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Schelling: Powers of the Idea

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REVIEWS AND RESPONSES

Antikritik

F.W.J. SCHELLING

Translated by Graham Wetherall

Translator's Introduction

Schelling's *Antikritik* first appeared in the *Intelligenzblatt* of the *Allgemeinen Literatur-Zeitung* no. 165 in December 1796. It was written in response to a dismissive review of his 1795 work *Of the I as the Principle of Philosophy* which had been published in an issue of the journal two months earlier. The review in question was written by Johann Benjamin Erhard, a friend of both Karl Reinhold and Friedrich Niethammer, but was published anonymously, as was common practice at the time.[1]

Rather than being of Schelling's own invention, '*Antikritik*' is simply a standard title given to responses to reviews, which was appended to the article by the journal's editors. As such, it could be loosely translated as 'response to a critic' or 'counter-critique'. The *Allgemeinen Literatur-Zeitung* often featured such 'counter-critiques' directly following on from a review, giving authors the chance to respond to criticisms.[2] As such, it is a genre of writing rather than a title. Nonetheless, Schelling himself took to referring to the piece in letters as his '*Antikritik*', and it is published under this title in the 1982 historical-critical edition.

As an example of the genre, Schelling's *Antikritik* stands out both for its length (it is longer than the review to which it responds), and for its

1 See Harmut Buchner's 'Editorial Introduction' to *Antikritik*, in Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *Historisch-kritische Ausgabe* I/3, eds. Harmut Buchner, Wilhelm G. Jacobs, and Annemarie Pieper, (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1982), p. 185.

2 Schelling had originally hoped for his Antikritik to be included as an insertion in the original volume at his own expense, but it seems likely that its length precluded this possibility. Ibid. p. 183ff.

sardonic tone. Schelling seems to have been particularly offended by the fact that the reviewer takes his book to advocate a form of Fichtean *Grundsatz* philosophy. He insists instead that the 'I' that stands at the centre of the work must be taken not as a grounding principle, but as a postulate, 'a call for the free act with which all philosophising [...] must begin' (see p. 4 below). Commentators are divided as to whether this amounts to an act of self-revisionism on Schelling's part, or whether it simply renders explicit a distance from foundationalism that was already implicit in *Of the I as the Principle of Philosophy.*[3]

* *

Antikritik: Some remarks occasioned by the review of my work: 'Of the I as the Principle of Philosophy' in 'die Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung' no.319.[4]

[191] The reviewer knows how to position himself against the author[5] from the very outset. '*Unfortunately,*'[6] he says, 'his own "I" is and remains for him incomprehensible as an object of knowledge, such that he is even less capable of understanding that which others so *graciously* seek to prove to him of their own "I"'. This means, in other words: throughout the course of an entire book, the author attempts to report and to prove god-only-knows-what of his own 'I' – who could possibly listen to such a

3 See e.g. Christian Iber, *Das Andere der Vernunft als ihr Prinzip* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1994), p. 78 n. 11; Richard Fincham, 'Schelling's Subversion of Fichtean Monism, 1794-1796', in *Fichte, German Idealism, and Early Romanticism*, ed. Daniel Breazeale and Tom Rockmore (New York: Rodopi, 2010), p. 153; and Daniel Whistler, *Schelling's Theory of Symbolic Language: Forming the System of Identity*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 72.

4 This translation is based on the text of *Antikritik* as it appears in Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *Historisch-kritische Ausgabe* I/3, eds. Harmut Buchner, Wilhelm G. Jacobs, and Annebarie Pieper (Stuggart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1982), pp. 191-195.

5 *Translator's Note.* Schelling refers to himself in the third person as 'the author' [*der Verfasser*] throughout, and to Erhard (who, as was generally the case in *ALZ*, published the review anonymously) as 'the reviewer' [*der Recensent*].

6 *Translator's Note.* Although Schelling uses quotation marks here, he loosely paraphrases the original review.

tedious story? The reviewer was on the right track. If he had brought his piece to a close here, it would have been fortuitous. *Unfortunately*, however, he proceeds to transcribe several passages from the book in which the author explicitly claims that 'for *him too* (just as for the reviewer), the "I" in general is entirely incomprehensible as an object of knowledge: nothing can be proven of the "I" as an object (and so nothing can be *known* of it): the unconditioned (the "I") cannot even be sought in the objective world: the "I" is actual only in its action [*nur in seinem Handeln wirklich*]; its very *essence* consists in *freedom*, a freedom of which one can never be conscious, since it is the *condition* of all consciousness.'

Among thinking men, it ought surely go without saying that any purported *principle* of knowledge cannot itself be an *object* of knowledge. The reviewer should hardly have wanted to instruct me on this point, had he in fact read the text in question. 'But what is the sense in all of this? Is it not there in so many words in the *title* of the book, that the author has made the "I" the object of his investigation?' – The reviewer will surely know that there is a difference between the object of a *book*, and an object of *knowledge in general*. [192] The former is called a *logical* object, the latter a *real* object. When the reviewer says that the 'I' is not an object of knowledge, he thereby makes it an object of his *judgement*. His objection is thus very much in the spirit of the well-known: you know nothing of things-in-themselves; and so you also do not know that they *cannot be represented* [*nicht vorstellbar sind*]! – 'But the predicates the author employs in his attempt to define the "I" remove all doubt' - all doubt that it could ever have occurred to the author to speak of the I as an object of (theoretical) knowledge! Anyone who claims to know the principles of criticism [*Kritik*] should at least know this much: that the predicates of the absolute can never be predicates of an *object*. – What, then, the reviewer will ask, is the purpose of this whole undertaking?

This question must be answered for him. Why should I not seize this opportunity to finally be *clear*, clearer perhaps than was wanted of me? The aim of the author was none other than the following: to liberate philosophy from the stagnation into which it has inevitability fallen through ill-fated investigations into *a first principle* [*ersten Grundsatz*] *of philosophy*; to prove that genuine philosophy can only begin with free acts [*freyen Handlungen*], and that the elevated status of abstract principles spells the death of all philosophising. The question: from which *principle*

[Grundsazt] must philosophy begin? seemed to him unworthy of a free, self-aware man. At most, they seemed to him good enough for a man who, like Nicolai, is forever falling out with his own 'I', and, not knowing what to do with *himself*, must instead have a ball of wool to unwind, or an onion to peel. - Since he [the author] held philosophy to be a pure product of man as a free being [*des freyen Menschen*], a singular act of freedom, he believed himself in possession of a higher concept of philosophy than many a tearful philosopher, of the sort who claimed to have traced the horrors of the French Revolution along with all of [193] mankind's unhappiness back to the lack of agreement among their peers, and who thought they could remedy this unhappiness by means of an empty, meaningless principle, in which they believed to have the whole of philosophy neatly wrapped up. He believed that man was born to *act*, not to *speculate*, and so that his first step in philosophy, too, must herald the arrival of a free being. This is why he thought so little of written philosophy, and even less of the idea of any single *speculative* principle *at its centre*. But it was *universal* philosophy that he held in lowest esteem of all. Only a 'man of worldly wisdom' [*Weltweiser*] could boast of such a philosophy, which, like Lessing's windmills, lives in friendship with all 32 winds.[7] Since, however, the philosophical public suddenly seemed to only have ears for *first principles* [*erste Grundsätze*], *his own* first principle had to be a *postulate* [*ein Postulat*], a call for the free act with which all philosophising, in his estimation, must begin. The first result of all philosophy, to act freely in relation to oneself, seemed to him to be as necessary as the first postulate of geometry to draw a straight line. The philosopher need not prove freedom, any more than the geometer proves the line. Seen from this perspective, it is also clear that this philosophy could easily dispense with its terminology, - terminology which – strangely enough – a professor from Breslau later prophesied would be found laughable by a bookseller from Berlin.[8] - This terminology was employed for the sake of those who cannot comprehend anything without [194] terminology, and who only found it so burdensome because their heads

7 *Translator's Note.* The editors of the *Historisch-kritische Ausgabe* note that this is a reference to a passage from G.E. Lessing's published correspondence. Ibid. p.245. The letter is reproduced in *Gotthold Ephraim Lessings sämmtliche Schriften*, volume 12, Berlin: 1793, p. 144-5.

8 *Translator's Note.* The editors of the *Historisch-kritische Ausgabe* suggest that the 'professor from Breslau' refers to Georg Gustav Fülleborn, and the 'Bookseller from Berlin' to Friedrich Nicolai.

were already filled with other terminology – for everyone else, it was entirely useless.

Meanwhile this philosophy – which, after all, is itself only an *idea* whose realisation the philosopher can only expect from practical reason - will and must remain incomprehensible, even laughable, to all those who, unable to elevate themselves to the level of ideas, have not yet learned from Kant that ideas ought never be objects of an idle speculation, but only of a free act [*freyen Handelns*]; that the entire realm of ideas has reality only in relation to man's action; and that, wherever man begins to *create himself*, to realise himself, he no longer 'finds' *objects*. It is no wonder that, at the hands of a man who aims to determine ideas theoretically, everything that goes beyond the table of categories is reduced to a mere chimaera; that, to his mind, the idea of the absolute amounts to a 'story of a nobody';[9] and that where others first genuinely attain free self-awareness, he sees nothing other than a *great nothingness* before him, which he does not know how to fill, leaving him conscious of nothing other than his own mindlessness. Proof enough that his spirit has never learned to act freely on itself, and that he is only capable of asserting his position in the spirit-world by means of *mechanical* thought.

Poor unfortunate philosophy! one might say. It is admittedly an unfortunate business – attempting to *outwardly* present that which is the *innermost* property of man, and which, when torn out of its spiritual [*geistigen*] context, leaves only a dead word-carcass in its wake. The only consolation in all of this is to have found that which profane men will sooner or later recognise as their *procul o procul este!*[10] - namely, the gradual perfection of science to such an extent that it ceases to be *communicable*, such that even the philosophical pedlars will notice that *man* has [195] reclaimed it as his property, and that it is no longer a commodity to be put up for sale at public markets. Meanwhile, every other art and science, just as much as philosophy, must struggle against such *spiritlessness* [*Geistlosigkeit*]. At its hands, the delicate creations of the imagination, which ought to be received in precisely the same spirit in which they were created, are paired off with concepts of objective truth, and become monstrosities. On contact with this spiritlessness, the

9 *Translator's Note.* In his review, Erhard refers to Schelling's book as the 'biography of a nobody'. Ibid. p. 182.

10 *Translator's Note.* 'Procul o procul este, profani!' – 'Keep away, o keep away you profane ones!' Virgil, *Aeniad.*

picture-language [*Bildersprache*] of physics, through which the schematising imagination renders perceptible the relations of natural appearances, becomes a ready-to-hand [*handgreifliche*] theory; and that which maintained itself as the free play of the *idealising* imagination in the systems and religions of the old world turns first into raw actuality, and then into venturesome (Chinese-Indian) dogma.[11]

I have paid off what I owed to *myself*. And now, not a word more!

Leipzig, 26th October, 1796

F.W.J. Schelling

11 *Translator's Note*. The editors of the *Historisch-kritische Ausgabe* note that Nicolai had previously mocked Schelling and Fichte by portraying both as 'profound Indian philosophers'. See p. 246.

On the True Concept of Philosophy of Nature and the Correct Way of Solving its Problems

F.W.J. SCHELLING

Translated by Judith Kahl and Daniel Whistler

Translators' Introduction

This text, originally entitled, *Appendix to Eschenmayer's Essay concerning the True Concept of Philosophy of Nature and the Correct Way of Solving its Problems* and attributed to 'the Editor',[1] appeared in January 1801 in the first issue of the second volume of the *Zeitschrift für spekulative Physik*, which Schelling himself edited. Schelling had first requested an essay from Carl August Eschenmayer for publication in the *Zeitschrift* in March 1799 and finally received an extensive critique of his own *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature* in September 1800. Eschenmayer's critique, *Spontaneity = World-Soul, or the Highest Principle of Philosophy of Nature*, takes up the first 68 pages of the January 1801 issue of the journal and, following a piece by Philipp Hoffmann on the construction of illness, Schelling appended his own 'addition'[2] to Eschenmayer's essay. While Schelling presented such an addition to Eschenmayer as a means 'to come to a complete understanding with you',[3] the text itself quickly turns into an attack not only on Eschenmayer's own methodology and construction of material qualities,

1 The shorter title by which the essay is more widely known was given by K.F.A. Schelling in the *Sämtliche Werke*.

2 F.W.J. Schelling, Letter to Eschenmayer, 22/9/1800, excerpted in Manfred Durner, 'Editorischer Bericht' in *Historisch-Kritische Ausgabe* I/10: *Schriften 1801*, ed. Durner (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 2009), pp. 15-6.

3 Ibid.

but also any idealist pretension to explain nature. At issue, then, is the fundamental question of the priority and extensity of Schellingian philosophy of nature in relation to Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*.[4]

The present translation is based on volume I/10 of the *Historisch-Kritische Ausgabe [HKA]: Schriften 1801*, edited by Manfred Durner (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 2009), pp. 85-106. Quotations from Schelling's *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature* and its *Introduction* are taken from the edition translated by Keith R. Peterson (Albany: SUNY, 2004); references to Schelling's *System of Transcendental Idealism* cite the edition translated by Peter Heath (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1978).

* *

[85] The concept I have of the science that I name 'philosophy of nature' has been quite clearly explained in many passages in the second issue of the first volume [of this journal],[5] and the relation I believe I can establish between it and transcendental philosophy is ascertainable from those same texts by anyone who is fairly accurately informed about the state of contemporary philosophy.

Already in the *Introduction* to my *Outline of the System of Philosophy of Nature*, there is the following passage on p. 15:

> Up to this point the idea of speculative physics has been deduced and developed; it is another business to show how this idea must be realised and actually carried out. The author, for this purpose, would at once refer to his *Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature*, if he had no reason to suspect many even of those who might consider that *Outline* worthy of their attention would come to it with certain preconceived ideas, which he has not presupposed, and which he does not desire to have presupposed by them.[6]

4 Further discussion of the content, aims, and context of the essay can be found in Whistler's accompanying essay, p. 58 below.

5 *Translators' note*. A reference to Schelling's *Universal Deduction of the Dynamic Process* published therein.

6 *Translators' note*. F.W.J. Schelling, *Introduction to the Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature* in *HKA* I/7, p. 280; Peterson trans., p. 199.

And the following are given as such presuppositions:

1. That many people misled by the term 'philosophy of nature' expect transcendental deductions of natural phenomena, the same as exist in various fragments [of the transcendental system] elsewhere; [86] for me, however, philosophy of nature is a self-sufficient whole and is a science fully differentiated from transcendental philosophy.

2. That many will find in my *Outline* their own concept of dynamic physics – namely, where I cite the [theory] that all specific changes and differences in matter are merely changes or differences of the degree of density – but this is not my opinion.

It is precisely on these points that Eschenmayer disagrees with me in the above critique of my *Outline of Philosophy of Nature*. As important to me as the judgement of this sharp-witted philosopher on my work must be, for, after Kant, he was the first to secure the grounds for a dynamic physics, I do so wish that he had not so happily left unread that *Introduction*. For, to judge from a number of passages, he was not acquainted with it while composing his critique, as I refer to it explicitly in the Preface to the *Outline* in relation to the very concept of this science [of philosophy of nature], which I had everywhere only presupposed [in the *Outline* itself]. Otherwise, Eschenmayer would have seen that his objections to me were not completely unexpected. He would have not only adduced arguments against my treatment of this science, but would also have begun to find answers to them on the basis of my presuppositions – and so we would have been one step further on than we are now.

After Eschenmayer saw that he had been deceived in expecting to find transcendental philosophy or a part of it (I know not which) in my *Outline*, there were only two possible hypotheses: *either* that I did not know at all that point of view which Eschenmayer holds as true – the idealist – which is of course difficult to believe, since instead of being sketched at the beginning of the work as is usual, this viewpoint is rather hidden in the middle of it, and without doubt banished there on purpose. For the author says clearly enough in one passage: philosophy of nature is for him a result of unconditional empiricism (this word, as one can deduce from the *Introduction*, being used instead of *realism* [87], which would have been a very awkward expression). *Or* [the second hypothesis is] that

the author had taken fright before the imposing mass being put in place by the cranks of idealism and perhaps still more before certain captious questions which emerge out of the collision of idealism with experience. For example:

> Is it the case that the new-born child who first gazes upon his mother has projected this mother and with her the sun, whose rays now illuminate his eyes for the first time?

And other such questions, like those set out in *Clavis Fichtiana seu Leibgeberiana*,[7] from which I will only take a few more as examples:

> For example: the man whom I encounter means to leave home by a free decision, but how is it now possible that he is simultaneously located on the street by means of my necessary act of producing?

Or:

> Here is a tree which someone planted fifty years ago for posterity, how is it that I now produce it as it is through productive intuition?

Or:

> How happy is the idealist that he can consider the divine works of Plato, Sophocles and all other great minds as his own?

In regard to the last of these questions, the author ought not forget the extent to which such happiness is tempered by certain other works (e.g. his own).

[88] These are only examples of the sorts of questions that could easily lead to embarrassment; however, they are not [embarrassing] for me, and anyway, both before and after the appearance of my *Outline*, I

7 *Translators' Note*. An anti-Fichtean polemic published in 1800 by J.P. Richter. None of these examples originate from the *Clavis*. The initial example of the new-born child comes from Eschenmayer's *Spontaneity = World-Soul* (*Zeitschrift für spekulative Physik* vol. 2.1, p. 16).

have provided proof from which one can conclude that an idealist point of view on nature is not alien to me. Without doubt, there is a reason for the *fact* that I separate philosophy of nature and transcendental philosophy from one another and have tried to generate the latter in a quite different direction than the former. If the reason for this fact has not been extensively dealt with in this journal before now, then this is merely because for the time being the journal is devoted more to the internal culture of this science than to investigating and proving its possibility (of which I am personally certain), and also because this proof can be achieved successfully only in a general presentation of philosophy. The next issue of this journal, however, is to be dedicated entirely to the new working through and development of my system from its first grounds;[8] I will thus use this opportunity to very briefly sketch it and make solely the following remarks.

If it were just a matter of an idealist type of explanation, or rather construction, then this is not to be found in philosophy of nature as I have established it. – But then was it just a matter of that? – I have expressly proposed the opposite. – If therefore the idealist construction of nature as I establish it is to be judged, then it must be judged according to my *System of Transcendental Idealism*, but not my *Outline of Philosophy of Nature*.

But why then should it not be idealist? And is there even (and the author agrees with this) any type of philosophising other than the idealist? Above all, I hope that this expression is to be further determined [in what follows] than it has been up until now. There is an idealism of nature and an idealism of the I. For me, the former is original, *the latter* is derived.

[89] I wish that, above all things, philosophy on philosophising would be distinguished from philosophy itself. To be able to philosophise, I must already have philosophised, for how else would I know what philosophising is? If I now emerge from this to find out what philosophising itself is, then I see myself merely as something known in myself – and during this entire investigation I never get out of myself. – There is no question that this philosophy on philosophising is subjectively (in relation to the philosophising subject) the *first*, but there is just as little doubt that in the question 'how is philosophy possible?' I assume *myself* already in the highest potency, and therefore the question is likewise only answered for this potency. – The derivation of this potency itself in turn

8 *Translators' Note*. Schelling's *Presentation of My System of Philosophy*, which has precisely this aim, occupied the whole of the next issue of the journal (May 1801).

cannot be provided by the response, for the *question* itself already presupposes it. As long as I maintain myself in this potency while philosophising, I can behold nothing objective other than in the moment of its entry into consciousness (for the latter is precisely the highest potency, to which I have raised my object once and for all through freedom) and no longer in its *original* coming-into-being at the moment of its *first* emergence (in *non-conscious* [*bewußtlosen*] activity). As it comes into my hands, it has already run through all the metamorphoses which are necessary for it to rise up into consciousness. – To see the objective in its first coming-into-being is only possible by *depotentiating* the *object* of all philosophising, which in the highest potency is = I, and then constructing, from the beginning, with this object reduced to the first potency.

This is only possible through abstraction, which must now be determined more precisely – and with this abstraction one moves from the realm of the doctrine of science [*Wissenschaftslehre*] into *pure-theoretical* philosophy. The doctrine of science is not philosophy itself, but philosophy about philosophy. In it, the equality posited by consciousness between the object – *about* which one philosophises and which in philosophising is that which produces and *acts* [*Handelnde*] – and the subject – *which* philosophises, and which in the self-same act [*Akt*] is that which reflects and intuits – is never annulled [*aufgehoben*] – and must never be annulled if it is to be claimed that that object = [90] I. For consciousness, when it is once attained, consists precisely in the perpetual identity of that which acts and that which intuits this activity [*Handeln*]; that which acts is not *in itself* = I, it is = I only *in* this identity of that which acts and that which reflects on this act [*des auf dieses Handelnde reflectirendnen*]. And since the doctrine of science takes its object into that very potency where it is already raised into identity with that which reflects, as = I, it can never construct this identity, thereby never escaping the circle of consciousness. As such, it can only construct what immediately appears to consciousness – that is, *everything* [*Alles*] only in its highest potency.

Although the doctrine of science initially attempts to derive *consciousness*, owing to an inescapable circle it ends up employing all those *means* which this already *completed* consciousness (in the philosophising subject) presents to it to exhibit everything in that potency in which it is already raised into consciousness. It therefore takes its object (that which acts and produces) already to be I, although it has only first become I at that moment when reflection [*Reflectirende*] posits it as

identical with it. [This moment], however, first occurs in *free* and *conscious activity*. In free activity, that which acts is still the same objective [element] which acted in non-conscious intuition; it is now a *free* act solely because it is posited as identical with that which intuits.

If I now abstract from what is first posited in the philosopher's object by this free act, there remains something *purely objective*. By means of this self-same abstraction, I move to the standpoint of *purely theoretical* philosophising (exempt from all subjective and practical interference): this pure-theoretical philosophising results in *philosophy of nature*; for by means of that abstraction, I reach the concept of the pure subject-object (= nature), from which I then rise to the subject-object of consciousness (= I). The latter becomes the principle of the idealist or, what means the same thing to me, the practical part of philosophy; the former is the principle of the pure-theoretical part; both in their union give the system of ideal-realism which has become *objective* (the system of art). With [this system of art,] philosophy, which in the doctrine of science [91] must proceed from a merely subjective ideal-realism (contained in the consciousness of the philosopher), produces itself out of itself, as it were, and so is completed.

Through the gradual but *complete* becoming objective of the pure subject-object, the (intuiting) activity, which in *principle* is limitlessly ideal, raises itself to the I, i.e. to the subject for which that subject-object (that ideal-real) is itself object. From the standpoint of consciousness, nature appears to me as objective and the I as subjective; from this standpoint I cannot otherwise express the problem of philosophy of nature than as it is expressed in the Introduction to my System of Idealism – that is, *to let the subjective emerge from the objective*.[9] Expressed in higher philosophical language, this means the same as:

> '*to let the subject-object* OF CONSCIOUSNESS *emerge from the* PURE *subject-object.*'

Many philosophical writers (among them one of late who has undertaken to judge something grounded in idealism, something that has only been made possible through him, although he ought to be convinced that he has yet to obtain sufficient knowledge of it) appear to have taken this *objective*

9 *Translators' note*. See F.W.J. Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism* in *HKA* I/9, pp. 29-30; Heath trans., pp. 5-7.

[element], from which philosophy of nature should proceed, I don't quite know for what, but certainly for something objective in itself. So, it is no wonder if the confusion in their representations proliferates substantially on the back of this. I presuppose that I am speaking to those [readers] who are well aware of what philosophy understands by the objective.

For them, 'objective' signifies the same as '*real*'. – *For me,* as they could have seen from the System of Idealism, the objective is itself *simultaneously the real and the ideal*; the two are never separate, but exist together originally (even in nature). This ideal-real becomes objective only through [92] the emerging consciousness in which the subjective raises itself to the highest (theoretical) potency.

With nature-philosophy [*Natur-Philosophie*] I never emerge from that identity of the ideal-real; I continually preserve both in this original connection, and the pure subject-object from which I proceed is precisely that which is simultaneously the ideal and the real in the potency 0. From this comes into being for me the ideal-real of the higher potency, the *I,* in relation to which the *pure* subject-object is already objective.

The reason that those who have grasped idealism well have not understood philosophy of nature is because it is difficult or impossible for them to detach themselves from the subjective [element] of intellectual intuition. – For the purpose of philosophy of nature, I demand intellectual intuition as it is demanded in the doctrine of science; however, I demand, in addition, abstraction from the *intuiting* in this intuition, an abstraction which leaves behind for me the purely objective [element] of this act, which in itself is merely subject-object, but in no way = I, for the reasons provided above.

Even in the System of Idealism, in order to devise the theoretical part, I had to take the I out of its own intuition, to abstract from the subjective in intellectual intuition – in a word, to posit it as *non-conscious*. – However, insofar as the I is non-conscious, it is not = I; for the I is only the subject-object insofar as it cognises itself as such. The acts, which are there established as acts of the I and so in the highest potency, are genuinely acts of the pure subject-object, and are *as* such not yet *sensation, intuition* etc. They only become them by being raised into consciousness.

I do not expect anyone to understand me at this level of generality. It is against my will that I here speak of what I intend; for what one intends is best spoken about by doing it. Anyway, those who do not agree

with me on the principle can still [93] participate in the investigations, since they are free to translate all the propositions which are necessary for their own understanding into the idealist potency. For *within* science, it initially matters little in which way nature is constructed, if it is only constructed. For a start, [the above] is not a matter of natural science, but an altered point of view on philosophy as a whole and idealism itself which the latter will sooner or later be forced to accept. – Idealism will remain; it will only be derived from first principles, and in its first beginnings from nature itself, which until now appeared to be in the starkest contradiction with it. Moreover, as I have already remarked, the *doctrine of science* will never get to this point. – To be subjectively possible, all philosophising, even the purely theoretical by which nature-philosophy comes into being, presupposes the doctrine of science and grounds itself on it. – *The latter,* precisely because it is the doctrine of *knowing* [Wissens-*Lehre*], can take everything only in the highest potency and must not abandon this. – It is, however, a question not of the doctrine of science (a closed and complete science) but the system of knowing itself. – This system can come into being only by abstracting from the doctrine of science, and if the latter is ideal-realism, it [the former] has only two major parts – a purely theoretical or realist part and a practical or idealist part. Through the union of these two, ideal-realism cannot again come into being, but rather real-idealism must come into being (what I have called above ideal-realism become objective and) by which I understand nothing other than the system of art. Only it must not be imagined as if these parts are separate within the system itself, as I here represent them. – In it, there is absolute continuity; it is *One* unbroken series, which proceeds from the simplest in nature to the highest and most complex, the artwork. – Is it bold to want to establish the first, truly universal system which ties together the opposed ends of knowing? – Those who understood the System of Idealism and followed my investigations in philosophy of nature with some interest will at the very least not take it to be [94] something absolutely impossible. He will have seen how gradually from all sides everything approaches the One, how already very distant phenomena, which have been sought in quite different worlds, shake hands and as it were impatiently await the final binding word to be spoken about them. If, at the very least, an initial plan is successfully executed, one will thereupon find comprehensible and thus acceptable the idea that it is to be made from completely different sides

and that one first tries to correct individual investigations before one unites them as parts of one and the same whole. – No one will find it unnatural for me to consider everything which can now occur as means to this end. For, not before it is both necessary and useful will I try to agree with others on *what is first*, and then it will appear, anyway, of its own accord and free of contradiction. For those for whom the preceding is still not clear, I shall say nothing further than I do not proceed in this manner without reason. I know that it leads to the goal and I will pursue it undisturbed, without taking notice of objections which are made against it and which will be answered by the future results themselves.

As soon as I began to proclaim philosophy of nature, the following objection was frequently made to me: I *presuppose* nature without asking the critical question of how we thus come to suppose a nature. Eschenmayer seems to have something like this in mind. I answered that whoever raises himself by abstraction to the pure concept of nature will see how I presuppose nothing for the construction but what the transcendental-philosopher likewise presupposes. For what I call *nature* IS for me nothing but the purely-objective [element] of intellectual intuition, the pure subject-object, what the transcendental philosopher posits as = I, because he does not make the abstraction – from the intuiting – which is necessary if a purely-objective, i.e. a genuinely theoretical, philosophy is to come about. – That pure subject-object [95] is already determined by its nature (the contradiction which lies within it) to activity and indeed to determinate activity. This determinate activity gives rise, passing through all its potencies, to a series of determinate products, while it potentiates itself both with what is unlimited in it (the ideal) and with its products. – Whether these products are those which are presented in experience or not does not initially concern me; I look merely to the self-construction of the subject-object. If from this [self-construction] arise products and potencies of ideal activity that can be shown in nature, then I clearly see that my attempt was genuinely a deduction of nature, i.e. a philosophy of nature. I have therefore not presupposed what *you* think of as nature, but rather derived it (although you will permit me, after I have performed the experiment for myself, to announce my philosophy in advance as a philosophy of nature). In general, I have presupposed nothing but what can immediately be taken from the conditions of knowing itself as a first principle, something originally and simultaneously subjective and objective, through the activity of which a consciousness is also posited,

alongside the objective world as such. For this consciousness [the objective world] becomes object and vice versa. With this concept we have reached back further than Spinoza managed with his concepts of *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*, which are merely relatively opposed, and *both* are only the subject-object regarded from different points of view.

Philosophy of nature has this advantage over idealism, that it proves its propositions purely theoretically, and has to make no particular, practical demands, unlike the latter which precisely for this reason possesses no purely theoretical reality, as I have already observed in the Preface to my System of Idealism.

By means of the fact that I abstract from the intuiting activity in intellectual intuition, I take the subject-object only from its own intuition (I make it non-conscious), but not from mine. It is constantly conceived in my intuition as *my* construction, and I know that throughout I only have to do with my own construction. The task is: to make the subject-object in this way objective, and to generate it from itself to the point where it [96] coincides as one with nature (as product). The point where it becomes nature is also that where the unlimitable in it raises itself to the I and where the opposition between I and nature, which is made in common consciousness, completely disappears, so that nature = I and I = nature. At this point where everything which is still activity (not product) in nature is transferred into the I, nature endures and lives only in this I which henceforth is one and all and in it everything is contained. And it is at precisely this point that idealism begins.

What has therefore been established in the System of Idealism under the names of theoretical and practical philosophy is already to be regarded as the idealist part of the complete system of philosophy. The acts which are derived in the theoretical part of idealism are acts whose simple potencies exist in nature and are established in philosophy of nature. – The coming-into-being of these higher potencies fall into the transition from the realist to the idealist part; *as* consciousness comes into being, all earlier acts raise themselves into sensation, intuition etc. – Because philosophy of nature and transcendental philosophy have been spoken of as opposed yet equally possible orientations of philosophy, many have asked which of the two is accorded priority? – Without doubt, philosophy of nature, because it lets the *standpoint* of idealism itself first come into being, and thereby provides for it a secure, *purely* theoretical foundation. However, the

opposition between philosophy of nature and idealism has the same worth as the traditional opposition between theoretical and practical philosophy. – Therefore, philosophy returns to the ancient (Greek) division into physics and ethics, both of which are united through a third part (poetics, or philosophy of art).

