagonism between the I and the not-I" (SW I: 191), and not the cessation of this antagonism. In its synthesizing activity, the I creates the world but cannot find its way out of it—and so ends up *reproducing* the antagonism that constitutes the world.

The practical logic is different: it is the immanent insistence of the I on its essence. It emerges out of the contradiction, not directly between the I and the not-I, but *within* the finite I—between itself as empirical and as absolute, between its conditionedness and its essential (absolute) freedom. It is in this contradiction that Schelling locates morality, so that the categorical imperative coincides with the imperative $I = I$:

> The absolute I *demands* utterly that the finite I become equal to *the absolute*, i.e., that it utterly annihilate [*zernichte*] within itself all multiplicity and all change. What for the *finite* I, i.e., the I delimited by a not-I, is *moral law*, is for the infinite I the *law of nature* [*Naturgesetz*], i.e., one given together with, and in, its *mere being* (SW I: 198).

Here, the I annihilates all multiplicity within itself, instead of gathering it into an all-encompassing objective identity. Whereas synthesis is the operativity, within the world, of the absolute as absolute *identity*, morality is its operativity as absolute *freedom*—i.e., as the annihilation of finitude.

Importantly, it is the same insistence on the I's essence as in synthesis, except considered from the side of the I. "The theoretical I strives to posit the I and the not-I as equal, and thus to elevate the not-I *itself* to the form of the I"—the mediation of multiplicity into unity. "The practical I," however, "strives towards pure oneness, to the *preclusion* of all not-I" (SW I: 176-7). *Within* the world, the I insists on its immanent nonrelation to the world. These are but two sides of the one process of striving (towards $I = I$). In the absolute, there is no division between the two; it only appears from the point of view of the world or the I–not-I opposition. It is the task of "the complete science," therefore, to insist on "the perfect oneness of the I, which is the same in all manifestations of its activity," serving to express "but one activity of the same, identical I" (SW I: 238-9). Schelling's ambition here is to unify (post-Kantian) philosophy by means of the essential oneness of the I's striving, even though

this striving may appear as divided within the divisive relationality of the world.

Breaking the Spheres, Cutting the Knot (of the World)

Morality is in Schelling tied to finitude, emerging because the I, *within* the confines of finitude, insists on its absoluteness. "The moral law only holds in relation to finitude." Only a finite being can be, or is called upon by its essence to be, moral. Absolute freedom is neither moral or amoral—it is the sheer power of the absolutely-Real: "The infinite I knows no moral law whatsoever, determined as it is in its causality only as absolute *power*, equal to itself." It follows solely the "law of identity," "law of nature," or "law of being" (SW I: 198-199), not the moral law.

Accordingly, in a familiar teleology, the moral law defines "the end goal of all striving" as its own "transformation into the I's mere *law of nature*." Since the absolute simply is what it is, the moral law demands that the I be absolutely equal to itself: "The highest law for the finite being is: *be absolutely identical with yourself*" (SW I: 199). Such is the "pure" formulation of the moral law. And yet, already in this formulation, the pure moral law's character as a *demand* betrays its finite, synthetic character: what the absolute simply *is*, is here represented "as demanded." With finitude, normativity appears, absent in absolute immanence. The moral law is merely "a schema" of the law of identity, its representation from within finitude (SW I: 198-199). No *imperative* could even arise in the absolutely-Real (SW I: 234).

The finite I cannot, however, simply "be absolutely identical with [itself]," as this stands in contradiction with its being caught up in multiplicity. It is here that the contradiction *within* the I appears, between itself as empirical or "a moral *subject*, i.e., conditioned through change and multiplicity"—and its essence of identity: an antagonism between what it is and what it ought to be. Schelling solves this contradiction, again, via *synthesis*: "a new schema, namely that of *production in time*, so that the moral law, aimed as it is at the demand of *being*, now turns into a demand of *becoming*." Adapted thus to the finite subject, the moral law now demands, not *Be (immediately) identical!*, but "*become* identical, *elevate* (in time) the *subjective* forms of your being to the form of the absolute" (SW I: 199).

Mediated in synthesis as becoming, the annihilation of finitude becomes progressive. Everything that is finite about the I, is now imagined as being gradually done away with, with moral purity, or absolute freedom, as the end goal. In this way, the I may be imagined to *expand* towards *I=I*. "Expansion" (*Erweiterung*) is what Schelling calls the moral demand as mediated by the world—an image expressing, as it were, the shrinking of the not-I and of its power over the I. "The final aim of the finite I is therefore expansion to the point of identity with the infinite" (SW I: 200; cf. 191, 240-241). Note how this logic is opposed to progressive synthesis, where it is the *not*-I (as gathered into unity by the I) that expands. And yet, in synthesis and morality, the end goal is one: absolute identity. This is the goal of the I's entire striving, and

the ultimate goal of the world; and yet, in this goal, the world *ceases* to be just that, a world—a point at which we return to the statement that opened this paper: "The ultimate end goal of the finite I and the not-I, i.e., the end goal of the *world*, is its *annihilation* as a world, i.e., as the exemplification of finitude" (SW I: 200-201).

The annihilation of finitude that, at the standpoint of the absolute, was what the absolute *immediately* did—prior to the very possibility of finitude—becomes now, from within finitude, the end goal. "In order to resolve the antagonism between I and not-I," which theoretical reason cannot do, "nothing else remains except complete *destruction* [*Zerstörung*] of the finite sphere"—"(practical reason)," adds Schelling in parentheses (SW I: 191). What theoretical reason futilely tries to synthesize by combining all finite spheres—by "forming" (*bilden*) finite spheres in the hope they may contain the infinite, or putting infinity together piece by piece until the not-I equals I (whereby, however, the I is lost)—practical reason achieves by way of the *breaking* of the spheres, an all-out destruction of finitude. It is only if "we pierce through [*durchbrechen*] these spheres"—as demanded by "practical philosophy"—"that we find ourselves in the sphere of absolute being, in the supersensible world, where everything is *I*, nothing is outside the I, and this I is but One [*Eines*]," absolute identity and freedom *become* absolute (SW I: 215-6). Practically, philosophy equals the annihilation of the world.

Thus, to envision the resolution of the question "why is there even a world at all?," is to conceive of it not as a theoretical answer—for, as we recall, "any answer that I provide to this question itself already assumes the existence of a world." It is to resolve the question practically by *dissolving* it (the two senses of *auflösen*)—to dissolve the logic of finitude indexed by the question:

> As a result, this question cannot be resolved except the way Alexander the Great resolved the Gordian knot, i.e., through the canceling-out of the question itself .... Such a resolution of this question, however, can no longer be theoretical, but necessarily *practical*. For, in order to be able to answer it, I must myself leave the realm of experience, i.e., suspend for myself the limits of the world of experience, or cease to be a finite being (SW I: 310-311; cf. 176).

There can be no justification of the world except by tracing the way it *undoes* itself. If "the main business of all philosophy consists in resolving the problem of the being-there of the world," then this resolution can only consist in the complete dissolution of the world. It is in the breaking of all finite spheres—the tearing down of all idols, all representations, all finite vessels, so as to break through to absolute oneness—that the only solution to the mystery of the world consists, and the only way to "restore" absolute identity and freedom (SW I: 202). "Practical reason enters, not in order to untie the knot, but to cut it into pieces [*zerhauen*] by means of absolute demands"

(SW I: 176). The practical solution is to cut the knot of the world without hesitation.

To the question, *How is the world possible?*, the answer was: *on the assumption of the world*—i.e., by thinking the structure of the original opposition. To the question *Why must the world be?*, the answer is: *the world must not be*. Since Schelling configures the world as constituted by the operativity of absolute identity and freedom *within* the structure of opposition, the world is, paradoxically, only thinkable as demanding its own dissolution. Precisely because, as such, the absolute functions in and as the absence of the world, its operativity *in* the world becomes that of collapsing or annihilating the world.

The absolute becomes, as a result, a very odd kind of ground: it may ground all identity and all of the I's activity vis-à-vis the world, but thereby it ungrounds the world itself (*as* world). Similarly, absolute identity, considered immanently, does not condition anything other than itself. It only becomes the condition of finitude or synthesis—the transcendental condition—under the assumption of multiplicity, conditioning identity as the *goal* of finitude, which consists in finitude's dissolution. "Condition" is here identity configured as *telos*. The logic of condition and ground is driven by one striving: to become, as absolute identity, *grundlos*.

The Joy of Annihilation: Pure Happiness—Bliss—Nonbeing

The world must not be is the imperative of all striving. To reach this goal—to annihilate the world, to be free from striving and one with the absolute—would be, for the I, pure bliss. The term "bliss" first appears in *Philosophical Letters*, but "pure happiness" is what Schelling calls it already in *Of the I*. Generally, happiness (*Glükseligkeit)* is the "agreement of objects with our I," of "the not-I with the I" (SW I, 197). I am happy when objects please me, or there is no conflict between them and myself. This happiness is, however, "empirical" insofar as I continue to depend on the not-I for my happiness. There is a strong element of chance to it—of dependence on external circumstances. This is why Schelling calls it "contingent" (*zufällig*). As such, it presupposes the gap between I and not-I.

As empirical, happiness cannot belong "to the (ultimate) end goal" (SW I, 197). It does, however, asymptotically imply an idea aligned with the end goal—the idea of the *full absence of any gap* between the not-I and the I, and in that sense their perfect harmony. This idea arises from theoretical philosophy, and yet, if the *practical* demand is to be realized—amounting to the "complete annihilation of the not-I"—this would lead to a state in which there is necessarily no gap between the not-I and the I, but now in such a way that the element of externality and chance is precluded. Morality, therefore, leads to *pure* happiness, precisely *as* the oneness with the absolute that the moral law demands. Such is the only "practical significance" of happiness, in which "it is also fully *identical* with the ultimate end goal" (SW I: 197).

Seeing as pure happiness indexes absolute oneness, at the standpoint of pure happiness the distinction between theoretical and practical disappears. After all, neither synthesis nor morality is itself the end goal; absolute identity ($I = I$) is. "Pure happiness" is a name we can give to this identity, to the extent that all resistance on the part of the not-I is here absent. In this, however, the term "happiness"—initially defined through the empirical—becomes, with the addition of "pure," self-subverting. "Pure happiness consists precisely in elevation above empirical happiness; the pure necessarily precludes the empirical" (SW I: 197). In this, however, the very *need* to be happy vanishes:

> [T]he ultimate aim of all striving is not empirical happiness, but complete elevation above its sphere, so that we must strive towards the infinite, not in order to *become* happy, but in order to never have need of happiness, indeed, to become completely *incapable* of it (SW I: 198).

The point of pure happiness is not to be happy (or unhappy), but to occupy the standpoint at which this binary, as empirical, does not apply. The separation between nature and freedom, "natural causality" and "the causality through freedom"—another Kantian divide—disappears at this standpoint, too, together with the divisions between theoretical and practical, mechanism and teleology, or possibility and actuality (SW I: 239-242). Pure happiness collapses all binaries and relations that define the world, spelling a "complete canceling-out" of finitude (SW I: 240). It is on this note—the end of the world in pure happiness—that *Of the I* itself ends.

It is, perhaps, due to the self-undoing inherent in "pure happiness" that, in *Philosophical Letters*, Schelling adopts the term "bliss" instead. Bliss (*Seligkeit*) and happiness (*Glückseligkeit*) relate here the same way that pure and empirical happiness did in *Of the I*—with the added conceptual benefit provided by the words themselves. *Glückseligkeit*, observes Schelling, contains the component of *Glück*, "luck," as that which happens *to* us. "We owe our happiness ... not to ourselves, but to *lucky chance*." "Happiness is a state of passivity; the happier we are, the more passive our relationship to the objective world." Happiness is empirical—so that, the "purer" we imagine it to be, "the closer it comes to morality and the more it ceases to be *happiness*" (SW I: 322): an obvious nod to *Of the I*. Hence the need for a different term. *Seligkeit*, as delinked from chance—and as connected to *Seele* and (in its meaning as "salvation") to the end goal of striving—answers this need perfectly.

"Morality," reiterate *Philosophical Letters*, "cannot itself be the highest," consisting only in the "striving towards absolute freedom" (SW I: 322). It is in the state of absolute freedom that bliss consists. "Where *there is absolute freedom, there is absolute bliss*, and vice versa" (SW I: 324). Bliss is oneness with the absolute—a state of pure identity, absolute nonrelation and intransitivity, to which we are transported by "intuiting the eternal in us under the form of unchangeability." In this way, we

have direct access—via the essence of our soul—to the end (goal) of the world; or, rather, immediately are at this standpoint. In intellectual intuition bliss does not, in other words, appear *as* goal; it is where the soul simply *is* in its essence—"our self [as] stripped of [*entkleidetes Selbst*] everything that came from the outside" (SW I: 318).

In bliss, we are taken out of time and space, and are the one immanence, without temporal succession or otherness. It is only from the perspective of the world that we are transported *to* or *out of* this state, so that there is a before and after, past and future, inside-the-world and outside-the-world. In bliss, the world is completely dissolved—the knot of finitude is immediately resolved—for, as we recall, in order to resolve it, "I must myself ... cease to be a finite being" (SW I, 311).

Schelling connects this cessation of the world in bliss to Spinozan *beatitudo*, quoting "the statement with which [Spinoza] concluded the whole of his *Ethics*, *'Bliss is not the reward of virtue, it is virtue itself!'*" (SW I: 321-322). Bliss cannot be a reward, since the logic of reward is transcendent, premised on the gap between what I am and what I receive as reward. With reward, we are thinking of something that pleases us. As such, it is tied to *happiness*, not bliss (SW I: 323). "Insofar as we still believe in a happiness that rewards us, we are assuming happiness and morality ... as antagonistic principles." "This antagonism," however, "ought to utterly cease." The closer we are to virtue, the less value (*Werth*) rewards have for us (SW I: 322). One simply *is* one with the absolute; in this, blessedness consists—and not in any kind of reward or possession:

> Should we, asks an ancient writer [i.e. Seneca], deem the immortal gods unhappy because they possess no capitals, no gardens, no estates, no slaves? Should we not rather praise them as the only blissful ones precisely because they alone, thanks to the sublimity of their nature, are already deprived [*beraubt*] of all those goods [*Güter*]? (SW I: 323)

The logic of reward entails the conceptual nexus of possession, value (capital), domination (even slavery), and justification. What the image of the Stoic-Epicurean gods signals, is bliss's refusal of this nexus, as well as of the logic of the world as a whole. Note also the immanent inhabitation of nothingness by the gods, "deprived" of everything—just as, in the earlier description of intellectual intuition, the self was *entkleidet*, bare. Bliss indexes an immanent dispossession, an absolute, divine poverty. (In his later novella *Clara*, Schelling will explicitly connect bliss to monasticism.)

Not just all external possession—the *self*, as self-possession, is in bliss annihilated, too. On the one hand, intellectual intuition is an intuiting of "the eternal *in us*," our "bare *self*." On the other, as we have already observed in *Of the I*, what I thereby intuit is nothing to call my own. "*My* reality disappears in the infinite reality" (SW I: 327). The "bare" in "bare self" undoes the selfhood. The self as dispossessed, as *bare* self, is not a self, but absolutely-nothing. Blissful self-destitution must be

thought as *preceding* subjectivity and possession; it is only from within the world that it appears as goal—the full dissolution of consciousness and personality:

> With *absolute* freedom, no consciousness is thinkable anymore. An activity for which there is no *object* and to which there is no resistance anymore, never returns into itself. It is only through return to itself that *consciousness* emerges .... I cannot cancel out the object without at once canceling out the subject *as* such, i.e., all personality (SW I: 324, 327).

Consciousness has the structure of reflection and binary, absent in bliss. In fact, all binaries are refused or collapsed here. Bliss is "infinite activity" and, as absolutely non-empirical, "the cessation of *all* passivity"—yet it is also absolute passivity, since it does not strive towards anything and possesses "no will" (SW I: 331). "Here, at the moment of absolute being, highest passivity is at one with the most unlimited activity. Unlimited activity is absolute repose, perfect Epicureanism" (SW I: 323-325). It is absolute freedom, or "unconditioned selfpower," but also absolute necessity, as only following "the laws of its being" (SW I: 331).

In collapsing *all* binaries, absolute bliss is apocalyptic. It spells the end of the world—and of the I in the world. "The highest moment of being is for us transition to nonbeing, the moment of *annihilation*" (SW I: 324). The "for us" is important here. It marks the finite perspective, as does "transition," which implies succession. "For us" in our finitude, entering bliss can only appear as a "transition to nonbeing" or a (transitive) "moment of annihilation"; from the standpoint of the absolute, however, there is no transition, and no world, but only (what appears from within the world as) pure nonbeing, where the soul simply *is*. At this standpoint, it is the world that is *not*—exposed as a secondary, imposed reality—so that bliss equals freedom from the world, the joy of world-annihilation.

From the point of view of this life, bliss, as the annihilation of striving, is only comparable to *death*. "We awaken," says Schelling, "from intellectual intuition as from the state of death. We awaken through *reflection*, i.e., through a forced return to ourselves" (SW I: 325). Bliss is, however, not physical death, itself a part of the life-cycle and the life-death binary. It is a state in which all distinction between life and death disappears, and "absolute repose" coincides with "unlimited activity." However, since our I is finite, we are "forced" to exit this state: forced to go back to the existence of opposition and striving. We are, as it were, forced to live. "Were I to maintain intellectual intuition [indefinitely], I would cease to live" (SW I: 325)—and yet I have to return into the world. This forcedness to live corresponds metaphysically to the fact of the *Heraustreten aus dem Absoluten*.

The world must not be, and yet it is there. The joy of the world's annihilation, the bliss of nonbeing is the highest moral demand. And yet the finite I can only experience the state of absolute oneness briefly in intellectual intuition, as the world is

not only itself unblissful, but prevents the soul's bliss—since to allow the soul to reach it would spell the world's annihilation. Bliss thus appears, from within the world, at once as the ante-original past, the desired future, and finitude's striving *for* bliss—which it, however, cannot reach without undoing itself.

To Reproduce the World—or, Apocalypse Re-Mediated

Moral Progress and the (Impossible) End of the World

As we have seen, the moral demand leads to the necessity of moral *becoming*. The schema of becoming not only makes the moral law applicable to the finite subject, but also leads to the (synthetic) temporality of moral progress:

> It is through this schematism of the moral law that the idea of moral *progress* becomes possible, as progress into infinity. The absolute I is the one eternal—which means that the finite I, in its striving to become identical with the absolute, must also strive for pure eternity. It must therefore ... posit in itself eternity as *becoming*, i.e. as empirical, or as *infinite duration* (SW I: 200).

The I strives for eternity, but eternity can only be imagined, from within finitude, as infinite duration—so that moral becoming itself becomes infinite. This re-mediation of morality by the temporality of finitude is the "moral" or "practical synthesis" (SW I: 232-233). From the pure "is," we thereby get to *Sollen*, the Ought, which Schelling identifies not with the pure moral law ("be identical!"), but with the I's striving to *become* identical (SW I: 232). The I cannot, after all, strive for anything without representing it as the determination of its will, so that synthesis is required in order for that which cannot be represented in finitude (i.e. absolute identity) to become representable—to become *possible* as goal.

The moral law becomes the law of possibility, and morality really becomes practical (and not impractical). Through the moral synthesis, "practical possibility, actuality and necessity" arise (SW I: 232). To borrow a Kantian term, the pure moral law demands an immediate moral revolution (*be* identical with the absolute!)—an impossible demand. The finite I cannot even represent it other than as a demand for (possible) change and becoming. In order to determine the will, the moral law must be re-mediated as *Sollen*. "Only for the finite being," insists Schelling, "is there an Ought, i.e. practical possibility" (SW I: 232). This leads to the structure of a not-yet in which morality appears as an "incremental *approximation* to the end goal." "Pure happiness," too, since it practically coincides with morality, can only be represented as "an infinite task for the I ... realizable only through infinite progress" (SW I: 197).

It is in this striving—in moral progress—that empirical freedom consists, identified by Schelling with "transcendental freedom." Like all things transcendental,

this freedom is for Schelling finite. It is "the freedom of an empirical I in its being-conditioned by objects" or "freedom that is actual only *in relation* to objects" (SW I: 235): freedom in the world. "*Absolute* freedom ... becomes *transcendental*, i.e., the freedom of an empirical I," when placed within the "limits" of finitude (SW I: 237). In this freedom, the absolute "only *ought to* be *produced*"; however, "to *produce* an *absolute* reality is an empirically-infinite task" (SW I: 235). Freedom continues, within the empirical limits, to function as the annihilation of the not-I, and yet this annihilation is, in the continuous givenness of opposition, constitutively incomplete or not-yet.

As long as we remain within the structure of finitude, the not-yet of moral progress is self-perpetuating. Endless becoming cannot reach its absolute goal insofar as, in order to *become* a goal, it must be represented *as* empirically-infinite. We must think the *end* of the world in order to think identity and freedom *in* the world; and yet, insofar as we think them in the world, we can never get *out* of the world. As finite, we can only think the end of the world from within the world. Thereby, however, the world paradoxically reproduces itself as the endless not-yet precisely through our thinking of its annihilation. The paradox is that the demand of annihilation must be applicable to that which it wants to fully annihilate, i.e. the empirical. To be applicable to the empirical, however, it must be represented in terms of the empirical. "The finite being can ... progressively expand the limits of its finitude"—a progress into infinity, "because, if this expansion were ever to cease at some point, this would amount to the infinite itself having limits" (SW I: 241). Since, in other words, absolute identity becomes the goal *of* and *from within* the world, the world can never actually coincide with absolute oneness. The moral law is represented as *possible* in the world, and is thereby constitutively deferred—so that morality serves, ultimately, to reproduce the world. As a result, the world endlessly defers its own annihilation via teleology, possibility, and the moral not-yet.

Knowledge and morality signal the finite I's inability to get out of the world, even as its essence demands it—so that, re-mediated by the world, this demand becomes the infinite not-yet through which the I is tied to this world (of striving) even further. As a finite being in the world, the I can only *believe* in the end goal, without expecting to reach it. "Since you are tied to objects," says Schelling, "your intellectual intuition is dimmed," even your immanent essence "becomes for you at the *end* of your knowledge only an object of *faith*: as it were, something which is different from yourself, and which you infinitely strive to exhibit in yourself, and yet never find as actual inside you" (SW I: 216). Where knowledge ends, morality *as* faith begins—because the end goal is theoretically represented (as the highest synthesis) and infinitely deferred (in moral striving), becoming "different from" one's essence, transcendent and unreachable. In faith, the absolute essence is re-mediated by the world and alienated from the I. Moral faith becomes here, in effect, faith *in* the end goal *as* unreachable. It is precisely because one cannot reach the goal that one is called

upon to have faith. This move is theodical, too: by having faith, by not despairing and infinitely striving forward, you accept the world's infinite not-yet and justify it. Your faith in the *telos* of the world justifies the striving to reach it—the striving that *is* the world itself, in its infinite not-yet. The world "destroys" our (immanent) bliss, and all that is left for us is (transcendent) faith.

The Freedom Not To Be Blissful: Idealism as the Katechon

In *Philosophical Letters*, Schelling says that, if we were simply to intuit absolute identity, there would be no antagonism or disagreement. What is novel here compared to *Of the I* is the idea that, thereby, not only the antagonistic character of the world would cease—but also the conflict between philosophical systems. If everyone were to remain one with the absolute, without stepping out of it, "there could never be any quarrel (*Streit*) between different systems" (SW I: 293), i.e., between criticism and dogmatism. Criticism asserts the absolute self, and dogmatism the absolute object as the first principle, but in both cases this principle, considered immanently, is but an absolute affirmation or absolute identity: the first unconditioned principle can only be "an absolute *asserting*," without negation or otherness (SW I: 312). This holds for criticism and dogmatism alike.

It is over the world that the battle rages. One could say that the world *is* the battle. It is only in the realm of finitude that it can even begin (seeing as "no quarrel is possible over the absolute itself" [SW I: 308]). This is why Schelling can claim, as we recall, that the *Dasein der Welt* is the main problem of *all* philosophy. Dogmatism and criticism can only be differentiated *within* finitude, in terms of the world's relation to the absolute (since the absolute itself is pure oneness). Since finitude has the structure of the I–not-I opposition, we can either take the side of the subject (criticism) or the side of the object (dogmatism), making one or the other into the first. But when it comes to the problem of how this opposition originates, seeing as absolute identity is absolutely-intransitive, the finite world remains a mystery for both systems: "*No* system can *accomplish* the transition from the infinite to the finite .... No system can *fill* the gap that is entrenched between the two" (SW I: 314).

Both systems want to mediate between the world and the absolute, "so as to bring about the unity of cognition," and both find this impossible. However, they continue to strive for that unity, and absolute identity remains for them the end goal: "the endless striving" on the part of the finite "to lose itself in the infinite" (SW I: 315). We recognize in this the general logic of striving, now applied to philosophy itself. Finitude re-mediates the demand *Be identical with the infinite!* into an endless striving towards the unity of knowledge.

Since this demand is, as we know, ultimately practical and not theoretical, that leads Schelling to focus on the difference between criticist and dogmatist morality. Both "*demand* the *agency* through which the absolute is realized" (SW I: 333). This

practical solution is, again, "the only possible solution" to the knot of the world, it is just that dogmatism and criticism interpret it differently (SW I: 314). Seeing as one prioritizes the subject and the other the object, the paths they take towards oneness are opposed. It is "not through the *goal*," but "in the way they *approach* it," that the two systems diverge (SW I: 332). The dogmatist agency is submission, the dissolution of the I in the absolute object—an absolute passivity (embraced, per Schelling, by Spinoza [SW I: 316]).

This passivity is indicative of the worst fanatical enthusiasm: "'Return into the divinity, the primal source of all existence, unification with the absolute, annihilation of the self'—is this not the principle of all fanatical philosophy?" (SW I: 317). Note the direction of the movement here: the self as giving itself up to the objective, not as expanding so as to preclude it. "This scary [*schrecklich*] thought"[8] of self-annihilation is positioned by Schelling in terms of existential dread. Thereby, "philosophy is abandoned to all the horrors (*Schrecken*) of enthusiasm" (SW I: 332). The self is "deprived" of all power (SW I: 334), abandoned to the alien, external world.

Criticism, by contrast, takes up the banner of finite freedom. Already in *Of the I*, Schelling spoke of "the bold deed of reason": "to rid humanity of the fear of the objective world" (SW I: 157). In *Philosophical Letters*, he takes finite freedom's side even more emphatically, to the point that it becomes *heroic*. Whereas dogmatism "progressively constricts the boundaries of my freedom so as to expand those of the objective world," criticism reverses the direction: "By expanding the boundaries of *my* world, I constrict those of the objective world" (SW I: 334-5). In this, criticism combats the fear of objectivity—and combats dogmatism, too.

In the final, tenth letter, the battle against dogmatism becomes a battle over the world and the human soul, and of highest eschatological intensity, the decisive battle of the contemporary epoch. The narrative setup of this letter is interesting in this regard. It begins with the image of heroically fighting an overwhelming alien power—and perishing in this fight:

> [O]ne more thing remains: to *know* that there is an objective power that threatens our freedom with annihilation, and, with this firm and certain conviction in our heart, to fight *against* it, to mobilize one's entire freedom, and *thus* to perish .... This possibility, even after having vanished before the light of reason, must still be preserved for art—for the highest of art [i.e. tragedy] (SW I: 336).

The parallel with dogmatism is clear. Schelling, however, holds back from making it explicit and presents this idea as archaic for reason, limiting it to tragic art. A discussion

8 Schelling, *Historisch-kritische Ausgabe*, vol. I. 3, ed. Hartmut Buchner, Wilhelm G. Jacobs and Annemarie Pieper (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1982), 85. SW I omits the adjective "scary" (SW I: 316).

of ancient tragedy follows, in which the tragic heroine, fighting against the external power of *fatum*, would assert her freedom precisely in her fight against this power, in being punished for the crime she was doomed to commit (this punishment indexing the recognition of the freedom inherent in the fight), and in her very demise. "It was a *great* thought, to suffer punishment willingly even for an *unavoidable* crime, and so, through the loss of one's freedom, to prove this very freedom, and to perish then with a declaration of free will" (SW I: 337).

It is, arguably, the part where the hero perishes—where the alien power is presented as unconquerable—that makes Schelling declare this heroism archaic from the standpoint of reason. At the same time, the parallel between the idealist and the hero is obvious, and the entire conclusion of *Philosophical Letters* becomes, from here onwards, colored by heroism. Schelling's point, however, is not to present the power of objectivity as undefeatable, but to combat precisely the idea of such an overwhelming power. Heroism does have a place in the contemporary world (the letter ends on a heroic-revolutionary note with the proclamation of a "covenant (*Bund*) of free spirits" [SW I: 341]), but the thought of an overwhelming external power does not. To save humanity from corruption by exposing the lie of dogmatism and revealing the truth of freedom, becomes the task of the contemporary epoch. "It is duty to uncover the whole [dogmatist] deception"—to fight for the principle of freedom. "It is in this alone that the last hope for the salvation [*Rettung*] of humanity lies": in a return "to the freedom of the will" (SW I: 339).