Eschenmayer, it is true, feels that it is not yet time to speak of a system of philosophy of nature. I would be anxious to know how long we will have to wait and how we shall know in the future that the time for this science has come? – Perhaps when experience has progressed further? – But *how far* [97] are we really with experience? – This can only be judged from philosophy of nature. Experience is blind and must first learn to see its own richness or lack through science. Moreover, a completely a priori science cannot be dependent on contingent conditions like that of the progress of experience; rather, on the contrary, the latter must be accelerated onwards by the former, which presents ideas that lead to invention. One can never say of a self-sufficient science: it is not yet time to invent it, for it is always time for it to be invented. – Therefore, one will always only be able to say: this specific attempt to establish science has not yet succeeded. – That what I have established in my Outline of Philosophy of Nature is not even taken by myself to be *the system itself* is already explained in the title of the work and very specifically in its Preface, where I write: 'The author has too lofty a notion of the magnitude of his undertaking to announce in the present treatise anything more than the first outline, let alone to erect the system itself.'[10] – I also explained that this piece was not primarily meant for the general public, but for my students. The academic teacher who has to proffer a completely new science cannot hope to make it sufficiently understandable without a manual; and to the extent that he does not wish to waste time with dictation, there remains no other option but the press. It is unfair to demand the same perfection of a work which appears for such a specific and expressly stated purpose, and which has been published piecemeal according to circumstance, as one would demand of a piece worked out for a general purpose and with the necessary leisure. – However, taking into account these contingent conditions, it was still impossible to think of a *system* of philosophy of nature, as long as one could not yet presuppose the standpoint for it. There remained nothing else but to lead the science to

10 *Translators' Note.* F.W.J. Schelling, *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature* in *HKA* I/7, p. 65; Peterson trans., p. 3.

the point from which it could *begin* to become system. This was effectively achieved through that piece. The germs of the system, as I will establish it in the future, all lie scattered therein, and the theory of dynamic process, which is the foundation of all speculative physics and even of the doctrine of organic nature, is expressed quite determinately there in outline and introduction. – In such a presentation [98] all possible levels of reflection [*Reflexionspuncte*] on which the philosophy of nature can rest must necessarily be run through and noted, and the highest which grasps all others under itself and which must be the principle in any effective system could here rather only be the *result*.

Of these levels of reflection, that of the atomist is without doubt the first; it was thus natural to use it to find a way into the system. However, I do not consider the customary form of atomism a viewpoint that could play a role in any true philosophy of nature, even as an inferior level of reflection; and this is clearly shown by the fact that I have transformed the atoms of the physicist into something completely different. – So I willingly surrender this whole atomist viewpoint to Eschenmayer and to anyone else who wishes to busy themselves with it. By means of the construction, which is still to appear in full but has already begun to be presented and justified [in the *Outline*], all those principles attacked by Eschenmayer, together with the system from which they spring, annul themselves. For example, take the principle so objectionable to Eschenmayer: every quality is action of a determinate degree for which one has no other measure than its product. – Who speaks here? The atomist. And for him, from whence does the measure of a degree come? No degree is possible except by an inverse proportion[11] of opposed factors; for example, a determinate degree of velocity [is constituted] by the inverse proportion of the space passed through and the time taken to do so. However, the atomist lacks such a measure, since for him action does not refer to a determinate proportion of opposed forces, but to something *absolutely* simple.[12] The difference between my viewpoint and Eschenmayer's does not lie in *these* principles, but rather in the fact that, in the proportion of original forces to each other, he has claimed that solely a quantitative difference, determinable by the relative excess or deficit of one or the other force, is possible, and as can be seen from the first part of his treatise, he claims this still. Moreover, by

11 *Translators' note. Verhältnis* is variously translated in what follows as 'proportion', 'ratio' and 'relation', depending on context.

12 *Translators' note.* 'Singular' (as in: without relation) is also a possible translation.

these different quantitative proportions, as well as the formulae through which they are expressed, he believes that he has derived *all* specific differences of matter, although they will never give him anything except differences in specific degrees of density, and so a host of other determinations [of matter] remain entirely indeterminate.

[99] *I* try to construct the qualitative determinations of matter from another relation of two forces to each other than [this quantitative ratio] which determines specific weights [*Schwere*]. Since Eschenmayer believes he has determined these qualitative determinations by means of such a quantitative proportion, to which they are in fact never reducible, he therefore neglects them *as* specific properties. For what is understood by the specific but the unconstructable, or rather that which cannot be constructed?

Since, for *Eschenmayer*, in matter there is nothing but this same proportion of forces which determines the degree to which it fills space, something else *positive*, something containing the ground of another determination, cannot be posited for him even by a change in degree. Therefore, the properties of a body must for him always stand in direct proportion to the degree to which they fill space. – Now, I would like to know how the specific weight of iron, for example, could be directly proportional to the considerable coherence of this metal, or how the specific weight of mercury could be directly proportional to the weak coherence of this metal? – Even through endless changes to specific weight – and he knows nothing of matter but this – nothing would ever change but the specific weight. Now I desire to know how, from this change in the specific weight, any other determination of matter that did not stand in a precise proportion to it could emerge? – *Eschenmayer* himself admitted a long time ago that the series of qualitative determinations of matter is in no way parallel to the series of specific weights, and he admits it again now. – And how does he answer this difficulty? With the question: Can *experience* arbitrate between the product that is to be constructed and reason which constructs? – However, the product which one is charged with constructing is known – prior to achieving this task – only through experience, so the question actually runs: is experience to arbitrate *between* experience and constructing reason? – Put like this, an affirmative answer is clearly absurd. – For myself, I ask, on the contrary: should not the coincidence of the product found in experience [100] with the one which has been constructed be the

most certain mathematical proof of the *correctness* of the construction? – What is under discussion here is not whether construction should occur at all (this goes without saying); rather, it is a question of whether this construction is carried out *correctly*. – Such an occurrence can surely not be proven with the general saying: the human spirit is the legislator of nature. This saying is quite good: there is no doubt that reason gives laws to nature, even that reason always constructs correctly – however, the question is WHETHER, in an individual case, *reason* has actually constructed at all. – From the fact that reason gives laws to experience it does not follow that it has the right to contradict experience; rather, just because it is its legislator, [reason] must be in the most perfect agreement with it, and where this is not the case, it can be rightly inferred that it is not legislating reason that has constructed, but some empirical [form of] reason. – In the philosophy of nature, I claim: nature is its own legislator.[13] Eschenmayer cannot grasp how, having presupposed this, one could still make the effort to construct nature. – If *Eschenmayer* had the same concept of nature as me, that claim would be no more strange to him than that which he opposes to it as the basic principle of rationalism: the human spirit is its own legislator. If this were true, one could ask, how could the philosopher make that vain effort to construct the I with all its determinations? – human spirit is human enough to have got on with it, or rather it has already got on with it.

It is certainly true that in the philosophy of nature I consider that subject-object which I call nature in its self-construction. One must have raised oneself to the intellectual intuition of nature to conceive it. – The empiricist fails to so raise himself, and for this precise reason *he* is always the one constructing in all his claims. It is therefore not astonishing to find what has been constructed and what should have been constructed so seldom coincide. – Because the philosopher of nature raises nature to self-sufficiency and lets it construct itself, he never has cause to oppose it to constructed nature (i.e. experience) nor to correct it according to [constructed nature]. The constructing [nature] cannot [101] err, and the philosopher of nature just requires a secure method to prevent it from erring through his interference. Such a method is possible and the next task is to make it known in detail. However, [the question of] whether he has correctly applied this method, which in itself must be infallible, can

13 *Translators' note.* See Schelling, *First Outline* in *HKA* I/7 p. 81; Peterson trans., p. 16.

ultimately be resolved for the philosopher only by its success – that is, by the coincidence of that nature constructing itself before our eyes with that nature that has been constructed. Therefore, for him experience is in fact not the principle but the task of construction, not the *terminus a quo* but the *terminus ad quem* of construction. – Where this *terminus ad quem* is not attained, one can rightly infer that either the correct method was not applied or it was applied incorrectly or in an incomplete manner.

I return to the question of the basis for the specific properties of matter. – Eschenmayer himself has tried to move the investigation forward in the preceding treatise. He now takes into account relations which he elsewhere has not; that is, the relations of bodies to the different senses, whose differences he once more tries to present as merely a matter of degree [*graduale*]. I find the whole thing very astute with individual claims of compelling truth; however, the fundamental question, for the sake of which this whole apparatus is assembled, still remains unanswered; that is, *how* by mere differences in degrees of density are these different relations of bodies to the senses posited? – The author does not link the above result that was discovered in a different way, as if through anticipation, back to his basic principle: the common expression of an object is its specific density. Therefore, as he himself states (p. 56), the entire investigation decides nothing with respect to the principal point. Rather, it appears that this new way has led the author into new difficulties, for he now must claim that the senses, which have now been put into play, are differentiated merely by degree [*gradual*]. Instead, a more helpful way would be to have previously determined *what* is actually raised by varying degrees into the senses? It cannot be the same as that which lies at the ground of the gradation of matter (i.e. that which affects the senses). This leaves unanswered [102] the following questions. What gradation of matter is required for it to be e.g. an odour or a ray of light, i.e. to be the gradation of sense corresponding to the sense of smell or the sense of sight? And how do these gradations of matter that acquire a determinate relation to a specific sense relate to those which acquire a determinate relation to the electrical or chemical process? – Without doubt, each determinate gradation of the latter kind corresponds to a determinate relation of bodies to the senses, and *vice versa* – but what is entirely lacking here is a binding concept, and this leaves a wholly unresolved antithesis.

I do not want to speak at the moment of the gaps in the theory proposed by *Eschenmayer* (which he may well fill in through future

investigations), but rather focus on the first principle, namely that the differences between all the senses are *merely differences of degree*, which he – as far as I understand it – has neither proven nor even made reasonably comprehensible. It seems to me that it all comes back to the following main claims.

1. There are different senses (which he postulates provisionally).

2. Each of these senses has its own distinctive sensation (which he again postulates).

3. Between the different sensations of one and the same sense there is merely a difference of degree; for example, the different sounds which one and the same body emits.

4. Within the general sphere of each sensation [*Sinnesempfindung*], and even in the absence of the determinate differences of degree in (3), there are further differences which appear specific (for example, the specific sounds of a violin and a flute even when playing the same high or bass notes).

5. Therefore different gradations appear in (3) and (4): the former grounded on an arithmetic proportion, the latter on a geometric proportion. – 'It is [103] thus explained how in addition to its (inner) proportion between degrees, the sound can take on still another (external) proportion. Specifically different sounds are merely different intensities: the maximum of one tonal series always passes over into the minimum of another.'[14] The same is applicable to all the other senses, only the analysis for them is not pursued in sufficient depth. For example, specifically different odour-sensations are only different intensities of one and the same (geometric?) basic proportion, whereas each specific type of odour contains an arithmetic series.

6. Yet precisely such a proportion as between specifically different sensations of one and the same sense (4) is repeated between the different senses themselves, so that here too the minimum of one

14 *Translators' Note*. Eschenmayer, *Spontaneity = World-Soul*, p. 48.

(for example, light) immediately passes over into the maximum of another (for example, sound-sensation?).

We will abstain entirely from remarking on this cleverly devised theory – in part because such remarks are easy to make, in part because we can always refrain from doing so until, by sustained construction, the author has derived his theory *from his first principle*, on which we do not agree.

Its main principles have simply been extracted in order to facilitate comparison with our own point of view on this matter.

It appears to us that we are no longer so far from Eschenmayer, now that he allows for the validity of another proportion than the merely arithmetic (through which specific weight alone is determined). After admitting to a geometric proportion – perhaps of forces? – he will also admit that the possibility of different dimensions of matter (which can never be perceived from the merely arithmetic) depends on their various relations to each other in space. Therefore, he will admit that, as there are only three dimensions of matter, only *three* different relations of forces to each other are possible in reference to space. We will agree with each other that in the *first* construction plainly only the third dimension (over which gravity [*Schwere*] [104] alone has power and in which – when it is perfectly produced – the first two [dimensions] are effaced) arises. Therefore, we will also agree that in the *first* construction nothing but an arithmetic relation of the two forces to each other is given; hence, the production of different dimensions *as such* is only possible by a *reconstruction* of the product. We will thus raise the product above the first potency, at which Kant, for example, constructed, and into a second, where the construction no longer depends on the simple opposition of two forces, but on the opposition between the ideal activity of the higher potency (light) and the constructing [activity] of the first [potency]. Where the product is suspended at different levels of reconstruction, it first receives *qualities*. These qualities refer to nothing but the different relations of bodies to the different moments of reconstruction. What is more, far from being dependent on a specific weight, they are posited in matter by means of the tendency of ideal natural activity to annul weight. After we wrest the product away from the first construction, we will have forever given it life and made it capable of all the higher potencies. We will find that uniform nature which forever repeats itself only in higher potencies repeats *all* the functions of the preceding potency even in the

organism, and indeed here in the function of sensibility. It will have to be accepted that the difference between the senses is as little a matter *of mere degree* as the difference between two forces or two poles of a magnet, and that for us the sense of sight represents an *idealist* pole and the sense of touch a *realist* one (from which it will in turn become clear that, because its external condition is an ideal activity that works at a *distance*, the former is not at all limited by spatial conditions as the latter is). We will glimpse in the other three senses only a repetition of the three moments of the reconstruction (magnetism, electricity, and the chemical process) occurring at a higher potency (from which it can be immediately explained once again why in respect to the first an arrangement of rigid bodies has been exquisitely made, while the organ of the second spreads out on a surface and the third ultimately appears bound to a half-fluid organ). For us, then, nature will no longer be a dead, merely extended whole, but rather [105] a living whole which increasingly reveals the spirit incarnated in it and which, by means of the highest spiritualisation, will in the end return into itself and complete itself.

The difference which prevails between *Eschenmayer* and myself in respect to the *whole* treatment of nature ultimately rests merely on the fact that *he* retains the opposition between spirit and nature that occurs in *consciousness*, and requires the former as the single factor for constructing the latter. On the other hand, *for me*, in transcendental philosophy what he ascribes to nature is in the I and in philosophy of nature what he ascribes to the I is in nature. I am compelled to infer such a fundamental difference between our viewpoints from statements like the following, 'An absolute quantum of activity is distributed between two opposed potencies (spirit and nature), so the more activity in me, the more negation in nature, and vice versa'[15] (which is true from a lower level of reflection, but false from a higher one). 'The original principle which according to *Baader* wafted down from the breath on high into the statue of Prometheus and brings to life the first throb in the pulse of nature (the interplay of its duality) – is *spontaneity*',[16] which *he* posits in spirit, whereas *for me* what does all this is *in nature itself* – the active *soul* of nature. For I do not admit two different worlds, but without reservation only *one and the same*, inclusive of everything, even what in common consciousness is opposed as nature and spirit.

15 *Translators' Note*. Eschenmayer, *Spontaneity = World-Soul*, p. 8.
16 *Translators' Note*. Eschenmayer, *Spontaneity = World-Soul*, pp. 6-7.

If *Eschenmayer* would care to clarify this point, science could only gain by it.

It is gradually becoming clear that even idealism has its spirit and its letter – and is to be understood in different ways. In the following issue, I hope to begin the new presentation of my system with an enumeration of these different ways, and to show how in the end one is forced to solely affirm that view which I have characterised above, namely that in which all dualism is forever annihilated and everything becomes absolutely one. Since I must hope [106] that Eschenmayer has become more familiar with my viewpoint both through my System of Idealism and through the present debate (in this journal) than was possible for him through a mere reading of the *Outline*, we might now be able to be informed of each other's viewpoints very quickly and find out whether we actually proceed from the same principles or only appear to do so.

Having spoken up until now only of those points on which Eschenmayer and I are, at least apparently, in disagreement, I would love to now speak of those which unite us, or at least those ingenious statements of his to which I must accede. However, space does not allow this at present. In conclusion, I only ask Eschenmayer to compare what he writes on p. 58 about the *fourth* principle, spontaneity, as indwelling *in us* with what he cites on p. 65 of his dissertation: 'Causam, quae ab absolute aequilibrio arcet, *sol* ministrare videtur'[17] – so that he can enter into agreement with me on that point which is still in doubt. This impulse of spontaneity falls within the sphere of nature itself; it is *light*, the sense of nature, by means of which nature sees into its own limited interior. It is that which seeks to wrest the ideal activity imprisoned in the product away from the constructing activity. As spontaneity is day, so the constructing activity is night; the former is the *I* of nature itself, the latter its not-I. And just as this pure activity [i.e. spontaneity], simple in itself, becomes *empirical* (colour) through conflict with the constructing activity, so this latter, in conflict with the former, is forced, along with its product, to become *ideal*, reconstructing its product under different forms in order to bring it back under its mastery – first through magnetism, in which both factors of indifference remain within it; then through electricity, in which it

17 *Translators' note*. '*The sun* seems to serve as the cause which prevents absolute indifference.' Eschenmayer refers to this principle in *Spontaneity = World-Soul*, p. 65, citing his own 1796 Tübingen dissertation (p. 19) in Medicine on the principles of natural science.

must look for one of the factors of indifference outside of itself, in a different product; and finally as chemical force, in which the attainment of one or both of the factors of indifference requires a third. Until finally, this immortal activity, which is unlimited according to its principle, weds itself *as* ideal activity entirely to the product, laying the foundation of life [*der Grund des Lebens*] in nature, and life is in turn raised by degrees to the highest indifference by an ever-higher potentiation.

Anthropological Schema

F.W.J. SCHELLING

Translated by Tyler Tritten[1]

[289]

I. *Will*

§.1.

The actual spiritual *substance* of the human being, the *ground* of everything, that which is *originally* generative of matter [*das* ursprünglich *Stoff-Erzeugende*], the sole element in the human being that is a cause of *being*.

II. *Understanding*

That which is *not creative* [*das* nicht Erschaffende], but *regulating* and *limiting*, that which provides measure for infinite and boundless will, that which *mediates reflective consciousness* [Besinnung] and *freedom* to that which is for itself blind and unfree.

III. *Spirit*

The actual *aim*, what ought to be, wherein the will is elevated by the understanding, whereby it ought to be liberated and transfigured.

1 Translation of F.W.J. Schelling, *Anthropologisches Schema (aus dem handschriftlichen Nachlaß)*, in *Sämmtliche Werke*, I/10 1833-1850, ed. K.F.A Schelling (Stuttgart and Augsburg: Cotta, 1861) pp. 287-295.

§.2.

These three elements of all spiritual being [*Seyn*] are opposed to one another in such a way that it is the *task* of the human being to unite them in the correct arrangement, the one appropriate to their nature. This unification is the content of a *process* by which the human being *forms* herself and shapes herself into a determinate personality. Those properties which the human being attains in this manner (in process) are in a stricter sense her *personal* properties (in this context all three elements are perpetually in competition, negatively or positively). Those properties of the will, of the understanding, and of spirit, which the human being has in advance of her own doing as either a favourable or antagonistic matter to be used or to be overcome (in any event, to be modified) are her *natural* properties (in this context will, understanding, and spirit each come into consideration for themselves). [290]

A. Will, Understanding, Spirit

…each for itself or in their merely natural relations.

§.3.

1. Will

a. *entirely for itself*, without being considered in relation to the process, can only be differentiated through a *more* or a *less* of energy, and is by nature either weak or strong, potent or impotent, ruly or unruly.

Where the energy of the will approaches or is entirely equal to 0, the moving force of the entire process is lacking. The understanding does not have anything that it could regulate (it is without an object) and it passes over into a state of dormancy. The spirit cannot be completed from the will. – Imbecility (idiocy), spiritual death.

b. for itself, but yet in *relation* to the requisite process, thus at its *site* [Anlage], i.e. in its capacity or incapacity, inclination or disinclination, to give itself over to the higher process of

formation. – *Good complex, dire complex.* (Malleable, non-malleable, deranged will.)

> *Note.* Since the will is the substance, thus the potency of the entire process, so are the indications for all of the following levels actually already contained in the will's complex. The potency that has sunk the deepest in the will is just that potency of the highest, the (more or less active) *conscience*.

Appearances (symptoms), from which conclusions can be drawn for the will's complex [*Willens-Anlage*]: good humour, malevolent temper, predilection for pleasure (crude or fine) or sullenness; the measurable or immeasurable nature of the voluntary movements etc. The will, in which there lies no potency for a higher humanity, is manifest as an animal will (a will given over to mere appetite).

2. The *understanding* as *natural*, in opposition to the understanding acquired through education (just as *natal wit* [Mutterwitz] is opposed to a *schooled wit* [Schulwitz]), offers proof of a natural and already innate independence (freedom, impartiality) of the understanding from the will. (Self-will eclipses the understanding.) – So-called *lighter* minds. [291]

3. The spirit *for itself* and accordingly as merely natural can only be portrayed as that which the French call *esprit*, wherein only the natural superiority of the spirit, not merely over the will but also over the *understanding*, is pronounced, which is used merely as a means that the spirit flouts and intentionally toys with in order to let understanding feel its inferiority. – Even the spirit, as merely natural, is only *matter* for the higher process and is for itself without depth, not to be confused with the spirit which has gone through the process and, again as a naturally appearing spirit, pronounces itself as *humour*.

B. Will, Understanding and Spirit

§.4.

…in their active relations or in process.

AA. Will in relation to the understanding.

1. The inverted arrangement.

   a. Resolution of the *natural* bond between both (of the natural subordination of the will under the understanding). – *Mania* (the opposite of idiocy).

   b. Will which repels (passive suffering [*Leidenschaft*]) the understanding or excludes it (brutality).

   c. Will which instead of receiving the law of the understanding observes itself as law. – *Arbitrariness*, which, where it has the power to express itself, appears as *despotism* (the *choleric temperament* corresponds to the universal predominance of the will).

2. The understanding in the service of the will in order to provide the will with *possibilities* according to its wanting [*Wollen*] – *fantasy* [Phantasie] – skilled or unskilled (phantasy [*Phantasterei*]), after the will, while it sets the understanding into activity, once again subordinates the understanding to itself or not; noble or ignoble, according to the direction of the will set toward merely sensual desire or toward higher aims (eccentricity). [292]

Sanguine Temperament

3. The will in the service of the understanding

   a. for determinate purposes – *attentiveness* (the negative side of the same is *abstraction* and its opposite is *distraction*), the talent of observation, *memory* (whereby the will is simultaneously receptive), *habituation* (diligence, acquisition of skills – sciences of the memory).

b. Unconditionally,

aa. but with the exclusion of the *spirit* – and in such a way that the will does not come to the act of *production* [Schaffen], but is fixed upon an object.

α) Mere knowledge of the understanding where it merely has to do with what is presently given [*das Vorhandene*] (experience), one-sided acumen which in degeneration becomes *folly, bemusement* (brooding).

β) In a moral respect it is mere *legality* (illiberal, a more slavish than free disposition), self-seeking, spiritless cunning, *tyranny* (distinct from despotism insofar as understanding is present in it).

Phlegmatic Temperament

bb. with an attraction of the spirit; free eisomplasty[2] [formation into one/*Ineinsbildung*] of will, understanding and spirit. Only in this eisomplasty does *the human being* appear as the competent[3] power that stands above the three elements, free to produce with them. Only in this is the human being a determinate *personality*, a whole, a *character*. (the opposite: lack of character. Character is only where there is an absolute unity of the inner principle, personality in the highest sense, and [it is] with the strictest truth only compatible in opposition to itself and others.) Only at this level is there *free*

2 This term is Samuel Taylor Coleridge's neologism, which he devised as a translation for Schelling's *Ineinsbildung*. This term is closely related to one of the German terms for imagination – *Einbildungskraft* – and so it could also be understood as the act by which something is united under a single image or imaging-into-one.

3 The German word is *berufen*, which traditionally means 'called' in the sense of being called into a position of authority, presumably due to one's suitability or competence for the job. One's profession, one's calling, is one's *Beruf*. Rather than competence, however, a more telling neologism, for contextual rather than etymological reasons, might have been 'com-potence'. The person is called to unite or hold sway over all three powers as potencies, competently to hold them together in com-potence.

morality [Sittlichkeit] (actual morality [*Moralität*]). Where the individual elements are present as scattered and outside the insoluble unity, which only personality is capable of providing, do we there find, where *the human being herself* should be, nothing, an empty place – we find only *forms*, but no *essences* [Wesen]. [293]

This organic-spiritual conformation is present

α) either in consequence of a more *natural* unity, to which the human being is already inclined on account of her nature, which she has as a voluntary gift of her nature more in *feeling* than in *clear consciousness*, a gift that appears to be unifying, more passively as soul and more actively as spirit, *temper, beautiful soul*; subjected to *longing*, to the love of dark ideas (to mysticism).

Melancholic Temperament

β) or in consequence of self-imposed activity and education –

Heroic Temperament

and it is depicted

αα) either in the collective life of the human being as *harmonious cultivation* (its opposite: diremption, inner discord), in general a clarity of self-consciousness, will which has found itself and is one with itself. In the leading of public affairs, in those who rule and particularly in those called to an active life [*zum Handeln*] it is depicted as a wisdom that is especially pronounced in the domesticated *will* which has been restrained through understanding and spirit.

ββ) in particular in spiritual productions, after that unity (toward which all three elements always coalesce) is pronounced more in the *will* or in the *understanding* or, immediately, in the *spirit itself*. –

Poetic and artistic (the will here *elevates* itself to actual *creative*, productive fantasy, to the *faculty of the imagination*. So-called *refined taste* is nothing else than the completely purified will that can will nothing unseemly). Geniality [*Genialität*]. [294]

Scientific, philosophical (the understanding here elevates itself to *reason*. Mere understanding in the strictest sense knows how to act according to the given rule; understanding in the higher sense, as power of judgement, knows how to distinguish which rule is to be applied. The understanding in the highest sense, as reason, provides the rule for itself). Genius [*Genialität*].

Religious (moral)

§.5.

Of everything which appears at this highest level only the rudimentary image is to be found at the earlier levels. Religion is thus not at first present at this highest level, but it appears after it has its place in the will with the exclusion of the understanding and spirit, as mere *empiricism* in religion (an empiricism which is content with the exercise of prescribed ceremonies as a means of salvation), as the compulsory service of religion (*bigotry*), whereby in particular there is no requirement that a depraved inclination be offered as sacrifice. Where the *spirit* is excluded, either as a matter of fantasy – religious *zealousness* – *Jesuitism* bound up with politics (imperiousness) (although this connection is not exclusively to be met amongst those who are actually the Jesuits, so-called), *fanaticism*; or as a matter of the mere understanding – *naked rationalism*.

§.6.

The appearance of the *inner* in the *outer* –

1. insofar as this is a mere indicator of *natural* properties (of the will, understanding and spirit) – the formation of the skull – the formation of extremities – stature

2. insofar as it is an indicator of *personal* properties – physiognomic expression, preferably to be perceived in organs of the freest use (e.g. in the mouth) – in everything which is independent from one's own activity – posture, gait, movement in general.

The Life of the 'Idea': Hegel, Schelling, and Schopenhauer*

TILOTTAMA RAJAN

Idealism, Schelling writes in the *Freedom* essay, 'is the soul of philosophy; realism is the body.'[1] The two cannot be separated, whether their relation is one of enfolding or an unfolding in which, as Schelling says in renouncing 'mere progression', there is no evolution without involution.[2] To be sure, despite his departure from Fichtean idealism, the early Schelling often elides this involution. For in work that includes *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* (1797/1803), *The System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800) and *On University Studies* (1803), he still tries to see what he calls the real and ideal sciences[3] in a relation of synchronicity. Thus as he writes in another text from this period, the 'Introduction to the Outline…or The Concept of Speculative Physics': 'if it is the task of transcendental philosophy to subordinate the real to the ideal,' it is the task of the philosophy of nature 'to explain the ideal by the real'; the two are 'one science, differentiated only in the opposite orientation of their tasks.'[4] To be sure, Schelling's

* The author acknowledges the help of the Canada Research Chairs Programme in preparing this article.

1 F.W.J. Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations Into the Essence of Human Freedom* (1809), trans. by Jeff Love and Johannes Schmidt (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), p. 26; hereafter cited parenthetically as F.

2 F.W.J. Schelling, *The Ages of the World* (1815), trans. By Jason M. Wirth (Albany: State University of New York press, 2000), p. 83; hereafter cited parenthetically as AW.

3 F.W.J. Schelling, *On University Studies*, trans. by E.S. Morgan, ed. by Norbert Guterman (Athens: University of Ohio Press, 1966), pp. 10-13, 59, 103-4. The real sciences are empirical or positive sciences dealing with the finite and with particulars, or having a historical element; ideal sciences such as philosophy deal with ideas and principles.

4 F.W.J. Schelling, 'Introduction to the Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature, or, On the Concept of Speculative Physics and the Internal Organization of a System of this Science' (1799), in *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature*, trans. By Keith Peterson (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), pp. 193-232 (p. 194).

earlier work cannot be homogenised into a night in which all cows are black, since even at this point he produces multiple 'introductions', 'outlines', and 'ideas' for a system of philosophy. Indeed *The First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature* (1799) already discloses a tangled, auto-generative nature that cannot be easily synchronised with spirit and that provides the 'real' basis for Schelling's middle work, which has been of interest to contemporary theory. Nevertheless the 'Introduction' written shortly after tries to fit what Hegel will describe as this 'Proteus' of nature that is so 'refractory to the unity of the Notion'[5] back into the Philosophy of Identity, granted that it requires an 'invasion of Nature...through freedom' to bring this about.[6] Moreover, nature in the early Schelling is conceived in terms of forces and potencies, which is to say that this radically ungrounded subject-less nature does not as yet touch or hurt consciousness.

On the other hand, in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the key text in the transition away from this idealism that absorbs the real, makes it complementary but separate, or abstracts it from experience, idealism unfolds *within* the real, the 'labour' of the negative in which consciousness must endure the *'length* of [its] path' and *'linger over'* each moment.[7] Indeed Hegel is critical of 'the Universal idea' in a 'non-actual form' that ignores difference and moves too quickly to claiming all things as one. Thus, in the famous phrase that Schelling took personally, Hegel dismisses, as the 'night…in which all cows are black', this 'enthusiasm' of absolute idealism which 'begins straight away with absolute knowledge' (PS 9, 16). He insists that Substance is 'Subject' or 'the mediation of its self-othering with itself' (PS 10). Mediation, in turn, is 'the possibility of adapting findings…from one level to another.'[8] But this possibility of explaining the real by the ideal is not simply 'a transition into a higher sphere.'[9] It risks being a self-othering that Hegel must endure, when he writes poignantly that 'Nature seems an alien existence, in which Spirit

5 G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Nature* (1830), trans. by A.V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), pp. 444-5; hereafter cited parenthetically as PN.

6 F.W.J. Schelling, 'Introduction to the Outline', p. 196.

7 G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. By A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 17; hereafter cited parenthetically as PS.

8 Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), pp. 39-40.

does not find itself' (PN 3). Or as Derrida says, in his similar critique of Schelling in 'Theology of Translation', there are 'differences' between one domain and another: 'If the mind could, in a single act of knowledge, *really* grasp absolute totality as a system completed in all its parts, it would overcome its finitude.' 'It would not need to translate'[10] between nature and spirit, the real and the ideal. But the very need for translation points to the difficulty of this mediation.