The freedom of the will is, however, *not* absolute freedom or bliss. It is the freedom of striving. Salvation consists here not in the state of bliss, but in the very striving to reach it—a striving that must, as such, *never* reach its goal. The ninth letter makes this clear. Just after discussing bliss as the end goal, Schelling turns to *criticize* it, precisely for its apocalyptic, world-destroying character. Idealist freedom is the assertion of the power of the I, the expansion of the self towards absolute freedom. And yet, in bliss, the self *and* the world are equally annihilated. Bliss is the immanent inhabitation of nonbeing, and not the finite life of striving. It annihilates all binaries—including between subject and object or freedom and necessity. As a result, at the standpoint of bliss, criticism becomes *indistinguishable* from dogmatism (SW I: 328-329). Both systems, reminds us Schelling, strive towards absolute identity. Dogmatism may strive towards it by submitting the I to the not-I, and criticism by affirming the I over and against the object—but this opposition itself only holds *within* finitude, and not at the standpoint of the absolute. If criticism were to reach the goal of absolute bliss, this would spell its self-annihilation:

> Where an activity, no longer limited by objects and wholly absolute, is no longer accompanied by any consciousness; where unlimited activity is identical with absolute repose; where the highest moment of being begins to border on nonbeing: there criticism is bound for self-annihilation just as

much as dogmatism is (SW I: 327).

At this point, all knowledge and morality cease. There is here nothing to know, nothing to strive for, no doubling and no reflection. The world goes down, and the opposition of dogmatism and criticism goes down with it. Schelling does not, however, want to allow this. Criticism is too important to let it blissfully perish. He needs to preserve the principle of criticism, the I—and thus to preserve and justify *the world* as the realm where the opposition takes place. This opposition gone, how would the idealists be able to strive so heroically? Dispossessed, blissful, how would they be able to save humanity from fanaticism and deceit?

Criticism must be preserved, and it can only be preserved by insisting on the unreachability of bliss. Oneness with the absolute must remain the vocation (*Bestimmung*) of the human being, without thinking of it as actually reachable, and without allowing bliss to annihilate the value of the world. "In criticism, my *vocation* is: *striving for* unchangeable selfhood, unconditioned freedom, unlimited activity" (SW I: 335; cf. 327)—a binding of the I to the world of striving. At the standpoint of bliss, unlimited activity would coincide with unlimited passivity and all selfhood would dissolve; something that criticism does not want to allow. *Strive*, but do not *reach*. In *Philosophical Letters*, Schelling theorizes bliss only to foreclose it, turning it into an unreachable regulative ideal. The unification of all philosophy is theorized only to be denied, since it would spell the annihilation of philosophy as such, and critical philosophy in particular.

Bliss is absolutely uncaring, a zero-point at which no world is possible or needed. Philosophy, however, ultimately cares too much about the world, seeking to uphold and justify it, since it is required for philosophy's own survival. Therefore philosophy *encloses* bliss, divides the absolute in two—the I and the not-I—and takes sides, in the case of criticism, with the former. This division in place, philosophy *expands*, assimilating the not-I to the I (or vice versa): philosophy's own colonial logic. For that, it needs the division to remain. It is on this division alone that it lives and feeds; and so it affirms finitude and life, over and against what it perceives to be nonbeing, dispossession, death. At the same time, it is this nonbeing that, denied by the world, remains the absolutely-Real on which the world is imposed—and where we simply are in our essence, prior to the imposition of a world.

The 1795 Schelling programmatically defers the power of bliss, refusing to insist on the annihilation of the world and investing instead into its survival. It is, ultimately, only the existence of the world that provides the possibility for criticism to avert the horrors of dogmatism. And it is only by acting as the bulwark against the end of the world that criticism can stave off humankind's corruption. In this, criticism acts as what Carl Schmitt has called *the katechon*, that which withholds or restrains. Taken originally from St. Paul, this term indexes for Schmitt "the power to restrain the appearance of the Antichrist and the end of the present eon."[9] Accordingly, *the*

9 Carl Schmitt, *The Nomos of the Earth*, trans. G.L. Ulmen (New York: Telos Press, 2003), 60.

katechon has an ambivalent function: it is the defense against chaos, but also the indefinite deferral of salvation (*as* the end of the present world). It is this double function that criticism has, too. "For the sake of everything in the world I would rather not be blessed (*seelig*)!" repeats Schelling after Lessing, adding: "For someone who does not feel *just this way*, I cannot see philosophy to be of any help" (SW I: 326; note the philosophy–world conjunction here). Criticism opposes dogmatism, but therefore it must also justify the world and oppose bliss. In his diaries, Schmitt notes: "One must be able to name *the katechon* for every epoch ... The place has never been unoccupied, or else we would no longer exist."[10] Criticism occupies for Schelling this place in the contemporary epoch—the epoch of the battle against dogmatism.

Not that, however, criticism really cares about the world: what it cares about is its own striving—the expansion of the I vis-à-vis the external world—and it only needs the world (the structure of opposition) for this striving to be possible. In this, striving remains the operativity of absolute freedom, as nonrelation and preclusion, within the confines of finitude. And yet, not unlike in the case of moral progress, it is this (finite) freedom that serves, in practice, to foreclose absolute freedom—and to reproduce the world *as* the infinite not-yet. By means of morality and freedom, the immediacy of the apocalyptic demand is mediated into an indefinite eschatological horizon.

Conclusion

The world must be, conclude *Philosophical Letters*. Just as it began in *Of the I* with the demand of world-annihilation, Schelling's 1795 metaphysics ends with a justification of the world in its finitude. At the same time, *Philosophical Letters* theorize bliss as the refusal of all worldly logics—including the refusal of justification, since bliss simply *is* and does not seek to justify itself (or anything else). As long as the world is there, however, it remains constitutively impossible to simply be blissful—to *simply be*, without any negativity or striving. Absolute freedom is foreclosed by the world, and bliss is deferred into an unreachable future. The point is, however, not to endorse this foreclosure, but to trace its structure: to see how, by thinking in terms of possibility, futurity, *telos*, etc.—in terms of a possible future—the subject reproduces the way the world is. Thus, if we want to think bliss, we cannot do so in terms of *telos*. Even for it to appear as a future goal from within the world—to be re-mediated by the world—bliss needs to be thought (or intellectually intuited) in its immediacy. This entails, however, an essential clash of bliss with the world. Considered immanently, in the absence of a world, bliss is free from antagonism, violence, hierarchy or striving—and yet, in the presence of the world, it turns into the immediate apocalyptic demand, the demand that the world, this world of antagonism and negativity, must not be.

10 Carl Schmitt, *Glossarium. Aufzeichnungen aus den Jahren 1947 bis 1958* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2015), 47.

Appearing from within the world as "death" and "nonbeing," no wonder that the world has to re-mediate it to survive.

At the heart of this re-mediation, however, there remains for Schelling the core of absolute immanence, nonrelation, dispossession, nonwill. Both demands, *The world must not be* and *The world must be*, are premised on the fact of the world—so that, in order to think its possibility, we need to think opposition, negativity, and striving. And yet the core of our soul, the absolutely-Real which we access in intellectual intuition and in which the world is completely suspended, remains absolute identity and freedom. Even though it appears, from within the world, as the goal of all striving, as such this Real remains without relation to or care for the world. In neither of its modes of operativity (synthesis or morality) does the I care in the least about the world that it itself creates through synthesis. The world may be a mystery, but this mystery is, in effect, nothing but a hindrance, an inescapable nuisance—the I's structural, constitutive unhappiness—the annihilation of the world amounting, for the I, to pure joy and bliss. The goal of all of the I's fallen, unblissful striving in the world is: to break the vessels of finitude; to finally be at rest; to cut the Gordian knot of mystery and be absolutely free from the world, without justification. And yet the world is there, and the subject continues to struggle in its nets of mediation and the not-yet—doomed to infinitely long for bliss from within the world. This is, I would suggest, Schelling's own philosophical struggle, too: why the world at all? why must it be?—and so, in his thought, he will continue to seek ways to justify finitude—to justify the world—even as bliss will remain for him pure nonrelation, refusing all justification and refusing the world.[11]

11 Research for this article was supported by the Academic Fund Program at the National Research University Higher School of Economics (grant 19-01-045, 2019–20) and by the Russian Academic Excellence Project "5-100." I would like to thank Joseph Albernaz and Daniel Whistler for their comments on an earlier version of this paper. On bliss in the later Schelling, see furthermore Kirill Chepurin, "Indifference and the World: Schelling's Pantheism of Bliss," *Sophia* 58. 4 (2019), 613-630, and "Knot of the World: German Idealism between Annihilation and Construction," in Kirill Chepurin and Alex Dubilet (eds.), *Nothing Absolute: German Idealism and the Question of Political Theology* (New York: Fordham University Press, forthcoming).

kabiri
The Official Journal of the
North American Schelling Society

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

SAKURA YAHATA[1]

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).[2] 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.[3]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.

1 This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP17K13314.

2 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.

3 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.[4]

Prior to his 1807 speech, Schelling had discussed the plastic arts in his lecture series, *The Philosophy of Art* (1802-1803, 1804-1805).[5] The lectures cover various genres based on the principles of the philosophy of identity. Here Schelling displays a wide range of knowledge on art.[6] 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).[7] 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.[8]

Painting, Schelling says, "is the first art form that has figures and accordingly also genuine objects" (SW V: 542).[9] Music expresses "the development of things" (*das Werden der Dinge*), whereas painting portrays "already formed things" (*schon gewordene Dinge*) (SW V: 542).[10] 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).[11] Third, coloring stands in relation to the "absolute indifferentiation of matter and light;" put differently, light and matter are united (SW V: 541).[12] 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).[13] 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).[14] 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

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).[15] Landscape paintings, "where light is externally inorganic, yet flexible and to that extent living," (SW V: 544)[16] has only one positive category. For that reason, it is considered at a lower level than portrait and historical painting.[17]

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).[18] 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* [*getrübtes*] light or color" (SW V: 509),[19] 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).[20] Furthermore, drawing, which grasps form cannot be found at all in landscape paintings as such (SW V: 545).[21] 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.[22]

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*.[23] 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.[24]

The differences and common points between Schlegel and Schelling concern the idea of mood (*Stimmung*). For Schelling, "the unity of mood" (SW V: 546)[25] 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.).[26]

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."[27] 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

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."[28] By seeing landscape paintings, the observer's feelings change to vague fantasies. As Julia Cloot indicates, Schlegel seeks a musical situation in the beholder's consciousness and the painter's technique.[29] 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.[30]

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."[31] 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).[32]

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.[33] Schelling considers landscape painting as a subjective art. The beauty of landscape painting depends on observers,

28 Schlegel, *Die Kunstlehre*, 338.
29 Julia Cloot, *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).[34]

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),[35] 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).[36] "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).[37]

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).[38] 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).[39]

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).[40]

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).[41] 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).[42] Secondly, artists are required to have "a restraining exercise in the recognition" of the spirit of nature (SW VII: 305).[43] Through this practice, they (artists) can achieve "the extreme of beauty in constructions of the greatest simplicity with infinity and content" (SW VII: 305).[44]

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.[45] 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.[46] 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 See* (1809).[47]

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 Runges 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.[48] 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.[49] In this exhibit, Schelling mentions his appreciation and enthusiasm for the inclusion of Koch's painting, *Landscape near Subiaco in the Sabine Mountains* (1811).[50] 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."[51]

Koch also produced a counterpart to this painting called *Tiber landscape at Acqua Acetosa* (1812).[52] 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."[53]

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'Erasmo, 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."[54] 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."[55]

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.[56]

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*.[57] 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.[58]

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.[59] L. Knatz acknowledges the significance of Koch for Schelling, because Schelling's landscape theory is more applicable to Koch's paintings than Friedrich's.[60] 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.[61]

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.).[62]

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,

---

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.[63]

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).[64] 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.

kabiri
The Official Journal of the
North American Schelling Society

Schelling and the Satanic: On *Naturvernichtung*

JASON M. WIRTH

Nah ist
Und schwer zu fassen der Gott.
Wo aber Gefahr ist, wächst
Das Rettende auch.

Friedrich Hölderlin,
Patmos (1802)

In her unsettling book, *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History*, Elizabeth Kolbert quotes Joseph Mendelson, a herpetologist at Zoo Atlanta: "I sought a career in herpetology because I enjoy working with animals. I did not anticipate that it would come to resemble paleontology." Kolbert elaborates on Mendelson's despair:

> Today, amphibians enjoy the dubious distinction of being the world's most endangered class of animals; it's been calculated that the group's extinction rate could be as much as forty-five thousand times higher than the background rate. But extinction rates among many other groups are approaching amphibian levels. It is estimated that one-third of all reef building corals, a third of all freshwater mollusks, a third of sharks and rays, a quarter of all mammals, a fifth of all reptiles, and a sixth of all birds are headed toward oblivion. The losses are occurring all over: in the South Pacific and in the North Atlantic, in the Artic and the Sahel, in lakes and on islands, on mountaintops and in valleys. If you know how to look, you can probably

find signs of the current extinction event in your own backyard.[1]

At the heart of this natural catastrophe is perhaps the earth's most problematic creature: *ourselves*. Schelling *prophetically* grasped this pandemic outbreak amid the earth's natural systems when he warned of "the true annihilation [*Vernichtung*] of nature" (SW V: 275) and when he characterized modernity as constituted by the absence of nature because "it lacks a living ground" (SW VII: 361).

I do not use this adverb *prophetically* lightly. Like the Hebrew prophets, Schelling presaged the virulent emergence of a genuine—indeed, radical—evil and he also intimated the possibility of its overcoming in the advent of the kingdom of God on earth, that is, the intimation of a utopian or religiously awoken future. "The future is intimated" and the "intimated is prophesied" (SW VIII: 199) as the well-known opening lines of all of the extant drafts of *The Ages of the World* announced. What manner of future is intimated? The re-emergence from the oblivion of the past, the "striving towards ἀνάμνησις [*anamnēsis*, *Streben nach dem Wiederbewußtwerden*]" (SW VIII: 201), of a golden age whose access has inevitably been obstructed, blocked, contested, resisted. "What holds back that intimated golden age in which truth again becomes fable and fable again becomes truth" (SW VIII: 200)? Buried in the oblivion of the past is an anticipatory relationship to the future in which truth presents itself as fable and Hesiod's *Χρυσόν Γένος*[2] (*Chryson Genos*), the golden age, or the Hebrew Bible's garden of Eden or the *Mahābhārata*'s *satya yuga*, the age of the fullness of being (*sat*), is intimated as a lost (buried in the past) but future paradise on earth. Indeed, in the first draft (1811) of *The Ages of the World*, Schelling succinctly defined 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*]."[3]

As Dante confirmed for Schelling, the only reawakening to a future paradise runs straight through the *inferno* of the past, a path that therefore demands that we confront the satanic. Perhaps he failed, but Schelling endeavored to take up the prophetic voice, to liberate a different future by exorcising our relationship to nature and to do so demanded that he go straight into the primordial abyss of hell.

I am fully aware that to contemporary sensibilities such language sounds resoundingly quaint, even demented, and no doubt we are called to find new ways of liberating Schelling's insight. Nonetheless, it is my hope here to defend the thrust of the central elements of the manner in which Schelling prophetically framed what has matured into the contemporary ecological crisis. The crisis of what Schelling called

1 Elizabeth Kolbert, *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2014), 17-18.

2 This is described in Hesiod's *Works and Days*, lines 109-126. See also Plato's evocation of Hesiod's golden age, the primordial time in which nobility prevailed, in Plato, *Cratylus,* 397e.

3 Schelling, *Die Weltalter in den Urfassungen von 1811 und 1813 (Nachlaßband*), ed. Manfred Schröter (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1946), 83.

Naturvernichtung—our growing oblivion to the question of nature—demands not only that we recover the question of nature, but that we also understand its original loss as, in the language of a new mythology, *satanic*. In other words, our increasing awareness of *Naturvernichtung* as constitutive of who we now are is simultaneously a revelation of radical evil.

***

To be sure, Schelling is no Manichean and he does not rehash tired and neurotic narratives about the epic battle between good and evil nor does he even hold that there is any such *being* as Satan. The latter is a principle and its potency has no being to call its own but it strives for being and hungers to be something and to have a self to call its own. As Joe Lawrence articulated it: "If Christ ultimately preceded the creation as the eternal Word through which it was spoken into being, Satan preceded it as the original chaos out of which it emerged."[4]

As is well known, in the Freedom Essay Schelling dismissed the *privatio* conception of evil, which holds that evil is a mere lack, the absence of the divine plenum. Schelling argued to the contrary that evil is not anything negative, an inevitable and structural consequence of human finitude. It has a monstrous positivity and belongs, as Schelling insisted all the way until his final Berlin lectures on the *Philosophy of Revelation*, to the root or *ground* of humanity. Following an opening in Kant, evil is "radical," a question of "*hereditary sin*" (SW IV: 270). It is not that we are born bad or broken, as if there were something intrinsically wrong with us. The positivity of evil does not mean, as Schopenhauer concluded in *Vom Leiden der Welt*, that evil and pain belong to the very fabric of appearance:

> I know of no greater absurdity than that of most metaphysical systems which declare evil to be something negative; whereas it is precisely that which is positive and makes itself felt. On the other hand, that which is good, in other words, all happiness and satisfaction, is negative, that is, the mere elimination of a desire and the ending of a pain.[5]

Schopenhauer had "the conviction that the world, and therefore also humans, are something, that really should not have been"; we are but a "needlessly disturbing episode in the blessed stillness of the nothing" and life "as a whole" is, and here Schopenhauer uses English, a "disappointment, nay a cheat," or, "to speak German,"

4 Joseph P. Lawrence, "Schelling's Metaphysics of Evil," *The New Schelling*, ed. Judith Norman and Alistair Welchman (London and New York: Continuum, 2004), 177.

5 "Nachträge zur Lehre vom Leiden der Welt," in "*Parerga und Paralipomena*, vol. 2, in Julius Frauenstädt (ed.), *Arthur Schopenhauers Sämmtliche Werke*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1891), volume 6, 312-327. This citation is at 312-313. English translation found in Wolfgang Schirmacher (ed.), *The Essential Schopenhauer* (New York: Harper, 2010), 2.

it is *eine Prellerei*, a swindle or fraud.[6] All in all, there is "utter disappointment with all of life."[7]

For Schelling, it is not existence that is fraudulent, but rather Satan himself. The inheritance of sin and evil, the evil that attends to the ground of human existence, *is not found in the character of what exists*, either in a positive sense (Schopenhauer) or a negative sense (*privatio*). The "genuine philosophical idea of Satan" (SW IV: 271) emerges, Schelling tells us in the *Philosophy of Revelation*, from the "uncreated source of possibilities" (SW IV: 270). Satan is the "eternal hunger for actuality," which the apostle Peter (1 Peter 5:8) likened to hungry lion (SW IV: 271), roaming about (as he did in the preface to Job), looking for someone to devour. Pure angels never enter the world of creatures, and the very attempt to depict them vindicates Walter Benjamin's lament about the catastrophic, wreckage-strewn wake of the angel of history.[8] Indeed, one could say that the angel of history is satanic κατ' εξοχήν (*kat' exochēn, par excellence*). Only the dark angels, which actualize themselves insofar as humans aspire to take ownership of their ground, have mythological force and, at least in this way, they are real to us. "The evil angels are spirits that should not be ... and *should* have remained mere potencies" (SW IV: 284). Satan's disobedience is his insatiable thirst to become something, to have being. His ...

> demonic nature is an eternal avidity—ἐπιθυμία [*epithymia*, appetite, yearning, longing, concupiscence]. The impure spirit, when he is external to humans, is found as if in a desert where he lacks a human being in which to actualize his latent possibilities. He is tormented by a thirst for actuality. He seeks peace but does not find it. His craving [*Sucht*] is first stilled when he finds an entrance into the human will. Outside of the human will, he is cut off from all actuality—he is in the desert, that is, he is in the incapacity to still his burning longing for actuality.[9]

Žižek explains what makes this a problem of the Anthropocene—and of ἄνθρωπος κατ' εξοχήν (*anthrōpos kat' exochēn,* the human *par excellence*). The satanic inversion or perversion of the relationship between ground and existence is only possible for humans (as well as, we might here also already add, the religious awakening to the proper order of ground and existence) because only humans hold

6 Schopenhauer, "Nachträge zur Lehre vom Leiden der Welt," 325/14.

7 Schopenhauer, "Nachträge zur Lehre vom Leiden der Welt," 321/10.

8 This is the ninth of Walter Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy of History." See Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken, 1969), 257-258. The storm of progress pushes the angel irresistibly toward the future to which his back is turned. Behind is the past, which piles "wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet." Benjamin, "Theses on The Philosophy of History," 257.

9 Schelling, *Urfassung der Philosophie der Offenbarung*, ed. Walter E. Ehrhardt (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1992), 648.

together the diremption of spirit and nature. Evil is only possible for the creatures who are subject to the problems of philosophical religion. Other animals can be cruel but only humans are capable of evil. If humans were only natural, humans would, like all of the other animals, "be an organism living in symbiosis with his environment, a predator exploiting other animals and plants yet, for that very reason, included in nature's circuit and unable to pose a fundamental threat to it."[10]

However, what Schelling in 1797 in the *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* argued made philosophy as such possible, namely, the non sequitur marked by moments like wonder, doubt, and the general force of radical questioning, the shattering of the absorption in the present as one "strives to wrench oneself away from the shackles of nature and her provisions" (SW II: 12), already hinted at the satanic temptation at the heart of philosophy. Breaking with nature, the disobedient rebellion at the heart of reflection itself, is not in itself the recovery of nature. The latter demands the initial loss of nature, which is born from the lure of possibility itself. Is there not another way to live or other ways to know the things of our earth and of our living and dying? Such radical questioning interrupts the experience of nature as an experience of unrelenting necessity, but one runs the risk of becoming lost in this loss. Mere reflection, that is, reflection for the sake of reflection, is, accordingly and in anticipation of the Freedom Essay, *eine Geisteskrankheit des Menschen* (SW II: 13). *Eine Geisteskrankheit* is a psychopathology or mental disease, literally, a sickness of the spirit. One pulls away from the center of nature and its stubborn hold and retreats to the periphery of reflection. However, if one remains on the periphery, separated, alone in the delusion of one's ipseity, that is, in the assumption that one is grounded in oneself, this is the experience of sickness and radical evil. Questioning separates one from nature and renders reflection upon it possible, but left to itself, nature (the ecological systems from which we emerged) now appears as separate, an isolated object to a discerning subject. We look *at* nature as if we were not *of* nature.

In the language of the introduction to the *Ideas*, when reflection reaches "dominion over the whole person," it "kills" her "spiritual life at its root" (SW II: 13). Reflection, Keats's celebrated "negative capacity," always only has a "negative value," enabling the divorce from nature that is our original but always mistaken perspective, but it should endeavor to reunite with that which it first knew only as necessity. Reflection is "merely a necessary evil" that, left to itself, attaches to the root, aggressing against the very ground of nature that prompted the original divorce from the chains of nature.

Philosophy is symptomatic of an awakening of and to spirit, but herein also lurks the satanic rub. Žižek: when the human relationship to nature is "raised to the power of spirit," it is "exacerbated, universalized into a propensity for absolute

10 Slavoj Žižek, *The Indivisible Remainder: An Essay on Schelling and Related Matters* (London and New York: Verso, 1996), 63. See also Slavoj Žižek, "Selfhood as Such is Spirit: F. W. J. Schelling on the Origins of Evil," *Radical Evil*, ed. Joan Copjec (London and New York, 1996), 1-29.

domination which no longer serves the end of survival but turns into an end-in-itself."[11] In evil I am tempted to become the ground and, as such, annihilate nature. Speaking of the fate of philosophy in the *Lectures on the Methods of Academic Study* (1803), Schelling called this the "true *annihilation* of nature, analyzing and thereby atomizing nature into absolute qualities, limits, and affections" as something external to us (SW V: 275). Nature becomes present to the human subject, which now regards itself as the ἀρχή (*archē*). As Bruce Matthews elegantly tells us: "The complicating yet all too obvious fact, however, is that we too are a part of this world, and cannot therefore rip ourselves out of the ground from whence we live."[12]

Yet we strive to do so in evil. For Žižek, "true 'diabolical' evil consists in the contraction of the spirit against nature: in it, the spirit, as it were, provides itself with a ground of its own, outside its 'natural' surroundings, with a footing from which it can oppose itself to the world and set out to conquer it."[13]

***

Such a reading of the diabolical required Schelling to refute explicitly the "customary image" of Satan as a "created," "individual" spirit who was originally a good angelic being, but who out of "hubris [*Hochmut*]" elevated himself above God and was eventually deposed and condemned to darkness (SW XIV: 242). Nonetheless, Schelling did not attempt in so doing to deny either "the reality of that idea overall" or the "dignity of Satan himself" (SW XIV: 242). Indeed, Schelling strove to ascribe to Satan "an even higher reality and an even higher meaning" (SW: XIV: 243).

Etymologically the name Satan derives from the Hebrew for *Widersacher* or adversary and the definite article makes him the adversary *kat' exochēn, par excellence*. This already suggests that "the" Satan is somehow a spirit, but not therefore that he is necessarily an individually created being. Satan is a force of resistance, a lag in the divine economy, an obstacle, a force or potency that seeks "to constrain, to oppose a movement or stand in its way," to come between some of the creative motions of the cosmos in order to resist them. He is therefore also called the διάβολος (*diabolos*, the diabolical), the enemy and slanderer (SW XIV: 243). This does not mean that the

11 Žižek, *The Indivisible Remainder*, 63.

12 Bruce Matthews, *Schelling's Organic Form of Philosophy: Life as the Schema of Freedom* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011), 4. On the problem of the *Naturvernichtung*, see Matthews' fine discussion, 1-10.

13 Žižek, *The Indivisible Remainder*, 63. Richard Bernstein argues that "Schelling's originality consists in clearing a space for a richer, more complex, and more robust moral psychology ... He has profound insight into the violent battle that takes place in the soul of human beings. He grasps the power of the unruly, dark, unconscious forces that shape human life ... He is sceptical of any philosophical or rationalistic ideal that deludes itself into thinking that we can achieve complete transparency, equilibrium, and control over our unruly passions." Richard Bernstein, *Radical Evil: A Philosophical Interrogation* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002), 96.

devil was a "created spirit" or a "creature" that "first *came to be* in the course of things" (SW XI: 244). It also does *not* mean that the satanic is by its nature evil, that it is a principle that is through and through evil and, as such, eternally opposed to God (SW XIV: 245).

As Job discovered in his pit, Satan "is a principle that belongs to the divine economy and as such is acknowledged by God" (SW XIV: 247). As Goethe also saw at the beginning of *Faust*, God does not regard Schelling's Satan as something perversely created by God or as something strange and unrecognizable to God even as it opposes God. Schelling even recalls that the Bogomils, tenth century dualists in the First Bulgarian Empire, called Satan "Christ's older brother" (SW XIV: 245). Job, God's servant, is loyal, but *could* he be made disloyal? Satan drives possibility toward actuality. Satan is a "power that is, so to speak, necessary, by which the uncertain becomes certain and the undecided is decided."[14] Satan is not himself evil—indeed, he belongs to the potency of becoming itself, without which the universe would fall asleep and become mired in the paralysis of slumber. Nonetheless, he "brings forth and to the light of day concealed evil" and does not allow it to remain concealed by the good (SW XIV: 248).

This "power can be called envious" but in the sense in which Aristotle in Book II of the *Nicomachean Ethics* spoke of the virtue of νέμεσις [*nemesis*], which is, per Schelling's gloss, "begrudging, that is, envious, of the happiness of those who do not deserve to be happy" (SW XIV: 248-249; see also SW XIV: 265). Aristotle wedged the virtue of *nemesis*, the pain of the indignation that we feel before the spectacle of another's unearned happiness and the good fortune of their unduly rewarded vice, between the extreme of outright envy (φθόνος, *phthonos*), that is, the ill-will toward and jealousy of the earned and deserved happiness of others, and its darkest extreme, *Schadenfreude*, ἐπιχαιρεκακία (*epichairekakia*), the malicious joy and delight at the misfortune and unearned sufferings of others (1108b1-10). For Aristotle, it is virtuous to begrudge unearned fortune, although it is a vice to begrudge earned fortune or to delight in unearned suffering. Satan, the power of *nemesis*, is neither the enemy of all joy in the world nor intrinsically malicious, dismissing neither the earned joy of others nor wishing to delight in their unearned pain. The potency in itself is not evil, but, in begrudging Job his original unearned halcyon life, it draws out Job's hidden doubts, putting the disposition or *Gesinnung* "of humans in doubt and therefore putting them to the test" (SW XIV: 248).

Schelling's point about Job is easy to appreciate. Is Job so sure that it is not the case that he loves God and keeps his covenant because God has been good to Job?