Despite or because of the break that followed Hegel's criticism in 1807, Schelling's middle work bears the impress of his reproach, in the echo of the *Phenomenology* in the 1815 *Ages of the World*, where Schelling writes: 'Whoever wants knowledge of history must accompany it along its great path' and 'linger with each moment' (AW 4);[11] and in a new emphasis on struggle, on the impossibility of having 'the bloom and the fruit without the hard covering that enclose[s] it'. (AW 103). Two further motifs recall the *Phenomenology*. At the level of logic, Schelling begins with the copula in the *Freedom* essay (1809) so as to rethink identity as difference, and he thus radically shifts the axis of Idealism (F 13). Thus the copula ('the body is blue') does not state an equivalence but a relation. And inasmuch as the copula is the grammatical figure for identity, subject and predicate, ideal and real, or essence and existence, are connected but are not, as before, one science from different perspectives (F 13). However, this point is already made by Hegel, when he insists that the subject, for instance the Absolute as Subject, is by itself 'meaningless…it is only the predicate' that gives it a meaning (PS 12). Hegel goes on to criticise the 'formalism' of Kant (and by implication Schelling),[12] which 'imagines that it has comprehended and expressed the life and nature of a form when it has endowed it with some determination of the schema as a predicate' (PS 29).

9 G.W.F. Hegel, *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline* (1817), trans. by Stephen A. Taubeneck, in *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline and Critical Writings*, ed. by Ernst Behler (New York: Continuum, 1990), pp. 45-263 (p. 54); hereafter cited parenthetically as E.

10 Jacques Derrida, 'Theology of Translation', *Eyes of the University: Right to Philosophy II*, trans. by Jan Plug et. al. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), pp. 64-80 (p. 79).

11 'Wer von ihr Kenntniss will, muss den grossen Weg mitwandeln, bei jedem Moment verweilen, sich ergeben in die Allmächlichkeit der Entwicklung.'

12 While it is Kant who is explicitly accused here of making the triadic schema 'lifeless', the references to electricity, magnetism, and the philosophy of nature all suggest that Hegel also has Schelling in mind (PS 29-30).

In contrast to this 'lifeless' copula of equivalence the copula in reality 'separates' its terms as well as 'holds [them] together' (PS 352, 473). Predicates are 'accidents' (PS 37), and an 'accident as such, detached from what circumscribes it,' can 'attain an existence of its own and a separate freedom,' which is the 'tremendous power of the negative' (PS 19).

As important to the bond between the real and ideal is Schelling's new emphasis on 'personality', a version of Hegel's claim, against Spinoza, that substance is subject.[13] Not only does the copula 'substance is subject' insert substance into a movement of self-difference, where it is subject to the accidents of its predicates. In its personifications of concepts like Beauty and Understanding (PS 19), and in its pathos and affect, the *Phenomenology* introduces a new style of philosophy. For the *Phenomenology* in its opening and closing casts itself as a spiritual autobiography, while the *Philosophy of Nature* goes farther and is a pathography of the involution or alienation that afflicts evolution.[14] Schelling gives the name personality to this new style of philosophising that does not stay at the level of the Concept or the *idea clara* that makes

13 Curiously for the remainder of their lives both Hegel and Schelling accuse each other of the same things: formalism or schematism, and insensitivity to experience or the real. In the *Phenomenology* Hegel accuses Schelling of a 'monochromatic' style of 'painting' and of taking refuge from what he knows to be the inadequacy of this 'schematism' in 'the void of the Absolute' (pp. 29-31). In his much later *Lectures On The History of Philosophy* he repeats this charge that Schelling's work is guilty of schematism and lacks a sense of dialectical movement (trans. by E.S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson [Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995], Vol. 3, pp. 334, 341-3). In his late lectures *On The History of Modern Philosophy* Schelling accuses Hegel of creating a purely logical philosophy ruled by the Concept, in which the end is predetermined from the beginning, as in the Identity Philosophy (trans. by Andrew Bowie [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995], 134-42, 153). He complains that 'the translation of the concept of *process* onto the dialectical movement, where no struggle is possible, but only a monotonous, almost soporific progression' hides 'the lack of *true life*' (143). But as Theodor W. Adorno says, 'Even after the split between Schelling and Hegel one finds in both of them –in *The Ages of the World* in Schelling's case and in the *Phenomenology* in Hegel's – formulations and whole trains of thought in which it is just as difficult to identify the author as in the writings of their youth' (*Hegel: Three Studies*, trans. by Shierry Weber Nicholsen [Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994], p.60).

14 Elizabeth Green Musselman uses the word pathography to describe 'autobiographical memoirs by modern day physicians who suffer' from the condition they describe (*Nervous Conditions: Science and the Body Politic in Early Industrial Britain* [Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006], p. 6).

aesthetics, as it was for Baumgarten, a mere handmaiden to logic. Personality is 'the ultimate potency by which an intelligent being exists in an incommunicable fashion' (AW 107), and it is only in the wake of the *Phenomenology* that Schelling's own subject-less style of writing acquires a personality.

Introducing this concept in the *Freedom* essay, Schelling writes: 'Selfhood as such is spirit; or man is spirit as a selfish, particular being (separated from God)' and 'precisely this connection constitutes personality' (F 33). But if separation from God suggests that personality is somehow deficient, in the *Freedom* essay God himself has personality through his 'bond…with nature' (F 59). Personality, in turn, rests on a 'dark ground', (F 75) which is to say that as separation, it arises from what Schelling describes as the force of contraction: 'something inhibiting, something conflicting', a 'darkening that resists the light', an 'obliquity that resists the straight' (AW 6). It is because of this new emphasis on personality that Schelling, in introducing the *Freedom* essay, seems to set aside his *System of Transcendental Idealism*, in saying that until now he has not arrived at a 'complete' system but has 'confined himself wholly to investigations in the philosophy of nature' (F 4-5). Evidently neither absolute nor transcendental idealism were idealism, since nine years later Schelling is only just beginning 'the ideal part of philosophy' (F 4). What makes this new stage the true beginning of 'the ideal part of philosophy' is the bond with the real that arises through personality, and what makes the earlier investigations in the philosophy of nature also preliminary is that they had not yet taken up the consequences of the empirical for the transcendental as a problem, rather than a synchronicity that bypasses the hard covering for the bloom and fruit.

This sequencing of the real and ideal parts of philosophy might seem to set Schelling on a similar path to Hegel in terms of labouring through nature to reach 'spirit', at least in the sense that in the middle work the form of Schelling's thinking becomes profoundly temporal. But pushing Hegel even further, Schelling subjects the unfolding of the ideal to a continuing 'involution' within the real that still enfolds the possibility of 'evolution' (AW 107). Involution implies that what Schelling calls the negating and affirming potencies are each the inside *and* outside of the other, each requiring only an 'inversion, a turning out of what was concealed…to… transform, the one into the other' (AW 18). This is to say that despite Schelling's often Hegelian privileging of evolution (AW 83, 107),

evolution can and does turn back into involution. Indeed this double fold also describes the differend between Hegel and Schelling, both of whom emphasise negativity, inhibition or the force of contraction, and both of whom would agree that 'development is not expected from what easily unfolds' (AW 107). But in his middle work Schelling gives a greater emphasis to 'the contracting force' as 'the root force of all life', so that for him development occurs not just through negativity but 'from what is excluded and which only decides to unfold with opposition' (AW 83, 107).

As such, idealism is the soul of philosophy in a particular sense, which this paper tracks through the term at its very centre, 'Idea': a largely Hegelian term that I suggest must be thought in terms of the dark ground of personality that cannot be reduced to the Concept. For soul – a term also used by Hegel – is not spirit, but crosses lines with it in a way which suggests that it is an envelope for rethinking spirit. Soul, 'the supremely interior,' as Schelling says in *Ages*, is the instinct 'bound to the higher life' 'that dwells in matter', that 'forms' and 'heals everything' when it is released into a 'free circulation' with 'what is higher', but only insofar as it is 'enveloped and retained by the negating force as by a receptacle' (AW 57-8, 69). The 'soul does not want somehow to sublimate the negating force' as what merely 'precedes it', and indeed 'demands and confirms the negating force' (AW 57). But insofar as it 'heals everything' (AW 69), and spirit is 'the eternally healing, reconciling potency' (AW 46), the soul is in some sense spirit; it is the involution of spirit, where what is to be unfolded 'lies still wrapped up' (AW 70).

But this means that spirit too, a word we particularly associate with Hegel, is not what we commonly understand it to be: namely the politically charged word that Derrida critiques and gives a 'philosophical nationality' from Hegel to Heidegger, as 'the affirmation of spirit through Führung.'[15] From the *Phenomenology* to the *History of Philosophy*, spirit is both that which consciousness becomes at the end of phenomenology and the passion to become that thing:[16] a structure of drive (not Führung) that also

15 Jacques Derrida, *On Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, trans. by Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 7, 21-2, 32.

16 As regards the *Phenomenology* Hegel is often thought to distinguish consciousness, as a 'disparity' between 'the "I"' and the substance which is its object,' from spirit, which has 'made its existence identical with its essence' (PS 21). But this distinction is complicated by the fact that he constantly personifies Spirit, thus presenting it as 'incomplete' and effectively no different from consciousness.

provides the structure for 'the Idea'. This means that Spirit is no more than the Idea of spirit, where the very word 'Idea' evokes both the Concept of Spirit and the inadequacy of this concept. Indeed as Hegel writes in a comment that Jean-Luc Nancy takes up, German has the 'peculiarity' that some of its words – *Grund* or *Abgrund* being his example – have 'not only different but opposite meanings,' a duplicity (in Schelling's sense) that renders individual words themselves a site of speculation.[17] Such words include above all Idea itself, as the mode of thinking terms like ground and spirit in their difference. For the Idea is 'the real existence of the Concept': an ambiguous phrase which may suggest that the Idea is the full realisation of the Concept, but may also suggest that in its real as opposed to ideal functioning, the Idea is that which exceeds the (Kantian) Concept, and the limited 'concept' Hegel might prefer to have of the Idea. Hence Hegel's *Aesthetics* is all about the labour of the negative in which the Idea is still making itself clear to itself. And Schelling's middle work is all about reconfiguring sciences he had wanted to see as ideal in his lectures on *University Studies* – sciences such as religion, philosophy and history – when they become involved or involuted within the real sciences of nature.

I suggest therefore that at the core of Idealism is the self-othering of the Idea, and that the radical shift undergone by this term 'Idea' indexes the direction taken by Idealism itself when it becomes a project in Romanticism. For Idealism's commitment to philosophy as a means to identity, system, and totalisation emerges within the broader literary-cum-philosophical thought environment of Romanticism, where it is itself an 'idea' complicated by its writing.[18] For Schlegel philosophy is

Moreover, he sees 'Science' in its drier forms such as mathematics (PS 26-7) or the complacency of immediate sense experience as characterised by an 'absence of spirit' (PS 15), which is to say that spirit is something deeper and more passionate than mind. As regards the *History of Philosophy,* it is notably Böhme, the most unperfected of philosophers, whom Hegel associates with the 'spiritual [*geistige*] philosophy, substantial in a higher sense…though still in a peculiar and barbarous form,' and whom he sees as the return and retreat of a 'German' origin (*Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, vol. 3, p. 350).

17 Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Speculative Remark (One of Hegel's Bons Mots)*, trans. by Céline Surprenant (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 24, 61-3.

18 For a different, though overlapping, distinction between Idealism and Romanticism see Ernest Rubinstein, *An Episode of Jewish Romanticism: Franz Rosenzweig's The Star of Redemption* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), pp. 8-12. Describing Idealism (Fichte, Hegel, Schelling) as epistemological and Romanticism (Novalis, Schlegel etc.) as aesthetic, but emphasising that they are

science (*Wissenschaft*) but it is also an art (*Kunst*) insofar as it works with concepts but in language.[19] Writing, in turn, as Lyotard puts it, makes thought responsible to 'what every representation misses.'[20] More specifically, if the relation between nature and spirit is at the heart of Idealism, the Idea, a term drawn in the first instance from Plato, is reconfigured within this relation. While the earlier Schelling in his Identity philosophy wants to synchronise spirit and nature, the I Am of transcendental idealism and the It Is of the *Naturphilosophie*, Hegel, by making the relation successive rather than simultaneous so that nature must struggle to become spirit, exposes spirit to its nature. Indeed one could say that especially in the *Phenomenology*, the *Aesthetics*, and the *Philosophy of Nature*, Hegel exposes spirit to its human nature, given that as Schelling will say, the 'eternal nature', like 'the nature of the person' and like nature itself, is 'a life of…anxiety, a fire that incessantly consumes itself, and unremittingly produces itself anew' (AW 3, 46). Given Hegel's silent impact on Schelling's middle work, when Schelling moves to the 'ideal part of philosophy' in the *Freedom* essay to take up the consequences of his earlier investigations into nature for transcendental thought, these investigations initiate what is not just a topic within philosophy but an entirely new 'way of doing philosophy in accordance with nature,' as Jason Wirth puts it.[21] The resulting autoimmunity of Idealism can be focalised through the term whose meaning and affect are at its centre: namely the Idea.

Autoimmunity is Derrida's word for the process by 'which an organism tends to destroy, in a quasi-spontaneous…fashion, some organ or other, one or another of its own immunitary protections.'[22] Or as Goethe

deeply entangled, Rubinstein sees the 'infinitesimal' difference between them as consisting in Romanticism's refusal to finally arrest the movement of difference and reflexiveness that is also part of Idealism.

19 Friedrich Schlegel, *Wissenschaft der europäischen Literatur,Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, ed. by Ernst Behler et.al., 35 vols. (München: F. Schöningh, 1958), vol. XI, p. 10

20 Jean-François Lyotard, *'the jews'*, in *Heidegger and `the jews'*(1988), trans. By Andreas Michel and Mark Roberts. Minneapolis (University of Minnesota Press, 1990), pp. 1-48 (p. 5).

21 Jason Wirth, 'Mass Extinction: Schelling and Natural History', *Poligrafi*, vol. 16, no. 61-2 (2011), pp. 43-63 (p. 59).

22 Jacques Derrida, *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*, trans. by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), p. 124.

puts it, when he writes of the 'crisis' (not consolidation) that occurs when a field 'matures' enough to call itself a 'science', at this point the 'universalist', who believes that 'one idea obtains in forms endlessly divergent,' is confronted with the 'singularist', who still wants to fit the particular into the universal but constantly finds exceptions. Thus sciences, according to Goethe, 'destroy themselves in two ways: by the breadth they reach and by the depth they plumb.'[23] These exceptions are indeed the challenge that Schelling faces in his *Naturphilosophie*, when he tries to see in the multiplicity of 'organisms' and phenomena 'one archetype whose objective aspect alone changes and whose subjective aspect is unchangeable.'[24] Or as Hegel poignantly admits at the end of *The Philosophy of Nature*, the 'material element' 'in its ever-increasing wealth of detail' proves 'refractory towards the unity of the Notion,' confronting 'Reason' with a profound obstacle to finding in 'Nature a free reflex of spirit' (PN 444-5).

This autoimmunity can be contrasted with the simplification of Idealism that occurs in its British appropriation by Coleridgeans such as Joseph Henry Green and Richard Owen. It is worth beginning a genealogy of the word Idea here because our own sense of Idealism and organicism have been filtered through this appropriation. Green and his protégé Owen, the foremost biologist of the Victorian period, were familiar with Kant and Schelling. Indeed Green, who studied in Germany, went not to the more popular English destination of Göttingen but to Berlin, to work with Solger, who was instrumental in hiring Hegel in the following year (1817). But the British Idealists – Coleridge, Green, and Owen– read Kant and Schelling with a deep nervousness about an autotelic let alone autogenetic view of nature. Thus as Robert Richards notes, in taking over *Naturphilosophie*'s desire to conceive nature as teleologically structured, Green retained the central designing power for God.[25] By contrast Schelling writes in the *Ages* of a 'nature that evolves itself out of its own powers and utterly for itself' in a 'terrible loneliness' (AW 104).

23 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, selections from *Maxims and Reflections*, in *Scientific Studies*, ed. and trans. by Douglas Miller (New York: Suhrkamp, 1988), pp. 303-12 (p. 305).

24 F.W.J. Schelling, *On University Studies* (1803), trans. by E.S. Morgan (Athens: University of Ohio Press, 1966), p. 142. The English title is a loose translation. The correct title, since Schelling is not talking about the institution of the university, is 'On the Method of Academic Study'.

25 Robert Richards, *The Romantic Conception of Life: Science and Philosophy in the Age of Goethe* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2002), p. 518.

To be sure Green, as an Idealist who worked on the real sciences of comparative anatomy and physiology, seems to place the Idea within the matrix of time, history, and nature. But he reads the immanent unfolding of the Idea from the closure of the end, as is evident in his claim that 'inferior forms are declensions from or defective forms of the Idea of Man.'[26] Hence, though his point of entry into Idealism was via the natural or real sciences, Green assimilated the real into the ideal in his own progress from 'vital' to 'mental dynamics' as the foundation of a Coleridgean clerisy. *Vital Dynamics* is the title of Green's gathering together, in 1840, of his Hunterian oration that year along with material going back to the 1820s which dealt with the always troublesome life sciences. Green then echoes this title in his *Mental Dynamics* (1847) so as to effect his own transition from nature to spirit, as a specifically Coleridgean transition from physiological to political 'constitution'. In *Mental Dynamics*, a text on education or *Bildung*, Green sketches a curiously Hegelian disciplinary series proceeding from grammar, to 'natural history', to what he calls physiogony, through civil history, to mathematics and logic, and finally philosophy.[27] Green's curriculum mirrors that sketched less systematically by Coleridge, who also envisioned moving from the life sciences to 'a new series beyond…physiology', the ideal series in Schelling's terms, namely philosophy and theology.[28]

Coincident with this ascent of knowledge, as he moved into the Victorian period, Green increasingly Platonised the Idea, referring to 'Ideas, Principles, or Final aims,' and associating an Idea with

26 Joseph Henry Green, *Vital Dynamics: The Hunterian Oration Before the Royal College of Surgeons in London, 17th February 1840* (London: William Pickering, 1840), p. 61.

27 Joseph Henry Green, *Mental Dynamics or Groundwork of a Professional Education, The Hunterian Oration Before the Royal College of Surgeons of England, 15th Feb 1847*. (London: William Pickering, 1847), pp. 7-19, 41. Green defines physiogony as 'the history of nature' considered as 'preface and portion of the history of man' (*Vital Dynamics*, p. 103).

28 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Theory of Life* (1816), in *Shorter Works and Fragments*, ed. by H.J. and J.R. de J. Jackson, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), Vol. 1, pp. 481-556 (p. 516, 519n); *The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, Vol. 4, ed. by Kathleen Coburn and Merton Christensen (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), #4517. While Schelling's division of ideal and real sciences may have suited Coleridge, Coleridge was harshly critical of him for making nature absolute.

'integration'.[29] This conservative understanding of the word is borne out by his equation of 'Idea' with 'type', a biological term that Green also uses theologically, linking it to the 'book of nature'.[30] The concept of type, in turn, removes the Idea from any possibility of an unfinished evolution, and grounds it in a preformationist rather than epigenetic biology, while also binding Schelling's more unpredictable potences into a teleology. Thus in his final work, the posthumously published *Spiritual Philosophy*, Green writes that the antecedent Idea or 'potential unity of the manifold is inconceivable except as predeterminate in aim and object, and this predeterminate we may call the *"Type"*', without which 'the parent one would have remained, or could be conceived only as an undifferenced, unintelligible potentiality.'[31]

The resulting containment of philosophy, science, history and the transfers between them within a theologocentric architectonic of knowledge is continued even when the terms 'type' and 'archetype' definitively migrate into the life sciences in Owen's work on the 'vertebrate archetype'. As Rupke sums it up, in Owen's homological research programme the vertebrate archetype is 'the most complete visual expression of a belief in the fundamental relatedness, if not of all organisms, at least of all animals with endoskeletons.'[32] Owen famously concludes *On the Limbs* (1849) by placing the 'Archetype' in an evolution all of whose 'modifications' the 'Divine Mind…foreknew', and which leads 'amidst the wreck of worlds, from the first embodiment of the Vertebrate idea under its old Ichthyic vestment, until it became arrayed in the glorious garb of the Human Form.'[33] It is true that scientifically speaking Owen's archetype really is a 'general and undifferentiated form', and that his equation of the archetype, which in its vertebrate form is more properly a 'structuralist' notion, with the Platonic Idea, may have been motivated by a desire to please his conservative patrons that does not nullify his

29 Green, *Mental Dynamics*, 34; *Spiritual Philosophy: Founded on the Teaching of the Late Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by John Simon, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1865), vol. 1, p. 198.

30 Green, 'Introduction to the Natural History of Birds' p. 310.

31 Green, *Spiritual Philosophy*, pp. 202-3.

32 Nicolaas Rupke, *Richard Owen: Biology Without Darwin* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 118.

33 Richard Owen, *On the Nature of Limbs: A Discourse*, ed. by Ron Amundson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), pp. 1-119 (p. 186).

considerable scientific work.[34] But the fact remains that both Green and Owen, in their public *personae* as members of an institution, adapted the speculative interdisciplinarity of German Idealism to a discipline, and took it in a theologocentric direction. For Owen's gold standard is the hierarchical, classificatory discipline of comparative anatomy, whose importance for an idealism of the clerisy we still see in Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism*. The late Romantic and mid-century appropriation of Kant and Schelling by the Coleridgeans in turn laid the basis for a conservative Victorian appropriation of *Hegel*. And it is to this appropriation that we can trace the bad press which Idealism has received in our own time (especially in Romantic studies), as the philosophical underpinning for various forms of aesthetic and romantic ideology that one could argue German Idealism itself puts under erasure.

Kant also used the term 'idea', distinguishing ideas of reason from concepts of the understanding, where reason is the faculty of principles and understanding is the faculty of rules.[35] In the first *Critique*, evoking Plato, Kant says that ideas flow 'from the highest reason' and go 'far beyond the concepts of the understanding (with which Aristotle occupied himself) since nothing in experience [can] ever be congruent to' them (CPR 395). For Kant, as Karl Jaspers puts it, ideas make things too big for the understanding, while concepts make them too small for reason.[36] But Kant then limits these transcendental ideas of pure reason to a merely regulative status. Pressing beyond these limits Schelling, in his early transcendental idealism, does often justify the British Idealists' Platonising of the idea as a 'design' or 'paradigm',[37] granted that we are dealing here with a mystical rather than theological 'Plato'. Thus in Schelling's *Bruno* (1802) ideas are sheltered in 'archetypal' rather than 'productive nature', and are housed in

34 Ron Amundson, 'Richard Owen and Animal Form', in *On the Nature of Limbs*, pp. xv-lii (pp. xxii-xxvii). See also Rupke, who takes issue with seeing Owen's archetype as a sign of his reactionary position: 'Rather, the Platonization was a response to the...vaguely evolutionary transcendentalism of the Schelling-inspired *Naturphilosophen* and was intended to reintegrate morphology into a traditional, teleological epistemology' (p. 133). But it is hard not to see such an epistemology as conservative.

35 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 387; hereafter cited parenthetically as CPR.

36 Karl Jaspers, *Kant*, trans. by Ralph Manheim (New York: Harcourt,1957), p. 46.

37 Green, *Spiritual Philosophy*, pp. 213, 240.

an 'archetypal understanding'.[38] To be sure, they are also realised in time. But as Schelling writes in *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*, 'In Nature… the whole absolute is knowable, although appearing Nature produces...in endless development, what in true Nature exists all at once and in an eternal fashion.'[39] So whereas the *First Outline* tests its idealism against the philosophy of nature, *Bruno* contains the threat posed by nature –which is present in sections on 'the three grades of finite being' and the heavenly bodies– within transcendental idealism, through the anchoring of productive nature in archetypal nature, and the consequent disabling of time (B 125).[40]

The word Idea in this Romantically Platonic sense is also present in Schelling's lectures on *University Studies*, where at 'the level of the Idea or being-in-itself' what 'temporal knowledge…posits conditionally and successively…exists unconditionally and simultaneously.' This level is that of the 'Idea of all ideas…the Idea of the absolute itself.'[41] But interestingly Schelling rarely uses the word Idea after the early 1800s. One reason may be its association with an Absolute Idealism that he could ground only as a construction: a construction that he knew to be 'an invasion of nature through freedom'. As such, far from being what Meillassoux attacks as strong correlationism,[42] this is always already a deeply self-critical, indeed autoimmune construction, as is evident in the fact that Schelling was at the same time writing the *First Outline*, which lays the seeds for a rethinking of freedom at the hands of nature. Another reason for dropping the word Idea is of course its increasing association with Schelling's rival Hegel.

38 F.W.J. Schelling, *Bruno, or On the Natural and Divine Principle of Things*, ed. and trans. by Michael G. Vater (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), pp. 122, 125; hereafter cited parenthetically as B.

39 F.W.J. Schelling, *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*, trans. by Errol E. Harris and Peter Heath (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 272.

40 In other words time is an abstraction in *Bruno*, existing only at a logical and not experiential level. Similarly in *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*, productive nature is an abstraction because the text thinks within a transcendental empiricism that has no sense of time. For this reason, *Bruno* and *Ideas* form a pair in which transcendental philosophy and the philosophy of nature can still come together as one science. But this is not possible when we pair the far more radical *First Outline* with *Bruno*, since it is here, in the 'graduated stages of nature', that the sense of time which becomes so important to the middle work first enters Schelling's corpus.

41 Schelling, *On University Studies*, pp. 14, 44.

42 Quentin Meillassoux, *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency* (London: Continuum, 2008); see especially pp. 37, 50-3.

But this is not to say that Schelling abandons the Idea, only that he moves away from a totalised form of Absolute Idealism that it becomes convenient – if inaccurate – to project onto Hegel. For the graduated stages of nature in the *First Outline* (where Schelling still uses the word Idea) are all about the immanently self-developing force that Hegel sees in mind and things. Hence in the *naturphilosophische* side of his work from the *First Outline* to the *Freedom* essay and the 1815 version of *Ages*, Schelling too is now engaged in rethinking this force which Hegel calls 'the Idea' in accordance with nature as part of an unfinished evolution. For Hegel this rethinking occurs because substance unfolds as subject, while for Schelling it is because substance is deconstructed as nature.

This sense of the Idea as unfinished is also in Kant. For while in the first *Critique* ideas lack presence but are not inchoate, in the third *Critique* they are subdivided into 'aesthetic' and 'rational' ideas. Aesthetic ideas are intuitions of the imagination to which no 'concept' or 'determinate thought' is 'adequate', and 'rational' ideas are concepts that cannot be concretely embodied. Either way, such ideas 'strive towards something lying beyond the bounds of experience,' but without any concept being 'fully adequate to them as inner intuitions', even when (as in the second case) they are described as 'concepts'.[43] By the third *Critique*, then, ideas, through their division into the mutually supplementary categories of aesthetic and rational, have become constitutively associated with inadequacy – a problem that dogs Hegel throughout his work. Nevertheless Kant approaches the Idea's difference from itself in logical rather than bio- or psycho-logical terms. Put differently, for Kant the incompleteness of ideas is thought within an aesthetics that aims at harmonisation, while in Schelling's *First Outline* it is the real science of physics that is the source of a certain de- and recomposability of ideas into what Schelling calls 'actants' that makes them highly volatile.[44] It is in post-Kantian Idealism, then, that the Idea becomes more dangerously exposed through the sciences to a materiality, contingency, and historicity that are the source of its potentiality and generative failure.

Hegel's 'Idea', singularised to give it a certain driving force, might

43 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. by Paul Guyer, trans. by Paul Guyér and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 192.

44 Actants (Keith Peterson's translation for *Aktionen*) are Schelling's version of monads as forces rather than matter, 'originary productivities' (*First Outline*, pp. 19-34).

seem theoretically consistent with the more Platonised Idea of Schelling's *Bruno*. Bruno, which uses the word in both the plural and singular, is studded with references to the 'absolute idea' and the Idea as the absolute's 'identity' (B 161). The Idea – which is the third in the series intuition, concept, Idea – 'comprehends and identifies both the unity of the bare concept and the multiplicity of objects furnished in intuition.' As such, the Idea in *Bruno* is the 'reality' of the 'concept' (B 143), a formulation echoed in Hegel's definition of the Idea as 'the real existence of the Concept.'[45] Or as Hegel says in the *Logic*, the Idea is the '*adequate concept*', 'the unity of the concept and objectivity'; it is not just the 'bad infinity' of a '*goal* which is to be approximated but itself remains always a kind of *beyond*,' but is the 'congruence of concept and reality.'[46]

But is this not the essence rather than the 'real existence' of the Idea? Or in other words, is the Idea to be approached as part of an epistemology or a phenomenology? The question goes to the heart of Paul Ricoeur's distinction of consciousness, which 'aims at another that it is not,' from spirit, which 'is not directed toward another who is lacking to it' but is 'entirely complete within itself.' On this basis Ricoeur sees Husserl's work as 'a phenomenology of consciousness that is raised above itself into a phenomenology of mind,' while Hegel's is a phenomenology that remains 'in consciousness'.[47]

Hegel's emphasis on consciousness, or later on the Idea as consciousness, marks his difference from epistemology and logic on the one hand, and from transcendental idealism on the other. At the root of the emerging difference of Hegel's phenomenology from Schelling's transcendental idealism, which then becomes the ground of their unconfessed convergence, is the division of labour to which Rosenkranz points when he suggests that while Schelling in the Jena years tried to lay the foundations of absolute philosophy, Hegel worked on developing philosophy as a *cycle* of sciences.[48] This diachronic nature of Hegel's project necessarily removes the Idea from the realm of the unconditioned.

45 G.W.F. Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. by T.M. Knox, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), vol. I, p. 106; hereafter cited parenthetically as A.

46 G.W.F. Hegel, *Science of Logic* (1816), trans. and ed. by George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 572, 670-1; hereafter cited parenthetically as SL.

47 Paul Ricoeur, 'Hegel and Husserl on Intersubjectivity', *From Text to Action* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1991), pp. 227-95 (pp. 229-31).

48 Quoted by Michael Vater, *Introduction* to Schelling, *Bruno*, pp. 3-97 (p. 82).

Instead the Idea becomes, as Gasché says in commenting on Friedrich Schlegel, 'infinitely inappropriate to its own self-presentation,' insofar as it 'continually transcends the synthesis…that it achieves.' Or as Schlegel says, in a formulation that brings out the speculative nature of the Idea, the Idea is 'an absolute synthesis of absolute antitheses, the continual self-creating interchange of two conflicting thoughts.'[49]

Granted that Schlegel's formulation is more enthusiastic than agonistic, and thus substitutes paradox for a dialectic that tarries with the negative. The word Idea in this speculative sense is ubiquitous in Hegel's work, especially in the *Encyclopedia* and the *Aesthetics*. And it is precisely this commitment to the Idea that is at odds with Lyotard's claim that Hegel limits thought to 'what can be taken into intelligibility under concepts.'[50] To a degree Hegel does build on Schelling's use of the word Idea as the reality of the concept in *Bruno*, but he does not adopt the synchronicity of the ideal and real in the latter's earlier work. Rather in the disavowed conversation between the two thinkers that we are tracing, Schelling's long-term impact on Hegel is his thinking of philosophy according to nature in the other side of his work, with the difference that nature becomes history in Hegel, but a history that faces all the pitfalls of the history of nature.

To be sure, in the *Science of Logic*, which is condensed in the *Encyclopedia*, Hegel wants the Idea to be 'the adequate concept' or 'reason identical to itself' (SL 527; E 54). But if 'the whole of science is the presentation of the idea' (E 54), this presentation in the *Encyclopedia* is articulated in three broad divisions in which the synthesis is at the beginning as a proposition instead of at the end as the result of a dialectic. The subsequent cycle of disciplines then has the form of an unfinished evolution, in which two of the divisions are about the difference between the 'theme' and 'execution' of the Idea, to evoke Hegel's own terms (A 96, 289). Hence in what Derrida criticises as Hegel's onto- and auto-encyclopedia of the state,[51] it is only in the Logic, the first division of the system, that the Idea is 'in and for itself'. Logic is followed by the

49 Rodolphe Gasché, 'Foreword: Ideality in Fragmentation', in Friedrich Schlegel, *Philosophical Fragments*, trans. by Peter Firchow (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), pp. vii-xxxii (p. xiv-xv); Schlegel, *Athenaeum Fragments*, in *Philosophical Fragments*, pp. 18-93 (#121).