14 Lidia Procesi tells us that for the late Schelling Satan "is the force which makes the uncertain become certain, the undecided decided." As such, he is "the impulsion to freedom from the pantheistic confusion and the metaphysical possibility of the birth of the conscience." Lidia Procesi, "Unicité et pluralité de dieu: La contradiction et le diable chez Schelling," *Le dernier Schelling: Raison et positivité* (Paris: Vrin, 1994), 113.

That God has exacted Job's loyalty by bribing him with good fortune? Is not the seemingly unyielding love even of the most righteous of humans a conditional love, a love rooted in reciprocity? If Satan the *nemesis* takes away the happenstance of Job's good fortune—for who really has earned their good fortune anyway?—would he still remain loyal to God? Who would be religious if religion were stripped of all rewards, bribes, and incentives? Could not unrelenting misfortune shatter the disposition of even the most ardently religious? Have I earned the right to consider myself religious, or is my putative religiosity just another aspect of what we might today call privilege? Do I value religion simply because it accords with the world being the way that I want it to be? Is not the radical possibility of the ground's subjunctive mood ready to flare up and inflame even the most seemingly recalcitrant reality? Satan is the "suspicious one that places disposition into doubt" (SW XIV: 249). Satan is not so much evil as "the one who *intimates* evil" (SW XIV: 249).

It is only when the struggle tilts back into the direction of life, when the now lost good can be thought precisely as good by revealing itself through its absence, just as health comes into relief precisely as what sickness has vanquished, that Satan "is felt as something that contradicts the good" (SW XIV: 249). This is not to say that one realizes that Satan is evil as such—Satan maintains the sublime dignity of possibility as such, the unrelenting divine conflagration of the μὴ ὄν (*mē on*, what is in being as otherwise than being[15])—but that Satan's coming to be had obstructed and blocked, and in so doing, had revealed the divinity and goodness of the ground.

In fact, there is ironically something quite diabolical about our penchant to misunderstand all things, even the diabolical itself: "All errors and obstacles of a true insight into science, especially in theology, comes from taking something that has truth for a specific moment and elevating or extending it into a universal concept" (SW XIV: 249). One might say that the *nemesis* that the ground's subjunctive mood holds over the reality of anything that is allows for the eruptions of new actualities. It is in its own way genetic, begrudging the order in which it finds itself. New actualities, simply in affirming themselves, however, become the new order and therefore abdicate the possibility from which they emerged. Even if the new order is an order of *nemesis*, of obstruction and begrudging, it succumbs to its own idolatry, becoming reified accounts of diabolical creatures, which, in turn, is ironically diabolical.

Nonetheless, Schelling, in narrating his "higher history," is after "personalities" that are "not at a standstill or immobile and hence their very concept itself is mobile" (SW XIV: 250). This is certainly true for the concept of Satan, "the instigator of contradiction, the universal dis-uniter, through which death, discord, and evil itself first came into the world," and who is not the same in the end as he was in the beginning (SW XIV: 250). Possibility's hunger for actuality is finally the revelation of the divinity of divine possibility amid the sickness that, in becoming

15 For more on the *mē on*, see Jason M. Wirth, *Schelling's Practice of the Wild: Time, Art, Imagination* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015), 61-65.

something, takes itself out of the divine economy and languishes on its periphery.

As I attempted to show in *Schelling's Practice of the Wild*, Schelling, in defending the Freedom Essay from Eschenmayer in 1812, made the same kind of point about idolatry. When an image congeals into a fixed meaning, we have idolatry. When I assume that I am what I appear to be—I am *like* I appear—I fail to appreciate the manner in which Schelling understands the force of *likeness*. Schelling takes the problem of the image (or *das Bild*) in relationship to *das Ebenbild*, a precise or spitting image, in the sense that it has in Genesis 1:26 when "God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image [*Ebenbild*], in our likeness.'"

> You scoff that it *falls* to us to make ourselves into the image [*Ebenbild*] of God, to which the understanding also adds its two cents, in that it shows quite artificially how God was actually *forced* to create such a corporeal image of himself. My belief in contrast is that it did not fall to humans to become the image of God, but rather that God himself made the human being in his image, against which it was certainly a different and opposed *Fall* (a fall of human beings and the devil) by which the human being became the non-image of God (SW VIII: 183).

Here Schelling is playing with two senses of *Einfall*. In the first sense it means a "sudden thought," to come or "fall" to thought, that is, for a thought to occur to thinking. This is the innocence of the initial satanic moment, the hunger of possibility to be something, the eternal beginning that is the ground of all things. We *are* in the image of God, or we could even say, we are in each and every moment what falls to us and as us.

The loss of this relationship, however, speaks to another meaning of *Einfall*, namely, the fall of original sin (in the myth of Eden). One can speak of *der Einfall der Nacht*, the fall of night, but here the occurrence is the sudden fall from grace, or what is more typically called *der Sündenfall*. In the Freedom Essay, this is the fall from the center into the periphery. Schelling, quoting from the beginning of Malebranche's *The Search after Truth*, rejects the claim that the spirit is what informs the body or is in any way on the side of the εἶδος (*eidos*, form). To be in the image of God is not to be a copy of another image, a replication of one thing based on another thing. To be made in the image of God is to be part of the divine ecology of the universe as the life of the imagination (*die Einbildungskraft*, the potency of coming into image). Having come into image one can fall from the divine economy by associating oneself with one's image and making it (and therefore oneself) the ground. Satan who was the power of nothing becomes the one thing above all things, *the hunger to subsume the universe to oneself*. Schelling joined Malebranche in his distaste for those who "should regard the spirit more as the *form* of the body than as being made in the image and for the image of God" (SW VIII: 184). Idolatry, the Hebrew *pesel* or graven image, is

the sudden fall from grace and, as such, the loss of one's being as the image of God. The great bifurcation of sense and form that so permeates Western metaphysics has its heart in the fall and in our inclination toward evil (our striving for form severed from its imaginative source).

In this sense, it is important to interject that it is not an overreach to conclude that evil is not best imagined in extreme depictions of its violence, but rather in the fraudulent normalcy that such violence polices. The horrors of genocide are already looming in the kitsch depictions of normal and proper human life and therefore in all of the life set aside and excluded from such depictions (in the sense of Agamben's *homo sacer*). The virulence of the Shoah, for example, is already anticipated in the dismissal of artistic creativity as *entartet*, degenerate, that is, in violation of its proper kind, and the elevation of state-promoted kitsch images of idyllic Aryan family life. Furthermore, it is not enough merely to steal back white family life and oppose it to National Socialism as in the maniacally white kitsch of *The Sound of Music*. One understands why John Coltrane thought that his soprano saxophone was channelling the presence of God when one hears him revitalize and reanimate *My Favourite Things*. One also understands what the great Austrian writer Hermann Broch meant when, in his famous address to the German department at Yale University, "Notes on the Problem of Kitsch," he argued that kitsch is "evil in the value-system of art."[16]

When, as it does in kitsch, the struggle clarifies the forms of life that truncate themselves from life itself, not only does the former appear more and more evil, but it is also revealed as the ground of divine majesty, the upsurge of the ground itself in its original sovereignty and possibility. Satan is A become B, or, to be more precise, he is the *nemesis* by which the undecidability of A is suddenly decided, "the B posited through divine begrudging" and, as such, Satan is the "great power of God in the fallen world" (SW XIV: 252). The existence of B, however, is the possibility of the revelation of A, of the original divine undecidability that, although it is decided again and again, degenerates into the sickness of idolatry if its images obscure that they are made in the image of God, that is, if they block the *revelation* that they are through and through *mythological*. It is at this point in Schelling's strange ontidicy that affirms the positive (but always treacherous and mendacious) reality of sickness, death, evil, and madness, as also belonging to the way of all things, that they are not only seen as evil, "but rather a necessary principle to the divine governance of the world" (SW XIV: 253). Indeed, Schelling embraces both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, as well as Kabbalistic texts like the *Zohar*, to speak of the "dignity" of Satan (SW XIV: 253) as an uncreated, non-creaturely "principle."

16 Hermann Broch, "Notes on the Problem of Kitsch," in *Kitsch: The World of Bad Taste*, ed. Gillo Dorfles (New York: Universe Books, 1969), 63. See also Hermann Broch, "Einige Bemerkungen zum Problem des Kitsches: Ein Vortrag," *Dichten und Erkennen: Essays Volume 1* (Zurich: Rhein Verlag, 1955), 307.

***

In this sense, we need to revisit the problem of the A = B. The latter is not a creature, not a being, but rather the principle out of which every creature comes, "the ultimate ὑποκείμενον [*hypokeimenon* or substrate] of creation" (SW XIV: 256). The A emerges even out of the mythology of ground and "even this B is in the entirety of creation an object of overcoming," an A that emerges out of its limits, only to set new limits again, only to again shed those limits. As such this B is the A posited as B, the "A brought back out of B into A" (SW XIV: 257). Satan as B is revealed as A and therefore in this respect not to have fallen. As B Satan is something, but, as such, Satan also sheds the boundaries and limits of whatever it is. Satan is both ὁν and μη ὁν, both creaturely and the questionability and undecidability and problem of that being.[17] In the *Ages of the World*, Schelling retrieves this μη ὁν from its reduction to a mere absence of being in Platonism and returns it to the original force it had with Plato. "We, following the opposite direction, also recognize an extremity, below which there is nothing, but it is for us not something ultimate, but something primary, out of which all things begin, an eternal beginning [*ein ewiger Anfang*], not a mere feebleness or lack in the being, but active negation" (SW VIII: 245). The A is the living μη ὁν at the depths of any possible B. Satan is a "duplicitous being" (SW XIV: 261), both A and B, μη ὁν and ὁν. "There is only truth" in Satan in terms of the μη ὁν; "Therefore when he *is*, he is *outside* of the truth. His nature is only to be a lie" and hence when he speaks, he can only lie (SW XIV: 268). Satan is hence the "sophist *par excellence*" (SW XIV: 271). As soon as his possibility becomes actuality, it is a ruse and a lie.

Nonetheless, this B that A could be is tempting, "the false, treacherously specious magic" (SW XIV: 259). This is the perniciously creative temptation of *nemesis* as "the disturber of his peaceful happiness, disturber of the original, but precisely as such unearned, blessedness" (SW XIV: 260). But for possibility to be tempting, for it to lure one out of the peace of one's Edenic innocence, it must itself also be fallen, A fallen to B while remaining A and, as such, exposing the evil within humans, indeed, revealing evil. In such evil, we believe the lie and affirm ourselves as lord.

17 Deleuze, turning to Plato's subtle deployment of the μὴ ὄν in the *Sophist*, asks about the μη: the "'non' in the expression 'non-being' expresses *something other than the negative*." Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 63; *Différence et répétition* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1968), 88. That is to say, "being is difference itself" or better: Being is also non-being, *but non-being is not the being of the negative*; rather it is the being of the problematic, the being of problem and question." Deleuze plays with three strategies to somehow convey the force of the μὴ ὄν (*mē on*). One could write it: "(non)-being" or better: "?-being." Or he links it to the French NE: "an expletive NE rather than a negative 'not.' This μὴ ὄν is so called because it precedes all affirmation, but is none the less completely positive." Deleuze, *Différence et repetition*, 267/343. It is the "differential element in which affirmation, as multiple affirmation, finds the principle of its genesis." Deleuze, *Différence et repetition*, 64/89.

Indeed, the revelation of the satanic element of the Anthropocene makes it possible to understand the Ahab-like quality of contemporary industrial and capitalist life. Staring at his Ecuadorian coin, Ahab the *nemesis* begrudgingly muses, overwhelmed by the pure possibility of the inexhaustible sea, that "There's something ever egotistical in mountain-tops and towers, and all other grand and lofty things; look here,—three peaks as proud as Lucifer. The firm tower, that is Ahab; the volcano, that is Ahab; the courageous, the undaunted, and victorious fowl, that, too, is Ahab; all are Ahab."[18] All that towers above the valley shall be made subject to the valley. That is how the vengeful valley seeks to live with mountains. This is confirmed as Ahab, against the lightning-filled sky, screamed, "I own thy speechless, placeless power ... I am darkness leaping out of light, leaping out of thee."[19] When Ahab becomes the power of the sea, there is only, the poet Charles Olson tells us, "OVER ALL, hate—huge and fixed upon the imperceptible," a "solipsism which brings down a world."[20] And what is this hate, this satanic force where there is only oneself, if not the lonely, world destroying, solipsism of the ego? "Declare yourself the rival of earth, air, fire, and water!"[21]

This is the great desert of the Anthropocene. Ahab is in the wealth of the sea, but he only knows it as an immense desert. The "eternal thirst for actuality" is born of the aridity of the great ontological desert—what Joe Lawrence rightly calls the ontological priority of hell—and the "aridity of the demonic" is associated, Schelling recounts, "with genuinely *waterless* places" (SW XIV: 273). This is the desert of spirits who in themselves "have no means to realize themselves" (SW XIV: 273). Schelling never wavered from his 1809 association of evil with sickness, and it, like an awakening from the fever of the *Naturvernichtung* of the Anthropocene, is a "struggle between life and death" (SW XIV: 278). As we confront the possibility of the imminent mortality of our species through the self-assertion of its lordship, this struggle comes shockingly into view.

18 Since the numbers of different versions of Melville's 1851 classic, *Moby-Dick, or, The Whale*, are legion, I cite it here by chapter number, in this case chapter 99, "The Doubloon."

19 Melville, *Moby-Dick*, chapter 119, "The Candles."

20 Charles Olson, *Call Me Ishmael* (1947) (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 73.

21 Olson, *Call Me Ishmael*, 85.

kabiri
The Official Journal of the
North American Schelling Society

NEW TRANSLATION

Schelling's Late Political Philosophy: Lectures 22-24 of the *Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy*

Translated by KYLA BRUFF[1]

Translator's Introduction

From approximately 1847 until the end of his life in 1854, Schelling wrote on a range of philosophical topics with the ultimate goal of explicating a purely rational philosophy, particularly as it relates to mythology, religion and revelation. The notes and fragments from this period were assembled by Schelling's son, K.F.A. Schelling, in a collection of 24 lectures known as the *Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy*. While the importance of this work for the development of Schelling's negative and positive philosophy is well-known, the significance of the political content which appears near the end of the lecture series has been largely ignored. This could be in part attributable to the heavy hand that K.F.A had in composing the final lecture of the series. Specifically, Lecture 24, in which Schelling gives his final word on the state and the monarchy, was written based on fragments but also on conversations that K.F.A. and his brother Hermann had had with their father.

1 I would like to thank first and foremost Joseph Lawrence for his extensive editing and proofing of the final version of this translation. Christian Stadler, Benedikt Rottenecker, Petr Kocourek and Sean J. McGrath also kindly provided their assistance at various points in the translation process. I would additionally like to thank Claire Garland for typing out the ancient Greek, and last but not least, Iain Grant for allowing me to consult his translations of these lectures. I have extensively borrowed from the latter's notes, and relied on his translations from and references to ancient Greek, to complete the translation of this text. A section of this translation (part of Lecture 22 and all of Lecture 23) was published previously in a reduced form in Daniel Whistler and Benjamin Berger (eds.), *The Schelling Reader* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020). All in-text pagination refers to SW XI.

Schelling's late political program includes a minimal concept of a rationally structured state, characterized by the constitution and the legal system, that ought to serve the freedom of individuals. The state should foster—but not determine—individuals' capacity to freely decide for themselves and to cultivate relationships. The state, Schelling is clear, is not the goal of history and cannot be perfected. Accordingly, the institutions and laws of any imperfect state, which ought to constantly be reformed, should not directly mediate our moral decisions and mutual relations. According to Schelling, the state, perhaps somewhat ironically, offers the individual the freedom to rise above it in the development of her personality, virtues and relationships.

Schelling's concept of social responsibility is grounded in his concept of the person, which, Schelling notes in these lectures, should serve the whole. In a word, Schelling values relations between persons higher than relations between citizens, implying a qualitative distinction between the two. Schelling's esteem for the notion of personality is furthermore integral to his defense of the existence of the monarchy in these lectures. While citizens have the freedom to develop their own laws and to self-govern (to an extent), the monarch, Schelling claims, is the person responsible to the people of the state and before whom all citizens are equal. As a person, he is also individually answerable to the divine. Despite this appraisal, Schelling is not advocating for an absolute monarchy. He rather supports a constitutional monarch, such as was already achieved in England and was developing at the time in Germany.

Ultimately, as persons, Schelling maintains that we do not find satisfaction, reconciliation, or love within the state's borders. Social virtues, according to Schelling, are personal virtues through which we enter the "voluntary and therefore higher community" (SW XI: 541). This higher community is, for Schelling, a unified religious community to come. In this structure, the state can be seen as the ground of society, but it should not become synonymous with the free, voluntary, community, as the latter is not bound by the limitations of state borders or national identities and into which all human beings will eventually enter on their own free will. The "voluntary" should therefore be distinguished from the "involuntary" community, which, for Schelling, is the state. In espousing such a view of the state, Schelling accordingly critiques the idea that human beings could consent to an original social contract.

Our faith in the possibility of the existence of this type of free community in the future is embedded in the progressive, historical self-revelation of a personal God, i.e., a person who exists above the state who can recognize us in our personhood. Schelling's late political philosophy thus explores the desire of human beings to move beyond the state politically and morally in her longing for justice in the form of the reconciliation of all of humanity (which, for Schelling, is linked to her longing for the recognition of a personal God). While the human condition prohibits us from achieving a perfectly just community without God, it does not prevent us from working towards it. Indeed, for Schelling, we are called by God to do so. In

his last work, Schelling thus presents an eschatological political philosophy, which demands a critique of the structural injustices of the present and an existential revitalizing of personal responsibility in the context of the fight for social justice.

Lecture 22

[516] We now return to the general context and ask: what does spirit do in the world? The first thing, as we said in reference to Prometheus, is that, pervading the world, it is knowing spirit. As such, spirit is not free and does not have its own will until what has intruded upon it [*das 'Dazwischengetretene'*] no longer stands opposed to it as something foreign. That to which our considerations are thus directed is the knowledge that refers to the world

Already many, and particularly those who trace their roots back to Leibniz, have advanced the proposition that the sole immediate object of the soul (the one that mediates all others for it) is God. For the soul that is still thought of in its originary relation and as supramondane, we have affirmed the same thing, though in other terms. But we cannot say the same thing for the soul insofar as it is posited outside of this relation and drawn into the realm of the physical-material. To do so does nothing more than to prove how commonly, in our times, "God" and "that which is" [*das Seyende*] are taken to be fully identical. For, relating to the side of the soul that is turned to the world, we would rather say: the sole immediate object of the soul is *what is* [*das Seyende*], which is taken in the sense that has been sufficiently explained and established throughout these lectures. For the entire concept of the soul is: not to be what is, but to be that which *is* what is [*nicht das Seyende, aber das es seyende zu seyn*] (recall Aristotle's considerations of [517] τί ἦν εἶναι [*ti ēn eīnai*]); the soul is nothing other than this; thus to wrest being from it is to wrest it from itself. Therefore we say that it cannot let go of[2] what is, that is, as long as it itself is. Thus in whatever being that the soul is, each soul has its unmediated object, i.e., the object which mediates all others for it. The exterior object, with which the soul is in contact by means of the senses, changes the being to which the soul belongs. But insofar as the soul retains and reconstitutes the being that it is, even in change, the changed being corresponding to the object becomes objective [*gegenständlich*] to the soul. It awakens within the soul the *representation* of that which is foreign and external to it. Without such a reconstitution [*Wiederherstellung*], through which that which is foreign and posited in the soul is excluded, what Aristotle says cannot be explained: that in sensory perception there are pure images of things *without their matter*, images that

2 See SW XI: 451, "For if the soul is not to be thought as independent of that to which it is related as soul, as what it is, but this is reduced to physical matter, then the soul, without thereby renouncing this relation to what it is, or towards immaterials, it cannot but follow it into the (contingently) material," citation referenced and trans. Iain Grant, henceforth IG.

remain fixed in the sense organs even after the removal of their objects.[3] Without this reconstitution, what Aristotle goes on to say would be even less comprehensible: that, in sensible things, we actually see the *intelligible* within them.[4] To be sure, sensation [*Empfindung*] (perception) is sensation (perception) of the particular [*des Einzelnen*] as such, for example, *this* human (Callias). The representation, however, is not itself this particular, but its universal, its universal image or φάντασμα [*Phántasma*].[5] After that, Aristotle firstly concludes that: perception for itself corresponds to mere *saying* and *thinking*—and the meaning of these expressions for him was shown above.[6] The accompanying feeling of the pleasant [518] and unpleasant, however, has *assertion* or *negation*[7] as a consequence, in which sense even the animal soul *judges*.[8]

---

3 Aristotle, *De Anima*, II.12, 432a5 (precise section numbers provided by IG): ἡ μέν αἴσθησίς ἐστι τὸ δεκτικὸν τῶν αισθητῶν εἰδῶν ἄνευ τῆς ὕλης (*ê mhen aesthêsis esti to decticon tôn aesthêtôn eidôn aneu thas hylês*) (that which is receptive of the form of sensible objects without matter [trans. IG]). Also Aristotle, *De Anima*, III.2, 425b24-5, with the supplement: "διὸ καὶ ἀπελθόντων τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἔνεισιν αἱ φαςτασὶαι ἐν τοῖς αἰσθητηρίοις" (*diò kaì apelthóntōn tôn aisthētôn éneisin hai phaꜱtasìai en toîs aisthētēríois*) (This is why even when the objects of perception are gone, sensations and mental images are still present in the sense organ, [trans. IG]). Compare with that which is said of the physical in the process of thought in SW XI, 450 [note IG].

4 Aristotle, *De Anima*, III.8: Ἐν τοῖς εἴδεσι τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς τὰ νοητὰ ἐστιν (*En toîs eídesi toîs aisthētoîs tà noētà estin*) (the objects of thought reside in the sensible forms [trans. IG]). Aristotle, *De Anima*, III.7, 431b2-3: τὰ μὲν εἴδη τὸ νοητικὸν (τῆς ψυχῆς, **not** ὁ νοῦς) ἐν τοῖς φαντάσμασι νοεῖ (*tà mèn eídē tò noētikòn* (*tês psychês, not ó noûs*) *en toîs phantásmasi noeî*) (the intellectual faculty (of the soul, not the mind) conceives of the forms in images [trans. KB]).

5 Αἰσθάνεται μὲν τὸ καθ' ἕκαστον, ἡ δ' αἴσθησις τῶν καθόλου, οἷον ἀνθρώπου, ἀλλ' οὐ Καλλίου (*Aisthánetai mèn tò kath' hékaston, hē d' aísthēsis tôn kathólou, hoîon anthrṓpou, all' ou Kallíou*) (Although it is the particular that we perceive, the act of perception involves the universal, e.g., "man," not "a man, Callas" [trans. IG)]). Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, II.19, 110a16-b1.

6 In Lecture 15 [XI 358-9].

7 Aristotle, *De Anima*, III.7 [431a8-10]: Τὸ μὲν οὖν αἰσθάνεσθαι ὅμοιον τῷ φάναι μόνον καὶ νοεῖν· ὅταν δὲ ἡδὺ ἢ λυπηρόν, οἷον καταφᾶσα ἢ αποφᾶσα. διώκει ἢ φεύγει (ἡ ψυχή) (*Tò mèn oûn aisthánesthai hómoion tôi phánai mónon kaì noeîn: hótan dè hēdỳ ḕ lypēròn, hoîon kataphâsa ḕ apophâsa. diṓkei ḕ pheúgei* (*hē psychḕ*)) (Sensation, then, is like mere assertion and thinking; When an object is pleasant or unpleasant, the soul pursues or avoides it, thereby making a sort of assertion or negation [trans. IG]).

8 Aristotle, *De Anima*, III.2 [426b8-11]: ἑκάστη αἴσθησις τοῦ ὑποκειμένου αἰσθητοῦ ἐστὶν, ὑπάρχουσα ἐν τῷ αἰσθητερίῳ ᾗ αἰσθήτεριον, και κρίνει τὰς τοῦ ὑποκειμένου αἰσθητοῦ τὰς διαφορὰς, οἷον λευκὸν μέν καὶ μέιαν ὄψις (*ekástē aísthēsis toû hypokeiménou aisthētoû estìn, hypárchousa en tôi aisthēteríō hêi aisthḗterion, kai krínei tàs toû hypokeiménou aisthētoû tàs diaphoràs, hoîon leukòn mén kaì méian hópsis*) (Each sense then relates to its sensible subject matter; It resides in the sense organ as such, and discerns differences is the said subject matter; E.g., vision discriminates between white and black, [trans. IG]). And Aristotle, *De Anima*, III.9, 432a15-17: ἡ ψυχὴ κατά δίο ὥρισθαι δυνάμεις ἡ τῶν ζώων, τῷ τε κριτικῷ, ὃ διανοίας ἔργον ἐστὶ (specifically, in humans) καὶ αἰσθήσεως, καὶ ἔτι τῷ κινεῖν κατὰ τόπον κίνησιν (*hē psychḕ katá dío hṓristhai dynámeis hē tôn zṓōn, tôi te kritikôi, hò dianoías érgon estì* (specifically, in humans) *kaì aisthḗseōs, kaì éti tôi kineîn katà tópon kínēsin*) (The soul in living creatures is distinguished by two functions, the judging capacity, which is a function of the intellect and of sensation combined, and the capacity for exciting movement in space [trans. IG]). The νοῦς κριτικὸς (*noûs kritikòs*) can be meant only of the human in that context, or as a convenient expression, such as in ὁ τῆς ψυχῆς νοῦς (*ho tês psychês noûs*), two expressions which he strongly distinguishes from each other. See SW XI: 454ff [reference IG].

After this, there can be nothing surprising, if, in going further, we say that the soul of the animal also *concludes*, for this is what comes third, after judgment. The three mental [*geistigen*] functions were once so differentiated: *simplex apprehensio, judicium, discursus*. One would nowadays say: concept, judgment, conclusion [*Schluß*]. Now it can be easily and immediately seen that the three classes of categories that Kant issues under the headings of quantity, quality, and relation behave like each of these three functions. The soul of the animal also distinguishes the many and the few in simple perception; mathematics moves in the mere concept. That quality falls to judgment, we need not even say. But furthermore, it can be shown that the actions of the animal correspond entirely to the concepts that mediate conclusions to the understanding [*die dem Verstand den Schluß vermitteln*]. The animal sees only, for example, the green color of the fodder, but does not doubt that this accident has a substance underlying it. Equally, before all experience, the animal seeks the cause [*Ursache*] of the effect. The idle, standing horse turns towards the cause of a sound which was unexpected to him; the timid bird, the shy game animal [*das scheue Wild*] flees in the opposite direction from each unusual stirring of leaves close to him; it is not the understanding that says this to him, but the soul, under whose control he is alone, and which therefore rules over him even more than over the human.

[519] If the famous David Hume had just once observed the child in his cradle, who, as yet having no experience, incapable of moving his head, at least turns his eyes to the side from which a sound unknown to him comes, e.g., that of a musical instrument, then he would have indisputably spared himself of his explanation of the origin [*Entstehung*] of the concept of causation in us. "We are finally *accustomed*, when we see two phenomena follow one another over a long period of time, to thinking of these two phenomena as in a necessary connection, and namely the prior as cause, and the following as effect."[9] The child mentioned above had no time to become accustomed in such a way, or even to have observed two phenomena [*Erscheinungen*] repeatedly following each other. Kant was completely right when in claiming that the human (and with the required distinctions, he could just as well have said this of the animal) only attains experience because it is natural for him to seek the cause when he is aware of the effect.

Here, explained and shown in its particularity, is that which we earlier claimed in general about the noetic, intellective soul.[10] Explained, at least from one side, is what Aristotle meant when he said in another context: *the soul does not know, but it is itself the reservoir of knowledge*.[11] The soul is unformulated knowledge, which

9 Hume, *Treatise on Human Nature*, I.III, 6.

10 In the Nineteenth Lecture, especially SW XI: 446-8, 452-3 [page specification IG].

11 Schelling, *Über das Verhältnis der bildenden Künste zu Natur*, SW VII: 312. The following note has been provided by IG: In the phrase, "*die Seele weib nicht, sondern sie ist die Wissenschaft*," Schelling makes science [*Wissenschaft*] into the "making [*schaffen*] of knowing [*Wissen*]" that the soul is, in roughly the same sense in which the physicist Johann Wilhelm Ritter did in his (28 March) 1806 paper to the Bavarian Academy of Sciences, entitled "Die Physik als Kunst,' where he writes: "*die Wissenschaft,*

exists as mere material, and is not elevated to actuality. If, in the well-known formula that is also valid for Aristotle, one sets the word 'soul' in place of the undetermined term *sensus*, then it is the most certain truth that there is nothing in the understanding [*im Verstande*] that was not first in the soul. The famous Leibnizian restriction: *excepto ipso intellectu* (with the exception of the intellect) is inapt, for the idea is much more that the understanding, taken completely materially, is already completely in the soul. This purely essential reservoir of knowledge that is non-acquired and prior-existing (*a priori*) must precede each acquired, that is, actual [520] science.[12] What is at issue in actual science is what *spirit* has to acquire, if spirit is to become powerful enough to take on the world [*soll er der Welt mächtig werden*]. For spirit by itself is without science. As Aristotle says, it is similar to a tablet on which nothing is actually yet written. Certainly, one can, so to say, casually read or hear that Aristotle called the *soul* a blank tablet, whereas he explicitly said this of the *understanding* [*vom Verstande*].[13] In relation to the soul, active knowledge [das Wissen] is something accidental [*Zufälliges*], something merely added on, just as spirit itself is, according to Aristotle, something added on. In spirit there is nothing that is merely material or in potency; Spirit is thus not science, but is only *knowing*: knowing, however, only through its relation to the soul.