50 Jean-François Lyotard, *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time*, trans. By Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), pp. 108-9, 112.

philosophy of nature, or 'the idea in the form of *otherness*,' as 'the negative of itself' (PN 13), and then by the philosophy of spirit or the science of the Idea 'as it returns to itself from its otherness' (E 54). In the *Logic* the Idea is formally elaborated as the 'free concept…determining itself as reality' (E 128), which has moved beyond mere 'representation' (SL 628, 670). The Idea as the teleological fulfilment of the Concept is brought in towards the end to save the Concept, which has become problematised by having to be dialectical. But in the *Philosophy of Nature* the Idea is no mere 'formal-logical entity' (E 128). Much like 'spirit' in the *Phenomenology*, it is personified in its *agon* with Nature. It must struggle through 'each grade or level of Nature' in which it is imperfectly present, 'estranged' from itself, in a Nature which is 'only the corpse of the understanding': a 'petrified intelligence', in the phrase from Schelling that Hegel cites (PN 14-15). In the process it must endure a '*self-degradation*' and 'disparity with its own self' (PN 17). Hence while the Idea may be brought in to save the Concept, Hegel also has to make the Concept the resolution of the Idea's contradictions, when he writes that the 'unity of the subjective and objective idea is the concept' (E 136).

This privileging of the Concept is what leads some to see Hegel as a philosopher of the Concept rather than, in Kantian terms, of the Idea. Thus for Schelling, who reads Hegel purely through the *Logic*, the Idea is identified with the formalism of the Concept, and generates only a dialectic that is 'abstract' and 'empty'. The Idea is always already the 'completed Idea', which 'is certain of itself' and 'knows in advance that it cannot perish in its being-other.'[52] But I suggest rather that the anxiously overlapping, supplementary relationship of Idea and Concept exposes the inadequacy of the Idea to its Concept or blueprint.[53] Thus instead of spirit succeeding nature, within each major division of the *Encyclopedia* are further disciplines and sub-disciplines, in which the Idea, having indeed perished in its being-other, must go through the same struggle to become identical to itself, only to start anew in a new discipline. After the failure of the Idea

51 Jacques Derrida, 'The Age of Hegel', *Who's Afraid of Philosophy?: Right to Philosophy I*, trans. by Jan Plug (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), pp. 117-57 (p. 148).

52 Schelling, *On The History of Modern Philosophy*, pp. 142-3, 154.

53 For elaboration of this point see Tilottama Rajan, 'Towards a Cultural Idealism: Negativity and Freedom in Kant and Hegel', *Idealism Without Absolutes: Philosophy and Romantic Culture*, ed. by Tilottama Rajan and Arkady Plotnitsky (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), pp. 51-71 (pp. 56-7).

to prevail in the *Philosophy of Nature*, in the *Aesthetics* we begin with symbolic art, in which the Idea cannot be adequately embodied because it has not found its 'form even in itself' and 'remains struggling and striving after it' (A 76). The 'adequate embodiment of the Idea' is then achieved in Classicism, but only for this synthesis to fall apart at the higher level of Romanticism where the inwardness of the Idea cannot find expression in external forms (A 77-9). Indeed Classicism is better described as an art of the Concept. Throughout The *Aesthetics* the Idea 'presses on to representation and reality' without definitively consolidating itself (A 299), so that instead of arriving at the end of history Hegel must declare an end of art. Thus as is well known, having experienced the history of art as the questioning of the very criterion of adequate embodiment, at the end of the *Aesthetics* Hegel has philosophy supersede art. But then at the end of *The History of Philosophy* we have only arrived at Schelling, whose work has 'great merit', but who has 'misconceived the nature of thought' as art rather than philosophy.[54] The envelope or prototype for this process of perpetually unworking the Idea is provided by the *Phenomenology*, the text which definitively brings not just dialectic, but also narrative, into philosophy's self-identity: a narrative of the 'Calvary' of spirit, in which consciousness is never fully raised into spirit (PS 493).[55]

What then is Hegel's Idea, if it is not reason identical to itself? In effect the Idea is a drive to be the Idea, which it cannot adequately embody; it is an 'urge…to become objective to itself' (PN 26), or as

54 Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, vol. 3, p. 542.

55 In seeing the 1807 *Phenomenology* as a containing form for Hegel's work I differ from M.J. Petry, who argues that Hegel replaces the Jena with the Berlin *Phenomenology*, which becomes a subordinate section of the second and third editions of the *Encyclopedia*. According to Petry the Jena *Phenomenology* was marred by its focus on consciousness and failure to properly distinguish consciousness and spirit, which are later divided up between the sections on phenomenology and psychology respectively. Insofar as he comes to prefer a 'systematic' to a 'phenomenological' exposition, the later Hegel gives up 'temporal sequence' for analytic and synthetic procedures that are 'structural', and 'never again' returns to the Jena *Phenomenology*'s 'teleological exposition' ('Introduction' to G.W.F. Hegel, *The Berlin Phenomenology*, ed. and trans. by M.J. Petry (Holland: D. Reidel, 1981), pp. xiii-cx (pp. xv-xviii, xliii, xlvii, ci). But the problem with Petry's claim is that Hegel continued to arrange several lecture series in a temporal-historical sequence (e.g. the *Aesthetics*, *Philosophy of Religion*, *Philosophy of History*, and *History of Philosophy*). Moreover, even the *Encyclopedia* itself is arranged in a temporal, if not historical, sequence.

Coleridge says of Schelling (albeit critically), an 'Anticipation' that 'acquires necessity by becoming an Idea.'[56] At the core of the Idea is what Hegel calls a 'germ' or '*idea matrix*' (PN 347) and what Schelling in *The World-Soul* calls a '*positive* force that…*initiates* motion' and is the reason why 'in nature everything strives continuously forwards.'[57]

Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation* is an interesting text within this genealogy of the idea of the Idea, warped by its author's ill-will towards Hegel, but symptomatically revealing the tensions that traverse the word Idea. It is clear that Schopenhauer wants to deconstruct, as a mere representation of the will, the myth of reason identical to itself. Hegel, as Alison Stone argues, constructs his philosophy of nature as an ascending sequence of natural forms conceived as 'constellations of concept/matter relations,' or 'forms of thought' increasingly integrated with matter. Hegel's is thus a 'strong a priori' reading of nature as 'intrinsically rational', even if non-consciously.[58] In the second book of his *magnum opus* Schopenhauer adopts this ascending sequence of natural forms, whether from Hegel, or from Schelling's graduated stages of nature, or from Kielmeyer before them. But for Schopenhauer this idea of reason in nature is nothing but the representation of a blind will whose metaphysical fraud he wants to unmask by presenting it as a representation (*Vortsellung*), the word Hegel is careful to distinguish from Idea. However, as we know, in the first English translations of *Die Welt as Wille und Vorstellung*, *Vorstellung* was rendered as 'Idea',[59] in part because Schopenhauer also does use the word 'Idee' as a compromise formation between will and representation, necessity and freedom, realism and an idealism he cannot entirely renounce. The word *Idee* as distinct from *Vorstellung* is first introduced in the second book of Schopenhauer's auto-encyclopedia of the ruin of Spirit, or we could say, borrowing a term from E.S. Burt, his auto-thanatography

56 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Marginalia* (M:4.379-81; *Notebooks*, Vol. 3, ed. by Kathleen Coburn (1973), #4449. Coleridge is, however, critical of Schelling for confusing ideas with self-evident theorems on the one hand, and ungrounded anticipations on the other.

57 F.W.J. Schelling, extract from *On the World Soul*, trans. by Iain Hamilton Grant, Collapse VI (2010), pp. 88-117 (p. 95).

58 Alison Stone, *Petrified Intelligence: Nature in Hegel's Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), pp. 57-9.

59 Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea*, trans. by J.B. Haldane and R. Kemp, 2 vols. (Boston: Ticknor and Co., 1887).

of spirit.[60] The first book is his anti-Logic: a proposition about how the world of representations is nothing but a representation of the will. The remaining three books move from the real science of *Naturphilosophie*, to aesthetics as at once a real and ideal science, to ethics as the death-wish of a spirit that cannot emancipate itself from nature. Returning to the second book, the Idea is introduced here as the 'adequate objectivity of the will'[61] and has several 'grades' like the graduated sequence of stages in *Naturphilosophie*. The individual ideas—since Schopenhauer uses the word both in the singular and plural—are each expressions, at a particular stage, of a will that 'Objectif[ies] itself more distinctly from grade to grade' through the forms and forces of nature, culminating in Man as the '(Platonic) Idea' in which 'the will finds its most distinct and perfect objectification' (WWR 149, 153). The whole, in turn, is a process in which 'a higher Idea', as in Schelling's *First Outline*,[62] subdues the 'lower ones through *overwhelming assimilation*,' even as these lower ideas struggle to survive (WWR 145).

For Schopenhauer, then, what Hegel seeks as an 'adequate embodiment of the Idea' is nothing but the 'adequate objectivity of the will' (WWR 154). Yet curiously this deconstructed Idea is attributed to Plato. Schopenhauer's use of the term Idea thus raises the question: why use two terms, *Vorstellung* and *Idee*, and why bring in Plato who would not have recognised himself in this brutally Malthusian, biopolitical concept of the Idea? The first term, the notion of categories like time and space as mere '*Vorstellungen*' of the will, functions within an epistemology. But the second term, Idea, albeit an Idea generated within nature, functions within a metaphysics, wherein the Idea is an 'actual being' (WWR 181) whose reality Schopenhauer cannot repudiate as mere representation, even though he may demystify its *idealisation* by Hegel. This is also to suggest that Schopenhauer cannot get rid of the Idealism of the post-Kantian Idea, for there is an almost schizophrenic inconsistency between the demystification of the Hegelian Idea and its remystification through Plato. This tension in

60 E.S. Burt, *Regard for the Other: Autothanatography in Rousseau, De Quincey, Baudelaire, and Wilde*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), pp. 6-8, 26-8.

61 Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation* (1819/1844), trans. by E.F.J. Payne 2 vols. (New York: Dover, 1966), vol. 1, p. 154; hereafter cited parenthetically as WWR.

62 In the *First Outline* Schelling discusses the problem of how an 'individual nature' can hold its own against the '*universal organism*' (pp. 53-4).

the Idea between the will that it is and the Platonic Idea that it wants to be also plays out as an *agon* between the deconstruction of the Idea in the second book on nature and its construction in the third book on art.

But here we must note the difference between Hegel's 'adequate embodiment of the Idea' (A 77) and Schopenhauer's description of the *Idea* as 'the adequate objectification of the *will*.' That the Idea for Hegel too is will or drive is marked by his shift from ideas to the singular 'Idea', which has no referent since it is not the Idea 'of' anything.[63] This would not matter if it were simply a term in logic or epistemology, like 'concept' and 'intuition'. But the Idea is also something real, which is to say that Hegel retains it as an object of striving, whereas Schopenhauer deconstructs it into the will but then cannot part with the idealism that he thereby disavows. What Schopenhauer does contribute to the history of the term is a powerful sense that this Idea as an immanently developing potentiality is generated within productive nature rather than standing outside it in 'archetypal nature'.

The later Schelling also rethinks the Idea in terms of a will involved in an unfinished evolution. While rarely using the word Idea, at crucial points he retains the word *Urbild* or prototype, which he had used synonymously with ideas in *Bruno*, and which he says are 'not quite physical natures', but are also not to be thought 'apart from all physicality': they are therefore not 'universal concepts of the understanding' or 'fixed models' but 'are in ceaseless motion and production.'[64] In the *Freedom* essay Schelling relocates this *Urbild* from archetypal nature to the ground, which is really an *Ungrund* that is 'being *before* all ground' (F 68). He also reconceives soul as a potentiality sheltered in the negative, where in *Bruno* it had been 'torn' from the archetypal state by its 'union with the body' and 'transition over to temporal existence' (B 134). The *Urbild* or 'Idea hidden in the divided ground' (F 31), an idea that must therefore itself be divided, thus develops within nature, but is an ideal by which life 'steers' itself, and 'in conjunction' with which it 'organically' shapes itself (F 76): what Habermas calls 'something not yet made good that pushes its essence forward.'[65] Yet this guidance or steering is caught in a circular logic in

63 'The Idea is...not to be taken as the Idea of any one thing or other' (E 128).

64 Friedrich Schelling, *Ages of the World* (1813), trans. by Judith Norman, in Slavoj Žižek/F.W.J. von Schelling, *The Abyss of Freedom/Ages of the World* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), pp. 105-82 (p. 161).

65 Jürgen Habermas, 'Ernst Bloch: A Marxist Schelling', *Philosophical-Political Profiles*, trans. by Frederick G. Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985), pp. 53-79 (p. 71).

which it can never truly ground itself, as the 'higher potency' is the 'archetype of the lower potency' which is the 'ectype' of the higher (AW 57-9), making the idea no more than an idea of itself. Thus in the *Freedom* essay, Schelling talks of a 'blind will' which 'to the extent that it has not yet been raised to...complete unity with light (as principle of understanding), is pure craving or desire' (F 32). But he also conceives this will in much more idealistic terms than Schopenhauer, who knew the *Freedom* essay.[66] For the will, as 'an inner, reflexive representation (*Vorstellung*)', is the 'first stirring of divine existence', in which God, by which Schelling means the ideal principle, 'is realized, although only in himself', 'begotten *in* God himself', that is to say autogenetically rather than teleologically (F 30-2). It is the 'eternal embryo of God that is not yet an actual god, but rather only a god with respect to its forces' (AW 86).

Or we could cite Coleridge, who anticipates Ricoeur in distinguishing between 'life' and 'Mind'. Where Mind is 'logically defined' as a 'Subject possessing its Object in itself', 'life' is 'a Subject' that 'produce[s] an Object' in order 'to *find* itself'. Life 'has an ascension towards Mind', but remains 'incomplete': it cannot therefore be the subject of a logic.[67] In Hegel's *Aesthetics* too, the insistent unworking of the Idea's 'adequate embodiment' recognises the Idea as a certain will that Schelling analyses in *Ages of the World* as the rotary motion of positive and negative drives, projection and resistance, in which even synthesis is only a moment. Yet, as we ask what the word Idea tells us about Idealism, Hegel's (in)adequate embodiment is a useful corrective to Schopenhauer's reduction of the Idea to pure will, which is itself caught within a rotary motion that reconstructs what Schopenhauer deconstructs. This 'restless fermentation' of the Idea (A 438) constitutes the vitality of Idealism, as a Romanticism in which consciousness has yet to become that Spirit which, as Ricoeur says, 'is not directed toward another who is lacking to it, but is complete within itself.'[68]

66 See Sebastian Gardner, quoting Christopher Janaway, in 'Schopenhauer, Will, and the Unconscious', *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. by Christopher Janaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 375-421 (p. 415n).

67 Coleridge, *Shorter Works and Fragments*, vol. 2, pp. 1426-7,1436-7.

68 Ricoeur, 'Hegel and Husserl', pp. 129-31.

Schelling's Doctrine of Abstraction

DANIEL WHISTLER

'Think abstractly? *Sauve qui peut*!'[1] If there's one thing we have all learnt from the legacy of German Idealism – particularly its Hegelian 'culmination' – it is the poverty of the abstract. The 'reproach of abstraction'[2] is one with which we are comfortable, for 'the abstract universal…is an isolated, imperfect moment of the Notion and has no truth.'[3] However, as always, orthodoxy here obscures diversity: while it does remain true that, in almost all of Hegel's output and most of Schelling's, 'abstract' functions pejoratively, this is not the whole story. A case in point is Hegel's *Differenzschrift*, drafted in Spring 1801, where 'abstract' takes on an ambivalent position.[4] On the one hand, there are anticipations of the mature Hegel in its critique of Spinozist identity as 'originating in abstraction' and of 'abstract reasoning [in which] the intellect drifts without an anchor';[5] however, on the other hand, Hegel takes up a positive idea of abstraction as key to accessing the 'true identity of subject and object' as the casting off what is 'peculiar' and 'onesided' in scientific forms.[6] Abstraction generates truth through subtraction.

1 G.W.F. Hegel, 'Who Thinks Abstractly?' in *Hegel: Texts and Commentary*, ed. and trans. by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Anchor, 1966), p. 113.
2 Peter Osborne, 'The Reproach of Abstraction' in *Radical Philosophy* 127 (2004), pp. 21-8.
3 G.W.F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. by A. V. Miller (London: Prometheus, 1969), p. 604.
4 And it is no surprise that all evidence points to the fact that Hegel wrote the *Differenzschrift* with Schelling's *On the True Concept of Philosophy of Nature* open in front of him.
5 G.W.F. Hegel, *The Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, trans. by H.S. Harris and Walter Cerf (Albany: SUNY, 1977), pp. 97, 113. Of course, even in the mature Hegel 'abstract' sometimes takes on a similar ambivalence; see Osborne pp. 25-6.
6 Hegel, *Difference*, p. 160.

It is with this generative conception of abstraction that the following essay is concerned. I begin by sketching its origins in Fichte's early works, before providing a concerted reading of its pivotal role in Schelling's essay from January 1801, *On the True Concept of Philosophy of Nature*. Although abstraction only makes this positive appearance in a couple of Schelling's works from a four month period during 1801,[7] it is here worked out in a way that crystallises what is innovative and distinctive about Schelling's philosophy at this moment.

1. The Characteristics of Generative Abstraction

To begin, it is necessary to sketch the origins of generative abstraction in Kant and Fichte. Abstraction lurks only in the background of Kant's epistemology. According to the *Jäsche Logic*, it is – along with comparison and reflection – an 'essential and universal condition for the generation of every concept whatsoever.'[8] It is on this basis that Osborne has argued that Kant gives an 'unequivocally positive epistemological value to abstraction as constitutive of the object of knowledge': it is through abstraction that experience achieves objectivity.[9] Nevertheless, throughout both the pre-critical and critical periods, the essentially 'negative' role of abstraction is constantly stressed by Kant, for, while constitutive, abstraction is never generative of knowledge; hence, the *Blomberg Logic*'s assertion, 'Through abstraction not the least cognition arises'[10] which is repeated once more in the *Jäsche Logic*, 'No concept *comes to be* through abstraction.'[11]

As so often with the Kantian legacy, it fell to Fichte to begin to challenge his refusal to countenance generative abstraction. Of all the German Idealists, Fichte employs abstraction positively in the most sustained fashion, and it comes to play a significant role not just in his account of epistemology, but at the very heart of his methodology.

7 Hence, by the 1804 *System*, abstract is being used widely in a pejorative sense once more. See F.W.J. Schelling, *Werke*, ed. K.F.A. Schelling (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1856-61), 6:6, 230, 254 (although cf. 6:146-7); hereafter *SW*.
8 Immanuel Kant, 'The Jäsche Logic' in *Lectures on Logic*, ed. and trans. by J. Michael Young (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), §6.
9 Indeed, on occasion, Kant presents his own philosophical methodology as proceeding by abstraction, see Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A22/B36.
10 Immanuel Kant, 'The Blomberg Logic' in *Lectures on Logic*, §254.
11 Kant, *Jäsche Logic*, §6.

Beginning in his very earliest sketches of the *Wissenschaftslehre* and culminating in the *First Introduction*, Fichte resorts again and again to abstraction to explain how philosophising is epistemically possible. There are, for my purposes, four key components to the Fichtean method of abstraction worth picking out.

1.1 Experiments in Transcendence

As for Hegel in the *Differenzschrift*, there is a form of abstraction that is generative: it makes appear to the philosopher aspects of reality not evident before. This is how Breazeale puts it,

> We are no more conscious of our immediate 'feelings' than we are of the immediate unity of subject and object that is expressed in the *Tathandlung*...Both of these absolute poles of Fichte's transcendental explanation of subjectivity and of experience become objects of thetic consciousness only within philosophical reflection, where they are of course abstracted from the full, rich context of lived experience.[12]

Only by subtracting from 'lived experience' in abstraction does properly philosophical content come to consciousness. Moreover, this generative result is, according to Fichte, due to the fact that abstraction *elevates* the philosopher above ordinary experience. Thus, in the *First Introduction*, Fichte writes,

> A finite rational being possesses nothing whatsoever beyond experience. The entire contents of his thinking are comprised within experience. These same conditions necessarily apply to the philosopher, and thus it appears incomprehensible how he could ever succeed in elevating himself above experience. The philosopher, however, is able to engage in abstraction. That is to say, by means of a free act of thinking he is able to separate things that are connected with each other within experience... and when he does so he has abstracted from experience and has thereby succeeded in elevating himself above experience. If he abstracts from the thing, then he is left with an intellect in itself as the explanatory ground of experience...[This] way of proceeding is called *idealism*.[13]

12 Daniel Breazeale, 'Fichte's Abstract Realism' in Daniel O. Dahlstrom and Michael Baur (eds), *The Emergence of German Idealism* (Washington: CUA Press, 1999), p. 112.

That is, through abstraction one can 'raise oneself to a consciousness of an intuition of the pure I'.[14] The act of rising above ordinary consciousness, of suppressing all objects of consciousness, gives one access to an unadulterated intuition of the self-positing I, and from this point the *Wissenschaftslehre*'s construction can begin.

This initial act of abstraction is always 'an experimental enterprise'[15], a performance that one must undertake for oneself. Such an emphasis on the performativity of philosophising is of course a theme running through the whole of Fichte's works: one cannot be given the results of abstraction by another; philosophical thinking must continually begin anew with acts of abstraction until this becomes 'a new habit'[16]. What is more, for Fichte it is the thoroughness and rigour of such an enterprise that provides one of the key criteria for philosophical success. As Breazeale puts it, Fichte 'believed that the purity of the philosopher's inner intuitions and hence the universality of his descriptions is, so to speak, *guaranteed* by the *completeness* of the initial act of free abstraction which precedes his series of self-observations.'[17] Thoroughgoing abstraction provides the warrant for good philosophy.

13 J.G. Fichte, 'An Attempt at a New Presentation of the *Wissenschaftslehre*' in *Introductions to the Wissenschaftslehre*, ed. and trans. By Daniel Breazeale (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), pp. 10-1.

14 J.G. Fichte, 'Concerning the Difference between the Spirit and the Letter within Philosophy' in *Early Philosophical Writings*, ed. and trans. by Daniel Breazeale (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 204.

15 Daniel Breazeale, 'Doing Philosophy: Fichte vs. Kant on Transcendental Method' in *Fichte, German Idealism, and Early Romanticism*, ed. Daniel Breazeale and Tom Rockmore (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010), p. 51. Fichte himself speaks of abstraction as an 'experiment' in 'A Comparison between Prof. Schmid's System and the *Wissenschaftslehre*' in *Early Philosophical Writings*, p. 331.

16 Fichte, 'The Spirit and the Letter', p. 206.

17 Breazeale, 'Doing Philosophy', p. 51. See Martial Guéroult's thorough discussion of this point in *L'evolution et la structure de la doctrine de la science chez Fichte* (Paris: Belles-lettres, 1930), pp. 200-4, as well as Fichte's own presentation in 'Concerning the Concept of the *Wissenschaftslehre*' in *Early Philosophical Writings*, pp. 127-8.

1.2 Like a Shot from a Pistol

Therefore, abstraction is the very starting point for philosophy. For example, Part One of the *Grundlage* begins, 'Our task is to *discover* the primordial, absolutely unconditioned first principle of all human knowledge…This makes it necessary to…*abstract* from everything that does not really belong to it.'[18] Or, as Fichte programmatically puts it elsewhere,

> There is certainly no one among you who does not know that under the name *Wissenschaftslehre* I have labored upon a rigorously scientific transcendental philosophy, and that this philosophy is erected upon what remains after one has abstracted from everything possible – that is, upon the I. A science of this type can furnish no rule except the following: One should continue to abstract from everything possible, until something remains from which it is totally impossible to abstract.[19]

Both Fichte and the Schelling of 1801 agree that philosophical method begins in abstraction and then proceeds to self-construction. For Fichte, this is a case of abstracting from ordinary consciousness to attain the pure self-positing I, before watching it reconstruct reality before our eyes: philosophy 'retraces the path of abstraction, or rather, it permits the I to retrace this path, while it observes this process.'[20] The proper philosophical method is: abstract first, then construct.[21]

Abstraction then is, in fact, a *pre*-philosophical practice (or one that takes place on the cusp of philosophising) necessary to bring about the immediate intuition of the I with which philosophy begins. It is a form of

18 J.G. Fichte, *Science of Knowledge*, trans. by Peter Heath and John Lachs (New York: Appleton, 1970), p. 93.
19 Fichte, 'The Spirit and the Letter', p. 204.
20 Fichte, 'Schmid's System, p. 330.
21 A detailed discussion of construction lies outside the remit of this paper; see the analysis of Schellingian construction, as well as the literature cited, in Daniel Whistler, *Schelling's Theory of Symbolic Language: Forming the System of Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), Chapter 6.

mediation that makes immediacy possible.[22] Abstraction thus provides part of an answer to the Hegelian critique of beginning philosophy with immediate intuition like a shot from a pistol.[23] Philosophy may indeed begin like a shot from a pistol for both Fichte and the Schelling of 1801, but just as firing such a pistol presupposes loading the gun, manufacturing its parts, and most significantly learning to shoot, so too intellectual intuition is brought about through prior practices, like abstraction.[24]

1.3 The Refusal of Negation

Abstraction is not negation. One does not actively cancel that from which one abstracts, one becomes indifferent to it. 'The concept…is here not thought of at all – either positively or negatively.'[25] The abstracted element is not posited in any form. Such a procedure is analogous to the phenomenological *epochē*, as has often been noted:[26] one brackets the natural attitude of ordinary consciousness, so as to attend to and then describe the structures of pure self-consciousness.

The importance of this characteristic needs emphasising: since abstraction is not negation, a philosophy premised on it possesses (at least) one non-dialectical moment. Abstraction cannot be subsumed into a dialectical play of negation and negation of negation, for it obeys a different logic. The early philosophies of Fichte and Schelling, premised as they are on this initial act of abstraction, offer therefore something different to the hegemony of dialectic, concreteness, and immanence bequeathed by Hegelian thought – an alternative within early German Idealism resistant to the pull of the concrete universal.

22 On such mediating practices that bring about immediacy, see Daniel Whistler, 'Silvering, or the Role of Mysticism in German Idealism' in *Glossator* 7 (2013), pp. 151-85.
23 G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), §27.
24 For a more detailed discussion of Schellingian abstraction in relation to this criticism of Hegel's, see Whistler, *Schelling's Theory of Symbolic Language*, pp. 135-7.
25 Fichte, 'New Presentation', p. 39.
26 See, for example, Nectoria Limnatis, 'Fichte and the Problem of Logic: Positioning the *Wissenschaftslehre* in the Development of German Idealism' in *Fichte, German Idealism, and Early Romanticism*, p. 25.

1.4 Abstracting from the Objective

Finally, and it is here that the stakes of Schelling's divergence from Fichte are most obviously to be located, Fichte proposes that one begin philosophising by abstracting from the *object* of intuition to isolate the intuiting activity itself. The philosopher must 'tear himself away *from what is given*'.[27] In other words, for Fichte the abstracting I is a limit, what remains after the most thoroughgoing procedure of abstraction has removed every object of consciousness. To quote once more, 'One should continue to abstract from everything possible, until something remains from which it is totally impossible to abstract. What remains is the pure I.'[28] To appropriate the language of the *nova method*, while one's thought of a wall can easily be bracketed, not so the thought of thinking,[29] and this is because the identity of intuiting subject and intuited object, which both Fichte and Schelling agree is the presupposition of philosophical knowledge, is for Fichte only made possible by abstracting from the object of thought (e.g. the wall) and retaining the pure I.

With this Fichtean context in mind, I now turn to Schelling's 1801 *On the True Concept of Philosophy of Nature*, the most sustained reflection on generative abstraction in German Idealism.

2. *On the True Concept of Philosophy of Nature:* Context and Content

In the Winter of 1800/01 – between the publication of the two great culminating statements of Schelling's 1790s work, the *Introduction to the First Outline of a System of Philosophy of Nature* and the *System of Transcendental Idealism*, and the dawning of the *Identitätssystem* in May 1801 – Schelling produced a 37-page '*Zugabe*' on *Naturphilosophie*. The *Appendix to Eschenmayer's Essay concerning the True Concept of Philosophy of Nature and the Correct Way of Solving its Problems* is a Janus-faced essay that both completes Schelling's search for a distinctive *naturphilosophische* approach and also announces the possibility of a

27 Fichte, 'Schmid's System', p. 335.
28 Fichte, 'The Spirit and the Letter', p. 204.
29 J.G. Fichte, *Foundations of Transcendental Philosophy nova methodo*, trans. by Daniel Breazeale (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), pp. 110-1.

philosophy for which 'absolute identity is the universe itself'.[30] It indeed forms, as Grant has it, 'as clear a manifesto of naturephilosophy as could be wished for'.[31]

The text was published in January 1801 as a supplement to the first issue of the second volume of Schelling's own journal, *Zeitschrift für speculative Physik*, and it directly responds to Eschenmayer's critique of Schellingian *Naturphilosophie* which opens that issue, *Spontaneity = World Soul or the Supreme Principle of Philosophy of Nature*. Eschenmayer is troubled by the direction in which Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* has developed since the first edition of the *Ideas* in 1797, and this is for two reasons.

First, prior to the *First Outline*, Schelling had basically endorsed Eschenmayer's own construction of matter, particularly with respect to the role of quantitative proportions in the determination of qualities.[32] However, in the *First Outline*, Schelling breaks with this Eschenmayerian account, positing instead qualitatively distinct monads or actants as an explanation for the genesis of quality.[33] In *Spontaneity*, Eschenmayer vigorously attacks this view, and the second half of *On the True Concept* provides Schelling's response, in which he (implicitly) acknowledges the problems with his own theory in the *First Outline*[34] at the same time as continuing its critique of Eschenmayer's quantitative solution.

The second motivation for Eschenmayer's attack is what concerns me in the rest of this essay, for it is at this point that methodological issues come to the fore. In *Spontaneity*, Eschenmayer takes up a broadly Fichtean attitude towards *Naturphilosophie*:[35] the fundamental principle of nature is the spontaneity of the subject; nature is derivative of this freedom, and thus *Naturphilosophie* consists in a mere application of the

30 F.W.J. Schelling, *SW* 4:129; *Presentation of My System of Philosophy*, trans. by Michael Vater, in *Philosophical Forum* 32.4 (2001), p. 350.
31 Iain Hamilton Grant, *Philosophies of Nature after Schelling* (London: Continuum, 2006), p. 185.
32 See, for example, F.W.J. Schelling, *SW* 2:241-52; *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*, trans. by Errol E. Harris and Peter Heath (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 193-201.
33 F.W.J. Schelling, *SW* 3:20-43; *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature*, trans. by Keith R. Peterson (Albany: SUNY, 2004), pp. 19-34.
34 See F.W.J. Schelling, *On the True Concept of Philosophy of Nature*, trans. by Judith Kahl and Daniel Whistler in the present issue, p. 7; hereafter OTC.
35 On Eschenmayer's Fichteanism, see Grant pp. 106-8, 185.