This relationship to the soul rests on this: firstly, that in the soul there are already concepts, free of all matter, thus the simple forms which maintain the representations of singular, sensible things. This does not mean, however, that these concepts are objective for the soul. They are in the soul materially, as a third, we might say, unformulated and merely potential. As Aristotle also says: the soul is certainly the seat of concepts, but this is not the whole of the soul, but only the intellective part. The concepts in it are not actual but merely potential.[14] The concepts are raised to actuality first only by spirit, in which, for this very reason, they are no longer simple concepts

---

das ist diejenigen, was Wissen überhaupt schafft [science, that is that science that knowing makes]." Wilhelm Ritter, Die Physik als Kunst," in Jocelyn Holland (ed. and trans.), *Key Texts of Johann Wilhelm Ritter (1776-1810) on the Science and Art of Nature* (Leiden: Brill, 2010): 536-7. Ritter's paper preceded Schelling's speech *Über das Verhältnis der bildenden Künste zu der Natur* (October 12, 1807), read in the same venue, by just over a year.

12 Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* I.1, 71a1-2: πᾶσα διδασκαλία καὶ πᾶσα μάθησις διανοητικὴ ἐκ προϋπαρχούσης γίνεται γνώσεως (*pâsa didaskalía kaì pâsa máthēsis dianoētikḕ ek proüparchoúsēs gínetai gnṓseōs*) (All teaching and learning that involves the use of reason proceeds from pre-existinent knowledge [trans. IG]).

13 Aristotle, *De Anima* III.4, 430a1-2: "What the mind [*nous*] thinks must be in it in the same sense as letters are on a tablet which bears no actual writing" (note provided and trans. IG). Further applications of this formula will come in what follows.

14 Aristotle, *De Anima* III.4, 429a27-29: καὶ εὖ δὴ οἱ λέγοντες, τὴν ψυχὴν εἶναι τόπον εἰδῶν, πλὴν ὅτι οὔτε ὅλη, ἀλλ' ἡ νοητικὴ, οὔτε ἐντελεχείᾳ, ἀλλὰ δυνάμει τὰ εἴδη (*kaì eû dḕ hoi légontes, tḕn psychḕn eînai tópon eidōn, plḕn óti oúte hólē, all' hē noētikḕ, oúte entelecheía, allà dynámei tà eídē*) (It has been well said that the soul is the place of forms, except that this does not apply to the soul as a whole, but only in its thinking capacity, and the forms occupy it not actually but only potentially [trans. IG]).

of individual, sensibly-experienced things, but rather *concepts of these concepts*,[15] i.e., the universal concepts through which spirit has the power and knowledge to take on things [*der Geist der Dinge mächtig und wissend wird*]. For to be powerful enough to take on a thing can only mean to go beyond it and not to convalesce with it, but rather to remain free from it. The name by which spirit denotes an individual thing, e.g., as a tree [521], does not simply contain the concept of this tree, nor even the concept of all actual trees, but of all *possible* trees. This universal [*Allgemeine*] is the pure product of the spirit itself, because, as Anaxagoras had already said, in order to grasp *all*, this universal must be unmixed and should have nothing in common with anything else.[16] So, in relation to each thing, it must behave as the universal, as the equally powerful over all. But what befalls concepts also befalls judgments and conclusions [*Schlüssen*]. For, we have seen that the soul does not only grasp [*begreift*], but also judges and concludes. So also the judgments and conclusions, which remain unexpressed in the soul and always refer only to the individual, are elevated to the level of actual universals. It is, for example, not *this A* but rather *A* in general that has *B* as a consequence.

But secondly, it is to be noted that spirit does not exercise its effects [*Wirkungen*] first of all through a particular act, but through its presence, through its simple existence. This is not a contingent and passing effect, it is rather a lasting effect, independent of spirit's own will, which spirit does not exercise by virtue of a disposition (διάθεσις [*diáthesis*]), but by virtue of its nature—just as it is the nature (ἕξις [*héxis*]) of light to make actual the colors of a body that really are only *potentiâ*. I am referring here to what Aristotle says of the active understanding, admittedly only in general.[17] For if there is nothing new on the issue which we can use to distinguish ourselves from Aristotle, we must hold all the more tightly to the method which, for us, turns our consideration of transitions and the more formal differentiation of moments into law. The last step brought us thus no further than to the *natural*

15 Aristotle, *De Anima*, III.8 [432a2-3], ἡ αἴσθησις εἶδος αἰσθητῶν, ὁ νοῦς δὲ εἶδος εἰδῶν (*hē aísthēsis eîdos aisthētôn, ho noûs dè eîdos eidôn*) ["...the mind is a form that employs forms, and sense is a form which employs the forms of sensible objects," trans. IG].

16 Aristotle, *De Anima*, III.4, 429a18-19: Ἀνάγκη ἄρα, ἐπεὶ πάντα νοεῖ, ἀμιγῆ εἶναι, ὥσπερ φησὶν Ἀναξαγόρας. καὶ μηδενὶ μηθὲν ἔχειν κοινόν (*Anánkē ára, epeì pánta noeî, amigē̂ eînai, hósper phēsìn Anaxagóras. kaì mēdenì mēthèn échein koinón*) (It is necessary that mind, since it thinks all things, should be uncontaminated, as Anaxagoras says ... and have nothing in common with anything else [trans. IG]).

17 Aristotle, *De Anima*, III.5, 430a14-17: καὶ ἔστιν ὁ μὲν τοιοῦτος (ὁ ποιητικὸς) νοῦς τῷ πάντα γίγνεσθαι, ὁ δὲ τῷ πάντα ποιεῖν, ὡς ἕξις τις, οἷον τὸ φῶς· τρόπον γάρ τινα καὶ ποιεῖ τὰ δυνάμει ὄντα χρώματα ἐνεργείᾳ χρώματα (*kaì éstin ho mèn toioûtos* [*ho poiētikòs*] *noûs tôi pánta gígnesthai, ho dè tôi pánta poieîn, hōs héxis tis, hoîon tò phôs: trópon gár tina kaì poieî tà dynámei ónta chrṓmata energeía chrṓmata*) (Mind in the passive sense is such because it becomes all things, but mind has another aspect in that it makes all things; This is a kind of positive state like light; For in a sense light makes potential into actual colors [trans. IG]). On the difference between διὰθεσις (*diàthesis*) and ἕξις (*héxis*), see Aristotle, *Categories*, VI (actually, as corrected by IG, Aristotle, *Categories*, VIII.8b27 and 9a5-9), which concludes, "Thus is habit unlike disposition; the former is lasting and stable, the latter soon undergoes change" (trans. IG). In Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, VIII.5, 1044b33-5, ἕξις (*héxis*) is opposed to what παρὰ φύσιν (*parà phýsin*) is [note IG].

understanding and to [522] common, i.e., generally understood knowledge of things. It has brought us to understanding which is merely natural, because spirit here only acts according to its nature, and to knowledge common to all humans and presupposed in each one, because here the individual spirit does not yet act as itself, and individuality thus cannot yet make any difference. In contrast with the potential knowing that lies in the soul, what emerges here must already be valid for actual science. But it relates itself to freely generated science as a pre-existing (προϋπάρχουσα [*proüpárchousa*]) body of knowledge that only has the potential for science.

After this science and above it, we thus posit *acquired science*, in which the will has a part. This should already be evident from the fact that such science has always expanded, increased and grown only in relation to human purposes, i.e., to the objects of the human will. And even this acquired science, which has natural cognition [*Erkenntnis*] as its presupposition, relates exclusively to the sensible world. For this science wants to gain power over what Aristotle says has intruded upon us [*des 'Dazwischengetretenen'*]. In it spirit would be only a dianoetic, thinking spirit, but not *thinking itself* [*das Denken selbst*], which it becomes only when it attain the purely and plainly intelligible. However, since there is nothing absolute in nature and everything is only relative, the Aristotelian distinction between the passive and the active understanding cannot be a simple, separative opposition, rather there are stages and mediations. If we begin from the understanding that is, in the deepest sense, passive in the intellective soul, so then the active understanding, by its nature, will be *actus* in its relation with the former. But to the extent that the active understanding is neither free nor voluntary nor conscious of any activity, but acts only according to its nature, it *also* is only passive understanding, however at a higher a level or potency. In relation to it, the freely generating understanding that awakens science behaves as *actus*. But to the extent that it is bound to the natural and has this as its presupposition, we will not be able to fully absolve it of passivity. Only the pure and simply active understanding, the creating understanding, [523] can be *actually separated* (χωρισθείς [*chōristheís*]) from all presuppositions, thus from all matter. As Aristotle says, this understanding is purely itself.[18] But we are not yet at this place; for the concern here is initially only with the understanding that subordinates itself to the foreign, to what has intruded upon us [*des 'Dazwischengetretenen'*]. *Insofar as* this is the case, it remains connected to matter (is τῶν συνθέτων [*tôn synthétōn*], as this is expressed elsewhere[19]). Nevertheless, even if it is not actually separated, this understanding is at least free in relation to everything material and also separate from it in accord to its *nature* (χωριστὸς [*chōristòs*], an Aristotelian term). It is *therefore* capable of understanding [*auffassen*] material stripped of all sensible properties down to sheer quantity so

18 See the passage in the Twentieth Lecture (SW XI: 457-460).

19 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, XII.9, 1075a6-9: "There remains the question of whether the object of thought is composite [...]. The answer is that everything which contains no matter is indivisible." The human mind, meanwhile, is a "mind of composite beings," trans. IG.

that it can be grasped mathematically.[20] In the same way, it is capable of raising itself from the mere phenomenon to the thing itself (to the essence).[21] But its capacity goes beyond even this. As freely acting, it is here in its essence (pure actus). For this reason, it can also grasp *itself* with thinking.[22]

The goal was to show, for all Aristotle's separate expressions, their interrelation in which their truth is manifest. One thing, however, still seems to demand explanation. There is one time that Aristotle says: it remains only to determine the understanding as powerful nature, in reference to that which is foreign and intrudes upon us.[23] All the same, he also says that the understanding is in accord to its capacity the intelligible, but actually or in fact, it is nothing before it has grasped the intelligible.[24] But, regarding the first point, [524] as long as the foreign element has not been penetrated by it, the understanding relates to that element as the mere power of comprehending [*Macht des Begriefens*], just as the light, when it is impeded by the moon which comes in between it and the earth, is also merely the power of illuminating the earth. This does not stop it, however, from being *actus purus* in itself. And concerning the second point, under capacity [*Vermögen*] here we do not understand a possibility that ceases to be a possibility once it is activated, but rather a power, which even when activated, continues to be a power. Aristotle says the same thing of the understanding. When it acts freely and once it has actually become knowing, the understanding is still in a certain respect a *power*,[25] especially insofar

20 Aristotle, *De Anima* III.4, 429b18: τὰ ἐν ἀφαιρέσει ὄντα (*tà én aphairései ónta*) (something quite separate [trans. IG]), a common Aristotelian expression for the mathematical.

21 Aristotle, *De Anima* III.4, 429b13-14: τὸ σαρκὶ εἶναι καὶ σάρκα (*tò sarkì eînai kaì sárka*) (an equally common expression for the distinction indicated above). Ibid: ἄλλῳ (ἢ τῷ αἰσθητικῷ) ἤ τοι χωριστῷ κρίνει (*állōi* (*è tôi aisthētikôi*) *é toi chōristôi krínei*) (We judge flesh and the essence of flesh either by separate faculties or the same faculties in distinct relations [trans. IG]).

22 Aristotle, *De Anima*, III.4, 429b9-10: καὶ αὐτὸς δὲ αὐτὸν τότε (ὅταν δύνηται ἐνεργεῖν δι› αὑτοῦ) δύναται νοεῖν (*kaì autòs dè autòn tóte* [*ótan dýnētai energeîn di› hautoû*] *dýnatai noeîn*) (the mind is then capable of thinking itself [of exercising its function by itself] [trans. IG]).

23 Aristotle, *De Anima*, III.4, 429a20-22: (παρεμφαινόμενον γάρ κωλύει τὸ ἀλλότριον καὶ ἀντιφράττει) ὥστε μηδ' αὐτοῦ εἶναι φύσιν τινὰ μηδεμίαν δυνάμει, ἀλλ' ἢ ταύτην, ὅτι δυνατόν ([*paremphainómenon gár kōlýei tò allótrion kaì antiphráttei*] *hóste mēd' autoû eînai phýsin tinà mēdemìan, all' è taútēn, hóti dynatón*) (for if what belongs to something else appears in it by nature, it hinders and blocks it). Translation from Jason W. Carter, "How Aristotle Changes Anaxagoras's Mind," *apeiron* 52, no. 1 (2019), 15.

24 Aristotle, *De Anima*, III.4, 429b31-2: ὅτι δυνάμει πως ἐστὶ τὰ νοητὰ ὁ νοῦς· ἀλλ› ἐντελεχείᾳ οὐδέν, πρὶν ἂν μὴ νοῇ (*hóti* dynámei *pōs estì tà noētà ho noûs: all' entelecheiāi ouden, prìn án mḕ noḗ*) (mind is potentially identical with the objects of thought but is actually nothing until it thinks [trans. IG]).

25 Aristotle, *De Anima* III.4 [429b6-9]: ὅταν δ' οὕτως ἕκαστα γένεται, ὡς ἐπιστήμων λέγεται ὁ κατ' ἐνέργειαν (τοῦτο δὲ συμβαίνει, ὅταν δύνηται ἐνεργεῖν δι' αὑτοῦ) ἐστι μὲν ὁμοίως καὶ τότε δυνάμει πῶς· οὐ μὴν ὁμοίως καὶ πρὶν μαθεῖν ἢ εὑπεῖν (*hótan d' houtōs hékasta génetai, hōs epistḗmōn légetai ho kat' enérgeian* [*toûto dè symbaínei, hótan dýnētai energeîn di' hautoû*] *esti mèn homóiōs kaì tóte dynámei pôs: ou mḕn homóiōs kaì prìn matheîn ḕ heupeîn*) (But when intellect has become the several groups of its objects, as the learned man when active is said to do [and this happens when he can exercise his functions by himself], even then the intellect is in a sense potency, though not quite in the same way as before it

as it affirms its superiority over the purely contingent actuality. In its contact with the object, it does not itself descend to the level of the object; in contact with that which is material, it remains *free* of the material as χωριστὸν (*chōristòn*) and remains *above* it as subject (in the sense explained above). We are not speaking here of the kind of possibility that a seed has to develop into a plant, if certain conditions are met. Instead, it is the kind of possibility that someone has who has the power to produce something.[26] Aristotle explained elsewhere in abundance the sense in which he uses the term powerful. Whoever has the power to sit down will not always sit; he has also the power to stand. The power for one includes the other. One can have the power to talk, and not talk, just as one can have the power not to talk, but nevertheless talk. When one of these options achieves actuality [525] (ἐὰν ὑπάρξῃ ἡ ἐνέργεια [*eàn hypárxēi hē enérgeia*]),[27] it does not make the other impossible. Thus the power to do one thing remains the power to do the other. I, at least, do not know how else to understand Aristotle, to whom it is impossible to ascribe a tautology such as results from the other explanation.[28]

That's enough for our explanation of an Aristotelian expression. But that which we just presented in general contains, in short, the complete theory of natural cognition [*des natürlichen Erkennens*]. For the acquired science must also be accounted for as one of natural cognition's parts, for it derives entirely from it. The man in whom spirit is not free from the feeling, naturally judging, deciding

learned and discovered [trans. IG]). (Here, namely, it is the power before everything actual, there the power that outlives the actus). Concerning the "becoming all" at the beginning of the passage, it is the Aristotle's way of expressing that what does the knowing in knowing *is* the known (note IG). Hence Aristotle, *De Anima* III.8, 431b23-4: ἔστι δ' ἡ ἐπιστήμη μὲν τὰ ἐπιστητά πως, ἡ δ' αἴσθησις τὰ αἰσθητά (*ésti d' hē epistḗmē mèn tà epistētá pōs, hē d' aísthēsis tà aisthētá*) ["knowledge is in a way what is knowable and sensation in a way what is sensible," trans. IG], and Aristotle teaches generally: Τὸ αὐτὸ δ' ἐστὶν ἡ κατ' ἐνέργειαν ἐπιστήμη τῷ πράγματι (*Tò autò d' estìn ē kat' enérgeian epistḗmē tôi prágmati*) (Knowledge when actively operative is identical with its object, trans. IG]). Aristotle, *De Anima*, III.7, 431a1.

26 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, IX.3, 1046b34-5: Τὸ οἰκοδόμῳ εἶναι τὸ δυνατῷ εἶναί ἐστιν οἰκοδομεῖν (*Tò oikodómōi eînai tò dynatôi eînaí estin oikodomeîn*) ['to be a builder' is 'to have the power of building,' trans. IG]).

27 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, IX.3, 1047a25: "having the actuality," trans. IG.

28 Aristotle, *Metaphysics* IX.3, 1047a24-6: Ἔστι δὲ δυνατὸν τοῦτο ᾧ, ἐὰν ὑπάρξῃ ἡ ἐνέργεια, οὗ λέγεται ἔχειν τὴν δύναμιν οὐθὲν ἔσται ἀδύνατον· λέγω δ› οἷον, εἰ δυνατὸν καθῆσθαι καὶ ἐνδέχεται καθῆσθαι, τοῦτω, ἐὰν ὑπάρξῃ τὸ καθῆσθαι, οὐθὲν ἔσται ἀδύνατον (*Ésti dè dynatòn toûto ôi, eàn hypárxēi hē enérgeia, oû légetai échein tḕn dýnamin outhèn éstai adýnaton: légō d› hoîon, ei dynatòn kathêsthai kaì endéchetai kathêsthai, toûtō, eàn hypárxē tò kathēsthai, outhèn éstai adýnaton*) (A thing is capable of doing something if there is nothing impossible in its having the actuality of that of which it is said to have the potentiality. I mean, e.g., that if a thing is capable of sitting and is not prevented from sitting, there is nothing impossible in its actually sitting [trans. IG]). The οὐθὲν (outhèn) in the first sentence posited as it is so generally, when we do not restrict it by the οὗ λέγεται k. t. l (*oû légetai k.t.l*), thus thought as referring to this, would be meaningless. The second sentence is added here because in it the ἐνδεχόμενον (*endechómenon*) and the δυνατὸν καθῆσθαι (*dynatòn kathēsthai*) are distinguished. To the first, the mere possibility of sitting, a sitting belongs as much as does an upright figure, since the animal either only lies, or can only lie and stand (trans. IG).

soul, and thus is not in his own *esse*[29]—is the natural man, as rightly translates the New Testament expression ἄνθρωπος ψυχικός [*ánthrōpos psychikós*]. As such, he knows nothing of God. But suppose he somehow acquires a knowledge of God from the outside, he might well, through an analogous application of the means of knowledge for the naturally given—those which are valid for the sensible world—also seek to reach the supersensible. Such was in fact the way of proceeding of the former metaphysics, or of the part of it that was called natural theology, as was rightly if somewhat naïvely expressed by the honourable Garve [526] when he said:

> In a general manner, for this metaphysics, the supersensible world is, if further separated, *not otherwise* separated from the sensible world than the part of this world that we cannot see is separate from the part that is visible to us. The path through which I pass from the knowledge of our earthly globe to knowledge of Saturn is not essentially different from the path that leads me from all that I have learned, experienced, and seen in the world to that which existed before it, to that which will be after it, and to that which towers sublimely above it.[30]

But it is here that Kant traced the great line of demarcation by revealing the artifice by which natural knowledge deceived itself in wanting to prolong itself into the supernatural. As Kant says, this is where reason "over-soars," becoming transcendent. What J. G. Hamann says in relation to Socrates, but evidently already guided by Kantian declarations, expresses the true result of Kant's critique of natural knowledge in a way that this critique itself was unable to do: "The grain of our natural knowledge must rot, decay in ignorance, so that from this death and from this nothingness life and the essence of a higher knowledge can germinate and be created anew."[31]

We took, at the beginning of the present lectures, this metaphysics as our starting point,[32] but declared it immediately to be a spurious and factitious science (*disciplina spuria et factitia*). This might seem to entail a contradiction. But with this judgment metaphysics was not declared to be a merely contingent product. For, from the point of view of natural knowledge, metaphysics is also itself a natural product. Its attempt to rise to the supersensible by means of the purely natural faculties of sensibility, understanding, and reason (as the capacity to infer) was and still is inevitably its first impulse. No teacher of philosophy can take or presuppose anything other [527] than the standpoint of natural reason of the person he wants to instruct in the science of reason. And beyond this any preparation for true science

29 οὐκ ἐστιν ὅπερ ἐστίν (*oúk estin hóper estín*) (see Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, VII.4, 1030a: a man "is not precisely a certain type of thing," [note KB]).

30 Christian Garve, *Die Ethik des Aristoteles - übersetzt und erläutert von Christian Garve*, vol. 1 (Breslau: Bey Wilhelm Gottlieb Korn, 1798-1801), 214.

31 J.G. Hamann, "Sokratische Denkwürdigkeiten," *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 2, ed. Josef Nadler (Vienna: Herder, 1950), 73.

32 In the Eleventh Lecture.

can only exist in the elimination and abolition of false knowledge. For this reason, the natural introduction to philosophy, over which many people rack their brains, does not consist in setting forth some true theory, for example, as some seem to imagine, a theory of knowledge (as if such a theory would be possible before and outside of philosophy). Instead, it can only take the form of a critique of the sole science possible to the *natural* man. In this respect, Kant's work has lasting significance also from a didactic perspective.

For our further development the theory of knowledge that was here presented has achieved the following: The I, in which we now entirely include ourselves (it is *the only principle* of our further development), the I that is in each person, and in which place everyone may think of their own unique self, has now been revealed as free in reference to the alien reality that has intruded upon us. Through knowledge the I has power over what is alien. The will that possesses itself finds itself also limited by nature in consideration of means (for all cannot serve all). But on the other hand it is free in consideration of ends, or, given that many things are themselves sought as means, free in reference to the ultimate and proper end, which, once one has come into possession of him or herself, can be nothing other than to maintain oneself in one's being [*Seyn*]. Or, better, given that a being that consists only in suffering and privations would have no advantage over non-being [*Nichtsseyn*], to maintain oneself in well-being, i.e., in the full enjoyment of one's being [*seines Seyns*]. That well-being is the ultimate end of willing, is a point not worth belaboring. At the same time, however, we now know man is sufficiently equipped with natural understanding to recognize and distinguish as such all that has a closer or more distant relation with the final end, to use it in accordance with this insight and to make it serve his will, i.e., to treat it as its material condition.

Here, however, the I immediately encounters certain limits, of which we cannot even say where they come from. The only thing immediately clear [528] is that they can neither come from the sensible world nor from God; for the I is free from the latter, according to the presupposition. Nor can these limits come from men, insofar as they are sensible beings. It thus remains only that they come from men, insofar as they have an intelligible side and are intelligible beings. The human, with whom we have been concerned up to now, is the individual. As an individual, man has his place in the sensible world. But we have no choice but to assume that each person, outside of the place that he or she takes up in the sensible world, also has a place in the intelligible world. In the soul, of which we say, that *it* is equal to the *totality* of being [*dem ganzen Seyenden*], the human exists as a possibility, i.e., as an Idea. But this entire possibility is not fulfilled by the individual. He leaves thus innumerably many possibilities outside of himself as unfulfilled through himself. These possibilities, since in all of them there is only the one idea, have such a relation among themselves that each serves as a complement to the other, and so the one could not be without the other, and if this one could not access being, then also no other (that is, no individual

by which it is fulfilled) could be entitled to it. This is an intelligible order that is thus older than actual men, and which therefore does not first come from actuality, but persists in the latter and imposes itself on the will that has become autonomous and self-acting as a law. It does not allow anyone to override the measure of his due right. Only in this way does it become possible for each and every one to exert their will. To this extent, there is a completely equal claim to both Being [*Seyn*] and to well-being. But where would there be any *order* and how should the possibilities mutually complement each other without *differences*, that is, without inequality? The question thus arises—from which concern does this inequality come and on what does it rest?

Here we must once again remember, that that out of which man is taken and created (a^0) is not a single type of thing, but is equal to all being [*Seyenden*] and contains thus also in itself all the possible degrees and differences of which being is capable. It does so, however, only in eminent potentiality, so that, when it comes to the actualization of these [529] possibilities, here, as in a second and indeed superior world, all the degrees of being [*Seyn*], from the lowest to the highest, must appear. A sequence of degrees thus emerges, whose members are of different values, depending on how close or how far they stand apart from what comes last, which is the real purpose. The human counts as the purpose of nature, though in this case it is not the human as the individual. Instead, it is the idea of the human, which can be fully realized not by the individual but only by the totality. As such, the end goal can only be the totality. In regard to it, all people cannot be of equal rank, but only of a higher or less worth, depending on whether the material they draw from is closer or further from the centre point. The more the common element lives in them, the higher they stand; the more they act only for themselves, for their individual aims and for their own preservation, the lower. A person is elevated and ennobled in relation to how much he or she serves the totality. The regular warrior, standing in the same rank with the others, is proud in this feeling of community, of which he knows he is a member. He serves; the commander rules. But the commander in turn is also only a means and not the end, so that in general one can say: he who rules the most, is he who serves the most. In the natural course of things, those who lived earlier serve the succeeding generations; the descendants enjoy the shade of the tree that their fathers, with much effort, planted and cultivated. The later time rejoices in the truth that an earlier time achieved through fighting, toil and even pains of all kinds. No one complains that his actions are beneficial to those living later. In truth one would not feel demeaned, but rather elevated, if one were justified in regarding himself as born not for himself, but for the whole (*non sibi sed toti natum se credere mundo*).[33]

One can recognize as a human feeling the wish that all humans would stand at the same rank, but it is a futile effort to set aside differences that, instead of first deriving from the world of freedom, were already designated in the intelligible world and hypothetically predetermined by the idea. It is futile to try to [530] eradicate an

33 Lucan, *Civil War*, II.383 (reference IG).

inequality that, instead of being made by humans, comes from an order that reaches beyond this world and is the consequence of that great law of all being [*alles Seyenden*], according to which not only no state, as Aristotle says,[34] but also no community can consist of only pure equals (ἐξ ὁμοίων [*ex homoíōn*]). Community requires beings that are different from each other according to the idea, and thus in accord to their inner worth (ἐξ εἴδει διαφερόντων (*ex eídei diapheróntōn*)). There can be no type of order of possible or real things, in which one does not stand apart from the other, from birth onwards, by virtue of the fact that the one rules while the other is ruled.[35] This law, that Aristotle declared as a *general*, as a natural law, is the power that each feels and also reveres without even wanting to, the power that allocates to each his own (*suum cique*), allotting to each the position in the world that is his to fulfill by virtue of an *innate*, *natural* right. To overstep such a right would have pernicious consequences for him. It is not, moreover, left up to the whim of another to respect or not respect it. It is imperative that one accept that the will by virtue of which one wills oneself be directed to the position for which one is determined.[36] It is for the sake of that position that one can be regarded as an end and thus as carrying one's purpose in oneself. It is an imperative, for this law does not come from man. Nor does he escape the law by making himself independent from God. On the contrary, *it was by stepping to the side of the other* [of that which is, *des Seyenden*] *that he has made himself subject to the law*. The law appears for those who know nothing of God [531] as an independent, self-enthroned power. It is independent of God, elevated to his equal (actually taking his place). It appears as a power that towers above the human, and as the source of natural "law [*Recht*], common to all," of law that "precedes the real community and any agreement amongst men." It was not developed or apprehended through the understanding, but is a system of laws which of itself makes itself felt by all:

> For their life is not of today or yesterday, but for all time, and no man

34 Aristotle, *Politics*, II.2, 1261a24-33. The chapters of the *Politics are* indicated by roman numerals in the margins of the Sylburg text (Friedrich Sylburg [ed.], *Aristotelis Politicorvm et Oeconomicorvm libri qui exstant* [Frankfurt: Wechel, Marni & Aubrig, 1587]) referring, it appears, to the Zwinger edition (Theodor Zwinger [ed.], *Aristotelis Politicorum libri octo* [Basel: Eusebii Episcopii opera ac impensa, 1582]).

35 Aristotle, *Politics*, I.2 (Schelling gives 'I.5,' corr. IG), 1251a22-24: Τὸ γὰρ ἄρχεν καὶ ἄρχεσθαι οὐ μόνον τῶν ἀναγκαίων, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν συμφερόντων ἐστὶ καὶ εὐθὺς ἐκ γενετῆς ἔνια διέστηκε, τὰ μὲν ἐπὶ το ἄρχεσθαι, τὰ δ›ἐπὶ τὸ ἄρχειν (*Tò gàr árchen kaì árchesthai ou mónon tōn anankaíōn, allà kaì tōn sympheróntōn estì kaì euthỳs ek genetēs énia diéstēke, tà mèn epì to árchesthai, tà d'epì tò árchein*). (Authority and subordination are conditions not only inevitable but also experient; in some cases things are marked out from the moment of birth to rule or to be ruled). As Aristotle says here, the relation belongs to the "advantageous", yet he equally says: "slavery for the one and mastership for the other are advantageous" *Politics* I.2 [1255b7]). Compare Aristotle, *Politics*, I.5. On the originally organic society, compare 1 *Cor*. 12, 12.14.15-26, trans. IG.

36 "*humana qua parte locatus es in re* (*disce*)," in Persius' famous phrase. Persius, *Satires*, III.72-3: "what is your position in the human commonwealth."

knows when they were first put forth.[37]

These are the familiar words of Sophocles' Antigone, which Aristotle did not fail to mention at that juncture where he speaks of a general premonition of the human race, the premonition of a power which, before and independently of any human contract, determines right and injustice.[38] This same power, in so far as it actually manifests itself, was celebrated in Greek antiquity as *Dike*, which, according to the old saying that Plato always mentioned in the *Laws*, always appears in the entourage of Zeus. As the tragic chorus reminds us,[39] the inviolability of Dike had been invoked by Antigone (pure, but now consecrated to death) when she had earlier called upon *eternal* justice. The sudden emergence of *Dike* in unusual human destinies was perceived with terror, also in the general opinion of the people.[40]

[532] It is here where even Kant exceeds the limits imposed on theoretical reason. As a *moral* being [*Wesen*], humanity is not released from the intelligible world, and what would be outside of the domain of the former (theoretical reason), is not so for practical reason. This is *reason*; for it too has as its last content the purely intelligible, that which is [*das Seyende*]. It is *practical*, because precisely this intelligible imposes itself as a law to the will that has become self-acting or acting as its own, demanding its submission. In this sense the moral law is therefore also to be named the law of reason, because it is namely the law that originates from the intelligible order and by virtue

37 Sophocles, *Antigone*, 456-457.

38 Aristotle, *Rhetoric* I.13, 1373b7-10: ἔστι γὰρ, ὃ μαντεύονται τι πάντες, φύσει κοινὸν δίκαιον καὶ ἄδικον, κ' ἂν μηδεμία κοινωνία πρὸς ἀλλὴλους ᾖ, μηδὲ συνθήκη, οἷον καὶ ἡ Σοφοκλεους φαίνεται λέγουσα κ.τ.λ. (*ésti gàr, hò manteúontai ti pántes, phýsei koinòn díkaion kaì ádikon, k' án mēdemía koinōnía pròs allḗlous êi, mēdè synthékē, hoîon kaì hē Sophokleous phaínetai légousa k.t.l.*). (For there is something of which we all have a presentiment, being a naturally universal right and wrong, even if there should be no community between the two parties nor contract, to which Sophocles' Antigone seems to be referring). It is contained in the μαντεύονται (*manteúontai*) that it is not of this world and is not in the intellect.

39 Sophocles, *Antigone*, 853-5: "Forward and forward still to farthest verge / Of daring hast thou gone, / And now, O child, thou fallest heavily / Where Right erects her throne" (trans. IG). In the speech against Aristogeiton, Demosthenes says of Dike: ἣν ὁ τὰς ἁγιωτάτας ἡμῖν τελετὰς καταδείξας Ὀρφεὺς παρὰ τοῦ Διός θρόνου φησὶ καθημένην (*ḕn ho tàs agiōtátas ēmín teletàs katadeíxas Orpheùs parà toû Diós thróonou phēsì kathēménēn*) (inexorable and sacred Justice who, as we are told by Orpheus, our instructor in the most holy ordinances sits by the throne of Zeus). Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 248: Ὦ βασιλεῖς, ὑμεῖς δὲ καταφράζεσθαι καὶ αὐτοὶ τήνδε δίκην. (*HŌ basileîs, hymeîs dè kataphrázesthai kaì autoì tḗnde díkēn*.) (you princes, take notice of this punishment). Schelling possibly intended to cite 259, where Justice "sits beside her father Zeus," (trans. IG). Sophocles, *Oedipus at Colonnus*, 1384: Δίκη ξύνεδρος Ζηνὸς ἀρχαίοις νόμοις (*Díkē xýnedros Zēnòs archaíois nómois*) (Primeval Justice sits enthroned with Zeus [trans. IG]).

40 Compare the discussion on the inhabitants of Malta in *Acts* 28:4: ὡς δὲ εἶδον κρεμάμενον τὸ θηρίον (τὴν ἔχιδναν) ἐκ τῆς χειρὸς τοῦ Παύλου, ἔλεγον πρὸς ἀλλήλους. πάντως φονεύς ἐστιν ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὗτος, ὃν διασωθέντα ἐκ τῆς θαλλάσης ἡ δίκη ζῆν οὐκ εἴασεν (*hōs dè eîdon kremámenon tò thēríon* (*tḕn échidnan*) *ek tês cheiròs toû Paúlou, èlegon pròs allḗlous. pántōs phoneús estin ho ánthrōpos hoûtos, hón diasōthénta ek tês thallásēs hē díkē zēn ouk eíasen*) (When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, "This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, the goddess Justice has not allowed him to live, trans. IG]).

of which the intelligible is also in the world. At one point in his *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant states about conscience: "by means of this we become aware of a nature [*Wesen*] that is distinct from ourselves, yet is most intimately present to us." After "nature" he adds the explanation: "of moral, legislative reason." Indeed we cannot oppose this addition, if the thought is to be fended off that this nature would be God (for, in Kant's scientific and moral character, the asserted autonomy of reason, i.e., the moral law's independence from God, is one of its deepest—and despite what shallow, superficial people may bring against it—one of its most admirable features).[41] In contrast, we must however protest against thinking that this nature refers to *human* reason, as the unfortunately chosen expression of autonomy seems to say. It is not the latter; *it is reason that lives in being itself* that subjects the will to itself. (This reason is certainly autonomous, i.e., it does not receive its law from God.) That which in theoretical reason is only as latent (as an object of pure contemplation) has become, in relation to the will that is a practical end for itself, active. This intelligible power does not address itself to human reason, but only to the will [533]. The consciousness of this is not called *reason*, but *conscience.* It is called conscience to express the constant and ever-recurring nature of this knowledge, the unremitting and untiring power by which it acts.

The end result of our last considerations is that an intelligible order precedes the real or external community between people. The sheer *content* of this order, however, would lose all meaning in a world of factual being [*Seyn*], if, with that content, the *law* did not also pass over, i.e., if the latter did not also receive a factual existence, appearing as a power, not merely in a person, i.e., in his conscience, but also *outside* of him—if thus a constitution armed with actual force did not enter into this world, a constitution in which domination and submission occur. This external order of reason equipped with coercive power is the *state*,[42] which, materially considered, is a sheer fact, and has only a factual existence. But it is sanctified by the law that lives in it. It is a law neither of this world nor of human invention. Instead, it directly originates and emerges from the intelligible world.[43] The law become actual power is

41 Kant discusses conscience in Königlichen Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (ed.), "Critique of Practical Reason," *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5 (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1900-), 98-9 (in English see Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, ed. and trans. Mary Gregor [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997], 82ff). Later discussion will show how important it is that Kant "secularised" morals. A Frenchman commends Pascal's *Provincial Letters*: "elles ont beaucoup fait, pour seculariser l'honnêté, comme Descartes, l'esprit philosophique." ("They have done much to secularise honesty, as Descartes has done for the philosophical mind.," trans. IG).

42 In the state one lives κατά τινα νοῦν καὶ τάξιν ὀρθὴν, ἔχουσαν ἰσχύν (*katá tina noûn kaì táxin orthḕn, échousan ischýn*). Aristotle's terms in Nicomachean Ethics, X.9, 1180a18: "by a certain intelligence, and by a right system, invested with adequate sanctions." This last corresponding in what follows to: δύναμις ἀναγκαστική (trans. IG).

43 Just as this intelligible order in the world is independent of the individual and without his will, it is also self-initiating from itself, in that its natural existence [*DaSeyn*] is given in the family (paternal power).

the answer to that act by which human beings posited themselves outside of reason. This is reason in history.

Lecture 23

[534] The domain into which we are now entering is that of practical philosophy. This is the part of my presentation that could easily appear as the most questionable, if for no other reason than that it concerns what seems to be, quite apart from science, the closest and most important thing to everyone. As a result, no one hesitates to make their own judgement. Moreover, because it is a topic that so many regard as of such ultimate importance that it alone seems able to fill the whole scope of a human spirit, there are few who will understand why, in the context of the present lectures, it cannot appear for its own sake and be examined accordingly. Instead, it is much rather the case that for it in particular (or at least above all), what we find ourselves emphasizing is not what leads one to cling to it, but what impels one to hurry beyond it.

In fact now, however, we see the I—as previously noted, the only thing that remains to which a further development can attach itself –, we see the I in consequence of the law, lost and having completely strayed (*déchû*) from all that it wanted, from being-for-itself, from being which is only itself, from Being which is the real absolute, i.e., from being [*Seyn*] free of everything, where it would have nothing in common with anything else (a ἀμιγές [*amigés*] in the sense of Aristotle), and would be a law only for itself. In contrast, the I is now restricted by the law, which imposes itself on its will as something unwanted. It is delimited by the universal, and no longer belongs to itself, but to a different and foreign power, whose effect on the I can only be displeasure and rebellion against the law as it strives to free itself and [535] take possession of its own will. One craving against the other. The ἀρχόμενος [*archómenos*] wants to be the ἀρχὼν [*archôn*]. This is the necessary other side of the matter. It should be just as much considered and recognized as is, from the other side, the holiness of the law.

Liberation from the law could at first be purely factual, a simple stepping beyond. Given that according to the law the I remains the unconditioned lord of his own action, nothing could withstand this, if it were not the case that, in reference to this world of purely, factual existence, the law itself had become the factual power that guarantees its fulfillment independently of the will. The obligation that had been imposed from within appears thus as an external, compulsive force (δύναμις ἀναγκαστική). This power of reason emerges from the purely factual rejection of the law (the law does not always inhibit reason, but avenges and thus restricts it). Existing as a factual force, this power of reason is, as we have already seen, the *state*.

I do not doubt at all that such a factual power will bring offence to most, because it oppresses individual freedom before it can express itself. For it is firmly

established that for the majority, and this is also an opinion favored by Kant, the law itself makes human beings free, for it can in fact only be directed at moral beings. But insofar as it renders *each* of them responsible for their part in the real achievement of the community (where *no one* can do anything for this unless they all want it, and specifically, not a single time, but always want it and thus cannot do anything else but want it)—to this extent, the individual has no freedom either to act for or against the law, unless it is made impossible for everyone to act against it. To act for the law would make a person the victim of his legal disposition. To act against it would be to know that all others would later do to him what he did to them, so that his action would be absurd. And just as I am prevented from observing the law if all do not observe it, likewise I also cannot exert what I am entitled to, for example, make myself the lord of something, if all do not recognize it. It is thus evident that [536] by virtue of the law alone people would be much rather unfree than free. The individual is only free at all, when, independent of one's solitary will while yet making it possible, the community already exists. This factual presence of the community—factual, i.e., independent of reason and thus also of the law—is thus a practical postulate of reason itself. It is a presupposition without which the law would not have any relation to the individual as such, and by which a moral disposition is first made possible to the individual. As the saying goes, the state, or as Kant more precisely states, the juridical legislation, is indifferent to the moral disposition. It would be more correct to say that it regards itself as the presupposition, without which the moral disposition would be impossible, and that it *cannot* demand that which only becomes possible first through it. Herein, as well as in the fact that it considers crime a priori as *impossible*, conceding its existence only in accord to the obvious proof that a crime has been committed, the state shows the proper feeling for its meaning. It is the same for the individual, who, from the mere lawfulness of his actions, does not make an immediate conclusion about his moral disposition. Nor does he impute to anyone a particular virtue for not attacking either the person or the property of another. In this way an individual seems to have a good intuition of the proper order of things. It is the most important consequence of a factually existing rational order, and furthermore of the state, that it elevates the individual to personhood. Before and outside this order, there would be individuals, but no persons. The person is the subject to whom actions can be imputed. But outside of the factually-existing legal order, there would be no imputation of guilt [*Zurechnung*] and the individual would be responsible for nothing. *The war of all against all* is according to Hobbes the state of nature that preceded the state as such. That it did not precede the state in actuality was clear enough. It should be equally clear that in such a state of nature there can be neither moral freedom, nor blame or responsibility. That the individual is morally free and a person first through the state is also attested to by the fact that whoever goes against its law, and above all whoever revolts against it and [537] so sets himself outside of the state, ceases to be a person for it and can therefore be completely deprived of the exercise of his freedom and the

circumstances of his personal existence (for this world).

"The human who enters into the state sacrifices his natural freedom,"[44] so one says; but it seems rather to be the opposite, only in the state does he find and acquire real freedom. At the same time here, another delusion vanishes; for how, without freedom, could individuals discuss together and conclude on a voluntary agreement, a contract, which would lead to the state? Admittedly, this theory of the original contract presents many additional inadequacies (which David Hume, among others, already pointed out) that would keep a reasonably perspicacious observer from trying to build an explanation of the state on such an operation. But one finds it nevertheless useful to consider the state *as if* it originated in this manner, so that, for example, one would not admit any right, unless it could be assumed that everyone would have completely consented to it. Nor could one allow any new law and new institution to arise, for which, as they say, the collectivity –here meaning really each individual—had not given its consent. As the latter is impossible, so this path leads directly to the institution that subjects the individual to the most oppressive tyranny, subordinating him to the will of a contingent majority and thus to a despotism. This is ill-concealed by the fact that the individual is understood not as bound by duties, as formerly, but as having rights. They call such a state a state of reason. They do not mean by reason, however, that objective reason, in which things themselves live. Such reason demands, for example, natural inequality. Instead, they have in mind the reason of the solitary individual, of someone who could accept and agree to such an arrangement. That they deduce the state from this human, subjective reason can be seen from the fact that they believe they are able to *make* states and constitutions, and, to this end, to convene constituent assemblies. The attempts turned out poorly enough, and the total futility of all that was organized in this direction for the last half a century or so had to finally bring the most determined actors to completely cast aside the appearance of universality [538] and of reason, in order to proclaim pure, unconcealed individuality as carrying within itself its own unique and absolute justification. To this end, they had to reach beyond the merely historical even into the supra-historical, seeking to sweep aside all differences, including those that had the sanction of the world of ideas, such as property and ownership, by virtue of which people are able to rise above the merely material to achieve a state of grandeur that, because of the exclusivity that belongs to its nature, introduces inequality. Their goal was to sweep it all aside, especially "all authority and power," in order to establish as quickly as possible [*jetzt gleich*] heaven on earth, without awaiting the lord, with whose arrival Christianity consoles poor and clueless humanity.[45]

---

44 Translator's note: C.f. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's claim that in entering into the social contract, we give up our natural freedom (our "unlimited right to anything" in the state of nature) and acquire civil freedom. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Political Economy and The Social Contract*, trans. Christopher Betts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 59.

45 Schelling references above Romans 13:1: "Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for

Reason determines the *content* of the state—but surely not the spurious reason of the individual, rather reason that is nature itself, the abiding totality of what truly is [*das Seyende*] which stands above merely phenomenal being [*Seyn*]. But *the state itself* is even more, it is the *act* of eternal reason that has become active in view of this factual world. It is reason become precisely *practical*, an act that is no doubt recognizable, but cannot be investigated, i.e., that does not allow itself to be drawn into the circle of experience as an object of research. The state itself has, in this sense, a factual existence. But from nothing of this sort is contingency to be excluded. Even in nature, contingency thwarts the eternal order, but is never able to break it. It can cast a seed of grain that requires a strong sun in order to fully develop into a sunless place, or it can expose to the sun that which would thrive better in the shade. Contingency, in a similar way, surely also possesses humans, so that, by overcoming contingency, a real, eternal (not simply imaginary) destiny can be actuated. Thus, as reason that has become factual power, reason cannot expel contingency. This contingency that belongs to it is the price by which the essential, i.e., reason itself, is obtained. [539] In this sense, there seems to be little understanding of the issue in such truisms as that factual right should yield more and more to rational right, continuing as such until a pure realm of reason is established. It is as if the goal were to make all personalities superfluous, removing the thorn from the eye of envy, which, in certain moments, extends all the way to regions, where one should not suspect it. For only in the face of the factual is there space for human ambition. The time that brings it about that the factual could be completely dismissed and discarded might think itself able to do well without its great men. Just this is foretold for our own time by its so-called spokespeople. With the pure realm of reason, the paradise of all mediocrity would be opened. My concern is not to please whatever party of the day. In general, I walk here a lonely path, one that must become more and more lonely, the more it leads to such matters as the state and constitution, matters about which everyone nowadays can judge and about which everyone has an opinion. Only those who have followed this entire development will be able to accept, from the mere necessity of thought (from the trust and belief in thinking) the idea of an act of the intelligible world that anticipated all of human thought.

For the rest, the very factual side of the state raises the expectation that this act has a historical side through which it might become accessible to the less practiced. The law of the community, as we have seen, is namely a law for the species. The individual is incapable of serving the community for himself alone. He must thus expect and insist that the law really become a law for the species, that it be a power independent from individuals through which it becomes possible for each

there is no authority except that which God has established" (note IG). In possession, the human rises above the material, as that which cannot be for itself, and only appears to be only in order to be part of another Being [*Seyn*]. One recalls here the explication of Aristotle's τὶ ἦν εἶναι (*ti hēn heînai*) (that what it was to be [essence]) [trans. KB].

individual to fulfill his part. For even the most favored (someone who belongs to one of the ἀρχονσι [*archonsi*], of which as Aristotle said[46] there are many types) is not therefore free from the subjugated. They must also be an end for him, [540] and he is responsible for the realization of the community. The question is then how the law can be brought out and away from the individual, how it can be seen as imposed on the species and thus as a power independent of the individual. To this end the means lie precisely in the distinction between rulers and ruled[47] that is already posed separate from the individual and derived from the world of ideas. Amongst these individuals, one will easily be found who is sufficiently equipped with the power to in fact subordinate the others to himself. This will not happen by deliberation or agreement, it will instinctively happen. The ruling of an individual only over the family, then over the whole tribe, then over several tribes, whereby a people is created, is the first and oldest, the natural monarchy. In this way, then, the act by which the order of reason is realized can be historically explained and proven. From this natural (unconscious) monarchy runs the path to self-conscious monarchy, proceeding, as it is the fortune of humanity, through its opposite (through republican ideas). Self-conscious monarchy has compulsion as its basis but freedom as its product, not the reverse, which is why it grows into the most developed society. That initial monarchy cannot be the self-understanding one. Because the state belongs to the things *that are from nature* and arises independently of human intelligence, we must assume that for all that it addresses and concerns (the rulers themselves not exempt) it begins in a blind, non-recognized way, as something purely factual. Understanding first comes afterward. The perfectly constituted and self-constituting state is achieved only in a progressive way, whereby earlier *aspects* of the idea of the state will be there before the state takes on its true meaning. In this succession, however, no contingency is exercised. The state becomes the idea that hovers above the successive forms and which it contains philosophically (a priori). For this reason, the forms of the state do not emerge haphazardly but in a predetermined [541] succession. This can now be recognized philosophically, as the subject of philosophy, and in particular of the philosophy of history.[48]

The state is that which, we say, first makes a moral disposition possible for the individual. But it itself never *demands* it. Precisely because it does not demand it, but only makes it possible, satisfying itself with external justice and caring only for it, the state makes the individual free and leaves him a place for voluntary (and thus also for the first time for personal) virtues, e.g., that one is fair. Instead of asserting

46 Aristotle, *Politics* I.2 [1254a24-5; Schelling wrongly locates the passage at I.5, corr. IG]: Ἴδη πολλὰ καὶ ἀρχόντων καὶ ἀρχομένων ἐστιν (*Éidē pollà kaì archóntōn kaì archoménōn estin*) (there are many kinds both of rulers and subjects [trans IG]).

47 See SW XI: 529ff above.

48 The negative side of the same. Compare SW XI: 569n1 below. It is not hereby said or implied that the idea of the perfect state has ever manifested itself in reality [note trans. Sean J. McGrath].

his own right to the detriment of others (ἀκριβοδίκαιος ἐπὶ τὸ χεῖρον [*akribodíkaios epì tò cheîron*] as Aristotle said),[49] he prefers to give up something himself, even if the law would be backing him. Or one is brave. (It is true that Aristotle specifically mentions bravery under the virtues demanded by the state, because the law forbids anyone to leave his post in the battle array, to flee and to throw away his weapons.[50] Even so, bravery is not merely a virtue of the battlefield. The bravery that is demanded of us—the one that, as for the ancient Romans, one has no choice but to endure or to be punished to death at home—is not necessarily a personal one). Or one is truthful, faithful to his promise, even when he cannot be forced to keep it, or communicative, benevolent, caring. These are virtues that reason alone cannot prescribe or realize. They are virtues that are purely personal and can also be called social. With them, there arises above the involuntary community the voluntary and therefore higher community. This is what we will call *society*. In this respect, the state is the *bearer* of society. For regarding what Kant says—freedom must be the principle [542] and condition of all constraint[51]—the opposite is rather true. One would also have to say that *purpose* might also be called the principle, and therefore be the condition under which something that is not for its own sake nevertheless is. Kant, however, did not mean this; this is evident from how he applies this principle. The state should be the bearer of society, but it can also hinder or cut off the development of society, just as inversely from society the attempt can arise to weaken or subdue the state. From this the following types ensue.

The ruler is a despot, who does not allow any space to the voluntary virtues or any development to society. To speak in Kant's way such a ruler does not understand that freedom is the purpose of constraint. If the beginning of history and the first great empires were supposed to be in the East, and if furthermore it is true what Aristotle says, that the Asian peoples are by nature more inclined to servitude than the Europeans,[52] then it was no accident that the first empires were monarchies of a despotic kind. It was just as little fortuitous that the most aware and intellectual of the Greeks only came after the first, still paternal reign of hereditary kings had passed through different intermediary stages (including self-declared rulers that governed for a short time) that led to—especially after a glorious end to the Persian wars, by which

49 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, V.10, 1138a1: the equitable man "does not stand on his rights unduly" [trans. IG].

50 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, V.1, 1129b20ff.

51 Kant, "Metaphysical First Principles of the Doctrine of Right," Königlichen Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (ed.), "The Metaphysics of Morals, Part 1," *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 6 (Berlin Georg Reimer, 1900-), 232-3, in Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, ed. and trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 388-9.

52 Aristotle, *Politics*, III.9 [Schelling gives III.14, which does not exist. Therefore 1285a20-22: "the barbarians are more servile in their nature than the Greeks, and the Asiatics than the Europeans [and hence] endure despotic rule without resentment."]. Aristotle, Politics, VII.7 [possibly IV.3, 1306a35-40] [ref. IG].

they defended themselves against the Persian yoke, but also liberated their kinsmen in Asia minor—that definitive form of popular rule or *democracy* in which, as one could say, the state is completely subdued by society and society makes itself the bearer (the fundament) of the state. Such a state has surrendered to the fluctuations of society, and fundamentally and rightly considered, is little more a state than the despotically governed realm can be called a state. This is the case because the state is neither an issue for the despotic ruler, who seeks only himself, nor for democracy, where the state is only the tool of personalities, the fate of all democracies [543] [*worauf alle Demokratie hinausläuft*]. This is all the more unavoidable, the greater the appeal of a rule so acquired and disputed. If the appeal is minimal in peasant democracies, it increases according to the extent to which the power serves a mighty will and a great talent. In the same way as personality, talent also becomes free and, in all directions, a free course and path is opened to it. It asserts itself not only at the head of armies or popular assemblies, but extends also into art and science. For where despotism rules, truth and beauty are also subject to a fixed type. Where society has become free, both strive to find a canon whose law is not determined by command [*Vorschrift*] but instead by general and voluntary agreement. If, in Asia, the despotic rule of one and, in Athens, the unlimited rule of the people, did not give rise to the standing of the state, it is an impressive spectacle to see how Rome fulfills its destination by making the whole majesty of the state appear. The state was never wanted for its own sake more than in Rome, where, on the one side, everything was subordinated to it. Even the priesthood was a state title. The augurs and the *pontifex maximus* were magistrates, who, once bestowed these dignities, were members of the senate. Even after the expulsion of kings, a *rex sacrorum* remained in the place of some of these performed, sacred ceremonies.[53] On the other side, the *person*—not the one who goes beyond the state, but who is *in* the state—has become the highest point of attention for a legislation which, from the first beginnings to the most exhaustive achievement, developed with a necessity in a form which remains valid as a model for all times. There is in the Roman essence something that disappears neither with the expulsion of the kings, nor with the later passage to individual rulers of a different kind. Those who call the constitution introduced by that change *republican* are wrong. The form of the state was a republic, but the spirit of the state was monarchic in the highest sense. [544] The state could not be so wanted that it could appear as the end goal, unless it were fulfilled and driven by the idea of singular absolute rule, i.e., world domination. The Republic did not dissolve because of internal disputes or because of

53 Montesquieu, "Politique des Romains dans la Religion," in *Oeuvres de Montesquieu*, vol. 1, ed. Destutt de Tracy (Paris: Dalibon, 1827), 373. "The Kings of Rome had a kind of priesthood: there were certain ceremonies only they could conduct. When the Roman Kings were deposed, there was a fear that the people would notice some change in their religion; this led to the establishment of a judge called *rex sacrorum*, who, in sacrifices, provided the functions of the ancient kings .... This was the only vestige of royalty that the Romans preserved amongst themselves" [trans. and ref. IG].

the fighting of the plebeians against the patricians. This could have been appeased by concessions, without any change in the great course of the state. Nor was it endangered by the vices of society, which had been more and more powerfully erupting since the Punic victories, but especially since the submission of Greece. The problem was not participation in science and the arts, with which formerly no free citizens, but only freed ones occupied themselves, and in which traditionally minded people alone had already sensed an Augustinian age. Not because of all of this did the Republic perish, but only because of its attained greatness and the fulfillment of its purpose.[54] For what Aristotle says of the Lacedaemonians could also be said of the Romans: they sustained themselves as long as they waged war, and they were lost, because they didn't know how to begin anything at leisure.[55] The latter point says, in the sense of Aristotle, nothing more than that the state is only an end for them, and cannot at the same time become a means for other, higher goods. The urge to unrestricted rule, satisfied from the outside and without object, had to turn itself inward, back to the source, to Rome itself. What conquered the world was not also powerful enough to rule it. As the world had become a kingdom, the ruler also had to be only one, and even he could only be a god, a principle which was not derived from this world, i.e., the Roman world. Through the dark and fumbling quest for this necessary principle, which it is however impossible to reach, the Roman world was set outside of itself. From this the uncanny and atrocious aspects of the history of emperors is explained: on the one side, the unhesitating deification of rulers, on the other, the religious faithlessness of the people itself, the [545] downright atheism, professed by many Romans, and in contrast, the fondness for Eastern religions, in which there was more mystery, because there was more unity. These customs spread most widely in the city, where, as Tacitus[56] complains when mentioning the infiltration of Christianity into Rome, everything atrocious and repulsive came together and was celebrated. Even the better rulers were affected by the growing despair, by the fact that neither purpose nor truth was anymore recognized in anything, not even in one's own action. The melancholy of the whole world view can be found in the writings of someone like Marcus Antonius, just as we recall the madness of Elagabalus, who wished that the Syrian god whose name he bore (and whom he served as a priest) should be the only one honored in Rome, recommending not only that all that was sacred to the Roman religion (the fire of the Vesta, the palladium, etc.), but also all that the religions of the Jews and the Samaritans

54 Montesquieu actually says the same thing in chapter six of "Grandeur et decadence des Romains," in *Oeuvres de Montesquieu*, vol. 1, ed. Destutt de Tracy (Paris: Dalibon, 1827), 166ff.