Wissenschaftslehre to one local ontic domain.[36] What alarms Eschenmayer is that the *First Outline* seems to mark a departure from such Fichtean orthodoxy. Hence, his critique is intended as a gentle rebuke to a young scholar to bring him back into the Fichtean fold.

And Schelling responds by openly declaring his break with Fichte. *Naturphilosophie*, he proclaims, is independent of and prior to the *Wissenschaftslehre*: 'There is an idealism of nature and an idealism of the I. For me, the former is original, *the latter* is derived' (OTC 11).[37] This position had first been developed in the closing pages of the *Universal Deduction of the Dynamic Process*,[38] and Schelling's correspondence with Fichte at this time also played a decisive role. In November 1800, they exchanged letters on the question of *Naturphilosophie*'s relation to the *Wissenschaftslehre*: the violence of Fichte's refusal to countenance any independence for *naturphilosophische* investigations crystallised for Schelling the distance between them.[39] The result is *On the True Concept*.[40]

From the very beginning of the essay, Schelling is clear that a Fichtean interpretation of *Naturphilosophie* is false:

> Many people misled by the term 'philosophy of nature' expect transcendental deductions of natural phenomena…For me, however, philosophy of nature is a self-sufficient whole and is a science fully differentiated from transcendental philosophy. (OTC 9)

36 Grant dubs this 'the ethical process' at work in so many crypto-Fichtean interpretations of nature. Iain Hamilton Grant, 'Being and Slime: The Mathematics of Protoplasm in Lorenz Oken's "Physio-Philosophy"', *Collapse* IV (2008), pp. 288-9.

37 See further *OTC*, pp. 16-18.

38 Schelling, *SW* 4:75-8

39 Hence, on 15/11/1800, Fichte belatedly responds to the *System of Transcendental Idealism* as follows, 'I do not agree with your opposition between transcendental philosophy and philosophy of nature', to which Schelling replies on 19/11/1800, 'The opposition between transcendental philosophy and philosophy of nature is the crucial point.' J.G. Fichte and F.W.J. Schelling, 'Correspondence' in Jochen Schulte-Sasse (ed), *Theory as Practice: An Anthology of German Romantic Writings* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 73, 75.

40 This narrative of Schelling's increasing prioritisation of *Naturphilosophie* over transcendental idealism is problematised considerably by the Preface to the 1801 *Presentation* in which Schelling returns to his more traditional 'two parallel sciences' approach (*SW* 4:107-8; *Presentation*, pp. 343-4). For an attempt to discern even here the priority of *Naturphilosophie*, see Frederick C. Beiser, *German Idealism: The Struggle against Subjectivism, 1781-1801* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), pp. 552-7.

The radicality of Schelling's contention here should not go unremarked. It is often thought that what unifies the German Idealist tradition, if nothing else, is fidelity to the project of transcendental philosophy and an idealist metaphysics. However, Schelling denies that his practice of *Naturphilosophie* can be situated in that tradition; it marks out an alternative, one based on rejection of this Kantian heritage. As Grant has put it, 'Schelling's post-Kantian confrontation with nature itself begins with the overthrow of the Copernican revolution…[Schelling precipitated] the fast overthrow of the entire transcendental structure Kant bequeathed his philosophical successors.'[41] *Naturphilosophie* is not only liberated from the dead-hand of the *Wissenschaftslehre*, but from the terms of the *Critique of Pure Reason* itself, in the name of a distinctive experiment in German Idealism.

3. Methodology of *Naturphilosophie*

So, if philosophy of nature is no longer strictly speaking a form of transcendental idealism, what exactly is it? Schelling realises that his alternative is so distinct from orthodox forms of German Idealism that it becomes almost incomprehensible to those accustomed to them: 'The reason that those who have grasped idealism well have not understood philosophy of nature is because it is difficult or impossible for them to detach themselves from [the methodology of transcendental idealism]' (OTC 14). The question is therefore to determine the nature of this break between the two sciences, and Schelling goes on to specify it as methodological. An early passage in *On the True Concept* sets up this problematic as follows,

> If it were just a matter of an idealist type of explanation, or rather construction, then this is not to be found in philosophy of nature as I have established it…Why then should it not be idealist? And is there even...any type of philosophising other than the idealist? (OTC 11)

41 Grant, *Philosophies of Nature*, p. 143.

At stake, then, is the nature of this other 'type of construction', and, in order to determine this methodological difference more precisely, we need to know what exactly is wrong with idealist construction. For Schelling in *On the True Concept*, transcendental idealism remains bound by the concerns and structures of the self; it can never transcend these to intuit the workings of the natural world (or, more precisely, nature as it does *not* appear to the self). He writes, 'If I [try] to find out what philosophising itself is, then I see myself merely as something known in myself – and during this entire investigation I never get out of myself' (OTC 11). The transcendental idealist remains trapped in 'the circle of consciousness' which is 'inescapable' (OTC 12). The philosopher is both the subject and object of her philosophical interest: she is the one philosophising and she is also the one being philosophised about. The identity of subject and object in the subject is the genius of Fichtean thought, but also for Schelling its inherent limitation: it cannot account for a reality outside of or prior to the subject.

Evidently, the presupposition that there is such a reality is one that Fichte and, indeed, all robust idealists would deny. Schelling has a number of arguments for it. First, it is not obvious that the initial self-positing from which reality is to be constructed should be identified with the subject, and certainly not a finite or conscious I. Schelling is not denying that nature is dependent on – or indeed, identical with – an original self-positing subject-object; he is merely asserting its independence of – and partial obscurity to – the finite I. Within *On the True Concept*, Schelling expresses the above line of thought as follows,

> The following objection [has been] frequently made to me: I *presuppose nature* without asking the critical question of how we thus come to suppose a nature…I presuppose nothing for the construction but what the transcendental philosopher likewise presupposes. For what I call *nature* [is] the pure subject-object, what the transcendental philosopher posits as = I. (OTC 16)

He continues,

> I have therefore not presupposed what *you* think of as nature, but rather derived it…In general, I have presupposed nothing but what can immediately be taken from the conditions of knowing itself as a first principle, something originally and simultaneously subjective and objective. (OTC 16)

What Fichte had labelled 'the I', the primordial subject-object which posits itself and from which reality as such derives is for Schelling better named 'nature'. It is the same fundamental postulate.

The above is nevertheless a position not particularly distinctive to Schelling (it is shared by many of the more absolute idealists). Instead, the methodological innovations behind Schellingian *Naturphilosophie* emerge when one reframes the above epistemologically, in terms of intellectual intuition. What is known must be identical with what knows (the identity of subject and object); this premise, shared by Schelling and transcendental idealists alike, is the ground of the idea of intellectual intuition. However, on first blush, nature (insofar as it remains unperceived or is hidden from consciousness) is *non-identical* with the conscious I. How, then, is knowledge of nature, intellectual intuition of nature and so the philosophy of nature possible?

In *On the True Concept*, Schelling explores two solutions, the Fichtean and his own. The Fichtean solution consists in altering (or potentiating) the object (i.e. nature) until it becomes identical to the subject: to raise nature into the mind and make it into a sensation or perception. Yet, this is in fact not a solution at all, since that which is not raised to the potency of consciousness still remains hidden from the philosopher, and for Schelling an aspect of reality must necessarily always remain so hidden. That is, reality exists at non-conscious as well as conscious potencies. Here is how Schelling puts it, '[For the Fichtean] I can behold nothing objective other than in the moment of its entry into consciousness...and no longer in its *original* coming-into-being at the moment of its *first* emergence (in *non-conscious* activity).' (OTC 12) The ontology of productive force that Schelling had initially developed in the *First Outline* clarifies this point: nature is productivity-becoming-product, and different products are produced at different potencies of productivity; for example, consciousness, sensation, and thought are products of a particular high potency. Schelling's argument is not therefore so much that there are some entities in nature which elude conscious perception, but rather that reality itself exists at a multiple of other potencies than merely the potency of consciousness. To limit philosophical method merely to the raising of reality into consciousness is therefore to foreclose on the study

and description of the non-conscious potencies. Schelling thus writes, through this idealist method, 'I assume *myself* already in the highest potency, and therefore the question is likewise only answered for this potency' (OTC 11).

The Schellingian solution to this epistemological problem is to proceed in the opposite direction: to alter consciousness so that it becomes identical to (and can therefore know) non-conscious reality. That is, instead of altering nature and bringing it into identity with consciousness, what requires changing is consciousness in order to bring it into equality with nature. The philosopher must reduce her intuiting down to the lower potencies, so as to become one with the unperceived, hidden natural world: she must become like nature, to philosophise from the point of view of nature.[42] So, for Schelling the question of the possibility of *Naturphilosophie* in fact runs: what need the philosopher do to herself in order to become nature and so put into practice genuine *Naturphilosophie*? And the answer is found in *abstraction*. In *On the True Concept*, abstraction is the practice that makes *Naturphilosophie* possible:

> To see the objective in its first coming-into-being is only possible by *depotentiating* the *object* of all philosophising, which in the highest potency is = I, and then constructing, from the beginning, with this object reduced to the first potency. This is only possible through abstraction. (OTC 12)

Nature at *all* of its levels of productivity, not merely the conscious, only becomes visible through a process of abstractive depotentiation by which philosophy shifts away from the high potencies in which the *Wissenschaftslehre* had been done and scours the low potencies for how nature comes to be. This form of abstraction is that which differentiates *Naturphilosophie* from *Wissenschaftslehre*: 'With this abstraction one moves from the realm of the *Wissenschaftslehre* into *pure-theoretical* philosophy' (OTC 12).[43]

42 This underlines the inadequacy of understanding 'philosophy of nature' merely according to an objective genitive (philosophy *about* nature); it is also – primarily, even – a subjective genitive: philosophy *by* nature, from the point of view of nature.

43 Schelling even considers this process of abstraction as consisting in an 'abstracting from the *Wissenschaftslehre*' itself (OTC 15). The *Wissenschaftslehre* thus acts in *On the True Concept* as something like a *partial* abstraction from which the *Naturphilosoph* must keep abstracting. See further Dalia Nassar, 'Intellectual Intuition and the Philosophy of Nature: An Examination of the Problem' in Johannes Haag and Markus Wild (eds), *Übergänge – diskursiv oder intuitive? Essays zu Eckhart Försters 'Die 25 Jahre der Philosophie'* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2013), pp. 251-2.

According to Schelling, this means that, in opposition to Fichte, *Naturphilosophie* begins with abstraction from the subjective (rather than the objective),[44] i.e. from the consciousness of the philosophising subject, so as to access nature as it does not appear to consciousness. According to the true concept of *Naturphilosophie*, philosophy must be taken to the potency 0, to its very depths, before gradually reconstructing reality through all its potencies, mimicking the productive force of nature. For Schelling as for Fichte, the philosopher must abstract and then construct; however, such abstraction will take her in each case in a very different direction.

4. Förster's Critique of Schellingian Abstraction

Schelling's appeal to abstraction has, however, been recently criticised. In *The Twenty-Five Years of Philosophy*, Eckhart Förster argues from Schelling's appropriation of the Fichtean methodology of 'abstract first, then construct' to the ultimate incoherence of *Naturphilosophie* as a distinctive philosophical project. Indeed, Förster goes so far as to base his entire critique of Schellingian philosophy on the doctrine of abstraction proposed in *On the True Concept*. Förster's basic thesis throughout the book is that there are two forms of immediate cognition at play in German Idealism that scholarship has forever failed to distinguish, both originating in the *Critique of Judgment*: Fichtean intellectual intuition and Goethean (or more properly perhaps, Spinozist) intuitive understanding.[45] And Schelling's philosophy fails, according to Förster, because it employs Fichtean intellectual intuition (based on a prior process of abstraction) in *Naturphilosophie* when only Goethean intuitive understanding will do.

Therefore, Förster establishes his critique in terms of the Fichtean claim we have already encountered above: philosophy – or, what is the

44 Although, as we shall see, Schelling qualifies this assertion considerably.

45 For helpful summaries of the overall argument, see Eckhart Förster, *The Twenty-Five Years of Philosophy: A Systematic Reconstruction*, trans. Brady Bowman (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), pp. 145, 152. Nassar, 'Intellectual Intuition and Philosophy of Nature', makes the compelling argument that Goethe and Schelling are not as methodologically distinct as Förster insists.

same thing, intellectual intuition – is premised on the identity of subject and object; but, in knowing nature as something unavailable to consciousness, the two are not identical; therefore, there can be no philosophy of nature. Here is how Förster puts it,

> As Schelling himself writes in the System of Transcendental Idealism—"one always remains both the intuited and the one who is intuiting". This is *obviously* not so in the case of nature: here that which is intuited and the one doing the intuiting are not identical. The intellectual intuition adapted from the *Wissenschaftslehre* is of no use in *Naturphilosophie*.[46]

For Förster, it is with the doctrine of abstraction from *On the True Concept* that this methodological problem becomes most acute for Schelling's philosophy:

> If intellectual intuition is to be retained as the method of our intuition of nature, that is only possible on the basis of a depotentiation (a suppression or neutralization) of the intuiting subject. The question however remains whether an intellectual intuition in which one abstracts from the intuiting subject can really amount to more than word- play…What exactly would such an intuition be, assuming it possible? [Schelling's] methodology, however, is wholly insufficient. And he is fundamentally mistaken when he infers that the method of cognition must be the same for both nature and the I, namely intellectual intuition, for he has clearly failed to learn the lesson of what I referred to above as Fichte's central insight: that "I am" and "it is" express two wholly distinct modes of being.[47]

Thus, according to Förster, Schelling's method of abstraction is wholly erroneous, an attempt to redeploy Fichtean intellectual intuition within an illegitimate domain. He concludes, 'Schelling's attempt to base the method of his *Naturphilosophie* on Fichte's intellectual intuition inevitably leads to the dissolution of intellectual intuition.'[48]

46 Förster p. 239; my emphasis.
47 Ibid., pp. 248-9.
48 Ibid., p. 375.

Förster's resolutely Fichtean critique of Schelling is, therefore, ultimately threefold. First, when it comes to *Naturphilosophie*, intellectual intuition is impossible, since in this domain subject and object are non-identical. Second, Fichtean intellectual intuition is made possible by abstraction from what is objective; therefore, Schelling's claim that philosophy should abstract from 'the intuiting subject' is incoherent ('mere word-play') at best, impossible at worst. Third, abstraction is 'insufficient' in the domain of nature, for this method is only valid – as Fichte demonstrated – in relation to the I.[49] In what follows, I am going to use each of Förster's criticisms as jumping-off points to try to understand Schelling's conception of abstraction more substantially.

5. Förster's First Criticsm: The Identity of Subject and Object

I have already shown at length that – programmatically at least – Schelling is committed to the identity of subject and object in *Naturphilosophie*; he is thus committed to the idea that abstraction not only does not violate this key epistemic principle, it even makes it possible. There are two places in particular we have already encountered this claim. First, in the idea that the 'pure' subject-object that Fichte labels 'I' is in fact nature, and thus *Naturphilosophie*, as nature's self-construction before the eyes of the philosopher, remains subject-object throughout. 'With nature-philosophy I never emerge from that identity of the ideal-real,' Schelling insists (OTC 14). Second, I have argued that the Schellingian solution to the possibility of an intellectual intuition of nature involves the knowing subject altering herself so as to become identical with the object of knowledge. Hence, Schelling is clear that the tenet that 'one always remains both the intuited and the one who is intuiting' so dear to the *System of Transcendental Idealism* remains equally true in *Naturphilosophie*, *pace* Förster.

However, the question of *how* it is true is still to be determined: I have yet to adduce any evidence that it is possible, for example, for the philosopher to alter herself in a way that makes her one with nature. It is this task to which I now turn. However, on the face of it, Förster has a point, and this is because Schelling describes the process of abstraction in a way that makes it seems as if there can be no identity of subject and

49 On this third criticism, see Nassar pp. 235-8.

object through abstraction. That is, if what occurs is, as Schelling sometimes describes it, abstraction from the subject, then the subjective element of the subject-object seems to have been removed from the remit of *Naturphilosophie*. For example, Schelling writes, 'If I now abstract from what is first posited in the philosopher's object by this free act, there remains something *purely objective*' (OTC 13) or 'I demand…an abstraction which leaves behind for me the purely objective [element] of this [intuiting] act' (OTC 14). On this reading, the identity of subject and object is not preserved by Schellingian abstraction.

However, we need to be careful here; for example, here is this second quotation in a fuller form, 'I demand…an abstraction which leaves behind for me the purely objective [element] of this [intuiting] act, which in itself is merely subject-object, but in no way = I' (OTC 14). That is, there seem to be two notions of subjectivity at stake here: one which is removed in the act of abstraction and one which remains part of the subject-object that is left behind after abstraction has taken place. In other words, Schelling wants to claim that the identity of subject and object in *Naturphilosophie* is not affected by the abstraction from the subjective from which it begins.

It is no surprise, then, that Schelling explicitly draws attention to this double meaning of 'subjective' and 'objective':

> Many philosophical writers...appear to have taken this *objective* [element], from which philosophy of nature should proceed, I don't quite know for what, but certainly for something objective in itself. So, it is no wonder if the confusion in their representations proliferates substantially on the back of this… *For me*…the objective is itself *simultaneously the real and the ideal*; the two are never separate, but exist together originally (even in nature). (OTC 13-14)

There are, then, two senses to the term 'objective' at play in *On the True Concept*, and hence two senses of 'subjective' as well: what is subjective (or objective) in itself and what is commonly called subjective, i.e. what is subjective *for consciousness*. Schelling here insists that these two senses must be kept separate, for while the *Naturphilosoph* can be said to abstract from what is subjective for consciousness, this is no abstraction from what is subjective in itself. The argument for the above can be

reconstructed as follows. Common consciousness has nature for its object, or put more technically: the subject-object at a conscious potency stands as subject opposed to the subject-object at non-conscious potencies (its object): 'From the standpoint of consciousness, nature appears to me as objective and the I as subjective' (OTC 13). Indeed, the very process by which the subject-object attains a higher potency is bound up with this process of self-objectification, 'the becoming objective of the pure subject-object' as Schelling himself puts it (OTC 13). Hence, to abstract (or depotentiate) is to undo this process of self-objectification so as to attain that potency of the subject-object at which no subject stands opposed to an object. One reaches a point 'where the opposition between I and nature, which is made in common consciousness, completely disappears, so that nature = I and I = nature' (OTC 17). This is achieved when the philosopher manages to depotentiate to potency 0: at this level, subject and object no longer stand opposed, for there is no consciousness to take a stand as subject over against an object. It is this aspect of subjectivity (subjectivity for consciousness) that is abstracted in Schelling's *Naturphilosophie*, not the subjective in itself.

When Schelling writes, for example, '[Through] abstraction, I reach the concept of the pure subject-object (= nature) from which I then rise to the subject-object of consciousness (= I)' (OTC 13), one can clearly see that the task is not to abstract from something subjective to reach what is purely objective. Both consciousness (what is abstracted from) and nature (what is attained) are *subject*-objects at different potencies; abstraction reduces the potencies, it does not divest subjectivity as such. The point being, to return to Förster's argument, that there remains an identity of subject and object even in non-conscious nature (and so Schelling's claim in the Preface to the *System of Transcendental Idealism* holds good in this domain); it is only the opposition between them which is bracketed.

Moreover, the above also problematises Förster's third criticism, which runs: abstraction is insufficient to function in the domain of nature, since nature is a realm of the 'it is', whereas Fichte had already shown that abstraction, and indeed the whole apparatus of intellectual intuition, applies merely to the realm of the 'I am'. As Schelling makes clear above, the very idea that the 'nature' of *Naturphilosophie* is something merely objective, distinct from and opposed to the subjectivity of consciousness, is false. The beginning of *Naturphilosophie* consists of the abstraction of the higher (or conscious) potencies of the subject-object to isolate a

depotentiated subject-object (a non-conscious subject-object). So, to equate Schellingian nature with something that exists merely as an 'it is' of the objective world, rather than an 'I am' of the subjective self, is an error.[50] Nature is subject-object all the way down.

6. Abstraction and Indifference

My above account of Schellingian abstraction makes clear something not yet explicitly acknowledged by Schelling in *On the True Concept* – that is, insofar as one abstracts from what is subjective for consciousness, one abstracts from what is objective for consciousness too. This is for the simple reason that one is abstracting from consciousness as such, and so from the structural opposition of subjectivity and objectivity that it establishes. It is not the case that Fichtean abstraction can merely remove what is objective, while Schellingian abstraction neutralises the subjective; rather, Schelling shows that the true process of abstraction – and the only one that is coherent – is one which is shown to neutralise both the subjective and the objective insofar as they are qualitatively distinct, so as to bring about a 'pure' subject-object.

While this reading of abstraction remains merely implicit in *On the True Concept* itself, four months later in the next issue of the *Zeitschrift für spekulative Physik* Schelling returns to the idea of abstraction, and here founds his mature philosophy on an initial methodological moment of abstraction from *both* what is subjective *and* what is objective. The opening proposition of the *Presentation of My System of Philosophy* reads,

> I call *reason* absolute reason or reason as it is conceived as the total indifference of the subjective and the objective…Reason's thought is foreign to everyone: to conceive it as absolute, and thus to come to the standpoint I require, one must abstract from what does the thinking. For the one who performs this abstraction reason immediately ceases to be something subjective…[Reason] can of course no longer be conceived as something objective either, since an objective something…only

50 Förster's use of 'obviously' (emphasised in the quotation above from p. 239) is particularly inappropriate.

> becomes possible in contrast to a thinking something, from which there is complete abstraction here.[51]

Just as in *On the True Concept*, so too here, abstraction is that method with which the philosopher begins. Indeed, this is highly significant: the opening move in that work which for the rest of his life Schelling took to be his most fundamental metaphysical statement[52] consists in a process of abstraction that neutralises both the subjective and the objective too.

Hence, abstraction is to be articulated as an act of depotentiation, where both the subject and the object are neutralised so as to isolate what Schelling here calls 'the total indifference of the subjective and the objective'. And it is here we can begin to discern the fate of abstraction in Schelling's post-1801 philosophy: whenever indifference manifests itself, whenever nature catastrophically depotentiates back into its abysses and grounds, a process that correlates to abstraction is occurring. It is at this moment of depotentiation that the work of philosophy always begins, reconstructing nature from its depths. Throughout Schelling's writings there exists a dialectical oscillation between sporadic yet catastrophic moments of 'abstraction', followed by a process of continual and gradual potentiation. Abstraction in *On the True Concept* and the 1801 *Presentation* is the methodological repetition of the *turba gentium* of the *Freiheitsschrift*, the flood that engulfed Samothrace, or the unprethinkable crisis of the philosophy of mythology.

7. Förster's Second Criticism: On the Possibility of Schellingian Abstraction

Just as the transcendental idealist raises himself above the adulterated 'I' of ordinary experience through an act of abstraction, so too in a mirror image or subversion of the idealist, the *Naturphilosoph* transcends 'beneath' the limits of consciousness into the depths of nature. Schellingian abstraction performs a kind of transformational enactment of the origins of natural becoming.[53] The methodological opposition that emerges here correlates roughly to that which is notoriously described by

51 Schelling, *SW* 4:114-5; *Presentation*, p. 349.

52 See the comments in the Preface to the 1809 edition of Schelling's *Philosophischen Schriften* (*SW* 7:333-4).

53 I owe this phrase to Kirill Chepurin.

Deleuze in the Eighteenth Series of *The Logic of Sense*, in which the Fichteo-Platonic philosopher, who is 'a being of ascents' acts as 'the one who leaves the cave and rises up',[54] or as Fichte himself puts it, 'Just as we were ushered by birth into this material world, so philosophy seeks – by means of a total rebirth – to usher us into a new and higher world.'[55] On the other hand, the Schellingio-Nietzschean philosopher 'placed thought inside the caverns and life in the deep...[and so recognised] the absolute depth dug out in bodies and in thought.'[56]

And yet this is a simplification: Schelling does not quite present abstraction in *On the True Concept* as twofold, consisting in either a practical abstraction that ascends or a theoretical one which descends. In fact, he argues that the theoretical abstraction of the *Naturphilosoph* is the only possible form of abstraction. This has become clear in the preceding: to abstract is to neutralise forms of consciousness; abstraction is therefore subtractive or, in Schellingian terminology, it depotentiates. Thus, to rise to the highest potency of pure self-consciousness through abstraction, as Fichte wishes to, is to misunderstand the nature of the abstracting process as such, which takes one down the ladder of the potencies away from consciousness.[57] Fichtean abstraction is impossible for this reason, and therefore *naturphilosophische* abstraction is the *only genuine form*. This is the Schellingian rebuttal to Förster's second criticism.[58]

Of course, this does not blunt the full force of Förster's second criticism entirely; there are still ways to present Schellingian abstraction that quickly draw attention to its seeming impossibility. For example, according to Schelling, it is through losing consciousness that one gains

54 Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. by Mark Lester (London: Continuum, 1990), p. 145.

55 Fichte, 'The Spirit and the Letter', p. 203.

56 Deleuze, pp. 146-7.

57 Hence, the need to abstract from the *Wissenschaftslehre* itself (see n. 51). To put it another way, to abstract is to create a space for philosophising indifferent to positing, indifferent to self-consciousness, indeed indifferent to any thinking whatsoever. Abstraction performs absolute indifference.

58 Likewise, a further component of Schelling's critique of Fichte in *On the True Concept* revolves around the extensity of the *construction* consequent on this initial act of abstraction. Once one has abstracted upwards to the highest potency, one can only remain constructing within such high potencies; however, if one abstracts 'downwards' out of consciousness and into natural becoming, then one can construct all of reality. In other words, according to Schelling, Fichte is ignorant of the fact the construction potentiates; it never *de*potentiates.

knowledge of the natural world: to philosophise, Schelling writes, I had 'to posit [the I] as *non-conscious*...not = I' (OTC 14). As one deintensifies or depotentiates one's conscious attention, one intensifies one's knowledge. More is known through less – less freedom, less personality, less thinking. Such a presentation of Schellingian abstraction seemingly confirms Förster's second criticism, for how can one know without consciousness? How can one philosophise thoughtlessly? That is, how is Schellingian abstraction possible?

There are a number of ways to frame this objection to Schelling's doctrine more determinately, and I will consider one that particularly worried Schelling below; to begin, however, it is worth constructing it in Fichtean form (especially since Förster's critique is broadly Fichtean in inspiration). For Fichte, one can abstract from everything in experience except the act of abstracting itself. Fichte writes,

> All that remains after the abstraction has been completed (i.e. after we have abstracted from everything we can) is the *abstracting subject* itself, that is, the I. The I is what remains, and it is this *for itself*.[59]

The activity of the abstracting self forms a limit for abstraction – a limit that Schelling's doctrine entirely transgresses. What is more, Fichte's implicit argument for such a limit seems to be a version of the *cogito*: just as one cannot doubt that which is doing the doubting, so too one can never abstract from what is doing the abstracting.

However, the Schellingian response is simple: Schelling is in no sense *denying* this abstracting activity. Abstraction does not have the same limits as doubt, for it is in no way a form of rejection, denial or doubt; *it is not a modality of negation*. I earlier pointed to this crucial characteristic of abstraction as elucidated *in Fichte's own writings*. Abstraction neutralises; it does not negate. To abstract from the positing of the I is not to deny that it occurs, it is merely to become theoretically indifferent to it. Therefore, it is perfectly possible to abstract from what is self-evidently necessary, like the activity of abstracting itself. There is no latent contradiction here, and therefore no limit: to abstract from the subjective is, *pace* Fichte (and also Förster), possible, and it forms the basis of Schelling's methodology.

59 Fichte, 'Schmid's System', p. 328.

Even granting the above, however, there still remain more problems for the possibility of Schellingian abstraction; chief among them: how can one be said to know or be doing philosophy while abstracting from consciousness? To think while abstracted from thought sounds a fairly tricky, if not downright ridiculous endeavour.

This was a problem to which Schelling returned again and again: the possibility of non-conscious philosophy.[60] And his solution was always to search for models or exemplars for this kind of activity. One line of thought leads in this vein from *On the True Concept* to Schelling's interest in mysticism, particularly Swedenborg and Böhme. Böhme, for instance, is constantly plagued, according to Schelling, by an inability to communicate or articulate that which is known selflessly. Böhme is thus a 'philosopher of not-knowing'[61] and his mystic visions comprise 'the *hatred* of clear knowledge.'[62] Swedenborg, on the other hand, is more successful: he manages to philosophise even while extinguishing the self.[63] Likewise, Schelling's fascination with occult practices can be read along this trajectory: in *Clara* particularly, Schelling explores the idea of a moment of 'waking sleep'[64] brought about by hypnosis through which genuine philosophical insight is possible: 'Only he who could do while awake what he has to do while asleep would be the perfect philosopher.'[65] Again, the self is temporarily suppressed in the name of knowing the great outdoors; philosophy is pursued by means of a loss of consciousness.[66]

All such experiments are to be understood as means to self-abstract from consciousness, and so to philosophise as a not-I. They are specific practices intended to induce something like the theoretical abstraction described in *On the True Concept*; through them *Naturphilosophie* becomes possible. Schelling, then, meets all three of Förster's criticisms,

60 Note, however, that it is not the *elimination* or negation of consciousness that is called for but only its suspension – a kind of *naturphilosophische epochē*.

61 F.W.J. Schelling, *SW* 10:184; *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, trans. by Andrew Bowie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 179.

62 Ibid., 10:192; p. 185.

63 F.W.J. Schelling, *SW* 9:77; *Clara or, On Nature's Connection to the Spirit World*, trans. by Fiona Steinkamp (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002), pp. 55-6.

64 Ibid., 9:80; p. 73.

65 Ibid.

66 For a more detailed exposition of the claims made in this paragraph, see Whistler, 'Silvering'.

in part at least. In *On the True Concept*, he provides a model for abstraction that remains resolutely anti-Fichtean and yet coherent.

'World' in Middle Schelling: Why Nature Transcendentalises

IAIN HAMILTON GRANT

What is the function of the distinction between ground and existence, which 'the naturephilosophy of our time first established in science'?[1] And what does it tell us concerning that distinction that it issues from the *Naturphilosophie*, rather than from the 'logic' Schelling is supposed never to have written? If seeking the 'function' of this distinction seems dissonant with the worldly character of Schelling's investigations, it is part of the richness of that work that, for example, nevertheless essence (*Wesen*) is 'functionally' determined as having 'two operative modes (*zwei Wirkungsweisen*)',[2] while ground is similarly functionally capable of 'self-operating (*für-sich-wirken des Grundes*)'.[3]

It is thus clear that Schelling understands essence as consisting in operations. Yet an essence is not simple but complex, combining 'two modes of operation (*zwei Wirkungsweisen*)'.[4] It is into these two modes that the distinction divides essential operations: once or if one obtains, ground is a self-operating, centrifugal vortex, against which existence is the centripetal distribution of structures. Essences, therefore, neither serve on Schelling's view to *identify* entities or kinds, nor to ground

1 F.W.J. Schelling, *Philosophische Untersuchungen über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit und die damit zusammenhängende Gegenstände*, hereafter *Freiheitsschrift*. All references to Schelling's works are to *Schellings Werke*, ed. K.F.A. Schelling (Stuttgart and Augsburg: Cotta, 1856-61), referenced by division and volume (I/1-10, II/1-4), followed by page number. For the *Freiheitsschrift*, I use James Gutmann's translation (Chicago: Open Court, 1986), hereafter PI. Here SW I/7: 357; PI 31.