55 Aristotle, *Politics* II.9, 1285b8-19 and VII.13, 1334a8-10 [ref. IG].

56 Tacitus, *Annals* XV.44 ("Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judæa, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular" [note: IG]).

regarded as venerable ought to be brought together and revered in one temple.[57] And because the emperor himself had assumed for himself the name of God, the thought arose, as Montesquieu presents it, that he should make himself over into the one unique God.[58] The Romans sought monarchy, but in a way which it could not be achieved in the world. They went beyond the state and sought a world empire which was possible only for Christianity. Because they felt this lack, they became irreligious. They tried this with a secular monarchy, but in vain, because another principle had to come. The Roman Empire had only served another, the real world empire, laying its foundations.[59] [546] Constantine *had to* clarify the independence of religion from the state.[60] By doing so, he made it clear that the state had now recognized itself as a means. With Christianity, the state received a different and higher end, i.e., one situated beyond itself. When this spiritual power later wanted to show itself as a state power, it was a misunderstanding and error. Beyond the fact that the spiritual power thereby reduced itself to a secular means, the state was once again robbed of its (higher) end. Naturally, then, in the same way that the higher (that for which the state was supposed to act as a bearer) sank, the state rose again in every way (Louis XIV). This triggered, however, as the contradiction against the state, the revolt of the individual principle. The Reformation protested against the false theocracy. This was the real deed of the *German people*. Everyone knows through which means the Reformation was pushed back in certain parts. In this great event, the historical destiny of the Germans and their never-to-be-abandoned vocation expressed themselves: to recognize and realize—above the political unity, which, because of the Reformation, had to disappear—a higher unity. With the destruction of the idol, the Germans took over the task of setting in its place true theocracy. This could not express itself in the rule of proxies or priests. It could only show itself as the rule of the recognized, divine spirit itself.

Let us return now, however, to where we began. It was our task to show that the state (certainly not just any state), instead of suppressing individual freedom, far

57 Aelius Lampridius, *Antoninus Elagabalus* III, in David Mach (trans.), *Historia Augusta II* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1924) [ref. IG].

58 Montesquieu, "Grandeur et decadence des Romains," in *Oeuvres de Montesquieu*, vol. 1, ed. Destutt de Tracy (Paris: Dalibon, 1827), 114. ("Heliogabalus had even formed a resolution to destroy every object of religious veneration in Rome, and to banish all the gods from their temples, that he might place his own in their room" [trans. IG]).

59 A later Roman said: " *Atque utinam nunquam Judaea subacta / fuisset / Pompeji bellis imperioque Titi! /* [546] *Latius excitae pestis contagia serpunt / Victoresque suos natio victa premit.*" ("And would that Judaea had never been subdued by Pompey's wars and Titus' military power. The infection of this plague, though excised, still creeps abroad the more: and 'tis their own conquerors that a conquered race keeps down.") Rutilius Namatianus, "A Voyage Home to Gaul," book I, in *Minor Latin Poets* I, ed. and trans. J. Wight Duff and Arnold M. Duff (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934), 375f [ref. IG].

60 Compare Johann August Wilhelm Neander, *General History of the Christian Religion and the Church*, vol. 2, sec. 2, trans. Joseph Torrey (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1848), 163-5 [ref. IG].

more makes it first possible. The state is that which raises the individual to a person. From this it does not follow, however, that the state is not nevertheless felt by the I as compulsion. It cannot be otherwise. The striving [547] to escape this compulsion is only natural, and there is nothing to object to this, if it is deployed in the right manner. Even more, among those to whom the topmost direction of the affairs of the state is entrusted, the ones who are always taken to be the wisest are the ones who have made it the law for themselves to leave individuals as free as possible, while retaining for the general population a sharp eye and, where necessary, a sharp sword. The wisdom of our ancestors knew, moreover, the importance of forming certain autonomous circles within the state, inside which the individual knew himself to be free from the state. The honor conferred to each by his social estate (even the peasant and artisan) raised him above the humiliation of complete submission to the state.

It is otherwise, when the striving to make oneself independent from the state becomes the attempt to abolish the state itself, i.e., the state in its basis—*practically*, by a coup d'état, which, if it is planned, is a crime equal to no other. Only a parricide (*parricidium*) is similarly regarded. *Theoretically*, this can be found in doctrines that seek to make the state as comparable and suitable to the I as much as possible—completely contrary to the truth. For indeed, the state is not established to cater to or reward the I, but rather for its punishment. What it demands, we owe it, i.e., it is a debt which we must repay or clear. One can say: the intelligible order of things, from which a person has detached himself, is transformed into a debt owed to the state. Even so, these doctrines have met with near universal approval and have spread irresistibly. (No one could have suspected the number of learned men of the state who shared this attitude in the time that has just passed us by.) This general approval compels us to acknowledge that these doctrines emerged from something that speaks for them in every human being. In the final instance, this can only be that principle that, after it has once willed *itself*, now also wants to be complete of its own self. Feeling itself to be more powerful than reason, it creates a reason *for itself*. It is this reason at the service of the I [548] that the edifying orators of the most recent times hold to be *reason itself*. This in turn serves as a pretext to attribute all sorts of calamity, including the political, to reason, and to proclaim that, as a result, it is now all over with reason.

It is this reason, as I have said, that serves the I, and which here—where a *practical* interest, and not a purely theoretical one prevails—can only be sophistic, and can only consistently lead to the total self-aggrandizement of the people, i.e., the undifferentiated masses. As a result, because an appearance of constitutionality is nevertheless not to be avoided, the people must be both sovereign and subject: as Kant explains, the sovereign as the *people united*, the subject as the *scattered crowd*. With *reluctance* (as one clearly sees), but conforming to the once accepted principles, Kant has to recognize the republic as the only rational and even legitimate constitution. Such a republic can accordingly only be the democratic one, which he himself says

is the most all-comprising, the most intricate, i.e., to speak without beating around the bush, the most contradictory of all constitutions.[61] In general, with regard to these questions, Kant differs from his descendants, Fichte and others, by his great practical understanding, and by the honesty of his deliberation, qualities of which the contradictions, which his doctrine of right could not always avoid, are only results and witnesses.

We have recognized as justified and necessary a striving of humanity to overcome the burden of the state. But this overcoming must be understood as *internal*. With the application of an old word, we could say: first seek this inner realm, then the inevitable oppressiveness of the lawful external order will no longer be present for you, and you will not be especially bothered by "the insolence of office" that Hamlet mentions as one of the intolerabilities which could drive us out of this life. To exist beyond the state inwardly—not only may I, [549] but I should. Each should himself be an example of an independent moral disposition, and, if this moral disposition becomes that of an entire people, it is more powerful against oppression than the praised idol of a constitution, which, even in the country of its origin, has in many respects become a *fable convenue*.[62] Do not envy England a constitution that owes its origin alone to the addition of non-reason—not through contract, but through force and violence. Indeed, it is unreason (in the liberal sense) that has ensured up to now its continuance and permanence. Be as little envious of England for its constitution as you would be for its large, raw masses, or its insular position that permits many things for their constitution (like that of Crete at one time[63]) that other states are denied by geography. Even worse, it can mislead an unscrupulous government through devious machinations to stir up insurrections in foreign states, even while afterwards easily leaving their implements high and dry. They incite a state of war that cannot be responded to, or, at least cannot be responded to by weak governments.

Let yourselves in contrast be scolded as a non-political people, because most of you crave more *to be governed* (although this is often not granted them and if so, badly enough) than to govern, because you esteem the leisure (σχολή [*scholê*]) that leaves the spirit and the mind free for other things, for a greater than an annually

61 Kant, "Metaphysical first principles of the doctrine of right," §47. Compare §51 of *Metaphysics of Morals*, in Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, ed. and trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 459, 479-80; Akademie der Wissenschaften (ed.), *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 6, 315-6; 338-9. Compare in the Akademie der Wissenschaften edition, 320 and in the aforementioned translation, 463: "For a people to be authorised to resist, there would have to be a public law permitting it to resist, that is, the highest legislation would have to contain a provision that it is not the highest and that makes the people, as subject, by one and the same judgment sovereign over him to who it is subject. This is self-contradictory" [note provided by IG].

62 Precisely in England the time is approaching in which public political struggles no longer revolve around rights of closed classes, but around the interests and ambitious plans of individuals [trans. KB]. Addition from IG: [The phrase "*fable convenue*" comes from Helveitus' *De l'esprit* (Paris: Durand, 1758), 592: "*l'histoire n'est qu'une fable convenue* [history is only a fable agreed upon.]"

63 Compare Aristotle, *Politics*, II.10, 1271b20-1272b22.

recurrent political bickering that leads only to the formation of political factions—factions, whose worst aspect is to permit even the most incapable to gain a name and importance. Let yourselves deny all political spirit, because, like Aristotle, you regard as the first duty of the state is to grant leisure. Neither the rulers nor those who live without participating in the state are in a dishonorable position.[64] Finally, as the teacher of Alexander the Great [550] might tell you, it is possible that even those who do not command land and sea will accomplish beautiful and felicitous things.[65]

The state is the intelligible order itself become factual in the face of the factual world. The state thus has a root in eternity and is the *enduring*, never-to-be-abolished [*nie aufzuhebende*] and no-more-to-be-investigated *ground* [*Grundlage*]of all human life and all further development. Because it is the *precondition*, true politics has to be prepared to mobilize all resources for its preservation, just as in war, where the state is the *goal*. Insofar as it is the *ground* [*Grundlage*] it is not itself the goal, but the eternal (and thus never to be abolished or put into question) starting point for the higher goal of all spiritual life. Because the state is not an object, but only the presupposition of all progress, it is to be treated accordingly. How much better would it be, if this view were universal—not to search for progress in the state.[66] With regard to the ground of the state, we want the purpose of reason and the necessity of the matter to prevail. It is important not to jeopardize the higher goods for which the state is a prerequisite by false malleability in regard to principles. [551] Progressive development will also benefit, for it [the State] participates in progress without being its principle.[67] The state itself is the stable (the thing of the past). It should rest in silence, allowing only

64 Aristotle, *Politics* II.10, 1273a34-5: ὅπωσ οἱ βέλτιστοι δύνωνται σχολάζειν καὶ μηδὲν ἀσχημονεῖν, μὴ μόνον ἄρχοντες ἀλλὰ μηδ' ἰδιωτεύοντες (*hópōs hoi béltistoi dýnōntai scholázein kaì mēdèn aschēmoneîn*, *mḕ mónon árchontes allà mēd' idiōteúontes*) (the best citizens may be able to have leisure and may not have to engage in any unseemly occupation, not only when in office but also when living in private life," trans. IG]). Compare Aristotle, *Politics* VII.14, 15.

65 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* X.8, 1179a4-5: Δυνατὸν καὶ μὴ ἄρχοντασ γῆς καὶ θαλάττης πράττειν τὰ καλά (Dynatòn kaì mḕ árchontas gês kaì thaláttēs práttein tà kalá). (It is possible to perform noble deeds without being ruler [trans. IG]). Concerning the Greek race, Aristotle says that it is "ἔνθυμον καὶ διανοιητικόν" (*énthymon kaì dianoiētikón*) (remaining free therefore)—"καὶ δυνάμενον ἄρχειν πάντων, μιᾶσ τυγχάνον πολιτείασ" (*kaì dynámenon árchein pántōn*, *miâs tynchánon politeías*) (... both spirited and intelligent ... and capable of ruling all mankind if it attains constitutional unity [trans. IG]). Aristotle, *Politics* VII.7, 1327b30-33.

66 The presupposition here cannot be once again put into question. It is a fact buried in an abysmal past, and, as Kant himself says (Akademie der Wissenschaften (ed.), *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 6, 318-9), is inexplicable in a practical regard. But to bring about ruin, it is not necessary to question this last fact. The intention to combat all that is factual in the state is already pernicious enough, especially when it cannot be foreseen where this aspiration will stop and be restrained; whereas at the moment in which it would have been possible to eliminate all that is empirical and irrational, the state would have to dissolve, because it only in the empirical does it have its stability and strength. In fact, all those who get onto this slope cannot stop until even ethical imperatives—marriage, property, possession—would have been eliminated.

67 One finds oneself in error thus regarding the causes of the revolution when one believes that the state is guilty, whereas that depends in fact on that which is situated beyond it.

reform (not revolution). Like nature, it can be embellished, but it cannot be made to be otherwise than it is. It must remain as long as this world exists. To make itself insensitive, as nature is insensitive, to grant the individual rest and leisure, to be the means and the impetus to the attainment of the higher goal: that is what the state should do. In this alone lies its perfectibility. The task is therefore: to provide the individual with the greatest possible freedom (autarchy), freedom, namely, that rises above and, as it were, beyond the state. But it should not react back on the state or in the state. For with this the exact opposite occurs from what should happen, as our constitutional arrangements show when they allow the state to absorb all. Instead of granting leisure to the individual, it pulls him rather into everything. It claims everyone for itself, making each bear the burden of the state. True monarchy sees in the active working participants in the state not those who have privileges, but instead those bound by duty. This is what allows others to enjoy the advantages alone.

As a purely external, factual community in the face of the factual world, the state cannot be an end. For precisely this reason therefore, the *most perfect* state is not the goal of history. There is just as little a perfect state as there is (in the same line) a completed human being. The most perfect state certainly has its place in the philosophy of history, but completely on the negative side.[68] There was a time in which it was natural and forgivable to think an ideal as the goal of history and to seek it in the perfect state, in the state of accomplished right. But it is in general a false presupposition that there could be an ideal state of affairs inside this world that, if it were ideal, it would also necessarily have to be enduring and eternal. We see that this world, as simply a passing state of affairs, cannot endure. The present order is not an end, it is only to be wiped away. It is thus not this order itself that is the goal, but the goal is the order that is determined to take its place. Even the "moderate" monarchy, in which the state knows itself merely as a ground, is not the ideal of a political constitution perfectly in accord with reason.[69] When one seeks a perfect state in this world, (apocalyptic) fanaticism [*Schwärmerei*] is the result.[70]

68 See SW XI: 242 above. Here—on the negative side—reason only asks: What does the idea of the state (the community) entail? What possibilities? What goal? The positive side is that which divine providence comprehends as the agent of history).

69 Monarchy is incidentally in any case already moderate in that there are still only partial states.

70 "*Qualemcunque formam gubernationis animo finxeris*, *nunquam incommodes et periculis cavebis*," Hugo Grotius, *De jure belli et pacis*, book II.

Lecture 24[71]

In reference to the higher development, the state is thus nothing more than foundation, assumption, entry-point, and it also only in this sense that it was treated in these lectures. Progress lies in that which passes beyond the state. But that which surpasses it is the individual. It is with him, and his internal relation to the law, that we are now once again concerned. For as beneficial as the observation of the law that is imposed from the outside (by the state) is, when one reflects on how weak most men's adherence to duty is, it is still not enough. For the law itself concerns the inner life, and, because the state is indifferent to moral disposition, the assessment of the latter is left up that much more to the individual. No one is in bondage to the state, but each is unconditionally bound to the moral law. The state is something with which one comes to terms, in relation to which one can behave in a completely passive manner. This is not the case with the ethical law. The state, as powerful as it is said to be, can only lead to an external, i.e., factual justice. Inversely, as impotent as the state might be, especially if it were to dissolve completely, that internal [554] law that is written in the heart remains and is all the more urgent. The external law of the state is itself only the consequence of this inner compulsion, and therefore no longer comes into consideration once we speak of this.

But here it comes to light what the I has gotten itself into in getting away from God. Separated from God, it is held captive under the law as if under a distinct power of God.[72] It can neither go beyond this power, because it is completely bent under it, nor can it escape it, for the law is, so to speak, intertwined with the will of the I and engraved into it. Nor is the I happy with itself under the law. Aversion for and antipathy toward the law is its first and natural feeling, and so the more natural, the more harsh and unmerciful, the law appears to it.[73] For, as something universal and impersonal, it cannot be otherwise but hard. As a power of reason, it knows so little of personality that it does not even leave an iota for the sake of the person. Even if its requirements are *completely* satisfied, it gives no thanks to the person (even if

71 In its present shape, this lecture was not extant among the author's literary remains. The completed manuscript ends with [an] announcement to the German people towards the end of the forgoing lecture. From there until the end of this lecture however the following arguments are fully extant in several conceptual outlines, so that it required only that these be put together in order to produce the lecture in its present form [note K.F.A. Schelling, trans. IG].

72 It is absurd to conceive of the moral law immediately as divine, or to want to mingle God with natural law. God is rather hidden by the law, and must remain so, so that the law can be disciplinarian. If one wanted to subordinate all to religion, there would be no more morality or doctrines of rational rights; it would be as if one wanted to deny rational science in general. Certainly, if there was no God, there would also be no reason (reason would not be a *power*). But one must not conclude from this that the moral law only has meaning for us as *divine* law (and that morality is to be entirely reduced to theology).

73 "Therefore, the more the law dictates what he cannot do, the more hostile the human is towards it," says Luther in the preface to Paul's Letter to the Romans.

everything is done, we are nevertheless still futile slaves). Even being commanded would not be so bothersome to the I if only it originated from a person, but to be subjugated by an impersonal power is degrading. He, who wants to be *himself*, has to see himself subjected to the universal.[74]

[555] But peace would not be achieved even if one actively resisted the aversion that, after all, is more a matter of form than content (form, since the law is commanded, while the I wants to be entirely free). Even if one could find for himself what is best in the law (due to the intelligible side of his being, always a possibility), peace would still not be achieved.[75] In the very moment one realizes this, it becomes apparent that the law leads a person to death. How can it possibly be fulfilled, when one lacks the *moral disposition*[76] that the law itself is unable to give? The law is unable to give man a heart that would be equal to the law. Instead, it increases the power of sin. Instead of wiping away the disparity between the law and man, it enhances it in many different ways. This happens to such a high degree that in the end all moral behavior appears reprehensible and all life fragile and flawed.[77] Even though free virtues embellish and ennoble life, at bottom the seriousness of the law persists, making it impossible [556] to reach the joy of existence. The experiences the I has in its struggle with the law are such that the longer it continues, the more the I feels the pressure of the law as an insurmountable compulsion, i.e., as a curse. And in this way it begins, fully bent beneath it, to encounter nothingness in the form of the unworthiness of its whole existence [*Daseyns*].[78]

74 The imperfection *inherent to the law itself* rests on the impersonality of the law. But one is tempted to deny this, when the law is represented as divine. As impersonal and general is the law 1) concerned merely with the common, and there is nothing in it for the individual. It speaks to the individual, but its aim is only the human race; 2) it also does not say what to do and is thus purely negative (in fact, this was already expressed in the first point); 3) the moral has no goal in the sense that, even if I have accomplished everything, nothing has nevertheless been achieved. Therefore, the law is just an incidental achievement (ὁ νόμος παρεισῆλθε [*ho nómos pareisēlthe*], Romans 5, 20). It has its end in another, and, when it is there, it stops in this form of imperfect law τέλος τοῦ νόμου Χριστός (télos toû nómou Christós) ("The end of the law is Christ"), Romans 5, 20. Kant does not see this incompleteness of the law and thereby deprives himself of the true path to reach where he wants to go. Here, his critical sense abandons him.

75 Compare with the unequal struggle of the man of good will with the overburdening flesh, in chapter 7 of Paul's Letter to the Romans.

76 There is no morality in Kant's meaning, i.e., from pure respect. As Luther says, that requires "a voluntary, cheerful heart." Self-respect keeps us from misfortune, but it does not make us happy. Even Kant admits that when he lets happiness be something foreign. [Note added by IG: In section V.B of the Introduction to Part II of "The Metaphysics of Morals," in Akademie der Wissenschaften (ed.), *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 4, 387ff, Kant undertakes to demonstrate that only others' happiness, and not my own, can furnish an end that is also a duty. At VI: 393, he entitles this "*Fremde Glückseligkeit*,", or 'the happiness of others,' and happiness is explained as a mere "accompaniment" in the "Critique of Practical Reason," in Akademie der Wissenschaften (ed.), *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, 22].

77 "But nobody can give such a heart, except the spirit of God, that makes the human equal to the law, in such a way that with all of his heart he desires the law," Luther, *Preface to St. Paul's Letter to the Romans* (1522).

78 Compare the passages on human wretchedness in the Greek poets, *Iliad*, XVII, 446 ("There is

However, it is exactly here, at the point where the end of the law, the negation of the I, is almost achieved, that a turning point occurs. The possibility presents itself namely to the I, not to abolish itself in its godless and baleful condition, but to renounce itself as an acting being, to withdraw itself into itself, to surrender its selfhood. In doing this it has no aim other than to withdraw from the insanctity of action, to flee from the demands of the law into the contemplative life. For this purpose, it is solicited by the moral conscience itself, for it is conscience (the potential God) that draws it away from its own self-wanting. But, with this step from the active to the contemplative life, the I also *passes over at the same time to the side of God*. Without knowing anything of God, it seeks a godly life in this ungodly world. Because this seeking is done in the renunciation of the very selfhood through which it separated itself from God, it is able once again to touch the divine itself. The spirit, namely, that withdraws into itself, gives space to the soul. But the soul by nature is that which can touch God. It is the real θεῖον [*theîon*] in its nature[79] that emerges here. But this emergence does not happen on the level of the genus, but only in the individual.[80] This possibility of the spirit to [557] withdraw itself into itself, proves to be the power [*Potenz*] to turn back towards God, a power that that active being retained in itself as it turned away from God. It is A^0's essence that emerges, after the contingent within it (that which defected from God) was broken and reduced to nullity. The entrance of the I into contemplative life is thus a rediscovery of God (making God once again objective for it), but of course, as we will see, God only as an idea.

This rediscovery of God however has different degrees, which must be considered similarly as stations of the return to God. The first stage is that in which the I seeks to execute the act of forgetting itself, the abnegation of itself. It presents itself in that mystical piety, whose sense we find expressed most acutely by Fénelon. It consists in a person's quest to become like nothing (but not to annihilate oneself) and at the same time to regard as nothing whatever contingent being [*Seyn*] one is faced with.[81]

---

naught more miserable than man among all things that breathe and move upon the earth"), *Odyssey*, XVIII, 130 ("Nothing feebler does earth nurture than man, of all things that on earth are breathing and moving"), *Oedipus at Colonnus* 1225, μὴ φῦναι τὸν ἅπαντα νικᾷ λόγον (*mḕ phýnai tòn ápanta nikâi lógon*) ("Not to be born at all is best,") [trans IG].

79 Τὸ βέλτιστον ἐν ψυχῇ (Tò béltiston en psychêi) ("the best part of the soul"), [trans. IG]. Plato, *Republic*, Book VII 532c.

80 The genus or the race has only an indirect relation to God, namely precisely in the law, where Go dis potential to him, i.e., enclosed; only the *individual* has a direct relationship to God, can seek it, and when he reveals Himself, receive it.

81 In his *Démonstration de l'Éxistence de Dieu*, Fenelon expresses this abandonment of selfhood thus: *nous désapproprier notre volonté* (abandon possession of our will) and describes this mystical piety in these words: "*Nous avons rien à nous que notre volonté, tout le reste n'est pas à vous. La maladie enlève la santé et la vie: les richesses—les talens de l'esprit dependent du corps. L'unique chose, qui est veritablement à vous, c'est votre volonté. Aussi est-ce elle, dont Dieu est jaloux. Car il nous l'a donnée non afin que nous la gardions et que nous en demeurons toute entire, telle que nous l'avons recue et sans en rien rétenir. Quiconque reserve le moindre désir ou la moindre repugnance en propriété, fait un larcin à Dieu.—Combien d'ames*

The second stage is the art by which the I makes itself akin to the divine (ὁμοίωσις [*homoíōsis*]), seeking to bring forth a divine personality in order to fuse with it. It is the art that produces enchantment, in which the spirit becomes soul (in completely selfless production). It is something that only happens to artists of the highest calibre. Without them knowing or [558] understanding it, it unfolds through a true inner determination of their nature.[82] Following art, as the third stage, is *contemplative science*. In this, the I elevates itself above knowledge that is practical and merely natural [*dianoetic*],[83] in order to touch being-for-its-own-sake (ἀυτῇ τῇ ψυχῇ, αὐτῷ τῷ νῷ [autêi têi psychêi, autôi tôi nôi]).[84] Spirit that withdraws into itself and renounces the practical attains the pure θέα [*théa*], where it immediately touches the intelligible. Thus νοῦς [*noûs*] has the same relationship to the purely intelligible that sense has to the sensible (τὸ νοεῖν ὥσπερ τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι [*tò noeîn hósper tò aisthánesthai*]).[85] *Insofar* as spirit seeks to make itself potentiality, it behaves passively. Coming thereby into possession of itself, it returns again to the (theoretical) life that contemplates of God. This was the life that was initially destined for A^0 and that spirit, after making its whole journey, now considers as its highest goal.

Here is thus what the I can attain in its search to escape its insanctity and to save itself in *its* world.[86] The I indeed seems to have its satisfaction in the good attained

---

propriétaires d'elles- mêmes?" For the full text, consult François de Salignac de La Mothe-Fénelon, "Démonstration de l'existence de Dieu, tirée du spectacle de la Nature et de la connaissance de l'homme," *Traité de l'existence et des attributs de Dieu*, in *OEuvres de Fénelon*, vol. 1 (Versailles: Lebel, 1820). The cited passage in English: "*We ourselves have nothing but our will, all the rest is yours. Disease removes health and life: wealth, the talents of the spirit depend on the body. The one thing that is genuinely yours is your will. It is this, too, of which God is jealous. For he gave it to us not so that we might keep it and that it remains for us entirely as we received it from you without your keeping any of it. Whoever retains the least desire or the least loathing for property makes theft from God. How many souls own themselves?*" [trans. IG]). Fenelon even calls this self-renunciation (self-expropriation) *entire indifférence même pour le salut* ("complete indifference towards salvation" [trans. IG]) [Cf. "Lettre du 13 mai 1967 au marquis de Blainville"].

82 To show the place of art in rational philosophy, compare Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* VI.4, 1140a1-23 [trans. IG].

83 Here the *Nous* appears in its highest degree as awakening science and producing it freely. It should be noted that rational philosophy like contemplative science enters here itself as a moment in the development of contemplative science.

84 ("with the soul itself, with the intellect itself"). See notes to SW XI: 316 and 356. It is νοῦς [*noûs*] that in the highest science again frees the soul, raises it from the potency in which it had placed it and, with the free soul (αὐτῇ τῇ ψυχῇ [*autêi têi psychêi*] knows the eternal [trans. IG].

85 ("Thinking is analogous to perceiving," [trans. IG]). Aristotle, *De Anima*, III.4, 429a14.

86 Just as here art and sciences are degrees of beatitude (but as we will see, of a purely negative beatitude), in the same way for the Greeks poetry (Homer) and visual arts (Phidias) are liberating in regards to the legal state and legal religion. That which for us is the *entrance* of spirit in the soul is ἀθαντίζειν (*athantízein*) (making oneself immortal) for Aristotle. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* X.7, 1177b35. Compare, further, the entire seventh chapter, in which the contemplative life is described as the most godlike. Equally notable is the passage in Plato's *Theaetetus* 176a[-b]: διὸ καὶ πειρᾶσθαι χρῆ ἐνθένδε (ἀπὸ τῆς θνητῆς φύσεως) ἐκεῖσε φεύγειν ὅτι τάχιστα: φυγὴ δὲ ὁμοίωσις τῷ θεῷ κατά τὸ δυνατόν (*diò kaì peirâsthai*

through contemplation, for it has God, from whom it separated itself in practice, once again in knowledge. The I has an ideal in God [559] by which it raises itself above itself, thereby coming free of itself. But it only has an *ideal* relation to this God and cannot have any other relation to him. Contemplative science leads only to the God that is *end*, and that is not the actual God. It leads only to the one who is God in essence, not God in actuality.[87] Maybe the I could be satisfied [560] with this purely

chrê enthénde [*apò tês thnētês phýseōs*] *ekeîse pheúgein hóti táchista: phygḕ dè homoíōsis tôi theôi katá tò dynatón*). (Therefore we ought to try to escape from earth (from mortal nature) to the dwelling of the gods as quickly as we can; and to escape is to become like God, so far as this is possible [trans IG]). Compare Plato, *Philebus*, 62. [At 62ab, Socrates defines a man concerned with divine knowledge as having "sufficient knowledge, if he is master of the divine circle and sphere" as well therefore as of "our human sphere and human circles" [note and trans. IG; IG adds that "Escape is not abandonment, seems to be Schelling's point"].