2 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7: 409; PI 90.

3 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7: 381; PI 58.

4 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 409; PI 90.

necessitation relations amongst entities or kinds.[5] Essence is entity-smearing, both forwards and backwards. Schelling holds that essence smears forwards because it bears the consequentialist weight Fine, for instance, contemporarily accords 'essence':

> if a given property is essential, then so is the property of having that property; and hence an interest in the given 'lower level' property will transfer to an interest in the derived 'higher level' property.[6]

That is to say, a property's essentiality obtains once having it obtains. Yet in what is it that a property obtains? Notably, in Fine's formulation, properties attach not to objects but to essentiality, where essentiality generates derivative orders of essentiality. For this same reason, however, essence 'smears' insuperably backwards: since no object or thing individually grounds or backstops essence, the latter's ground-seeking function is required to descend to a depth augmented with each augmentation of the consequent or derivative series. Accordingly, when ground exists, not only does it do so consequently. Neither does an existing ground terminate the grounding procedure, but merely places an additional stratum, a 'resistant' or *Gegenstand*, in its way. It is from this that the conclusion may be drawn that, since essence exceeds existence 'descendentally'[7] just as insuperably consequent existence makes its

5 George Molnar presents both claims in his contribution to contemporary 'neo-essentialist' philosophy of nature, *Powers. A Study in Metaphysics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, 38-9: 'The grounding of essence in identity explains the difference between essential properties and necessary properties: the inessential properties of an object are not merely its accidental ones, but include all those it has necessarily yet not by virtue of what it is.' Neo-essentialists argue that a property is essential, however, when it consists of a causal power that is, as Stephen Mumford points out, 'a source of such [*de re*] necessity' as the world contains. See his 'Kinds, Essence, Powers' in Alice Drewery, ed., *Metaphysics in Science*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2006, 47-62, here 49.

6 Kit Fine, 'Essence and modality', in *Philosophical Perspectives* 8 (1994): 1-16; here 1. For a discussion of Fine's distinction between 'constitutive' and 'consequentialist' essence, see Kathrin Koslicki, 'Varieties of ontological dependence', in Fabrice Correia and Benjamin Schnieder, eds. *Metaphysical Grounding. Understanding the Structure of Reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, 186-213, along with Fine's 'Guide to ground', ibid., 37-80.

7 In Book One, Part One of the *Philosophie der Offenbarung* (hereafter *Begründung*), SW II/3, 151n, trans by. Bruce Matthews, *The Grounding of Positive*

antecedent into the base for its ascent, that 'the essence of ground, or of the existent, can only be precedent to all ground, that is, the absolute considered as such, the unground.'[8]

On this account, essence is neither the substrate of its properties nor the sum of its appearances, but is rather an operation by which existents are smeared towards a past that is without them (grounding) and a future in which they are not (assuming only that something arises). It is because the operations of ground and existence are *nonfinal*, both insofar as operations are not determined by having a futural target state, but rather essence itself divides operationally; and insofar as no operation is exhausted in its outcome, that an ontology for which existents are local constituents entails 'non-objectal', nonfinal or the environing of all strata – 'the absolute considered as such'.

Consequently, amongst the 'resistants' (thus removing the 'thingish' prejudice inherent in translating *Gegenstände* as 'objects', which Schelling criticises[9]) on which this ontological sequence co-depends (*zusammenhängt*), are the aesthetic[10] geneses comprising 'fact' and 'feeling', the ontological sequencing chain '*antecedent*' and '*consequent*', the emergence chain '*dependency*' (*Abhängigkeit*) and '*autonomy*' (*Selbständigkeit*) and the generation of orders or *Stufenfolge*[11] that

Philosophy: The Berlin Lectures (hereafter GP) (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), p. 196n, Schelling divides negative from positive philosophy insofar as the former 'is only a *philosophia ascendens* (ascending from below), from which one immediately realizes that it can have only a logical significance, whereas positive philosophy is a *philosophia descendens* (descending from above).'

8 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 407-8, PI 88-9, translation modified.

9 *Freiheitsschrift*, SW I/7, 349; PI 22, translation modified: 'The error of his [Spinoza's – IHG] system is by no means due to the fact that he posits all *things in God*, but to the fact that they are *things* – to the abstract conception of worldly essences [*Weltwesen*].' See also *Grundlegung der positiven Philosophie*, ed. Horst Fuhrmans (Turin: Bottega d'Erasmo, 1972), p. 94: 'Object [*Gegenstand*] and resistance [*Widerstand*] are at bottom one and the same word.'

10 I take 'aesthetic' in the pre-Kantian sense to mean the science of perception, as it was used by Baumgarten, in *Metaphysics* , translated Courtney D. Fugate and John Hymers. London: Bloomsbury, 2013, e.g., §533: 'The science of knowing and presenting <*proponendi*> with regard to the senses is AESTHETICS', a usage recently revived by Maurizio Ferraris. See his *Introduction to New Realism* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).

11 Primarily associated with the naturephilosophy, *Stufenfolge* recurs in the middle works, e.g. in *The Ages of the World* (hereafter AW), SW I/8, 232, 324; AW pp. 22, 93, both of which concern nature in general, in the first instance, and organic beings

positions the 'later' within the 'earlier' 'revelations of nature'.[12] In this sense, the dividing of ground from existence is expressed ontologically as the *environing of existence*, without prejudice as to the manner or mode of existence (e.g., logical, physical, mythological, revelatory, and so forth), and such that the investigation of freedom is insuperably bonded not to existence as a whole – since if there is existence, it can only be if environed – but to what he calls 'the innermost centre of nature'.[13] What this centre might be, or how this centre arises, what *occupies* it, was the animating question of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century life sciences, on the one hand, and a continuation, therefore, of the investigation concerning the origin of motion, the *arche kineseos*, Schelling began in *On the World Soul*, on the other.[14] But it is also the basal problem of fundamentality or the 'essence of grounds'. Schelling's answer, we may extrapolate, would position the ontological co-dependency of ground and existent as itself consequent on an insuperably ungrounded state antecedent to those operations. This illustrates the environing or field ontology operative even in the *Freiheitsschrift*'s title, which positions its focus – the essence of human freedom – within series of resistants, including creation and primal being, each of which, if the thesis holds, is environed in turn. The present essay seeks to outline the ontology of environed operations developed in the *Freiheitsschrift*. Roughly, no operation, not even *Urseyn*, is so primitive as not to be environed, such that no operation may satisfy the context from which operations issue. It is for the (non-fundamental) reason that there are operations at all that there is no 'environment of all environments'.[15]

in the second, and then again at SW I/8, 333; AW p. 100, where one obtains linking creating, forming and making. Schelling continues its use in the 1830s (SW I/10, 241) through to the 1840s and '50s (SW I/10, 311, 330, 364-5, 382; SW II/1 76, 411, 492, 529; SW II/2 451).

12 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 415; PI 98: 'We have an earlier revelation than any written one – nature.'

13 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 362; 37.

14 *Von der Weltseele* SW I/2: 345-584, trans. by I. H. Grant in *Of the World Soul and Other Naturephilosophical Writings* (Albany: SUNY, Forthcoming 2015).

15 Jakob von Uexküll, *A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans*, trans. by Joseph D. O'Neill. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), p. 135: '… all these different environments are fostered and borne along by the One that is inaccessible to all environments forever. Forever unknowable behind all the worlds it produces, the subject – Nature – conceals itself.'

1. The Positive is the Whole

Why then, it might be asked, does 'the whole' enjoy a positive valency in the *Freiheitsschrift*? The work's title makes it clear that the work first addresses what resists or informs the environment of a free, that is, an autonomous (*selbständiger*) operation. Only then do inquiries proceed into what the essence of a free act must be. Since an inquiry is philosophical, we are told, just when it relates a concept to a 'systematic worldview' or to 'the world as a whole',[16] we must either conclude that the whole is incomplete or that it is itself environed, i.e., that the world as a whole issues from an environment it does not include. If nothing that is can be exempted from what Schelling here calls 'the world', such a world must be susceptible to augmentation by whatever it is that is. This is why 'world', as Schelling indicates in the *Weltalter* drafts, is neither the physical cosmos nor the transcendental ideal, but a copula.[17] Order is insuperably environed by ataxia, the 'disorder of the forces'.[18]

Yet the work is more usually taken as the pinion of a Schellingian *Wende*[19] between the early and late periods, a turning towards an existentialist[20] or a dialectical materialist[21] rejection of the intervening decade's *Naturphilosophie*, a rejection evidenced by the conspicuous elision of the naturephilosophical works in the volume crowned by the *Freiheitsschrift* and booted by *Vom Ich*. This interpretive strategy would

16 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 336-7; PI 7-8.

17 F. W. J. Schelling, *Die Weltalter. Fragmente. Urfassungen von 1811 und 1813*, ed. Manfred Schröter (Munich: Beck, 1946), p. 225.

18 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 370; PI 46; cf. *Philosophie der Offenbarung* II/4, 180-181, where generation entails participation in and resistance to 'worldly ataxia'.

19 Xavier Tilliette, *Une philosophie en devenir (*2nd edition, II vols, [Paris: Vrin, 1992] Vol. I: pp. 504-5) presents Fuhrmans' claim, in *Schellings Philosophie der Weltalter* ([Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1954] pp. 75-127), that a Böhme-influenced *Wende* occurs in the *Weltalterphilosophie* after 1806. Fuhrmans notes its persistence in, e.g., Habermas's discussion of a Schellingian *Kehre* in his 1963 essay 'Dialektischer Idealismus im Übergang zum Materialismus', in *Theorie und Praxis* (Berlin: Luchterhand, 1969) pp. 108-161. Sean McGrath's 'Introduction' to *The Dark Ground of Spirit* (New York: Routledge, 2012) offers a concise account of the various positions taken on this issue and the reasons for them.

20 Karl Jaspers, *Schelling: Größe und Verhängnis* (Munich: Piper, 1955).

21 Habermas, op. cit.

reduce the problems of essence, nature, and causation either to symptoms protesting against, even as they attest to, Schelling's own 'inner mutation'[22] or to a metaphysic of freedom and 'positions of the will'.[23]

The re-emergence of the problem of freedom in 1809 gives us no reason to assume such a turning unless freedom is alien to nature,[24] separable from the world as a whole. Yet because a philosophy of freedom can 'only be developed from the fundamental principles of a true naturephilosophy',[25] it is 'complete' only when it demonstrates 'how each *successive process* more closely approaches the essence of nature, until… the innermost centre is disclosed'. What is this disclosure, this revelation? Schelling simply asserts that its disclosure will be consequent upon the 'highest division of forces',[26] a division issuing from and in essence, though essence has irreducibly two '*Wirkungsweisen*'.[27] That essence is self-dividing is acknowledged at the outset of the work. The philosophy of nature develops because this identity is not the extensional identity of the two (x=x), but what each differentially is (the identity in x is the identity in y, and since identity cannot differ from itself, the identity between x and y is at once its third iteration and, therefore, the additional assertion of the identity in each of these three). Hence the 'antithesis in the pure identity of

22 Tilliette, *Une philosophie en devenir* I, p. 510. Sean McGrath, in *The Dark Ground of Spirit* p. 29, criticises Žižek's attempt, in *The Irreducible Remainder* (London: Verso, 1996), not only to provide a psychoanalytic reading of his works, but 'more accurately, a psychoanalysis of Schelling'.

23 Martin Heidegger, *Schellings Abhandlung über das Wesen der Menschlichen Freiheit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1971), p. 133.

24 Such textual support as exists for it consists in two claims at SW I/7, 333-4; PI 3-4. (1) That all his previous work is declared to have been naturephilosophy. This claim implies but does not entail that the *Freiheitsschrift* is itself not such a work. (2) That it is the first work wherein 'the author offers…his conception of…[the] philosophy…of the Ideal' is required by misattributions of claims concerning the ideal part of philosophy to the naturephilosophy. In other words, it is to the completed system of philosophy, of which his previous works are 'fragments', that the *Freiheitsschrift* is devoted and that requires the 'overcoming of many a prejudice' (SW I/7, 335, PI 5), rather than to some philosophically partisan turning from nature to freedom. I agree with McGrath, *op. cit.*, p. 33, when he notes that the *Freiheitsschrift* announces 'no axial divergence' from the naturephilosophical concerns still dominant in the Identity philosophy.

25 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 357; PI 31.

26 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 362; PI 37.

27 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 409; PI 90.

nature' from which Schelling has the construction of nature issue in 1799[28] remains insuperable in the *Freedom* essay. Moreover, as the 'nature that permeates everything',[29] identity is maximally ubiquitous[30] and therefore not identical to any emergent.[31]

The renegotiation of an *a posteriori* naturalism with the *apparent* apriority of essence remains an unfamiliar element of the *Freiheitsschrift*. Yet such an understanding of essence is falsely attributed to Schelling, apriority itself being consequent upon the activity of essence since 'anything the essence of which exceeds actuality is temporal'.[32] It is only because essence exceeds or 'overpowers' actuality but remains nature, that a *past* emerges where the *a priori* is as 'having been', as a dimension of essence.[33] Unfamiliarity with the *Freiheitsschrift*'s dynamics or powers-naturalism is itself therefore consequent upon any account of that project that withdraws freedom from nature, that is, separates it from the system with which it *con-sists*. Thus, although Schelling presents the *Freiheitsschrift* as his first 'completely definite' account of the philosophy of the Ideal,[34] suggesting an abstraction of a logical from a cosmological order in which the implicit withdrawal of freedom from nature would already be previsioned, even the understanding – undeniably Ideal – is introduced as having 'the division of forces' as its 'first effect in nature'.[35]

28 *Einleitung zu dem Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie oder über den Begriff der spekulativen Physik*, SW I/3, 308n; trans. by Keith R. Peterson in *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature* (Albany: SUNY, 2004), p. 219n.

29 *Begründung* SW II/3, 6; GP, 92-3.

30 *Darstellung meines Systems der Philosophie*, SW I/4, 120, trans. by Michael Vater and David W. Wood in *The Philosophical Rupture Between Fichte and Schelling. Selected Texts and Correspondence (1800-1802)* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012) (hereafter PR), p. 149: 'absolute identity has surely never ceased being identity and everything that *is*, is considered in itself – not just the appearance of absolute identity but *identity itself*.'

31 *Darstellung* SW I/4, 119; PR 148: 'With respect to being in itself, nothing has come into being.'

32 *Über das Verhältniß des Realen und Idealen in der Natur oder Entiwcklung der ersten Grundsätze der Naturphilosophie an den Principien der Schwere und des Lichts* (hereafter *Band*), SW I/2, 364.

33 Schelling presents the origin of the past in the *Weltalter* (SW I/8, 259; AW 43): 'The person who does not overcome himself or herself has no past, or rather never comes out of the past and lives constantly in the past.'

34 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 334; PI 4.

35 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 361; PI 36.

How the understanding can *have effects in nature* at all, how the word can be 'spoken out into it',[36] is the problem that drives the *Freiheitsschrift* to continue the investigation of the involution of cognitive in cosmological systems that forms the starting point of the 1810 *Stuttgarter Privatvorlesungen*. Asking the apparently transcendental question of how a system is possible at all, Schelling offers the naturalistic response that 'long before man decided to create a system, there already existed one: the *System der Welt*.'[37] Calling this a transcendental naturalism does not go far enough, since if the conditions of possibility for systematising, whether cosmogonic or ideogenic, are nature, then nature transcendentalises. Schelling's naturalism is not reductive, that is, but inflationary just if nature consists in 'additional elements'. For free- as for nature-philosophy, a cognitive system may be Ideal for and in the understanding, but the understanding is consequent upon a cosmos (itself consequent or insuperably environed) wherein it arises.

If freedom is treated apart from the nexus it forms with *Gegenstände*, Schelling's philosophical inquiries into a nature full of powers, into the theory of self-replicating operations, and into the origin and efficacy of the understanding are occluded beneath the self-justification of a philosophy of the Ideal premised on elimination: everything not in the understanding is without reality. The 'irreducible remainder'[38] makes this eliminative idealism impossible. Nature is restored to the *Freiheitsschrift* when attention is paid to the details of its revised theory of essence and form, central to the Identity philosophy. We are concerned therefore in what follows with the concepts or *functions* proper to essence and form in Schelling's middle philosophy.

2. Essence and Potency: the Law of the Ground

> *The essence* [*Wesen*] *of the I is freedom*, that is, it is not thinkable except inasmuch as it posits itself by its own absolute power [*aus absoluter Selbstmacht*], not, indeed, as any kind of *something*, but as sheer I. This freedom can be determined

36 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 395; PI 74, translation modified.

37 *Stuttgarter Privatvorlesungen* SW I/7, 421 (herafter *Privatvorlesungen*) trans. Thomas Pfau, in *Idealism and the Endgame of Theory: Three Essays by F. W. J. Schelling* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), p. 197; hereafter IE.

38 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 360; PI 34

> *positively*, because we want to attribute freedom not to a thing in itself but to the pure I as posited by itself…No objective freedom belongs to the I because it is not an object [*Objekt*] at all. As soon as we try to determine the I as an object, it withdraws into the most restricted sphere, under the conditions of the interdependence of objects – its freedom and independence disappear. An object is possible only through another object, and only inasmuch as it is bound to conditions. Freedom *is* only through itself and it encompasses [*umfaßt*] the infinite.[39]

> He who has reflected upon freedom and necessity has found for himself that these two principles must be *united* in the absolute: *freedom*, because the absolute acts from its own unconditioned power [*das Absolute aus unbedingter Selbstmacht…handelt*], and *necessity* because it acts only according to the laws of its own being, the inner necessity of its essence.[40]

The inclusion of the two essays from which the above quotations are drawn, alongside the first publication of the *Freiheitsschrift* in the 1809 *Philosophische Schriften*, seems at first sight to support a *Wende* account pinioned on the rejection of the naturephilosophy. The degree of consonance between those works' concerns and those of the *Freiheitsschrift* is indeed striking: just as the *Freiheitsschrift* maps the system of essence according to which each has its being 'only in another' and 'none is without the other',[41] *Vom Ich* conceives freedom as the degree

39 *Vom Ich als Princip der Philosophie oder über das Unbedingte im menschlichen Wissen*, SW I/1, 179 (hereafter *Vom Ich*); trans. by Fritz Marti in *The Unconditional in Human Knowledge: Four Early Essays (1794-1796)* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1980) p. 84 (hereafter UH).

40 *Philosophische Briefe über Dogmatismus und Kritizismus* (hereafter *Briefe*), SW I/1, 330-331; translation in UH, p. 189.

41 The first such claim characterises finite being according to Spinoza as 'necessarily *in* another' (SW I/7, 340; PI 12, my emphasis) while Schelling makes the second claim with regard to the organic individual as 'something that has become, only through another' (SW I/7, 346; PI 12), which echoes Schelling's own claims in the *Darstellung meines Systems der Philosophie*, that 'nothing individual has the ground of its existence in itself' (SW I/4, 130; PR 155). The third claim explicates the consequence of this model of grounding: 'In the circle from which everything becomes it is no contradiction that what generates the one is in turn generated by it.

of *Selbstmacht* proper to an essence, while essences are differentiated according to the degree to which their power or sphere of activity is *restricted* by another. With this, Schelling moves decisively from Fichte's universalisation of activity under the transcendental pinion of the I, insofar as no single state satisfies essence's operative modes. The contrasting of the 'inner necessity' by which an essence acts, with the conditioned 'interdependence' of objects, prompts the suggestion that the *Philosophische Briefe* amount to a first draft of the solution to the problem the *Freiheitsschrift* undertakes thirteen years later. Each of the two passages stipulates an asymmetrical proportionality between power and its conditioned or restricted spheres, such that the *free power* against which degrees of restriction are measured is 'non-finite', 'unconditioned', 'positive' or 'absolute' and 'acts out of unconditioned *Selbstmacht*'.

Yet the *Freiheitsschrift* is not only concerned with the fact and feeling of freedom, i.e., with its consequent actuality: the vertical of freedom arises, as it were, only through the plane of system-forming interconnecting essences or 'the positive'. Nor is it with the *substance* of the unruly as separate from the understanding that the *Freiheitsschrift* is concerned but, as *Vom Ich* indicates, with *essence* and the objects with which essence bonds. Where *Vom Ich* sets *Selbstmacht* against *Objekte*, the *Freiheitsschrift* recasts the latter as *Gegenstände*, that is, as the modes of activity forming the power they stand against. While *Vom Ich* had already executed the move from the *Timaeus* essay's *Substanz* to *Wesen*, the *Freiheitsschrift* more fully develops essence as the 'vital bond'[42] of the unlimited X in the *schlechthin* unlimited, of the restricted in and against the positive and the positive in the restricted, whereby spheres of activity are logically identical to their restriction and essence is their dynamic articulation. The law of the ground emerges from this common medium.

It is important to note that the topology in which these restricted spheres form is itself unbounded. In terms of the later Identity philosophy on which the *Freiheitsschrift* draws, this is '*das All*'[43] in which power is

Here there is no first and no last since everything is reciprocally presupposed, none is the other and none is without the other' (SW I/7, 358; PI 33).

42 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 362: 'lebendige Band'; PI: 37: 'living nexus'.

43 That identity is the universe is stated in the *Darstellung* (SW I/4, 129; PR 154) and becomes an important theme throughout Schelling's subsequent engagements with identity and nature, returning in the *Freiheitsschrift* to the relation of Spirit and the *Potenzen*. Further substantiating the *Freiheitsschrift*'s claim that all his previous work was naturephilosophy (SW I/7, 333; PI 3), following the extensive

positive when it creates the positions from which spheres arise. That the totality of positions fall within the whole is due less to the transcendental or ideal character of totality than to the disorder that by definition exceeds, environs, and informs the positions or dimensions of a power. Hence the antithesis of the free and the restricted does not map on to an underlying antithesis of what acts and what is acted on or against, nor onto a difference in kind such as between *Selbstmacht* and *Objekte* but rather, according to the theory of the proposition in the *Freiheitsschrift*, it itself maps what is 'positive' in both the unbounded and the restricted. According to this theory, to determine 'positively' means to determine *kata dunamin* or according to power,[44] a determination differentially expressed in the proposition. 'A is B', that is, means that the positive in A is the positive in B (identity as power),[45] but in different degrees (difference in position and potency), since B is not by itself but by virtue of the A in it.[46] Hence the proposition is irreversible (Schelling's law of identity states, among other things, that $(A=B) \neq (B=A)$)[47] so that the posited always creates direction

'Supplement to the Introduction' to the *Ideen zur einer Philosophie der Natur* of 1803 (SW I/2, 57-72; IPN 43-55), Schelling added the essay '*Über das Verhältniß des Realen und Idealen in der Natur*' to preface the 1806 edition of the *Von der Weltseele* (SW I/2, 359-360) and retained it in the third edition of 1809. The theme is further developed in the Würzburg lectures of 1804, *System der gesamten Philosophie und der Naturphilosophie insbesondere* and the two sets of *Naturphilosophischen Aphorismen* (1806) drawn from them (especially SW I/7, 147-8) and published in the *Jarhbücher der Medicin als Wissenschaft*.

44 On the constant conjunction of *kata dunamin* and *kata phusin* in Plato and its legacy in Schelling, see chapter 2 of my *Philosophies of Nature after Schelling* (London and New York: Continuum, 2006).

45 That a relation is 'identical in the essence of Being and different only in potency' only therefore entails an *analogy* between two processes (ground and existence are related as gravity and light), as Heidegger claims (*Schellings Abhandlung*, p. 138), when ground is not thought, as Heidegger notes Schelling does think (p. 133), *kata dunamin* or according to power, which is the 'essence of absolute identity' and 'the ground of reality' (SW I/4, 145; PR 164).

46 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 341; PI 13: 'if one puts forward the proposition: "The perfect is the imperfect", the meaning is this: the imperfect is not due to that through which it is imperfect, but rather through the perfect that is in it'.

47 Schelling states the 'real meaning of the law of the identity' (SW I/7, 342; PI 14) as 'no sort of combination can transform what is by nature derivative into what is by nature original' (SW I/7, 340; PI 12), since the copula in the proposition bonds antecedent to consequent (SW I/7, 342; PI 14). The irreversibility of its factors therefore follows from that law.

in the positive, or the affirmed in the affirming. The proposition is also the expression of the interconnection (*Zusammenhang*) of essences and *Gegenstände*, because nothing individual exists except 'in another'[48] that *stands against* and so forms its sphere of activity. In consequence, spheres arise as the restricted in the whole or as 'the ataxia of forces', while

> the positive is always the whole or the unity; what stands against it [*das ihm entgegenstehende*] is separation of the whole, discord, ataxia of forces.[49]

Accordingly, since A is not positive unless it has antecedence (disorder) and consequences, it is not the case that essence consists only in the positive rather than the posited, in which case essence would be power without consequent, which is contradictory.[50] Essence, then, is a function, an articulation of power. That the positive requires consequences has as its consequence that the positive, articulated by essence as the production or separation of existing and grounding, *acquires* its antecedence to dynamic ataxia *consequent upon* the latter's introduction. At the same time, the positive remains *in* the restricted as the articulation of the whole.

This is why, for Schelling,[51] essence or *Wesen* does not occupy 'the dimension…of substantiality' or *substantia* by which Boethius and Cicero translated Aristotle's οὐσια,[52] but, according to Jean-François Courtine, the

48 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 346; PI 19.

49 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 370; PI 46.

50 'If the dependent or the consequent were not independent [there] would be a dependency without a dependent, a consequence without a consequent (*consequential absque consequente*) and, thus, no real consequence; that is, the whole concept would be self-eliminating' (SW I/7, 346; PI 18-19).

51 If in the 1794 *Timaeus*, ed. Hartmut Buchner (Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1994), 'substance of the unruly' (p. 69) remains Aristotelian despite its focus on the problem of Platonic matter, by 1809, Schelling's *Wesen* has become more Platonic than Aristotelian. By 1854, however, Schelling's *Einleitung in der Philosophie der Mythologie*, SW II/1, 362, cautions 'that οὐσια in Aristotle is not *Wesen* (*essentia*) as in Plato; the Scholastics rightly avoided this and set *substantia* in its place.'

52 See Jean-François Courtine's rich analysis of Boethius' and Augustine's translations of Aristotelian οὐσια in 'Les traductions latines d'ΟΥΣΙΑ et la comprehension romano-stoïcienne de l'être', in *Les categories de l'être* (Paris: PUF, 2003), pp. 11-77. For brief but decisive remarks on Cicero's translations of Platonic οὐσια, see Carlos Lévy, 'Cicero and the *Timaeus*', in Gretschen J. Reydams-Schils, ed., *Plato's Timaeus as Cultural Icon* (Notre Dame IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003),

'dimension of *Existenz* or *ekstasis*'.[53] Existence is a feature of dimension rather than of a state of being because, while *Wesen involves* existence, it is not, by virtue of its additionally having the *grounding* of existence as a function, reducible to it. For Schelling, it is in the mixture of the divisible and the indivisible,[54] in becoming,[55] that essence *consists*,[56] making it synonymous with nature for Plato[57] as for Schelling,[58] while extending also to the purely intelligible in the former case. Yet such tensions are not reducibly ideal or conceptual. On the contrary, it is such divisions as these that, while they render *Wesen* or essence as thinkable only through power, they also entail its inseparability from existing. The *Freiheitsschrift* thus follows the *Presentation* in giving essence the basic *form* of the separation of ground from existence, or better, the *movements* of a ground-depositing exceeded by an 'outward going',[59] each of which is a *Gegenstand*, i.e., not an object for but a 'standing-against' involved in the other, forming consequent spheres of activity according to power. Essence, that is, is *forged* in the division or 'real antithesis'[60] of ground and existence, acquiring its form from the forces in dynamic tension one with another, so

104-5.

53 Courtine 2003, op. cit., p. 91.

54 Cf. Lévy, op. cit., p. 105: 'οὐσια is used [in Plato] to signify the indivisible being as well as the divisible kind and the mixture of both. Despite some real difficulties in Plato's text, it does display an indisputable coherence [in referring to both] the real being that never changes and...[to those] οὐσιαι that are less perfect from an ontological point of view.'

55 Plato, *Philebus* 26d8, addresses the 'γένεσιν εἰς οὐσίαν' the birth or coming into being of what is.

56 Gernot Böhme translates Plato's οὐσια as *Seinsbestand* throughout his *Platons theoretische Philosophie* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2000).

57 Lévy (op. cit., p. 105) remarks that, at *Phaedrus* 245c-e, 'Plato uses οὐσια and φύσις as synonymous', switching between 'ψυχῆς φύσεως' and 'ψυχῆς οὐσίαν'.

58 E.g. SW I/7, 358, PI 32, where 'nature', as the 'ground of God's existence' is an 'indivisible but inseparable essence'.

59 SW II/1, 369, for example, characterises essence as what surpasses and what establishes grounds, i.e. as *hinausgehend* and as *zu Grunde liegend*.

60 This was a constant of Schelling's account of coming into being since *Von der Weltseele*: 'real antithesis is possible only between things *of one kind and common origin*', SW I/2, 397.

that all *Wesen* is *Mittelwesen*[61] and what is true of the 'essence of man' is true of all essences: each is 'its own act'.[62]

Power is not therefore a simple case of possibility acquiring creative potency where it does not yet overlap with actuality because, as Schelling writes, 'possibility does not entail actuality, and this is really the main object in question'.[63] Rather than any such *transition* between the possible and the actual (the actuality of possibility does not entail a change in the state of being of the possible), Schelling insists that it is impossible to 'wrest actuality from potency'.[64] Potency is its own positive; it becomes, in the *Philosophie der Mythologie*, an 'infinite *potentia existendi* [...] *ein bloßes Können enthaltende Wesen*'[65] whose being is to be 'by its nature... a leaping towards being'.[66] It is because what the later Schelling calls *Seynkönnen* and what the *Freiheitsschrift* call 'primal being' or 'willing'[67] remains on the verge of being *by nature* that the *Freiheitsschrift* requires 'a completed philosophy of nature'. The question of possibility, of the ontology of possibility, can only be answered, that is, by a philosophy of nature that, to be complete, must include power without reducing it to what is 'potentially actual' or, in the *Freiheitsschrift*'s terms to a consequent that eliminates what is positive in *Potenz*. The task of that philosophy is not to discover the essence behind, beneath or before the essence of human freedom but to plumb the 'depths of the ground of nature' and to disclose the 'innermost centre' of all effective being or *Wesen*, to ground position in power and dimension in position. As to the problem of what grounds power or force, which the *Darstellung* makes 'the essence of absolute identity' and the 'ground of reality',[68] neither this identification of ground and power nor the grounding of power in the essence of ground are viable, since the former begs the question and the latter is regressive. For just as 'the essence of ground...can only be

61 *Philosophie und Religion* (hereafter *Religion*) SW I/6, 46; trans. by Klaus Ottmann, *Philosophy and Religion* (Putnam: Spring, 2010) (hereafter PaR), p. 34.

62 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 385; PI 63.

63 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 373; PI 49.

64 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 390; PI 68, translation modified.

65 *Philosophie der Mythologie, Erstes Buch* (*Monotheismus*), SW II/2, 49-50.

66 *Begründung* SW II/3, 102; GP, 160.

67 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 350; PI 24.

68 'Das Wesen des absolutes Identität, insofern sie unmittelbar Grund von Realität ist, ist *Kraft*', *Darstellung*, SW I/4, 145; PR 164.

antecedent to all ground',[69] i.e., cannot be ground itself, neither is power self-grounding nor has it, *qua* 'ground of reality', some other, prior ground on which to rest: the essence of power opens onto ungrounding.