87 Here is historically the point at which ancient philosophy arrived at God as final cause, to A^0 in its pure self-being. The highest distinction was already made between Being in being [*Seyende seyn*] and the self-being of God [*Selbstseyn Gottes*]. Through separating itself outside being, A^0 in the rational philosophy is set in pure self-being. In this separate state it is (and it is thus that we find it in Aristotle) pure ἑαυτοῦ ἔχον (*heautoû échon*) (self-possession), fixed, eternally identical to itself, passive, final cause, not efficient cause (αἴτιον τέλικον, οὐ ποιητικὸν (aítion télikon, ou poiētikòn), or, as Aristotle states in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, X.8 1178b21, τοῦ πράττειν ἀφαιρούμενος, ἔτι δὲ μᾶλλον τοῦ ποιεῖν (*toû práttein àphairoúmenos, éti dè màllon toû poieîn*) (if action is withdrawn, creation even more so). It is that which moves all, but only as *end*, such that it does not move itself (ὁ πάντα κινῶν ὡς τέλος, αὐτὸς ἀκίνητος (ho pánta kinôn hōs télos, autòs akínētos)). As inactive towards the exterior, it thinks and intuitss only itself, it is thought of thought (νοήσεως νόησις [*noḗseōs nóēsis*]), that which is certainly something completely different than thought on thought, about which one has often cited in an incorrect and forced manner. The real sense of the expression is this: God is only the infinite act of thinking—the infinite, i.e. always thinking anew (and not an external object that would limit him) (Cf. Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics* VII.12, 1245b17-18: οὐ γὰρ οὕτω ὁ θεὸς εὖ ἔχει, ἀλλὰ βέλτιον ἢ ὥστε ἄλλο τι νοεῖν παρ' αὑτόν (*ou gàr hoútō ho theòs eû échei, allà béltion è hóste állo ti noeîn par' hautón*) (it is not thus that god is happy, he is too good to think of anything else but himself). The difficulties which one finds in Aristotle regarding the closer determination of the self-vision of God, one finds in Aristotle, *Magna Moralia* II.15, 1212b34-1213a7. The same difficulty can be felt in Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* VII.14, 1154b26-32, ([=] *Eudemian Ethics* VI.14).

God is here, according to the expressions of German philosophy, the *Subject-Object* which begins and cannot quit himself. Those who only see arbitrariness in philosophy do not know to which point, in completely different individuals, the identical concepts have reappeared, thus proving their necessary activity: for those who discovered this philosophy where God begins as the Subject-Object only had an inferior knowledge of Aristotle than that which has been able to be attributed to them. If, for Aristotle, God is only at the end and ἄπρακτος τὰς ἔξω πράξεις (*ápraktos tàs éxō práxeis*) ("accomplishes no action towards the outside"), so God is for him thus no more than a simple concept. Even if Aristotle possesses this last (term) as existing, it is *as if it did not exist*, seeing as it cannot do anything, and with it nothing can begin. One could find it inconceivable to which point the *negative* side of this determination has been invisible, just as much in Aristotle as in modern philosophy. As that which possess itself, without being able to leave itself, he is spirit only by essence, only ideal spirit, but it is an abuse [*Missbrauch*] to speak here of absolute spirit.

If God in his self-being is in Aristotle that which possess itself (ἔχον ἑαυτοῦ (échon eautoû), then for Plato, in this separate state, it is that which is willed because of itself. In this regard one is unjust to Plato when we claim that he speaks here simply of the idea of the Good. Of concern for him is

ideal God if it could stay in the contemplative life. But that is plainly impossible. The renunciation of action does not allow itself to be implemented—one *must* act. But as soon as the active life picks up again, reality reasserts its right, and the ideal (passive) God is no longer sufficient. With this, the former despair returns. For the discrepancy is not abolished. Accordingly, the question poses itself as to what is still possible for the I and to where it will turn.

But even though we will not attain the end of the whole development here, we have already reached the goal of this science, the pure science of reason, and now we must linger on this issue before we move on to the next.

The task of the science of reason is to have the principle A^0 in its being-for-itself, free in regard to beings, and thus to have it *as* a principle, i.e., as the last and highest object (τὸ μάλιστα ἐπιστητόν [*tò málista epistētón*]). This is now achieved. For it all came down to the I's declaring itself as non-principle and subordinating itself under God (which it certainly had at the same time to acknowledge again). As soon as that had happened, the A^0 remained the real, the only and true principle, and this indeed in complete seclusion. For it had already been set in seclusion once the I had put itself forward in order to establish itself as the beginning of a supra-divine world [561], i.e., a world excluding God.[88] But just as the principle centered in the self gives way to the higher and only true principle, in the same way now science (the only science valid up to now) gives way to a second science, in regard to which we said earlier[89] that it is in fact for this science (the second science) that the principle was sought in the first place—for this is the science we actually wanted. The first now appears in reality as what it is: the philosophy which moves towards the principle. As such it is now certainly not the last and highest, but it remains the general (universal) science, the science of all sciences, insofar as it seeks the object both for all particular sciences and for the highest. For, as you remember, the first science (ἡ πρώτη ἐπιστήμη [*hē prṓtē epistḗmē*]) arose from the fact that we simply let the possible principles come into play. As they emerged they became the causes of a being articulated into degrees, a succession of objects each of which can become the object of a science. In accord

rather τὸ ἀγαθὸν (*tò agathòn*): the Good itself (it is clearly present in the ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας (*epékeina tês ousías*) ["beyond essence"] (Plato, *Republic* VI, 509b) and that which emerges from the surprise of the interlocutor—certainly in the idea, only as a thought, but still the Good itself, as it is said about God at the end of rational philosophy, C.f. Plato, *Republic* VII, 518c, just as before, 517b: ἐν τῷ γνωστῷ (not ἐν τῷ νοητῷ) τελευτέια ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα καὶ μόγις ὁρᾶσθαι (*en tôi gnōstôi (not en tôi noētôi) teleutéia hē toû agathoû ìdéa kaì mógis horâsthai*) (In the knowable (and not: in the intelligible) the idea of the Good is seen at last and with pain). It is natural that Plato also speaks of an idea of the Good (for example, *Republic* VI, 505a) but the τὸ ἀγαθὸν (αὐτὸ τὸ ἀγαθὸν) (*agathòn* [*autò tò agathòn*]) (Good itself) signifies for him only ἰδέα τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ (*idéa toû agathoû*) [the idea only] in reference to ἀγαθὰ (*agathà*) [particulars] as the μετέχοντα τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ (*metéchonta toû agathoû*) (participant of being) (see Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, before the fifth chapter): or again the ἰδέα (idea) is to him only the ὁ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἔκγονος (*ho toû agathoû ékgonos*) (VI 508), as it emerges from the context as a whole.

88 See the conclusion of the Twentieth Lecture.

89 See SW XI: 367.

to this succession, a particular series of sciences was given, from which one is derived that can rightfully be called the science of all sciences.[90] But in the same way, it is also the initiator of that one science that begins with the principle from which the rest can be deduced. Because it concerns itself with the one supreme object that, at the end of the first science, still remains standing as the problem to be resolved, it is itself a *particular* science, not *the* science, but a science like all others. If philosophy did not have a particular object, it could not itself be a science, it would only be *the* science, i.e., universal science. This particular object can only be that for which there is no other science and which thus must be either excluded from all science or else constitute *its* (philosophy's) own object, the object that suits it in the particular. As the last object found, it is the highest object and the one most worth knowing. In contrast with it, philosophy had regarded all the objects that came before it as nothing, as having no value for *it*. [562] Insofar therefore as the first science makes it possible for the second science (philosophy as a particular science) to possess its object, and insofar as it is however itself also philosophy, we must consider it correct when it is said that the object of philosophy can only be known through philosophy itself. But, as soon as the first philosophy has made the principle possible or produced it, it has achieved its end; for it can only produce the principle, not realize it. Therefore, this preliminary philosophy is also called *negative* philosophy. As important and indispensable as it is, it nevertheless knows nothing in relation to what alone is worth knowing and what can be deduced from it. For it only posits the principle by elimination, and thus negatively; it has the principle as what is alone truly real, but only as a concept, as a simple *idea*. Because in searching for the principle it looks only for the possibility of a philosophy, it is *critique*, as was the task for Kant.

Rational philosophy, or as we now call it, negative philosophy, has, we would say, only made the principle possible. For this was first found in pure *thought*; after that, the project was to wrest it from its potentiality. Once this has occurred, the principle thus produced is still only the principle found in thought; nothing has changed here (with regard to existence) to alter the standpoint of pure thought. But through the process of the science of reason, the *nature* of the principle has been demonstrated or confirmed, namely that it is the *natura necessaria*, as that which is *actus essentiâ* (essentially actual) (οὗ ἡ οὐσία ἐνέργεια [*hoû hē ousía energeia*]). God is now posited outside of the absolute idea, in which he was very nearly lost, and now appears in *his* idea. As such, though, it is still only idea. We find God in a concept, but not in actual being [*Seyn*].[91] For in this science everything is enclosed in reason, and thus also God, even though he is now rightly conceived as he who, in himself, is not enclosed [563]

90 See SW XI: 368.

91 In the absolute idea is not only being [*das Seyende*], rather that which the being is also belongs there together with potency; substance in the highest sense, which, because it cannot transition into anything else (for there is no mere capacity in it) remains standing as pure actuality and nevertheless emerges from indifference only as a final possibility [trans. IG].

in reason, i.e., in eternal ideas. And even if, as Kant says, each proposition of existence is synthetic, i.e., a proposition through which I go beyond the concept,[92] this does not apply to the pure *that* (freed of all universality) as it is left standing at the end of rational science. Clearly, the pure and abstract "that" is not the object of a synthetic proposition.

But if, now, what is *actus essentiâ* is also posited outside of its concept, so that it is not only the *essentiâ* or *naturâ*, but *actu* and actually the being that really is (*das actu Aktus Seyende*), then the principle is no longer posited as a principle in the same sense that we demanded of it as the goal of the philosophy of reason. In that moment, we wanted to have it free from the being [*Seyenden*] that really is. It was sought as a result, and it was only a question of the (abstract) principle. Now, rather, it stands as a *principle* in the real sense of the word, namely as *beginning*—as the beginning of that science that has that which *is* real being [*das Seyende*], the real being itself (αὐτὸ τὸ ὄν [*autò tò ón*]), as a principle, i.e., as that from which everything else derives.[93] Up to this point we designated it simply as the science for whose sake we were searching (through the means of the first science) for the principle. Now, we call it, in opposition to that first (negative) philosophy, *positive philosophy*. The former is negative because its only concern is the possibility (the "what"). Whatever it recognizes it recognizes in pure thought, independent of all existence. Existing things were deduced from it (otherwise it would not be a rational science, i.e., an *a priori* science for which there is an *a posteriori*). But what was not deduced from it was the fact that things exist.[94] This philosophy is negative because whatever it has exists only in the *concept*, even the ultimate [*das Letzte*] that is act in itself (what thus exists over and beyond existing things). This new philosophy, in contrast, is positive. It begins and goes out from existence [*ausgehen*]—from [564] *existence*, i.e., from the *actu* actual-being of that which was found, in the first science, as existing necessarily in the concept (as "natura Actus"). The new science initially has this only as the pure "that" (Ἔν τι), from which we go forward to the concept, to the "what" (to the being that is), to lead this existent to the point where it *proves* itself to be the actively (existing) Lord of being [*Herrn des Seyns*] (Lord of the world), as the personal real God. With that, all other being is simultaneously also explained in its *existence* as derived from this first *that*. In this way, a positive system is established that actually explains reality.

Thus, the difference of the two sciences in view from the beginning of this philosophical development reveals itself here to be the *opposition* of negative and positive philosophy, and so here would be the proper moment to discuss this opposition completely. But seeing that this discussion is extensive (the entire history

92 "Critique of Practical Reason," in Akademie der Wissenschaften (ed.), *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, 139: "Every existential proposition—that is, every proposition that says, of a being of which I frame a concept, that it exists—is a synthetic proposition" [note and trans. IG].

93 See SW XI, 361ff.

94 Idealism does not explain actuality [*Wirklichkeit*], rather the type of actuality, Cf. p. 376 above.

of philosophy demonstrates a fight between negative and positive philosophy) and that it forms a complete series of lectures, I constrain myself here to the following brief remark. The first science, in its end, arrived at something that does not allow itself to be known by means of its method. It had thereby exhausted itself, and that which remained in the end unknown and for it unknowable, it handed over to the second philosophy. But this establishes for the second only an external, not an internal dependence. The latter would only be the case if negative philosophy were to hand its object over to positive philosophy as something already known. Positive philosophy could possibly begin for itself, with the simple claim: "I want that, which is beyond being" ["*Ich will das, was über dem Seyn ist*"], and as a matter of fact we will see how the actual transition to positive philosophy does happen through such a willing. But if positive philosophy is from the start a philosophy offset from and different from negative philosophy, the correlation, indeed the unity of the two is nevertheless to be affirmed. Philosophy is at the same time *one*, namely philosophy, which both *searches* for its object, and *has* its object and brings it to knowledge. The positive is what is real in the negative, but not yet as actual. [565] Rather, it is there as that which searches for itself, as was shown in the whole trajectory which has now come to its end.

If the principle is taken as a beginning, as the beginning of another science that is no longer the science of reason (for reason is not able to begin anything with it), then it ceases as well to be simple idea or in the idea: it is posited outside of its concept. It is freed from the reason in which it was trapped; indeed, it is expelled [*ausgestoßen*] from reason. At the same time there is a reversal of the previous relation between that which being is [*dem was das Seyende ist*] (A^0) and the being that it is [*dem Seyenden*] (- A + A ± A). Because the first of these becomes the beginning (*prius*), the latter (which by the way is inseparable from it) cannot precede it. It must thus follow it, and the first problem will be to demonstrate how this is possible, though for now we are not yet so far. For we still have to resolve the main question: who or what shall originate the expulsion of A^0 from reason and with it the corresponding reversal of reason (the transition to positive philosophy)? Here it must be said that the transition cannot come from *thought.* While it is true that what pushes us to the second science lies in the last concept of the first, it is also true that thought can begin nothing with this pure *that* (which comes last in rational philosophy). In order for *science* to arise, the universal, the "what," must be added on. It can now only be consequent, and not antecedent. The science of reason thus actually drives beyond itself and pushes toward the reversal; but this itself cannot come from thought. For that, a practical impulse [*Antrieb*] is required. In thought there is nothing practical, the concept is only contemplative and is only concerned with the necessary, while here it is a question of something situated outside of necessity, of something willed. There must be a *will* from which the expulsion of A^0 outside of reason, this last *crisis of the science of reason*, must proceed. It is a will that with inner necessity demands that God be more than simply an idea. We are speaking of a last crisis of the science of reason. The

first was namely the expulsion of the I outside of the idea. [566] This changed the character of the science of reason, but it itself remained.[95] The great, last and real crisis consists now in that God, the last to be found, is expelled from the idea. With that expulsion, rational science is itself abandoned (rejected). Negative philosophy thus culminates in the destruction of the idea (just as Kant's critique actually culminates in the humiliation [*Demütigung*] of reason). Or, in other words, its final result is the recognition that what truly is (*das wahrhaft Seyende*) is not the idea, but is first what lies outside of the idea, and is therefore more than the idea, κρεῖττον τοῦ λόγου [*kreîtton toû lógou*].[96]

But there can be no doubt as to what this will is exactly that provides the signal for the turn, and thus results in positive philosophy. It arises from the I that was abandoned in the moment it had to leave the contemplative life behind and the ultimate despair took hold of it. Even though the I had penetrated with noetic knowledge all the way to A^0, that did not help it in any way. It is still not free from the vanity of existence that it contracted and must now feel even more deeply after it has once again tasted knowledge of God. For only now does it first recognize the gap that lies between itself and God —and the extent to which the fall from God, which led to a being-outside-of-God, lies at the base of *all* moral action, rendering the I itself doubtful, in such a manner it has no rest, no peace, before this break is reconciled. The I is helped by no holiness [*Seligkeit*] other than that which would simultaneously redeem him. That is why he now calls out for God himself. *Him, him*, he wants to have, he wants to have the God that acts, the God in whom there is providence, he who, *as a God who is himself factual can counter the facticity of the fall*. It is he, in short, who is the **LORD** of being (not only transmundane, as is the case with God understood as final cause, but supramundane). In this God alone does he see the actual, highest Good. Even the sense of the contemplative life was no other than to penetrate beyond the universal all the way to personality. For person seeks person. However, through contemplation, the I can at best only [567] find the idea, and thus only the God that is in the idea. Such a God is enclosed in reason, in which he cannot move. The God who is sought is instead the God who is outside and above reason. To him only is possible that which for reason is impossible. Equal to the law, he can free us from the law. This is the God that the I wants now. And because the I certainly cannot assign himself the task of attaining him, it is necessary that, with his cooperation, God *come to meet him*.[97] But what the I can do is to *want* God and hope to participate thanks to him in a salvation [*Seligkeit*] that—because neither moral action

95 See above [SW II/1] p. 421.

96 Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics* VII.14, λόγου δ' ἀρχὴ οὐ λόγος, ἀλλά τι κρεῖττον (*lógou d' archḕ ou lógos, allá ti kreîtton*) (the starting point of reason is not reason but something superior to reason [trans. IG]).

97 "And do not hope to see the end of your suffering, before God comes to relieve you" (πρὶν ἄν θεῶν τις διάδοχος τῶν σῶν πόνων φανῇ (*prìn án theôn tis diádochos tôn sôn pónōn phanêi*) says Hermes to Prometheus (Schelling's reference is "v. 1006-1007"; consult Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, 1027-8 [additional ref. IG]).

nor the contemplative life can reconcile the gap—would not be a *deserved* salvation (something proportioned, as Kant wanted), but an undeserved one, a beatific state that is incalculable and over-abundant. In Kant, who also wants to surpass the law, it is not the I, but only philosophy and proportionality that aspire, beyond the law, to a happiness that would thus be *deserved*. Such happiness would not amount to true union with God, but would instead remain relatively external and thus actually be sensuous.[98] But I demand rather a bliss that would be removed of all particular being and also individual morality. The anticipated state of bliss would be clouded for me if I had to consider it again as an (at least mediated) product of my action.[99] If it were nothing but a proportioned blessedness, it would be the ground of an eternal dissatisfaction. And thus the only option that remains (and no philosophical pride should hold us back here) is to accept with gratitude that which we otherwise can never achieve, but must be bestowed upon us undeservedly and through grace.[100]

[568] The demand for this acting God and for redemption is, as you see, nothing other than the manifest need for—religion. With this, the path pursued by the I comes to an end. The I hopes to attain the joy of existing that it did not find by its own means, once it has God in reality and finds itself unified (reconciled) with him, i.e. through religion. Without an active God (which is not just an object of contemplation), there can be no religion—for this presupposes an effective, real relationship between God and man. Nor can there be history, for God acts in history as providence.[101] Within the science of reason there is no religion, and therefore in general there is no *rational religion* at all.[102] At the end of negative philosophy, there is

98 See Kant, "Critique of Practical Reason," in Akademie der Wissenschaften (ed.), *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, 114-5 below. Note IG: ["... that a virtuous disposition necessarily produces happiness is false *not absolutely* but only insofar as this disposition is regarded as the form of causality in the sensible world, and consequently false only if I assume existence in the sensible world to be the only kind of existence of a rational being; it is thus only *conditionally false*. [...] It is not possible that morality of disposition should have a [...] necessary connection, as cause with happiness as effect in the sensible world, if not immediately yet mediately ... a connection which, in a nature that is merely an object of the senses, can never occur except contingently and cannot suffice for the highest good."]

99 According to Kant in the "Critique of Practical Reason," in Akademie der Wissenschaften (ed.), *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, 110-111: "Now inasmuch as virtue and happiness together constitute possession of the highest good in a person, and happiness distributed in exact proportion to morality (as the worth of a person and his worthiness to be happy) constitutes the *highest good* of a possible world, the latter means the whole, the complete good, in which, however, virtue as the condition is always the supreme good, since it has no further condition above it, whereas happiness is something that, though always pleasant to the possessor of it, is not of itself absolutely and in all respects good, but always presupposes morally lawful conduct as its condition." Happiness is only a secondary element of the highest good, which is correct if the second is the higher. It is not pursued as the wages of morality, but as something higher, that the latter does not satisfy [ref. and trans. IG].

100 Negative philosophy certainly tells us what blessedness [*Seligkeit*] consists in, but does not help us attain it.

101 Through a philosophy of reason, a philosophy of the active history is impossible, even though we admit that the philosophy of history also has a negative side. See above, SW XI, 542.

102 One cannot object that, after the preceding, we have ourselves posited religion as a moment of

nothing but a possible religion. Instead of real religion, there is only a religion "within the boundaries of mere reason." It would be an illusion to discern in the conclusion of rational philosophy a rational *religion*. Reason does not lead to religion, and it is thus also Kant's theoretical conclusion that there is no rational religion. We *know* nothing of God: this is the conclusion of all authentic rationalism that understands itself. With the passage to positive philosophy, we enter for the first time into the domain of religion and of religions, and it is only now that we can hope that the *philosophical* religion emerges which has been the subject of this whole presentation, i.e., the religion that [569] is called upon to really comprehend the real religions that are either mythological or revealed.[103] Through this, we can now also see in a clearer manner that what we call philosophical religion has nothing to do with so-called rational religion. For, supposing that there would be such a religion, it would belong to a completely different sphere, and not to the sphere in which the philosophical has made itself manifest to us.

It has thus been shown, how the need for the I to possess God outside of reason (and not only God in thought or in the idea) is born out of the practical. This willing is not contingent, it is a willing of spirit that, by internal necessity and in the aspiration of its own freedom, cannot remained enclosed in thought. As this demand cannot come from thought, it is thus also not a postulate of practical reason. It is not a rational postulate, as Kant wants, but only the individual that leads to God. For it is not the universal in the human that seeks salvation, but the individual. If man is obliged (by moral consciousness or practical reason) to regulate his relation to other individuals according to the standard of the world of ideas, that can only satisfy the universal in him—reason—and not himself as an individual. The individual for himself can only aspire to happiness. By this, and from the beginning, i.e., from the moment the species is subjected to law, the following difference emerges: everything that is subsequently only postulated is done so by the *individual*, not by reason. For this reason it is also the I that, being itself personality, demands personality. It is the I that requires a person outside of the world and above the universal, someone who can hear him, a heart that would be the same as his own.[104]

---

the science of reason; in any case, no one who wants a rational religion would admit or accept a religion that returns completely into the subject and cannot be separated from the ascetic, and which stands as a contradiction to all science. Rational philosophy knows nothing of a rational religion that would be at the same time a science (it is such a religion that all rationalists invoke, exactly as if they possessed it in an indubitable way, when in fact we would not find two people in agreement, if it were that we demand them to really erect it, rather than to simply continue to invoke it).

103 See above SW XI: 243ff and the beginning of the eleventh lecture. Compare also SW XI: 386 [additional ref. IG].

104 This search for the person is the same search which drives the *state* to a kingdom. The monarchy makes possible that which is impossible by the law, for laws, for example, which are valid *in* the state, are not valid for the state. Further, because it is necessary to take responsibility, it is necessary that a person exists who would be responsible (in front of a higher tribunal than that of the law), the king, who offers himself in sacrifice for the people. Furthermore, reason and law [570] are without love, only the person

[570] The I is thus the one who says: I want God outside of the idea, and with that said demands the reversal mentioned above that we will now determine more closely in its consequences.

This willing concerns only the transition. That by which positive philosophy itself begins, is by the A^0 freed of its presupposition, recognized as *prius*. As that which is totally free of the idea, it is the pure *that* ("Εν τι [*Én ti*]). It is just as it remained standing as the residue of the preceding philosophy, except that now it is posited as beginning. But here is the position it must occupy in reality. For A^0 *is*, not because $-A+A \pm A$ is, but because of the opposite: there is $-A+A \pm A$ because there is A^0 (although it itself *is* not without the being of that which is [*Seyende*]).[105] It is thus also that which is beyond being. The formulation "I want God outside of the Idea" designates the same thing as "I want that which stands above the beings that are" [*über dem Seyenden*]. But it is in its indefinite being ("Εντι-Seyn)—and not in its Idea-Being)—that there exists what is irreducible and indissoluble by which it alone could be the indubitable beginning, as we saw earlier.[106] But there is no A^0 apart from what is. Without something by which it would show itself as existing, it would be so good as not existing at all. There would be no *science* concerning it (and thus also no positive philosophy). For there is no science there where there is nothing universal. It is thus necessary to show of the "Εν τι in which manner it is a being that really is [*das Seyende*]—and how the latter can only be manifest as the *posterius* and the *consequence* of the former. The question becomes the following: how is it possible that $-A+A \pm A$ could be the consequence of A^0? Once this question is answered, God is again understood in his relation to the idea. He is understood as the Lord of everything that is, but initially only of everything that is in the idea (not yet of the things that are outside of the idea). Only after this is it [571] of secondary concern to show that he is also the Lord of everything that is outside of the idea, i.e., of existing, empirical things. By this means, God would for the first time be introduced into *experience* and, in this sense (what was actually desired) into existence; he would be recognized in it. For if God not only has a relation to beings in the idea, but also to beings outside of the idea, i.e., to existing things (for that which exists is outside of the idea)—by this he shows his reality independent of the idea. It is a reality that subsists even when the idea is negated. In this way, God reveals himself as the actual Lord of being.

This does not complete the demonstration [*Beweis*] that is the subject of positive philosophy, but it has led to what is essential. This demonstration (of the

---

can love; but, in the state, this personality can only be the king, in front of whom everyone is equal.

105 The Position of God corresponds in the state to the position of the king. A^0 provides the *archetype* for the position of the king and his majesty, without which we could not ground it. Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.10, 1160b4-5: οὐ γάρ ἐστι βασιλεὺς ὁ μὴ αὐτάρκης καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς ὑπερέχων· ὁ δὲ τοιοῦτος οὐδενὸς προσδεῖται (*ou gár esti basileùs ho mḕ autárkēs kaì pâsi toîs agathoîs hyperéchōn: ho dè toioûtos oudenòs prosdeîtai*) (The king is an independent being and surpasses others in all sorts of goods; such a man needs nothing").

106 In the Thirteenth Lecture.

existence of the personal God) does not simply lead to a certain point, for example not just to the world as the object as our experience. For just as when I am with people who are important to me, I am not satisfied simply to know that they exist, but instead require continuous confirmations of their existence, the same thing holds here as well. We require that the Godhead [*die Gottheit*] always come closer and closer to human consciousness; we demand that she become an object of consciousness not only in her consequences, but *in herself*. But this can also only be achieved by degrees, especially since the requirement concerns that the Godhead enter not only the consciousness of some individuals, but of humanity; and since we see that this proof is a proof that passes throughout all of reality and through the whole history of the human race, it can never be regarded as a proof that has been completed. Instead, it a proof that is always in process and extends into the future of our species just as it reaches back into its past. It is above all in this sense that the positive philosophy is *historical* philosophy.

This is thus the task of the second philosophy; the transition to it is the same as the transition from the old covenant to the new, from the law to the gospel, from nature to spirit.

[572] But with regard to the initial question, "How is it possible that, if A^0 is *prius*, everything that is and can be [*das Seyende*], that is, everything that arises by virtue of the higher necessity of reason, happens to be posited with it?"—it is a question that is still to be answered by rational means. To this degree, it also belongs to these lectures. If in this form it is something new, it nevertheless already exists from before in another form—In the *Investigation of the Source of Eternal Truths.*[107]

107 This investigation is arranged in its historical development and leads to the solution of the question indicated above, in the edited essay in the annex "On the source of the eternal truths," which forms thus the apex of this *Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy.*

kabiri
The Official Journal of the
North American Schelling Society

BOOK REVIEWS

Schelling's Naturalism: Motion, Space and the Volition of Thought, by Ben Woodard, Glasgow, Edinburgh University Press, 2019, 256 pp., £ 75.00 (hardback), ISBN 9781474438179

Reviewed by PHOEBE LILY PAGE

The argument weaved throughout *Schelling's Naturalism,* as stated in the introduction, is Woodard's claim that nature is a species of "nested physical systems"[1] that are potentiated in Schelling by means of the *Potenzen* which indicate the openly constructive and non-restrictive character of both nature and philosophy. This argument develops into Woodard's claim that Schelling is ontologically minimalist whilst creatively expansive due to the ubiquity of the *Potenzen* throughout nature. This claim grounds the project's ambition to navigate through the dimensionality of thought and nature by means of algebra, diagram, and geometry, in terms of both metaphysics and epistemology. Woodard shares Schelling's conviction of a union of philosophy and the physical sciences and attempts to grasp throughout the project how "thought is part of nature's spatiality and temporally expanding continuum."[2] Thus Woodard shares a commitment to the continuity thesis expressed by Iain Hamilton Grant and Daniel Whistler that Schelling's philosophy is naturalistic and ought not to be periodized. Problematised throughout the book is how to navigate the constructive activity of thought with the activities of construction in nature: That is, how can thought and 'nature' be both a created system and a creative one?

Woodard's exposition of motion, space and thought is structured dynamically throughout the book. The reader follows a dense, non-linear journey through Schelling's articulation of these concepts in relation to thinkers both directly

1 Ben Woodard, *Schelling's Naturalism: Motion, Space and the Volition of Thought* (Glasgow: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), 1.

2 Woodard, *Schelling's Naturalism,* 2.

influential and conceptually related to Schelling. In this way, the scope of the book extends beyond Schelling scholarship in each chapter since Woodard locates Schelling within a cluster of diverse thinkers both historically and conceptually influential including Oken, Kielmeyer, Reinhold, and J.G. Grassmann, in addition to the classical figures of Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Spinoza, Fichte and Hegel. Whilst rich in content, the book is by no means an introductory piece for new Schellingian's but rather requires a careful reading, demanding the full attention of the reader throughout.