This is why the *Un-* or *Urgrund* is a naturephilosophical problem, since the inquiry into the principles by which dimensionality issues from what is without and therefore prior to all dimension and position amounts to an inquiry into how nature comes into being. It may be stated thus: what is the dimension on which dimensionality is itself consequent? The result of ungrounding is precisely that no X may satisfy that antecedent from which X's issue. Thus, creation is not reducible to theogony in the *Freiheitsschrift*. God is not the whole of creation since the ground he contains has other consequents. Similarly, the problem of freedom concerns not only its human essence, but also, since freedom's roots must lie 'in the independent ground of nature',[70] in the 'will of the ground'[71] or its 'self-operation',[72] and so in essence in general: if true of one essence, that is, then true of all. The question of freedom is recast therefore as that of the self-operative range of essence, giving sense to Schelling's identification of *alle Wesen* with *alle Möglichkeiten*:[73] essential operative range is actual power. A nature comprising essential operations is therefore one that is primordially a *Potenzzustand*, a not-being in the depths,[74] an 'infinite *potentia existendi* as mere potency',[75] or the pre-dimensional, 'placeless',[76] 'groundless essence'[77] never recoverable as ground and existence for anything grounded. In other words, if nature is creation, its inexistence is entailed.

The *Freiheitsschrift* therefore inherits the early accounts of freedom's *essence* as requiring an ontology of power without position or thing, the *ground* of power without which creation would neither be 'of' some*thing* nor 'from' any dimension of being, as well as the trajectory introduced into being by existence. While the meaning of Schelling's

69 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 407; PI 88-89, translation modified.
70 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 371; PI 47, translation modified.
71 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 375; PI 52, translation modified.
72 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 379; PI 56.
73 *Abhandlung über die Quelle der ewigen Wahrheiten*, SW II/1, 585.
74 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 405; PI 86.
75 *Philosophie der Mythologie*, SW II/2, 49.
76 'Über das Verhältniß des Realen und Idealen in der Natur', SW I/2, 364.
77 Ibid., SW I/2, 378.

'essence' or *Wesen* is complex,[78] the *Freiheitsschrift* builds on a structure whose outlines are glimpsed already in *Vom Ich* and in the *Philosophische Briefe*; namely, that an essence is free when its unconditioned power results in its self-positing. Essence, that is, acts or operates just when position is consequent upon power. Since the establishment of position issues from (power) and in (consequent), or has two trajectories, *essence acts according to two operative modes* (*Wirkungsweisen*), as ground and as existence.[79] This 'law of the ground'[80] is universal throughout the *Freiheitsschrift*'s ontology, clearly marked in its discussions of logic,[81] of the understanding,[82] organism,[83] determination[84] and order.[85] According to

78 See Jason M. Wirth's concise and nuanced analysis of essence in relation to the time-metaphysics of the *Weltalter*, in his Translator's Introduction' to his version of that work, AW, xxxi: 'For Schelling, *das Wesen* names the tension between present being (existence) and the simultaneous intimation of that which is as no longer being (the past) and that which is as not yet being (the future)…The *Wesen* holds together what has being and what is, but which does not have being.' The temporal emphasis in this account of what Schelling elsewhere calls 'the *Wesen* in time is the universal centre-point' (SW I/2, 365) tallies with Hegel's account of *Wesen* in the *Encyclopaedia Logic* as 'the past sublated and conserved' (§112 1991: 176), or mediated immediacy. Rather than explaining essence by temporality, the *Freiheitsschrift* explains temporality or the reciprocal motions of antecedence and consequence, by essence.
79 '[O]ne essence actually divides itself in its two modes of operation into two essences…, in one *merely* ground for existence and in the other merely essence' (SW I/7, 409; PI 90, translation modified). The German reads, '*…das eine Wesen in seinen zwei Wirkungsweisen sich wirklich in zwei Wesen schedet…, in dem einen* bloß *Grund zur Existenz, in dem andern bloß Wesen.*'
80 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 346; PI 18, translation modified.
81 The 'law of the ground' states that '[i]n the relation of subject and predicate [… is] that of ground and consequence' (SW I/7, 345-6; PI 18). Note also Schelling's reuse of the categories of the affirming and the affirmed, from the *Würzburg System* (1804) and the two sets of *Naturephilosophical Aphorisms* (1806), as ground and consequent (SW I/7, 340; PI 12).
82 'The understanding is born in the genuine sense in that which is without understanding' (SW I/7, 360; PI 34, translation modified).
83 'Every organic individual exists, as something that has become, only through another' (SW I/7, 346; PI 18).
84 'Dependence does not determine…and says only that the dependent…can be a consequence only of that of which it is a dependent; dependence does not say what the dependent is or is not' (SW I/7, 346; PI 18).
85 '[N]owhere does it appear as if order and form were what is original but rather as it the initial unruly had been brought to order' (SW I/7, 359; PI 34).

that law, *Wesen* is not therefore 'thing'[86] but division antecedent to consequent division, the *wiederholte Entfaltung*[87] of the 'vital bond which arises in division' such that consequents are consequents to the extent they are *not* that upon which they are consequents, so that 'at each point of division of forces a new essence emerges from nature'.[88] In the sense that essence divides but does not separate forces;[89] essence arises as consequent *upon* antecedent, determining the latter as the antecedent that it becomes. Identity is creative[90] because its essence is 'power' or 'force [*Kraft*]',[91] to which it belongs to differentiate: ground from existence, original from derived, antecedent from consequent. While therefore identity itself *is* the universe,[92] the operations of essence ensure that nature 'is everything that lies beyond the absolute being of absolute identity'[93] and consists in the asymmetrical and irreversible self-differentiation of identity. What applies to *one* essence – that it is its own act[94] – applies therefore to all. The *Freiheitsschrift*'s famous equation 'willing is primal being',[95] means that whatever is, operates as 'real self-positing, a primal willing of the ground which makes itself into something and is the ground of all essentiality [*Wesenheit*]'.[96] What is essential in essence is that it is inseparable from the *structure* of willing, of being 'on the verge of being'. Possibility, then, is not the ground of freedom, but of nature. Essence is therefore the act or operation by which something arises from what it is not, or *creation*. It is because creation – not only in the sense of what is created but also in its act, its 'being *wirksam*', that is, effective, its *wesen*-ing – is nature that the 'completed philosophy of nature' remains as necessary to the *Freiheitsschrift* as the *Briefe* preceding it required.

86 As Heidegger notes, in the *Freiheitsschrift*, '*Wesen* is not meant in the sense of the 'essence' of a thing [*Sache*]' (*Schellings Abhandlung*, p. 119), echoing Schelling: 'thing' is the most 'abstract concept of essences in the world [*Weltwesen*]' (SW I/7, 349; PI 22, translation modified).
87 *Band*, SW I/2, 375.
88 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 362; PI 37, translation modified.
89 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 361; PI 36.
90 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 345; PI 18.
91 *Darstellung* SW I/4, 145; PR 164.
92 *Darstellung* SW I/4, 129; PR 154.
93 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 358; PI 32; cf. SW I/4, 203; PR 199.
94 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 385; PI 63.
95 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 350; PI 24.
96 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 385; PI 63.

3. The Prior has its Actuality in the Consequent[97]

Schelling's essay 'Ist einer Philosophie der Geschichte möglich?' (1797) provides an early constellation of the problems driving Schelling's naturephilosophy, and in particular of the status of possibility in nature. Its problematic, however, is also what preoccupies the *Freiheitsschrift*, namely, the conjoint hypotheses that, first, if freedom or *Selbstmacht* is to exist at all, its roots must 'lie in the independent grounds of nature'.[98] For *Geschichte*, 'nature in its freedom' is evident as it 'develops along all possible trajectories' insofar as 'all possible trajectories' makes it 'absolutely impossible' to determine a trajectory a priori.[99] A trajectory is not free, that is, insofar as it is possible, but insofar as it is actual, so that it is the *actual free trajectory* that is indeterminable a priori – certainly 'relatively, in relation to ourselves', but not, Schelling cautions, 'absolutely'.[100] In other words, the problem of an *actually free* trajectory in nature is pinioned on its absolute determinability as free.

Second therefore, the requirement that philosophy (conceived, in 1796, as an *a priori* science) of natural history (there conceived as an *a posteriori* science) must conceive nature not only in the form of the repeated 'cycle of acts'[101] constitutive of animal species or individuals, that is, as 'things…the abstract concept of *Weltwesen*',[102] but in its development. If nature's freedom is the full development of all possible trajectories, natural history does not follow a trajectory from possible to actual, because nothing is possible outside nature.[103] Nature, that is, comprises actuality and all possibility. Yet nature is not nature without

97 *Einleitung in die Philosophie der Mythologie* SW II/1, 375, paraphrasing Aristotle *De anima* 414b29-30: 'the earlier type always exists potentially in that which follows.'
98 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 371; PI 47, translation modified.
99 'Ist eine Philosophie der Geschichte möglich?' (hereafter *Geschichte*) SW I/1, 469-470.
100 *Geschichte*, SW I/1, 470.
101 *Geschichte*, SW I/, 470.
102 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 349; 22.
103 As Schelling writes in the *System des transzendentalen Idealismus*, 'Anything whose conditions simply cannot be given in nature, must be absolutely impossible.' SW I/3, 571; trans. by Peter Heath, *System of Transcendental Idealism* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1978), p. 186.

what the History essay calls 'progressivity',[104] i.e., without all possible developmental pathways, nor without what the *Freiheitsschrift* calls true consequents, i.e. consequents independent of their antecedents, nor again without true antecedence, i.e., without creation. Accordingly, if nature is possible but not determinable a priori, natural possibility may be defined as the degree to which potency is 'raised to *actus*' in 'creation in operation [*wirklichen Schöpfung*]'.[105] This is not the becoming-actual of the possible but rather the degree of raising in which the acts that potency performs consist; the raising, in other words, is the actuality, the *effectiveness* of potency, or possibility is operativity at zero potency, operativity without operation.

While the *Geschichte*'s formulation of the problem of determinability arising from indetermination, cast in relative terms ('in relation to ourselves'), prompts the question as to the relation of the a priori to the a posteriori sciences, in its non-relative or absolute form, it asks after the emergence of determinate trajectory from all possible trajectories. As the *Freiheitsschrift* says, however, 'possibility does not comprise actuality, and this is really the main obstacle [*Gegenstand*] in question'.[106] As we have seen, while the law of the ground explains the origin of position from dimensionless potency as such, ground does not explain dimensionlessness, because that law applies also to ground itself: 'the essence of ground…can only be what precedes all ground'.[107] The question of essence, or of the ontological state consequent upon its operativity or actuality, its *Wirkungsweisen*,[108] is precisely the question of how what is emerges from what was not what it now is, or, for example, how understanding emerges from what is without understanding, order from *ataxia*, ground from its antecedent.

Accordingly, the law of the ground entails that auto-positioning that is *Selbstmacht* be explained from the dimensionless, or ground from unground. In accordance with that law, the Unground is *primal* ground (*Urgrund*) not because it is ground itself, but because it is that essence that 'precedes all ground and all existence'. Just as Schelling is clear that unground is the not-being (*Nichtsein*) of all antithesis and therefore does

104 *Geschichte* I, 470
105 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 398; PI 78
106 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 373; PI 49, translation modified.
107 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 407; PI 88-89
108 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 409; PI 90, translation modified.

not contain them, so auto-positioning (*Selbstsetzen*) is 'auto' because it does not *actualise* a position already given or contained in the unground, since the latter is itself the not-being of position or trajectory, a non-dimensionality, but rather positioning itself. When therefore the *Freiheitsschrift* defines the task of a 'completed naturephilosophy' as 'to show how each succeeding process approaches closer to the essence of nature, until the innermost centre unfolds into the highest division of forces',[109] the problem is precisely stated. The innermost centre of nature cannot be located insofar as it may be *occupied* by any existent, that is, according to a consequent or a posteriori metric, such as an animal act-cycle, the above and below, right and left, behind and before by which Aristotle locates the relative dimensionality of human being,[110] or the beginning, middle, and end that give the dimensions of process.[111] To attempt this location is to pose the 'question of the ground of dimensionality'.[112] Since according to the law of the ground, ground is not self-grounding, but rather auto-positioning forms place from the 'placeless',[113] unground is the necessary antecedent of the origins of dimensionality or the emergence of ground.

It was this that so shocked Eschenmayer; yet as he noted, there is nothing here that would strike an astrophysicist or a geologist as bizarre. The earth, for example, rests on nothing but the homeostasis issuing from the real opposition of gravitational forces. Its formation is not the slow development of a seed, but the reduplicated development, the '*wiederholte Entfaltung*',[114] or the division of these forces from which the vital bond arises. Just as Schelling rejects the actualisation of potentiality as the model of development, neither does the first precede the second that patiently awaits actualisation in a presently expanding series; rather, essence – the reciprocal but asymmetrical deposition of ground by existence – overpowers itself, is potentiated beyond its current state, and so acquires a past, a prior it cannot recover in accordance with the law of the ground.

109 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 362; PI 37
110 Aristotle, *On the Parts of Animals* 284b21-30, cited in Schelling, *Einleitung in der Philosophie der Mythologie*, SW II/1, 439.
111 Aristotle, *On the Heavens* 268a6-13, cited in Schelling SW II/1, 434.
112 *Einleitung in der Philosophie der Mythologie* SW II/1, 435.
113 *Band* SW I/2, 364.
114 *Band* SW I/2, 375.

The explanation of the emergence or construction of dimensionality had become the overt objective of the naturephilosophy since the *Allgemeine Deduktion des dynamischen Prozesses* (1800). The law of the ground entails that dimension is created from that which is without dimension. That law, as we have seen, governs the co-articulation of antecedence and consequence and, due to the asymmetry attendant upon the ultimate consequence of that law, namely, that unground is prior to all ground, the emergence of antecedence and consequence from what *was* without these, now *is* these, and *will* consist in their consequents. The 'innermost centre of nature' is therefore precisely the emergence of dimensionality from the non-dimensional; how process or 'becoming', the only concept 'adequate to the nature of things',[115] becomes the actuality of the prior in the consequent.[116] This is the task confronting a complete philosophy of nature: the emergence of emergence following the becoming proper to *Wesen*, the γένεσιν εἰς οὐσίαν that already formed the central problem of Schelling's *Timaeus* commentary.[117]

With a view to such completeness, Bruce Matthews has recently argued that 'life as the schema of freedom' should be taken as the 'metric' Schelling introduces for *Wesen*'s becomings.[118] Such a view is consonant with the idea of Schelling turning, in the *Freiheitsschrift*, from a naturalistic to a hermeneutic[119] or analogical[120] naturephilosophy according to which, for example, gravity and light are analogies for stages in the development of a free essence, rather than ground's own 'self-operation'.[121]

115 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 358-9; PI 33.

116 *Einleitung in der Philosophie der Mythologie* SW II/1, 375.

117 *Timaeus*, H. Buchner, hrsg. Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1994, 63-4.

118 See Bruce Matthews' excellent and rewarding study, *Schelling's Organic Form of Philosophy: Life as the Schema of Freedom* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011).

119 See Dale E. Snow, *Schelling and the End of Idealism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), pp. 67-92 and Andrew Bowie, *Schelling and Modern European Philosophy* (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 30-44, for the 'hermeneutics of nature'.

120 Heidegger, *Schellings Abhandlung* (pp. 137-9), defends an analogical reading of the naturephilosophy, with support from the *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 358; PI 32-3, and 'justifying' such comparisons on the basis of the essential identity of the terms forming the analogy.

121 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 381; PI 58, translation modified.

The *Freiheitsschrift*'s claim that the vital bond constitutes 'the centre of forces' seems to confirm and support this view:

> The forces separated (but not completely sundered) in this division are the material from which the body will later be configured; but the vital bond that arises in this division, from the depths of the natural ground, as the midpoint of the forces is the soul.[122]

Yet two things complicate the matter. Firstly, life or the vital bond 'arises' from the division of forces as their centre, the measure introduced into the dimensionless *Potenzzustand* from which in turn dimension emerges. Because the law of the ground entails that what arises does so from what is not it, nature is not reducible to life. While it may be retorted that a centre is not only geometrical but also temporal, i.e., that *from which* a past emerges for that essence, the emergent past cannot represent the recovery of the unground that precedes all ground, and therefore all division of ground and existence that is the operation of essence. This is why no animal act-cycle, as in *Geschichte*, nor any dimensional coordinates consequent upon what exists, such as the anthropic form advocated by Aristotle for this purpose and which Schelling discusses in the *Einleitung in der Philosophie der Mythologie*, can constitute the measure of nature, which consists in all trajectories. Dimension, in other words, can only arise from the dimensionless.

The second complication concerns the emergence and development of 'schema', that is, the nature of the concept and the emergence of understanding rather than only its form. Since the *Freiheitsschrift* is explicit that the understanding is not exempt from the law of the ground, that it derives, in other words from an irreversible division from what is without understanding; the understanding's form is not to be found in an echo of itself, but in the divisions that precede and do not resemble it. It is therefore to the ground-consequent structure that, according to the *Freiheitsschrift*, *phusis* exhibits as *logos*,[123] that we now turn.

122 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 362.

123 'Light or the ideal principle is, as the eternal antithesis of the dark principle, the creating word which redeems the life hidden in the ground from non-being and raises it from potency to actuality' (SW I/7, 404; PI 84).

4. Understanding and Unground: the Generation of Orders in the Dimensionless

> [T]he conviction that all thought and knowledge are completely subjective and that Nature altogether lacks reason and thought [meant that] the dynamic factor…was in no sense recognised in its identity with the spiritual.[124]

Contrary to Tilliette's dismissal of the claim that the *Freiheitsschrift* is a 'remake' of the *Naturphilosophie*,[125] we have seen that Schelling's naturephilosophy undergoes substantial revision there. The 'ungrounding' of essence onto creation; the derivation of systems of cognition from 'the system of the world'[126] or the necessary connection of the former with the latter;[127] nature as the 'older revelation';[128] all demonstrate precisely the being 'in another',[129] without which nothing is and by which essence generates structures. The nature thus remade in accordance with the law of the ground is extended not merely ontically, that is, in the addition of new objects or things (word, spirit, etc.), but also ontologically, since any nature whatever necessarily embraces the dimensionless non-being or *Potenzzustand* in the division of which, since nature is 'all being [*alles Seyn*]',[130] becoming issues.

124 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 333; PI 3.
125 Tilliette, *Une philosophie en devenir* I: p. 539.
126 *Privatvorlesungen* SW I/7, 421; IE, 197.
127 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 336-7; PI 7-8.
128 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 415; PI 98.
129 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 346; PI 19.
130 The full passage from the *Aphorismen über die Naturephilosophie* (1806) runs: 'You may neither suppose choice or arbitrariness here, but only the beautiful necessity of an infinitely loving nature, itself without reflection. Infinite, for there is a ground for all finitude; but such a thing is neither in that nature, for it is just one with itself and not doubled, nor outside it, for it itself is all being' (SW I/7, 199). The ground of all finitude, that is, is dimensionless pre-nature, as in the *Freiheitsschrift*.

We have seen that essence consists not in things but in its two modes of operation or, following Heidegger, its two 'dimensions'.[131] It is the non-sundering division of forces by means of which the vital bond arises, like the wedge that holds the split log open, conjoining ground and existence as it potentiates in each direction, just as it creates them. The law of the ground is therefore the amplification of tension in identity or the emergence of dimension in the dimensionless. The completed philosophy of nature must seek in the 'highest division of forces' for 'the ground of dimensionality' as the 'innermost centre of nature'.

Up to this point, the law of the ground maintains the positive by the repeated development of divisions until it comes to the undivided *Potenzzustand* requisite to essential becoming. From this anterior or Unground [*Ur- oder vielmehr Ungrund*],[132] division arises positively, that is, unprecedentedly or asymmetrically: even that the Unground itself divides[133] and, each being whole or positive, divides again, is a consequence of rather than antecedent to, its own essence. Wherever therefore there is division, there is maintained positivity, so that separation is not sundering but repeated development. When therefore the understanding is said to have as its 'first effect in nature' the 'division of forces', the understanding is treated in accordance with the law of the ground as an existing consequent upon its grounding, or upon the division of forces in which its activity consists. Hence it is the *Freiheitsschrift*'s account of the understanding as consequent and asymmetrical with respect to its ground that means the latter 'irreducibly remains' following the exhaustion of the understanding's operations. The law of the ground, in other words, is not a version of the principle of sufficient reason because it does not belong to the understanding, as a concept wielded by it over a domain reducible to it, but rather belongs to the mode of operation of ground itself. It is because ground is a 'self-operating' that acts following is its own necessity that it constitutes a *Gegenstand* for the understanding, standing against it as resistance, rather than furnishing the understanding with an object proper to its own domain. The antecedence of forces to their division is therefore the condition under which alone the understanding can arise, and arise as *positively* restricted by what exceeds it but to which it belongs as to its own medium or nature.

131 Heidegger, *Schellings Abhandlung*, p. 137.
132 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 406; PI 87.
133 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 408; PI 89.

From this, we gain a crucial insight into the nature of the Schellingian concept. Like the thesis of inductive identity in the *Ideas*, repeated under Empedoclean guise at the outset of the *Freiheitsschrift*,[134] by which necessity is accorded to the formation of concepts; and as in the *Begründung der positiven Philosophie* towards the end of Schelling's career, the becoming universal to all being that arrives at consciousness arises asymmetrically to a self-consciousness which, precisely because it is self-consciousness, is 'not equal to the consciousness of nature'.[135] Thus concepts remain free products of their genesis, and thus act according to an 'independent power' against their immediate generative source in 'the soul'.[136]

This is why the word is 'spoken out *into* nature'[137] rather than *over* it. Due to the law of the ground, the word does not recover its antecedent divisions as proto-semantic but repeats them as directionality 'into' a nature that is *gegenständlich* for it, i.e., that stands against and so forms it. The law of the ground thus gives word and world a common medium in the essence or operativity by which each works in another. Essence therefore is the recursion of operations in each, the 'universe in the universe'[138] or the innermost centre of nature.

That therefore the community of forces remains positive, unsundered, in the emergence of the understanding from what does not have it, is a precisely directed critique of the transcendental character of the understanding. The partiality of the concept is a consequence of its irreducible particularity and its dynamic community precisely because it does not have an origin or source separable either from the becoming universal in all being or from the *Gegenstand* of which, *qua* concept, it is the consequent. The Unground does not sanction, therefore, a reworking of the cognitive division between the knowable and the unknowable 'relative to ourselves', but rather, because it is *Urgrund* or ground's antecedent, an account of the understanding's *Umwelt*, a ground that, as its own, it cannot master and reduce.

134 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 337; PI 8.
135 *Begründung* SW II/3, 6; GP 93.
136 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 347; PI 19.
137 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 395; PI 74, translation modified.
138 *System der gesamten Philosophie und der Naturphilosophie insbesondere* SW I/6, 207; cf. *Aphorismen* SW I/7, 186.

The *Freiheitsschrift*'s 'generative dialectic'[139] of the understanding therefore maintains its positivity in the sense that its actualisation pathways open it ultimately to the *Ur-* and Unground it cannot recover, on the one hand, and thus demonstrates in turn why the understanding produces effects in the nature with which it maintains dynamic community, and thus demonstrates the 'identity' of dynamics and spirit that the *Freiheitsschrift* early announces as its elucidatory objective (SW I/7, 333; PI 3). This, in the end, is why the *Freiheitsschrift* extends the law of identity into a law of the ground. That nature is what exceeds identity does not tell us *what* but *how* nature is. Namely, as essence or the total set of operations of all possibilities (*'alle Wesen'* are *'alle Möglichkeiten'*, SW II/1, 585) or essence according to all powers. The law of the ground makes identity 'creative' (SW I/7, 345; PI 18), potentiating the division of grounding in existing.

What is it, finally, that *Verstand* understands? As the containing is higher than the contained,[140] the understanding's consequents – concepts – contain what they conceive. Since the container cannot be contained by what it contains, the understanding is *logically* higher than its content (nature, or the divisions of prius from posterius; ground from consequent) but *identical* according to essence and differentiated in accordance with power (higher/lower). That is, the content of the concept is not the *Gegenstand* but the divisions that articulate the dimensions in which *Gegenstände* form systems. Logical orders, then, do not rise *over* nature since nature is nothing other than the self-division of essence into ground and existence. Rather they rise *from* it, so that the content of such an order is not *this* ground and *that* existent but the movements that divide, the potencies that intensify the division, and the dimensions to which these give rise. As the *Philosophie der Mythologie* puts it, reiterating the *Freiheitsschrift*'s claim that *'Urseyn ist Wollen'*, 'willing is not only the beginning but also the content of the first emergent'.[141] What is conceived in the concept is essence, the operation or act that grounds and exceeds the consequent that its concept is, a past or a prius therefore 'that cannot be resolved into understanding [*Verstand*]'.[142] When, accordingly, the effect of

139 *Einleitung in der Philosophie der Mythologie* SW II/1, 330.
140 Cf. SW I/7, 346; PI 18-19, where Schelling discusses the *Begriffensein*, the 'being conceived' or 'contained' of all in all.
141 *Einleitung in der Philosophie der Mythologie* SW II/1, 388.
142 *Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 360; PI 34, translation modified.

the understanding in nature is characterised as the 'unity hidden in the ground and containing all rais[ing] itself up',[143] this does not therefore mean that in the end, ground is contained in the understanding, but rather that the all in the understanding (unity revealed) is lesser in extent than the all in ground (unity hidden) from which division the former arises. Yet it is the *form* of these motions that yields their systematic interconnection, the 'universe in the universe', via the law of the ground: the understanding arises from what is without it, just as logical orders entail the irreducibility of the ataxia in which they divide. Because the unity of the understanding arises in division, it conceives, by means of the division from which it derives, the unity of the divisions it contains along with the dynamic community (the *positivity* of division) from which it arises.

What is consequent upon the understanding therefore is nature (excess over identity) understood in accordance with power – the *structures* and *formations* by which forces articulate emergent and developing potentiations or auto-positings from what has, at the beginning, no dimensionality, the morphogenesis alone adequate to nature. It should be emphasised, however, that the present essay has proceeded only so far as the analysis of *Selbständigkeit* and its resistants; a free philosophy, like free mathematics, issues in a production of nature of which nature is subject but not, for that very reason, identical to its outcome.

143*Freiheitsschrift* SW I/7, 361; PI 36, translation modified.

Das Gewüßte wird erzählt: Schelling on the Relationship between Art, Mythology, and Narrative

JASON WIRTH

The past is known, the present is discerned, the future is intimated.
The known is narrated, the discerned is presented, the intimated is prophesied.

Das Vergangene wird gewußt, das Gegenwärtige wird erkannt, das Zukünftige wird geahndet.
Das Gewußte wird erzählt, das Erkannte wird dargestellt, das Geahndete wird geweissagt.

—*The Ages of the World* (1815) (I/8, 199)[1]

I. What is *Erzählung*?

In these famous words that begin all three extant versions of *Die Weltalter*, we are told that the past can be known, itself a strange claim when one recalls that *Die Weltalter* also claims that we absolutely cannot get to the bottom of the past: 'Nature is an abyss of the past. This is what is oldest in nature, the deepest of what remains if everything accidental and everything that has become is removed' (I/8, 243). We are also told that the known is narrated. How does one narrate such knowing? What exactly is narration (*Erzählung*)? And what image of thinking, that is, what

1 Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own responsibility. Citations follow the standard pagination, which adheres to the original edition established after Schelling's death by his son, Karl. It lists the division, followed by the volume, followed by the page number. Hence, (I/1, 1) would read, division one, volume one, page one. This pagination is preserved in Manfred Schröter's critical reorganisation of this material. *Schellings Sämtliche Werke*, ed. K. F. A. Schelling (Stuttgart and Augsburg: Cotta, 1856-1861); *Schellings Werke: Nach der Originalausgabe in neuer Anordnung*, ed. Manfred Schröter (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1927).

thinking can claim by right as its own, emerges from such a strange activity?

At the onset of this essay, I would first like to say what narration is not.

Lyotard, in his 1979 *La condition postmoderne: rapport sur le savoir*, infamously characterised our postmodern era as an incredulity toward all grand narratives, all *grands récits*, in favour of *petits récits*, smaller, more localised narratives.[2] Of course, as many have retorted, the end of grand narratives may just be the grand narrative of our time, but there is still something of value in Lyotard's insight. Regardless of the size of our narratives, narrative as such is no longer the mere representation—overarching or fragmentary—of what happened. Narration cannot exceed its speculative limits. Big H History, history that moves necessarily by inexorable laws and mechanically dispenses fate, is a pernicious fantasy.

For Schelling there is no way to get in front of history, no way to explain its principles by representing its ground—nature and natural history are abyssal (*abgrundlich*) and even, following Böhme, ungrounding (*ungrundlich*). We cannot represent the occurring of history as the unfolding of laws because at the ground of history is the non-representability of ground itself. We cannot figure out the laws and then figure out why we had to have the story that we have. We narrate because we cannot explain and we cannot explain because we did not have to have the narrative that we have. Necessarily there are no necessary objects (as Quentin Meillassoux also says in his own way in *After Finitude*).[3] We could even say that narrative is necessary because history is necessarily inexplicable.

Moreover, what is striking about the term *Erzählung* is that it comes from an artistic vocabulary. More specifically, it is a form of *die redende Kunst*, the art of speaking. It is not appropriate to say that one narrates a scientific experiment. The past, however, demands the narration of its knowledge. Toward the beginning of the introduction to *Die Weltalter*,

2 Jean-François Lyotard, *La condition postmoderne: rapport sur le savoir* (Paris: Minuit, 1979), p. 7.

3 'Accordingly, we can say that it is possible to *demonstrate the absolute necessity of everything's non-necessity*. In other words, it is possible to establish, through indirect demonstration, the absolute necessity of the contingency of everything.' Quentin Meillassoux, *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency*, trans. by Ray Brassier (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2008), p. 62. Schelling has his own manner of demonstrating this.

Schelling straightaway alludes to one of the hindrances that blocks the way —holds back—the narration of the past:

> Why cannot what is known [*das Gewußte*] in the highest knowledge also be narrated with the rectitude and simplicity of all else that is *known*? What holds back that intimated [*geahndete*] golden age in which truth again becomes fable and fable again becomes truth? (I/8, 200)

This is a complex question. It asks about what blocks—and implicitly how to unblock—a relationship to the ungrounded ground that is the abyss of the past. Moreover, a relationship to the bottomless depth of the past is not only a relationship to the past, but also a relationship to the future, an anticipatory relationship to the future in which truth presents itself as fable and Hesiod's Χρυσόν Γένος (Works and Days, 109-126) 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. The way to the golden age that is 'intimated [*geahndet*]' and 'prophesied [*geweissagt*]' first necessitates that one go directly into the centre of the past, much like, as we shall see, Dante who journeyed toward *paradisio* by going directly into the deepest centre of the *inferno*. The way to the infinite productivity of the future is through the infinite depth of the past. The emancipation of narrativity (awakening a relationship to *der Abgrund von Vergangenheit*, the abyss of the past) is simultaneously a utopian impulse. Finally, the awakening of and to the abyssal past in its relationship to a utopian future is made possible as a true fable, a fabulous truth, or, as we shall see, what the 1797 System fragment famously called a *new mythology*.