In each chapter, Woodard leads the reader through a web of historical analysis and argumentation with the question of thought's relation to nature firmly at hand. In Chapter One, the question of thought as a "species of motion" is structured, as to be expected, according to Schelling's response to Kant, Fichte and Spinoza. At the close of the chapter however, Woodard introduces Schelling's relation to Plato and Aristotle. Despite the proximity of Plato being well told in Schellingian literature, the recognition of Aristotle as a significant resource for how Schelling conceives of motion is a welcome position that remains in the background throughout the book. In Chapter Two, the Kantian division of inner and outer space is problematised through Maimon's critique of the critical project. Woodard's attention to Maimon demonstrates the scope of his interest in the historical context of Schelling's projects while illustrating his ability to form conceptual ties. A close analysis of Kant's "What Does It Mean To Orient Oneself in Thinking," and aspects of the *Opus Postumum*, tends to rely on the spatial terms employed by Kant like *navigation*, *orientation*, and *horizon* to problematise inner and outer space for Kant, rather than a direct relation to Schelling's thought.

Chapter Three is concerned with the natural place of mathematics in Schelling. Woodard asks how to situate mathematics in nature so that it is not purely ideal but rather can be operative in creating qualitative differences that "location and navigation engender."[3] Woodard highlights the recognition Fichte and Hegel have achieved as contributors to the mathematical thinkers after Kant, whereas appropriate attention has until now not been paid to Schelling. As such, Woodard embarks on a demonstration to indicate how Schellingian arithmetic and geometry have shaped a material mathematization of nature in Christian Samuel Weiss and H. and J.G. Grassmann. Whilst admitting that the historical connections require further work, this example highlights Woodard's expansive and adaptive project to take seriously the concept of motion and space throughout all of nature's aspects by means of a Schellingian investigation.

While there is a thread running throughout the book, each chapter develops an argument in itself. Chapter Four, however, brings the previous chapters together through an analysis of the *Potenzen* which Woodard emphasises as forming the basis of the Schellingian position as 'ontologically minimalist' since the *Potenzen* suggest that "construction by nature does not differ from construction by us in kind, but

3 Woodard, *Schelling's Naturalism,* 105.

only in location and degree."[4] Thus, central to Woodard's claims for how space, motion and thought can be conceived nature-philosophically as a species of difference without being radically disjoint from one another is Schelling's development of the *Potenzen*. This chapter is the crucial hinge of the book, that joins the historical analysis of the previous chapters, and paves the way for the contemporary considerations of those to follow. Woodard surveys the different species of *Potenzen* from the *nature-philosophical*, identity and absolute modes, thereby, tracing the historical landscape of the *Potenzen* through a critique of Spinoza, Kant and Fitche, on the one hand, and *Naturphilosphen* Oken and Eschenmeyer on the other. For Woodard, the *Potenz* are Schelling's "attempt to create the leanest structure of nature possible in order to determine both transcendental and immanent conditions for, and beyond, human cognition."[5] The result according to Woodard is that the *Potenzen* "function as a structuration of freedom-as-dynamics, thereby criss-crossing the mind-world boundary."[6]

Chapter Five asks what is at stake for epistemology given the real, yet inexistent potencies on the one hand, and object and facts on the other. To do so, Woodard traces the mutual impact of field theory and Schelling's philosophy to argue for both local creation and knowledge without falling into the various positions he critiques. Through a somewhat unexpected detour through rainbows, Woodard postulates how these phenomena indicate the locality of knowledge and the difficulty to grasp nature within a single theorem. Constructed knowledge is asymmetric with the excess of nature (from the potencies), non-reductive and both ontologically and epistemically significant.

The concluding chapter ends by placing Schelling within the field of pragmatism. Woodard claims that Schelling's "emphasis on motion and space, coupled with his particular mode of philosophical speculation, lead to a form of proto-pragmatism."[7] In this last chapter then, Woodard connects Schelling to Peirce's pragmatism, and Sellars' notions of pure process and the myth of the given, amongst others, to demonstrate the contemporary uptake of Schellingianism within the analytic tradition.

Schelling's Naturalism is a rigorous and exciting new addition to Schelling scholarship. Whilst a traceable indebtedness to Iain Hamilton Grant's claim for the naturalisation of thought is clear, and acknowledged throughout, Woodard's distinctiveness is evidenced in the experimentation of Schellingian thought beyond its historical situation and his ability to grasp the concepts of space, navigation and volition as strictly found within Schelling's work, and to speculatively develop these theses beyond the original texts.

4 Woodard, *Schelling's Naturalism,* 112.
5 Woodard, *Schelling's Naturalism,* 107.
6 Woodard, *Schelling's Naturalism,* 111.
7 Woodard, *Schelling's Naturalism,* 191.

kabiri
The Official Journal of the
North American Schelling Society

The Absolute in History: The Philosophy and Theology of History in Schelling's Late Philosophy, by Walter Kasper, translated by Sr. Katherine E. Wolff. Mahewah. The Collected Works of Walter Kasper: New York: Paulist Press. 2018, 592 pp, $79.95 (hardback), ISBN 9780809106295

The Ages of the World (1811), by F.W.J. Schelling, translated with an Introduction by Joseph P. Lawrence. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. 2019, 276 pp., $ 95.00 (hardback), ISBN 9781438474052

Philosophy of Revelation (1841-42) and Related Texts, by F.W.J. Schelling, selected & translated, with an introduction by Klaus Ottmann. Thompson, Conn: Spring Publications. 2020, 384 pp., $32.00 (paperback), ISBN 9780882140667

Reviewed by SEAN J. MCGRATH

Two new translations of Schelling and a classic piece of German Schelling scholarship have appeared in succession in the past three years. In 2018, a translation of Walter Kasper's seminal 1964 study, *The Absolute in History: The Philosophy and Theology of History in Schelling's Late Philosophy* came out. In 2019, Joseph Lawrence's translation of the 1811 edition of *The Ages of the World* appeared. And in the spring of this year, a complete translation of the Paulus edition of *The Philosophy of Revelation* was published by Spring Publications. English readers no longer have any excuses for not knowing what happened to Schelling's thought after the 1809 Freedom Essay.

*

Walter Kasper's massive study of the positive philosophy deftly guides us through all of the main moves in Schelling's late work. What it lacks in attention to ontological and logical issues, it makes up for in its thorough exposure of the theological background of Schelling's Philosophy of Revelation. Kasper's learned contextualisation of Schelling's work in terms of the history of 19th and 20th century theology alone makes this book essential reading for any serious student of the positive philosophy. The book belongs to a minor literature on the late Schelling in Germany and France in the 20th century—none of which has been translated up till now (Fuhrmans, Schulz, Tilliette). Presently a Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church, Kasper was a young theologian at Tübingen University when he published this massive study. The translation, completed by one Sister Katherine E. Wolff (whose name I had to work to find in small print on the copyright page), is volume 2 in the Collected Works of Walter Kasper, published by the American Catholic company, Paulist Press. One can only wonder what your devout American Catholic will make of Kasper's youthful enthusiasm for the speculative Trinitarianism and semi-Arian Christology of the late Schelling. Kasper leaves no stone unturned and fearlessly negotiates the nest of heresies that Schelling opens up in his philosophical re-thinking of the creation and redemption of the world by the Triune God.

In terms of the Schulz-Furhmans dispute, Kasper is on Schulz's side, although he purports to have struck a synthesis. Where Schulz argued that the late philosophy of Schelling was the logical culmination of his earlier work and the final fruition (*die Vollendung*) of German Idealism, Furhmans argued that the middle Schelling broke with idealism under the influence of Christianity, even if he back peddled on the decision in the Philosophy of Revelation and became an idealist once again in the end. Kasper believes with Schulz that the positive philosophy is continuous with identity philosophy and does not in fact succeed in overcoming idealism. While this claim has to be in part true, since the identity philosophy (re-conceived as "negative philosophy") is the non-dialectical presuppositions of the positive philosophy, I think Kasper overstates the point. In the end, the positive is that which resists idealisation and escapes every net which reason casts around it. But without idealism, the real could not be recognised as that which transcends the ideal. After Schelling, there was only one direction for philosophy to go: more deeply into existence, empiricism, materiality and historical facticity, which it of course did in the work of Kierkegaard, Comte, Fechner, and Marx, and on the theological side, Bultmann and Barth. On occasion Kasper insists on continuity at the expense of coherence. It is certainly not the case, as Kasper suggests, that Schelling was already a philosopher of revelation in the period of his identity philosophy. I suspect Kasper is attached to the Schulzian reading of Schelling's Philosophy of Revelation because it allows him and his Catholic readers to admire Schelling from a distance and to more easily discern the lines of his significant deviations from orthodoxy. In the final analysis Schelling, according to Kasper, fails to keep creation and Creator distinct—he fails to respect the analogy of

being, which is always the litmus test of orthodoxy for Catholic thinkers. Schelling's Trinitarian theogony is still too essentially connected to cosmogony for orthodoxy. In spite of his best efforts, Schelling compromises the principle of divine aseity.

The book is a youthful work, and Kasper is hesitant and qualified in his critique. I'm sure the Cardinal would have written quite a different book. Kasper affirms as much as he can the genuinely Christian quality to Schelling's thought (by contrast with Hegel's) and he goes out of his way to defend the orthodox quality of some of Schelling's theories. Sometimes his critique is so veiled as to be incomprehensible. For example, he writes, "For this reason, Schelling turned against orthodoxy, for one may not make Christ into a teaching, since it must rather be understood as a history" (455). Now what exactly does this mean? That orthodoxy neglects the historical Christ? That what matters for orthodoxy is the teachings of Jesus and not the history of the Christ event? This was certainly not true of mainstream 19th century Anglo-Catholic orthodoxy as any reader of Schelling's contemporary John Henry Newman will know. And it is even less true of 20th century Protestant and Catholic theology. Nevertheless it was Schelling who said, before Kierkegaard repeated it, that the point of Christianity is the Christ, not the teachings of Jesus. Jesus is much more than a moral teacher or sage according to Schelling; he is God incarnate who offered himself for the redemption of the world. This was not a common emphasis in 19th century Protestant theology in Germany.

Kasper's book is thorough, accurate in its exposition, and heavily cross-referenced with now forgotten figures and texts from the history of theology. Some of the more arcane material on 19th century theology and philosophy of religion which appears in the footnotes is crucial for understanding Schelling's work and can scarcely be found anywhere else. Who knew that Schelling's Philosophy of Revelation was not entirely a lone wolf enterprise but belonged to a small, predominantly Catholic literature of philosophers of revelation in Germany, people no one reads nowadays, such as Johann Sebastien Drey, Franz Anton Staudenmaier, Friedrich Pilgram, Martine Deutinger, along with the better known but still under-researched Franz von Baader? It seems *Le tournant théologique de la phénoménologie française* was preceded a hundred and fifty years earlier by *Die theologische Kehre* in German philosophy, and the late Schelling's work was at the centre of it. In short, Kasper's *The Absolute in History* is the kind of meticulous scholarship Germans are justly famous for and from which the rest of us have so much to learn.

*

Joseph Lawrence's translation of Schelling's 1811 *Ages of the World* and related texts offers English scholars the missing link between the philosophy of freedom of the middle Schelling and the positive philosophy. In this version, and only this version, Schelling explicitly relates the three potencies (the rotary motion of drives

that Žižek likes to think of evidence of God's psychosis) to orthodox Trinitarian theology. It seems that Schelling was tracking Christian revelation from shortly after the publication of the Freedom Essay. Lawrence's translation, and especially the "Notes and Fragments," makes it clear, at least to this reader, that the seven books of the Philosophy of Mythology and Revelation, which Schelling lectured on every year from 1827 to his retirement from teaching in 1844, is the culmination of *The Ages of the World* project. Contrary to popular belief, *Ages* did not simply 'fail,' with Schelling maniacally producing draft upon draft in a Dionysian fit of inspiration until he collapsed exhausted and silenced by the exertion for a decade; the *Ages* drafts were the first steps toward the Philosophy Mythology and Revelation, to which he turned with resolve and energy as early as his Erlangen lectures of 1821-1827.

Joseph Lawrence is one of the first champions of Schellingian philosophy in North America. He spent his career at Holy Cross College where he initiated countless undergraduates in Schelling studies, some of whom have gone on to distinguished academic careers of their own. He has published only sporadically, his dissertation *Schellings Philosophie des ewigen Anfangs: Die Natur als Quelle der Geschichte* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1989) and more recently a study of Socrates as a teacher of wisdom in the light of world philosophy, *Socrates among Strangers* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2015). We have good reason to hope for more from him in the near future, for Lawrence is quite active in retirement. However, Lawrence, in the tradition of Socrates and Schelling himself, is pre-eminently a philosopher of the spoken word, as those who have had the chance to hear him speak know. He can be utterly spellbinding live, and can easily hold an audience in rapt attention for two hours as he connects everything from Goethe's Faust, to Schelling's reading of the taming of Cronus by the love of the Son, to Trump America, to the absurdity of contemporary progressivist politics, to the Church of St. John, to the Bhagavad Gita, to ... you get the idea. The first time I heard Lawrence, on Goethe at the second meeting of NASS, in London Ontario in 2013, I felt my soul activated, which is not something I am accustomed to feeling at an academic meeting. Lawrence lives in his words and his words are alive with his life.

Lawrence is one of a very small, select group of scholars working in the English-speaking world today who genuinely understand Schelling's Johannine eschatological Christianity. He is possessed of an existential and sympathetic grasp of the philosophical power of the late Schelling's vision of the ultimate future, "an impossible hope, above all, the hope that nothing essential is ever truly lost" (Lawrence, introduction, 50). Or in more Biblical terms, which Schelling comes increasingly to prefer after 1811, the vision of the Christic end of history, when, as Paul says in one of Schelling's favourite passages, God shall be "all in all" (*panta en passin*, Cor 15:28), and pantheism will have become true (SW XIV: 66). Where many commentaries on the *Ages* founder at some point in theological ignorance, and dissipate in continental ambiguity, Lawrence soars in speculative theological flight. Where many hedge every

sentence with academic qualifiers meant to assure their woke audience that they don't actually believe this stuff, Lawrence steps in and challenges them all. What if Schelling is right? What if the world is destined to be united by love, not utopian progress, that thinly veiled secular Christianity of modernity, which Lawrence as much as Schelling rejects, but the love that each of us longs for in our innermost depths? This, for Lawrence as for Schelling, is the core of the Gospel, the promise that we shall find one another again, and be united under one God, but each having arrived there through his or her own path, with his or her own religious symbols not contradicted but validated by the revelation. What would it mean for our philosophy and politics now, if we lived out of this hope in a unity to come?

We are already familiar with God's agonistic break with eternity which inaugurates primordial time, the three archetypal ages of the world, the past that was never present, the present that never passes, and the future which never arrives. We have Norman's translation of the 1813 draft, with Žižek's commentary (University of Michigan, 1997), and Wirth's translation of the 1815 draft (SUNY, 2000). One might well ask, why do we need another version of *Ages*? My answer to this is threefold.

First, because the 1811 edition is the first draft, and as Schelling himself said in a letter when he was preparing it, "The first draft is usually the best."[1] Moreover, the 1811 draft is the only one that Schelling approved for publishing (even if he rescinded soon after it was typeset). The 1813 edition is quite different from both the 1811 and the 1815 drafts in tone and style. The 1815 version has been significantly edited by Schelling's son and editor of the collected works.[2] The 1811 version stands apart from both, for both its Trinitarian reference mentioned above, and for its more passionate and existential direction. As Lawrence says in his introduction, "What makes this version stranger than the later versions is that, unique among philosophical texts, it seems to have been written solely from the heart, and, just as those ancient scriptures that Faulkner calls 'His Book,' written *for* the heart. It is the work of a man in deep sorrow who expresses his hope that the anger and hatred so generally evoked by suffering can be transformed into compassion and love."[3] The sorrow referred to here is the death of Caroline Schlegel in 1809, the love of Schelling's life. This translation, therefore, needed to be done for scholarly reasons.

My second reason for why we need this book is because it is Joseph Lawrence's translation. Lawrence has chosen a literary approach to the text, translating the *Ages,* as he says, as though it were a novel. As is often the case, a literary or poetic approach

1 Schelling to Pauline Gotter, his future wife, in 1811, cited in Lawrence,"Translator's Introduction," in F.W.J. Schelling, *The Ages of the World (1811)*, translated Joseph P. Lawrence (Albany, NY: SUNY, 2019), 11.

2 Walter Kasper, in the book also reviewed here, offers an interpretation of the three versions as progressing gradually away from the Bohemian theosophy of the Freedom Essay, with its God who is born of a cosmogonic process, towards the stronger doctrine of divine transcendence characteristic of his later work. See Kasper, *The Absolute in History*, 242-248, 308-315.

3 Lawrence, "Translator's Introduction," 3.

to a text by a gifted translator such as Lawrence proves to be more faithful to the original than a more technically precise translation. Further, Lawrence's substantial introduction constitutes an important work of scholarship and interpretation in its own right. Among other fascinating points, Lawrence argues that the mytho-poetic prophetic writing of the *Ages* needs to be correlated with science, that is with modern physics and evolutionary theory, and the fit, as Žižek has also noted, is surprisingly good. God's decision that contracts infinity and expands into time stands in nicely for the Big Bang, and the Schellingian idea that "each thing has its own time ... in terms of its relationship to its own beginning and end" resonates with Einsteinian relativity.[4]

My third answer: we need this book because of what Lawrence included in the translation, notably Schelling's unpublished writings associated with the preparation of the text, "Notes and Fragments to the First Book: The Past," and "Notes and Fragments to the Second Book: The Present," which together constitute a third of the whole book. These notes from 1811-1813 were assembled by Schelling himself but were first published in German by Manfred Schröter, who had transcribed them, along with the existing three drafts of *Ages* (selected from the over twenty that existed) before the whole Munich archive in which they were stored was destroyed by the Allied bombing of 1944. They not only offer us a rare glimpse into Schelling's creative process, they also give us a clear view of the religious direction of Schelling's thought at this pivotal point of his career. As Lawrence points out, they fill out what Schelling intended to do with the Book II (the present) and Book III (the future). I had never read them before and I was overwhelmed by them. The *Ages* is an ambiguous work: it lends itself to multiple interpretations, psychoanalytic, neo-Pagan, gnostic, Kabbalistic, etc. But Schelling's intentions with the work were anything but ambiguous. In the fragments we listen in on Schelling's inner monologue as he conceives the plan for a great systematic work, and we witness the very turn to the positive in him, which began in 1809 and was more or less confirmed by 1815. Anyone who reads these fragments can no longer doubt that (a) Schelling is, at this stage of his career, a deeply religious thinker, and (b) that that which is most religiously thought worthy for the later Schelling is Christianity as such, not Kant's and Fichte's Christianity edited for learned and morally upright Europeans, nor Hegel's speculatively sublated Christianity, but Christianity in history, creed and cult. At the foundation of Schelling's middle thought lie the mysteries of the Trinity and the incarnation of the Logos. What Schelling struggled to do in the *Ages*, and only succeeded in doing in *The Philosophy of Revelation*, is to apply these traditional Christian doctrines, which he held to be reasonable interpretations of historical facts, to what was for him from his earliest works in nature-philosophy the central problem of philosophy: namely, the question, How does the infinite give rise to the finite without ceasing to be infinite? Or in words more familiar to readers of *The Grounding of the Positive Philosophy*, Why is there something and rather not nothing?

4 Lawrence, "Translator's Introduction," 18.

Why is there order and rather not chaos? Schelling combs through the Church Fathers, the Scholastics, the Kabbalah, and theosophy for clues as to how to explain the fact of divine creation from nothing, and in 1811 settles on the answer which he will refine but not reject in the *Philosophy of Revelation*. Creation is God's productive dissociation from eternity, the finitization of spirit for the sake of the production of love. More concretely, creation is the manifestation in time and space of a process which God has already undergone. Cosmogony repeats theogony—that is the point of the rotary motion of three drives, and the decision with contracts the divine being. What happens in God—the achievement of love between the three persons of the Trinity—is externalised in nature, and will be complete when humanity is united with one another through their unity with the divine. The mystery of the Trinity and the historical consequences of its eternal achievement are visible at every level of material existence, from the play of the irreducible components of the natural world, to the dynamics of consciousness and unconsciousness in the human psyche. Joseph Lawrence's 1811 edition of *Ages* is a crucial piece of the puzzle for understanding how Schelling the *Naturphilosoph* and objective idealist become Schelling the Philosopher of Revelation.

*

Klaus Ottmann's translation of the Paulus edition of the Berlin lectures on the Philosophy of Revelation of 1841/42 is without exaggeration a game changer. I can only imagine the boom in doctoral dissertations it will precipitate. And it is also a lovely book, in an attractive elongated format, with a stylish font, on good paper. Every student of Schelling will want to own one.

The translation comes a bit out of left field. Ottmann is known in name at least in Schelling circles for his 2010 translation of Schelling's *Philosophy and Religion*. Spring Publications is a bit of a mystery. It was founded by the popular mythologist Joseph Campbell and is mostly known for books on Jungian philosophy. Perhaps Ottmann, who manages the press, discerns a relationship between archetypal psychology and the Philosophy of Revelation, which is hardly far fetched. Schelling's thesis of a primordial consciousness of the forms of God which constitutes the mythological age is clearly analogous to Jung's collective unconscious.[5]

5 We know that Jung read Schelling's *Philosophy of Mythology*; a copy of it can be seen in his library in Küsnacht, complete with Jung's own marginalia. Jung references Schelling's Philosophy of Mythology in his early work which marked his break with Freud, the 1911 *Symbols of Transformation.* See C.G. Jung, *Symbols of Transformation*, in *Collected Works of CG Jung*, vol. 12 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), 29n. Jung's references to Schelling have been surveyed by Paul Bishop in his "Jung's Red Book and its Relation to Aspects of German Idealism," *Journal of Analytical Psychology* 57, no. 3 (2012): 335-363, at 337-340. I have examined the systematic relation of Jung's thought to Schelling's in S.J. McGrath, "The Question Concerning Metaphysics: A Schellingian Intervention into Analytical Psychology," International Journal of Jungian Studies 6, 1 (2014): 23-51.

Ottmann's translation is elegant and highly readable, if occasionally idiosyncratic ("potence" instead of "potency" for *Potenz*). I hate quibbling with translations, however. It is usually a cheap shot levelled at one who has laboured on the text for countless hours by one who has not. Ottoman has done Schelling studies a great service. The source text itself has its limitations. Paulus' infamous transcript, which was published without Schelling's consent, is rough and fragmentary. Some of this will be incomprehensible to newcomers to Schelling's late philosophy. Ottmann has anticipated this and generously supplemented the text with translated passages from other transcripts of the lectures (eg., Kiekegaard's) and other versions of the Philosophy of Revelation.

The story of how this transcript came about is worth re-telling. Schelling kicked off his royally appointed Berlin Professorship in October of 1841 with these lectures, and everyone who was anyone in German academia was there, listening eagerly to what Schelling was going to say. They longed for a new turn in philosophy after German Idealism. When Schelling started in on the three potencies and they heard something that sounded like a version of Hegel's dialectical appropriation of Christian theology, most of them groaned and left. They were wrong: Schelling's Philosophy of Revelation is not merely an alternative to Hegel's philosophy of religion (although it is surely that), and those who stayed, such as Kierkegaard (at least until the end of the semester), went on to change the course of philosophy under the influence of Schelling's revival of the Scholastic distinction between essential, logical knowledge and existential, historical knowledge. The text was first published in 1843 without Schelling's permission or knowledge by H.E.G. Paulus, a fierce critic of Schelling, and a Hegelian theological revisionist who denied revelation as a possibility altogether. Paulus intended to humiliate Schelling by exposing the folly of Schelling's last system to the world—he thought it enough to simply publish Schelling's words verbatim without comment and let the old man hang himself with his outrageous claims. Schelling unsuccessfully attempted to sue Paulus for publishing his work against his wishes (the first lawsuit in the history of the German university), but to no avail. The book went to press and was widely read. Paulus only succeeded in ensuring that Schelling's Berlin lectures had the widest possible reception, and that the only reason anyone remembers his name is because of them.[6]

Ottmann's translation includes, along with the whole of the Paulus *Nachschrift,* a solid-enough introduction and several other pieces of Schelling. The book opens with an early writing, "Revelation and Public Education" (1798: SWI: 472-482), a new translation of the chapter on Christianity from the 1803 lectures, *On University Studies*, and the inaugural Munich lecture of 1827. It concludes with a new translation of the opening lecture of *The Grounding of the Positive Philosophy*, and, as an appendix, a translation of one of the speeches Schelling gave at the Bavarian

6 The first lecture was even translated in an American transcendentalist journal in 1843. See "Schelling's Introductory Lecture in Berlin," *The Dial* 3, no. 3 (January): 398-404.

Academy of Sciences, the 1833, "On the Significance of One of the Newly Discovered Wall Paintings at Pompeii." Ottmann's point in this eclectic assemblage of texts seems to be to demonstrate the consistency of Schelling's interest in the Philosophy of Mythology and Revelation over his long career, a view which he maintains in his introduction. Unfortunately, some of the texts Ottmann has chosen prove exactly the opposite point. Take for example, the 1798 "Revelation and Public Education." This article was occasioned by Schelling's reading of Friedrich Immanuel Niethammer, *Versuch einer Begründung des vernunftmäßigen Offenbarungsglaubens* (Leibniz and Jena: Freidrich Frommann, 1798). Both Schelling and Niethammer agree that revelation should not be rendered 'rational' through philosophical justifications, and that philosophy should have nothing to do with anything purported to be revealed. "The concept of revelation cannot claim scientific dignity," Schelling writes, a claim he will directly contradict thirty years later. "This concept, if raised to the level of a principle, would destroy all use of reason."[7] What more proof do we need that Schelling the *Naturphilosph*, not only had little interest in Christianity, he was in fact opposed to introducing Christian themes into philosophy?[8] Still, there are tantalising harbingers of what is to come. At one point in the 1798 essay, Schelling defines revelation in precisely the same terms he will use in the Berlin lectures. The concept of revelation, the young Schelling writes, signifies "a real effect of the highest essence [i.e., God] on the human mind."[9] Compare this with the definition offered in the official version of the lectures on the Philosophy of Revelation over forty years later: "Revelation ... is expressly conceived as something which presupposes an *Actus* outside of consciousness."[10] However, the conditions for receiving revelation are totally re-conceived in the late work. In 1798 revelation, if it existed would reduce the mind to "absolute passivity."[11] According to the early Schelling, who was deeply influenced by Fichte, the mind is pure, infinite activity; any passivity which might appear to it, such as the passivity of sensation, intuition, or the encounter with the real, is a passivity that is underwritten by an unconscious ("transcendental") act of positing that which appears to limit it. The early Schelling objects to the very idea of revelation because of his idealist commitment to reason as a productive activity of generating the world. Revelation for the late Schelling no more reduces the mind to absolute passivity than does a sensory encounter with the physically real, or a personal

7 F.W.J. Schelling, "Revelation and Public Education (Jena 1798)," trans. Klaus Ottmann, in F.W.J. Schelling, *Philosophy of Revelation (1841-42) and Related Texts*, selected, trans. with an an introduction by Klaus Ottmann (Thompson, Conn: Spring Publications. 2020), 3-11, 10.

8 All of this supports the now unpopular claim that something indeed changes in the late Schelling, and the change occurs in 1809, but this is a matter for another time. See my forthcoming, *The Turn to the Positive: The Philosophical Foundations of the Late Schelling* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2021).

9 Schelling, "Revelation and Public Education," 10.

10 Schelling, *Philosophie der Offenbarung, Zweiter Teil*, SW XIV: 1-334, 3.

11 Schelling, "Revelation and Public Education," 5.

encounter with the will of another. In fact, the very presupposition of revelation is freedom, the freedom of the one who reveals his or her self, and the freedom of the one who receives the revelation as a revelation. The definition cited above from the SW version of the Philosophy of Revelation significantly adds the following: "Revelation ... presupposes ... a relation which the most free cause, God, grants or has granted to the human consciousness not out of necessity but in complete freedom."[12]

The Paulus is not the definitive version of the Philosophy of Revelation, and it needs to be supplemented by the other versions. I think it is safe to announce that a translation of the much more substantial *Urfassung der Philosophie der Offenbarung* is being prepared as this review goes to press. The great advantage of the Paulus over the much more complete two volume version of the Philosophy of Revelation in the Collected Works, or the more polished 900 page *Urfassung*, is that one gets the whole sweep of the Philosophy of Revelation in less than three hundred pages. The triadic doctrine of the potencies, the critique of Hegel's logicism, the monotheism treatise, the semi-Arian doctrine of the Trinity, the speculative Christology, even the doctrine of the three ages of the Church—it is all here, now rendered in graceful English by a skilled translator. I can hardly wait to see what new readers of Schelling will say about it. My advice to them: read it with Kasper in one hand, and the memory of Žižek effaced by Lawrence's *Ages* translation.

12 Schelling, *Philosophie der Offenbarung*, 3.