The movement toward the buried, obscured, and repressed centre of the past is the movement toward the vitality at the ungrounded ground of the past, an always past life expressing itself in and as all beings. As is well known, this is the destination of what Schelling came to call negative philosophy, which moves through the things of nature to the living ground of nature, moving always *über x hinaus*, through x to get beyond x. In this movement, thinking arrives at 'what is primordially living, the being that is preceded by no other and is therefore the oldest of all beings [*Wesen*]' (I/8, 199). What blocks narration? The lack of a relationship to the vitality of the oldest of all *Wesen*, the groundless ground at the heart of the past. And

who lacks such a relationship? Modernity itself. As Schelling famously claims in the *Freiheitsschrift*, 'nature is not present' to modernity because it 'lacks a living ground [*die Natur für sich nicht vorhanden ist, und daß es ihr am lebendigen Grunde fehlt*]' (I/7, 361). As such, nature is detached from the natality after which it first received its name; its potencies become inviolable operators, mere repetitions of the same.

Negative philosophy, one could say, is also a preparation for the living ground of positive philosophy:

> What we have described up until now (insofar as possible) is only the eternal life of the Godhead. The actual history that we intended to describe, the narration of that series of free actions through which God, since eternity, decided to reveal itself, can only now begin. (I/8, 269)

Narration becomes possible with the return of the repressed, the remembering to remember the living oblivion of the past. (Without this awakening, we remain oblivious of the oblivion of the past.) As Lore Hühn[4] rightly claims, both 'the unprethinkability [*die Unvordenlichkeit*]' of the future and the primordial vitality of the past cannot be 'hypostasized into any kind of fundamental presence' and its 'independence' is irreducible to any concept (KDI, 156). One always thinks in its wake, for it is always 'too late' to think it in itself, and its wake is its *Nachträglichkeit*, or belatedness (KDI, 157). The narration of what we know is a belated narrative of a discontinuous and free history, and such knowledge demands a radical dis-forgetting—'what we call knowledge is only the striving towards ἀνάμνησις [*Streben nach dem Wiederbewußtwerden*]' (I/8, 201).

Narration is not the naïve recounting of what happened, but is rather the critical psychoanalysis (the *Weltseele* or *anima mundi* on the philosopher's couch) of what the past obscures—and what the future intimates. It has an archaeological or genealogical element. Narration does not assume that a historical period understood itself or even that it can be fully understood, and it eschews all historical explanation (the pretence that we can get in front of what is oldest in nature). Philosophical narrators need lots of 'discrimination or critical activity [*Scheidungskunst oder Kritik*]' to sort out the true from the false and, more importantly, they strive to become what Nietzsche claimed he learned from Schopenhauer, namely, to become *unzeitgemäßig*, out of the measure of one's time.

> [Philosophical narrators] also need discrimination in themselves, from whence belongs the customary saying that they must seek to liberate themselves from the concepts and peculiarities of their time [*er müsse sich von den Begriffen und Einheiten seiner Zeit frei zu machen suchen*]. (I/8, 202)

The project of narration, the critical excavation of the wake of *das Urlebendige*, begins with the 1815 *Beilage* to *Die Weltalter*, namely, the extraordinary narrative *Über die Gottheiten von Samothrake*. Schelling the philosophical detective sifts through the historical record, weighing the archaeological and philological evidence, and proposes his own philological hypotheses (some of which are no longer acceptable to contemporary linguistics), attempting to discern something that would not have made sense even to the Cabiri themselves.

> Its most profound sense, according to the lore surrounding the Cabiri, revered as holy, was that it depicted inalienable life itself as it advances in a series of enhancements from the deepest to the highest levels, and that it depicted the universal magic and the theurgy that endure forever in the cosmos, whereby the invisible—which is in effect the transcendently actual—is ceaselessly brought to revelation and actuality. To be sure, there on Samothrace it was unlikely to have been proclaimed in expressions such as these; at all events, initiation into the mysteries was intended to commit the life and death of the individual to the higher gods, not to attain information about the universe. (I/8, 368)[5]

4 Lore Hühn, *Kierkegaard und der deutsche Idealismus: Konstellationen des Übergangs* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009); hereafter KDI.

5 This translation is by David Farrell Krell from a manuscript currently under my editorship. 'Darstellung des unauflöslichen Lebens selbst, wie es in einer Folge von Steigerungen vom Tiefsten ins Höchste fortschreitet, Darstellung der allgemeinen Magie und der im ganzen Weltall immer dauernden Theurgie, durch welche das Unsichtbare ja Überwirkliche unablässig zur Offenbarung und Wirklichkeit gebracht wird, das war ihrem tiefsten Sinn nach die heilig geachtete Lehre der Kabiren. In diesen Ausdrücken freilich wurde sie dort, in Samothrake, schwerlich vorgetragen; ohnehin hatte die Einweihung in die Geheimnisse mehr die Absicht, sich für Leben

The Cabiri did not understand their esoteric rituals and their mystery religion as either a trick to fool a gullible public or as a narration of the temporal unity of the universe as a divine ecology. It was a way of life in which a ritual understanding of the interlocking temporality of all things made them happier in their living and their dying.

But that was then and this is now. From the latter, the Cabiri cult is narrated and brought out into the open as 'the key, so to speak, to all other systems, by virtue of its antiquity as well as its clarity and simplicity of outline' (I/8, 423, *Nachschrift*).

II. The Art of Narration

Narration's reliance upon the positive, its movement from freedom, from the living and most ancient ungrounding ground of the past, also cannot be separated from art and its mythological roots.

In the Jena and Würzburg (1802-1805) *Kunstphilosophie* lectures, we learn that 'All art is an immediate after-image of absolute production or absolute self-affirmation [*Alle Kunst ist unmittelbares Nachbild der absoluten Produktion oder der absoluten Selbstaffirmation*]' (I/5, 631). Art is an after-image or reflection, as if in a mirror of that which, absolute in itself, has no image. The plastic arts, *die bildende Kunst*, the arts by which that which is without image comes into image, 'does not let it *appear* as something ideal, but rather only through another and, as such, as something real [*nur läßt sie nicht als ein Ideales* erscheinen, *sondern durch ein anderes, und demnach als ein Reales*]'; the art of speaking, *die redende Kunst*, language self-aware and self-affirming as art, poesy in the stricter sense, 'lets that absolute act of knowing appear immediately as an act of knowing [*läßt jenen absoluten Erkenntnißakt unmittelbar als Erkenntnißakt erscheinen*].' Unlike, say a work of sculpture, where the real, concrete form preponderates, in poesy, language manifests itself in such a way that its originary creativity is present: 'in the counter image [*Gegenbild*] itself it still retains the nature or the character of the ideal, of the *Wesen*, of the universal [*sie in dem Gegenbild selbst noch die Natur und den Charakter des Idealen, des Wesens, des Allgemeinen beibehält*]' (I/5, 631). In the poetic word one hears not just the word itself, but its speaking, its coming into being, its creation.

und Tod den höheren Göttern zu verbinden, als Ausschluß über das Weltall zu erhalten.'

> That through which plastic art expresses its ideas is something in itself concrete; that through which verbal art does so is something in itself *universal*, namely language. For this reason poesy has preferentially received the name poesy, that is, *creation*, because its works do not appear as a kind of being but rather as producing. (I/5, 631-632)[6]

In verbal art creation (*Erschaffung*) itself presents itself and hence Schelling recalls poesy's relationship to ποίησις, to produce, to bring forth, to create, to make. Creation and ποίησις are the movement of what Schelling calls by the neologism *Ineinsbildung*, the imagination as the coming into image.[7] As such, it is the unity of *das Urbild*, the primordial image, and *das Gegenbild*, the counter or mirror image, the image that reflects the primordial image back to itself without in any way revealing it or making it anything particular in itself. The primordial image presents itself without revealing itself as the counter-image, as if it were seeing without being able to recognise itself in the mirror. In this *Gegenbild* or the counter-image, for example, we intuit the unimaginable depths of the earth or the unfathomable expanses of the ocean without the earth or the ocean thereby appearing as a thing; they are elemental yet not subject to reification. Just as negative philosophy 'presents the Absolute in the primordial image [*das Urbild*],' art presents 'the absolute in the counter-image [*das Gegenbild*]' (I/5, 369). These primordial images become objective in art and 'hence present the intellectual world in the reflected world itself' (I/5, 369). The *reflektierte Welt* or reflected world is the realm of the *Gegenbilder*, but unlike, say, Lacan's mirror stage, the reflected image does not in any way capture or trap the original. According to Lacan, the young child sees herself in the mirror and fatefully identifies with her *imago*, condemning her to endless, and endlessly expensive, therapy. Schelling's mirror is closer to the mirror in Zen, which takes the perspective not of the one looking in the mirror, but of the mirror itself. The mirror receives and discloses everything without judgement. Each and

6 'Das, woduch die bildende Kunst ihre Ideen ausdrückt, ist ein an sich Concretes; das, wodurch die redende, ein an sich *Allgemeines*, nämlich die Sprache. Deswegen hat die Poesie vorzugsweise den Namen der Poesie, d.h., der *Erschaffung* behalten, weil ihre Werke nicht als ein Sein, sondern als Produciren erscheinen.'

7 *Einbildung* or *Einbildungskraft* are the more typical words for imagination, but Schelling is attempting to stress the movement into image and so coins a term to make this movement more explicit.

every *Gegenbild* reflects the great earth, but no *Gegenbild* represents or captures it. Poesy creates the finite word in such a way that its anterior infinity can also be heard. 'Language in itself is the chaos out of which poesy is to form into image the bodies of its ideas' (I/5, 635).[8]

What is the role of narrative in verbal art? For Schelling, the best and most apt form of narrative is the novel; narrative is its 'most beautiful and most apt form [schönste und angemessenste Form]' (I/5, 675). In a sense, the great narratival project inaugurated with the *Weltalter* and continuing into *die Philosophie der Mythologie und Offenbarung* has elements of a good novel—it is ordered around 'a midpoint that does not gobble everything up or violently pull it into its whirlpool [*einen Mittelpunkt, der nichts verschlinge und alles gewaltsam in seine Strudel ziehe*]' (I/5, 678). The narrative steers between Scylla and Charybdis, neither losing the centre nor, in its allegiance to the centre, allowing it to swallow up the things and events of nature.

Yet clearly *Die Weltalter* is not really a novel, but rather a strange and almost unprecedented (at least in modernity) experiment in philosophical poetry. As such, its models include nature itself, which Schelling describes as follows:

> Nature, again considered in itself, is the most originary, the first poem of the divine imagination. The Ancients, and after them, the Moderns, dubbed the real world, *natura rerum*, the birth of things. (I/5, 631)

Schelling here recalls a memorable line from his 1797 *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur*, 'The ancients and after them the moderns quite significantly designated the real world as *natura rerum* or the birth *of things* [*die Geburt der Dinge*]; for it is in the real part that the eternal things or the ideas come into existence' (I/2, 187-188). We can also hear an allusion to Lucretius' great atomist poem *De rerum natura*, which had finally appeared in a German translation by Franz Xaver Mayr thirteen years earlier. Mayr translated the poem into prose as *Von der Natur der Dinge*, which, while certainly correct, runs the risk of suggesting that

8 For a more expansive consideration of the problem of *die Einbildungskraft* and its relationship to language, art, mythology, and revelation, see chapter six of my forthcoming *Schelling's Practice of the Wild: Time, Art, Imagination* (Albany: State University of New York Press). 'Die Sprache für sich selbst nun ist das Chaos, aus dem die Poesie die Leiber ihrer Ideen bilden soll.'

Lucretius is just offering an account of the essence of things. Lucretius' own account, however, opens up a radical gap between matter and the things of nature, the latter of which are not a property of matter. Matter does not necessitate that there be something beside matter. Things are necessarily contingent. Matter is still matter whether or not matter configures into things or comes into image. Things are an accident of matter. This is the mythological potency of Lucretius' famous *clinamen* or swerve of the atoms (book 2, lines 216-224). Schelling's translation of the ancient *natura rerum* as *die Geburt der Dinge* wants to think the question of nature all the way through. *Natura*, after all, names not the set of all things but rather their 'birth' (from *natus* 'born', pp. of *nasci* 'to be born'). Using a distinction in Spinoza that Schelling cherished even as he critically transformed it, one could say that modernity only knows *natura naturata*, already born nature, but can no longer think *natura naturans*, the free, discontinuous natality of nature. As such, this blocks or hinders the systemic, scientific narration of nature as well as the artistic creativity of such narration.

Lucretius has always occupied an uncomfortable place in the history of philosophy because the tradition holds that his philosophical argumentation is confusingly alloyed with and compromised by his verbal artistry. Philosophers often ignore the literary elements in Lucretius much as they do the literary (dialogical) elements of Plato and abstract from the poetic mush the allegedly purely philosophical aspects. For Schelling, art rescues philosophy from this peculiar fate by returning it to the creativity of its own source, to the great sea of poesy.[9]

Schelling was taken with *De rerum natura* as a whole, calling it a *Lehrgedicht*, linking it with earlier philosophical poems (Parmenides,

9 This is the famous concluding image (*Urbild*) in the 1800 *System*, where the 'consummation of philosophy flows like individual streams back into the ocean of poesy' (See Peter Heath's translation, *System of Transcendental Idealism* [Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1978], p. 232). Schelling returns to this primordial image in his discussion of the absolute *Lehrgedicht*: 'just as science first emerges from poesy, so it is also its most beautiful and ultimate determination to flow back into this ocean' (I/5, 667). In mythology we glimpse the 'primordial world itself [*die urbildliche Welt selbst*],' 'the first universal intuition of the universe' (I/5, 416). From here, again echoing the end of the 1800 *System*, we intuit that poesy is the 'prime matter [*der Urstoff*], out of which everything emerges, the ocean out of which all streams flow [*der Ozean aus dem alle Ströme ausfließen*]' (I/5, 416).

Empedocles, etc.), extolling Lucretius as a 'priest of nature' (I/5, 666), and then wondering about the possibility in modernity of a great *Lehrgedicht*, a poem that would take the universe itself as its theme, 'das Gedicht *von der Natur der Dinge* [the poem *of the nature of things*]' (I/5, 664). Can there be a modern 'speculative epic—an absolute *Lehrgedicht*' (I/5, 664)? The figures in antiquity who attempted speculative poetry on such a comprehensive level did not fully succeed, and such an ambition, already growing dim at the time of Lucretius, is utterly foreign to the modern sensibility. Can there be a novelistic (narratival) *Lehrgedicht* in the time of the Enlightenment, in an age of religious exhaustion and the rise of science?

For our present purposes, his response to his own question is striking:

> The *Lehrgedicht* κατ' εξοχήν can only be a poem about the universe or the nature of things. It should present [*darstellen*] the reflex of the universe in knowing. The consummate image of the universe must therefore be reached in science. It is the vocation of science to be this image…and insofar as the universe itself is the primordial image of all poesy, indeed, is the poesy of the absolute itself, so would science…be poetry and dissolve into poetry. (I/5, 666-667)

In such a 'speculative epic', the gods of modernity, which are *Geschichtsgötter*, historical gods, gods that come and go, would have to take possession of nature, 'in order to appear as *gods*' (I/5, 667). The absolute *Lehrgedicht* would become a great contemporary θεουργία, a theurgy, the bringing forth on earth of the gods, which would comprise a new mythology.

With its novelistic narration of the history of the gods and the history of nature, the *Weltalter* experiment attempted to do what Parmenides and Lucretius had failed to do: to narrate an absolute *Lehrgedicht* of the genealogy of times as an absolute and dynamic *Urbild* of the universe. That Schelling failed, that the project itself has never succeeded, does not minimise the importance of the ambition.

III. Narration and the Divine Comedy of Time

One of the many virtues of Wolfram Hogrebe's *Prädikation und Genesis: Metaphysik als Fundamentalheuristik im Ausgang von Schellings* Die Weltalter is his claim, right in my view, of the relationship between the *Weltalter* project and Dante's *Divine Comedy*:

> My thesis is now, said briefly, that in the end this trichotomy of the *Divina Commedia*, and also the quality of the three realms, remained structurally prototypical for the three conceived parts of *Die Weltalter*: The past corresponds to the *Inferno*, the present to the *Purgatorio*, and the future to the *Paradisio*. One could therefore in a certain sense designate *Die Weltalter* as the Divine Comedy of Time…[10]

In the important 1803 essay, *Über Dante in philosophischer Beziehung*, we learn that Dante was the model of a consummate thinker, one who could ingeniously and creatively express in the language of his time his own kind of *Lehrgedicht* that expresses the underlying unity of religion, science, and art:

> The subject [*Stoff*] of the poem is in general the articulated identity of the entire age of the poet, the interpenetration of its events with the ideas of religion, science, and poesy in the most superior mind of that century. (I/5, 153)[11]

Dante, in whose work we find the '*wechselseitige Verschmelzung*' or 'reciprocal fusion' of poesy and philosophy, was decisive for Schelling because he created 'a thoroughly endogenous [*eigentümliche*] mixture of

10 Wolfram Hogrebe, *Prädikation und Genesis: Metaphysik als Fundamentalheuristik im Ausgang von Schellings* Die Weltalter (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1989), p. 31.

11 Although translations of this essay are my own responsibility, a translation of the essay can be found in 'On Dante in Relation to Philosophy', trans. by Elizabeth Rubenstein and David Simpson, *The Origins of Modern Critical Thought: German Aesthetics and Literary Criticism from Lessing to Hegel*, ed. David Simpson (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 239-247. See also Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, ed. and trans. by Douglas W. Stott (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), pp. 239-247.

the allegorical and historical' (I/5, 155). *Eigentümlich* in Schelling's now somewhat antiquated deployment retains the resonance of *Eigentum*, property, and hence we could say that Dante had to mix the allegorical with what belonged or what was characteristic of and specific to his time. In a word, Dante's ποίησις did not evacuate his time into the dark night when all cows were black, but rather thought the allegorical in an utterly *eigentümlich* mixture of itself and what it dis-forgets within in itself, namely the allegorical.

In this sense, Dante is *urbildlich* (I/5, 156), producing primordial images, that is, historical images of the allegorical that, in the language of their time, imagine the whole of time. *The Divine Comedy* expresses 'a primordial image by way of its universal validity which it unites with absolute individuality [*urbildlich durch die Allgemeingültigkeit, die es mit der absoluten Individualität vereinigt*]' (I/5, 158). It is a *Typus*, a type or image, of 'an overall contemplation of the universe,' although there is nothing universal about its 'particular arrangement' which is formed [*gebildet*] 'in accordance with concepts of the age and the particular intentions of the poet' (I/5, 158). Indeed, there is no universal image of the universal! Without absolute individuality, that is, without the singularity of its historical manifestation, language is vacuously allegorical. The modern poet must produce *from* the allegorical, must produce *from* the primordial ground of production itself. Dante must be allegorical 'against his will, because he cannot be symbolic, and historic, because he should be poetic' (I/5, 156).

Dante's art takes the allegorical force of Christianity and makes it mythological. In the *Philosophy of Art* lecture course, Schelling argued that the mythological gods were not interchangeable tokens of something more general. If they were only their ideas (if Zeus, for example, is merely understood by being subsumed into the more general idea that he is a god), they would surrender the force of their personality (from the Latin *persona* from Greek πρόσωπον, the masks worn at the theatre). Gods were the masks of that which elementally comes only as themselves. Hence, an artwork or a god 'should be absolute according to its nature [*seiner Natur nach absolut*]' and 'is not there for any end [*Zweck*] that lies external to it' (I/5, 412). Hence, 'the poems [*Dichtungen*] of mythology are at the same time meaningful and meaningless [*bedeutend und bedeutungslos*]—meaningful, because it is a universal in the particular, meaningless because

both again are absolutely indifferent, such that that in which they become indifferent is absolute and wants to be itself' (§41, I/5, 414).

Christianity, however, marked the death of the gods and the going extinct of the symbolic-poetic world. The strength of Christianity in particular and of revelation more generally, is its allegorical and therefore 'unconditional devotion to the immeasurable [*die unbedingte Hingabe an das Unermeßliche*]' (I/5, 430). As the esoteric, ungrounding ground of existence, it reveals its *historical* dimension (each being is an expression of the divine while at the same time revealing nothing about the divine in itself). As the symbolic realm (divine tautegory, the gods coming as themselves) shrinks to mere symbolic acts, the power and force of the exoteric dissipates, reducing the earth to a gateway beyond itself. The intuition of the universe as the kingdom of God makes it an expression of an absolutely removed absolute, and hence a devaluation, abdication, and even annihilation of this world for the sake of the otherworldliness of the ideal. Catholicism lacked a compelling mythology and although Luther intervened in this world, he, too, despite his insistence on the emptiness and groundlessness of the very form of Christianity, was unable to transform it into a new mythology with new, genuinely external, forms to make it objective.

One might even here note how much Schelling's delimitation of Christianity as lopsidedly ideal resonates with Nietzsche's own critique of it, despite the latter's utter disavowal of the possibility that anything transvaluative remained within Christianity. For both Schelling and Nietzsche, only a god can save us, but by that we mean: our salvation does not lie in a detached transcendent realm, but rather with liberating the depths of creativity. 'The prerequisite of a mythology is precisely *not* that its symbols mean [or refer to] mere ideas, but rather that they are independent beings that refer to themselves' (I/5, 447). This is why a new mythology must be created (*erschaffen*)—allowed to come into being—and cannot just be derived from the instructions (*Anleitung*) of philosophical ideas. If it is not created, it cannot be given 'an independent poetic life [*ein unabhängiges poetisches Leben*]' (I/5, 446).

This is the call, as was made famous in the 1797 System fragment, for a 'new mythology' and a '*sinnliche religion*', that is, a religion that does not abandon the earth in favor of the allegorical, rendering the whole earth a worthless shadow play of something wholly detached. Moreover, since the allegorical dimension is detached, it is only a question of time

before nature flattens into an anaemic positivism. Returning to the Dante essay we see:

> The energy with which the individual forms the particular mixture of the available materials of the time and of his life determines the measure in which he obtains mythological power. (I/5, 156)

It is important to add here that Schelling is not advocating for the 'mythological violence [*mythologische Gewalt*]' that Walter Benjamin so powerfully argued against in *Zur Kritik der Gewalt*. A new mythology can never shed its allegorical element, the unimaginable ground of any possible image. A new mythology presents the unpresentable in its unpresentability, albeit with the science and art of its age. This is what Dante did. Taking 'the science of the time', it became 'the mythology, so to speak, and the universal ground' (I/5, 158-159) upon which he built his inventions. The cosmology of Dante's time is 'clothed [*bekleidet*]' 'with mythological dignity' (I/5, 162). In Dante's art, science becomes part of a new mythology through which the unsayable can somehow be said through the creation of a new language that nonetheless resonates within (even while contesting) its prevailing linguistic conditions. In a way, Dante modelled what Māhayāna Buddhism calls *upayā*, the skilful means by which the prevailing means of speaking can be creatively refashioned to hear the soundless sound at the heart of speaking itself. Dante's intention? 'To be allegorical without ceasing to be historical or poetic' (I/5, 159).

Schelling insists that the power, the striking originality or *Eigentümlichkeit* (literally its power to speak from what is characteristic of its source), of Dante's thought is not his understanding of 'philosophy, physics, and astronomy' but rather the manner 'of its fusion with poesy' (I/5, 156). Moreover, Schelling could not see what would prevent 'each distinguished age being able to have its own *Divine Comedy*' (I/5, 157). Not only is its external form eternal, but it is the '*sinnbildlicher Ausdruck des inneren Typus aller Wissenschaft und Poesie*', the symbolic (in both senses of sense) expression of the inner type of all science and poetry, and as such can contain 'the great objects of science and *Bildung*', namely, 'nature, history, and art' (I/5, 158).

Dante's work is *urbildlich*, an originary image, a form of the formless, that allows each age to formulate its age anew. As such, the

holding together of nature, history, and art is related to the holding together of time itself. I conclude by briefly considering each discipline as Schelling understood them in relation to both Dante and his Dantean ambitions.

1. 'Nature is, as the birth of all things, the eternal night, and, as this unity through which things are in themselves, they are the aphelion of the universe, the place of the distance from God as the true centre' (I/5, 158).

   The aphelion is the point in the orbit of a planet in which it is farthest away from the sun, at the greatest distance from Helios. One could say that at the aphelion, the universe is like a work of sculpture that does not know and cannot be experienced as art, but is only itself, only the object that it is. This is the *inferno*, the dark night in which the past is hidden in the presence of nature, much as creativity cannot be thought with regard to a work of sculpture without an understanding of art. This is the unavoidable *selva oscura*, the dark forest that obscures *la diritta via* or direct path. As Schelling articulates this point in *Die Weltalter*: 'Therefore the goal is not reached in simple vision. For there is no understanding in vision in and for itself. In the external world, everyone more or less sees the same thing, yet not everyone can express it' (I/8, 203). The first book of *Die Weltalter*, the preparation for the very possibility of narration, so to speak, is a deep excavation of the primordial past in any possible present, or, to use Merleau-Ponty's words, a 'psychoanalysis of nature'.

2. 'Life and history, whose nature proceeds piecemeal, is just purification, a transition to an absolute condition' (I/5, 158). Narration is life in purgatory, excavation of the buried history of the creativity of darkness, the palpation of its endless ruins, even those of the gods.

   'But the unfolding of this darkening force out of the entirety of its depths and concealment also could not happen suddenly, but only in a piecemeal [*stufenweise*] fashion' (I/8, 288). After all, 'we do not live in vision. Our knowledge is piecemeal, that is, it must be generated piece by piece' (I/8, 203).

3. This absolute condition 'is present only in art, which anticipates eternity, the paradise of life truly in the center' (I/5, 158). The claim is not that art as such is paradisiacal, but rather that art, in so far as it is the coming of a new mythology, the interrelation of science, history, and art as a shared living from ground, is the emergence of thinking and living from the centre. This is the utopian promise at the heart of nature. Dante's *Paradisio*, Schelling tells us, is 'a true music of the spheres' (I/5, 160). The scientific and mathematic proportions of the celestial bodies—the science of the universe—as such expresses the *musica universalis*, the inherent musicality and therefore creativity of being's ongoing auto-ποίησις. The poetic narration of nature [*inferno* and *purgatorio*] gives way finally to 'poetry becoming music, figuration disappearing [*die Gestaltung verschindet*]' (I/5, 162). The alpha awakens in the omega.

Dante found a way of doing this and the *Weltalter* project was Schelling's own attempt. As Schelling reflected three years after the Dante essay in the 1806 *Aphorismen zur Einleitung in die Naturphilosophie*, he was not interested in founding a school of thought if by that one means a school of epigones who follow the letter of the master's work. If Schelling's work were to give rise to a school, it would be in the sense that we speak of a school of poetry: 'so that the commonly inspired go forth poetically in the same sense toward this eternal poem' (aphorism 28, I/7, 145). It is not a question of masters and pupils, but of our relationship to 'the god, out of which everyone speaks.'

This paradise is present in art in so far as it 'anticipates' eternity and lives in truth in the centre. In so doing, it vindicates Schelling's claim that 'the future is intimated [*das Zukünftige wird geahndet*]', but this does not mean that a future paradise will one day arrive, but rather that paradise is a relationship to the future, the coming of a day in which the future has a future and is not the mere replication of yesterday.

The prophetic dimension of Schelling's thought—'the intimated is prophesied [*das Geahndete wird geweissagt*]'—does not in any way mean that one could say in advance of the future what the future will have been. The verb *weissagen*, common in Luther's translation of the Bible, translates a verb that is now more commonly translated as *prophezeien*, to prophesy, from the

Greek προφήτης, to speak for the gods. Such speaking issues from divine darkness, speaking in and to the present from a past that is always already eternally past and of a future that reveals the futurity of the future, not future events.

In the first draft (1811) of *Die Weltalter*, Schelling succinctly defines the prophet as the one who can discern the manner in which the past, present, and future hold together as a dynamic whole, the one who 'sees through the hanging together of the times [*der den Zusammenhang der Zeiten durchschaut*]' (WA, 83). For our time, this is the prophetic work that holds together science, history, and art as the temporality of the world, including a prophetic narration of the past whose *ewiger Anfang* opens up in ποίησις and lets the futurity of the future present itself and come to presence. Indeed, Dante's work itself is '*prophetisch*' and '*vorbildlich*', an exemplary image (as well as an anticipatory image) for 'all modern poetry'. All who would not remain in hell, abandoning all hope, turn to modern poesy's source—the allegorical again becoming mythological—in search of the means to comprehend 'the whole of the modern age' (I/5, 163).

A final word remains to be said on narration, which, as we have seen, belongs to the larger task of expressing the temporality of world systems in the language of a given age of the world. Schelling clearly never finished his own Divine Comedy.

> Heralds of this time, we do not want to pick its fruit before it is ripe nor do we want to misjudge what is ours. It is still a time of struggle. The goal of this investigation has still not been reached. We cannot be narrators, only explorers, weighing the pros and cons of all views until the right one has been settled, indubitably rooted forever. (I/8, 206)

Die Philosophie der Mythologie und Offenbarung, indeed, positive philosophy as such, was a huge critical project of narration, an effort to give voice to a past darkness, which 'is in itself mute [*in sich selbst stumm*]' as 'it faithfully protects the treasure of the holy past' (WA 112; 114). It is important to remember that such a project is in itself also a critical part of a larger artistic and creative philosophical enterprise that

attempts to give expression within the language of modernity to a divine ecology of time. What Schelling will later call philosophical religion, itself part of a new mythology for the earth, its narratival devotion to the history of what is oldest in nature, is also a utopian intimation of a new earth. As Deleuze and Guattari, speaking of the enterprise of philosophy as such, countered Habermas: 'We do not lack communication. We lack creation. We lack resistance to the present. The creation of concepts in itself calls for a future form, for a new earth and people who do not yet exist.'[12]

12 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 108.

Twilight of the Gods: Nancy and Schelling on the End of Myth and Politics

TYLER TRITTEN

This essay offers a reevaluation of Jean-Luc Nancy's criticism of myth in his *Inoperative Community* as a self-signifying totality that has as its function the self-justification and self-pronouncement of a people. If this were true, then a myth would operate as the transcendental condition of the identity of a people. By turning to F.W.J. Schelling, whose account of mythology is both highly influential and greatly criticised by Nancy, I will argue that myths are not 'works' to be accomplished by a people that wishes to found itself and, moreover, that any 'unworking' of myth would not reveal any esoteric content at the basis of a people, but mythology is rather without secret, i.e. its secret is not some esoteric element. The secret of mythology is neither a doctrine of the gods nor the attempt of a people at self-foundation, but its secret is nothing but the fact of expressivity itself, never to be captured by any expression, dogma, community, or ritual. Mythology's secret is already its 'unworking.' Mythology's secret does not consist in what is Said but in its Saying. Mythology can therefore never form itself into a closed totality; myths can never say their own secret.

Formulating the Problem

Transcendental philosophy has as its task the elucidation of the conditions of the possibility of experience, e.g. Kant, or the elucidation of that which is constitutive of experience, e.g. Husserl. Nothing about transcendentalism, however, entails that it must be idealistic any more than materialist. One might note here Foucault's neo-Kantian project, which, as neo-Marxist as well, can be called a material transcendentalism insofar as

it provides the material pre-conditions which make experience and specific bodies of knowledge possible. In fact, transcendentalism consists in nothing more than the assumption that possibility precedes actuality or that something has been adequately explained if and only if one has first elucidated the pre-conditions which have made it possible. In opposition to this strain, neither Schelling, at least in his latest thought, nor Nancy participate in the traditional project of transcendentalism. They both start with the facticity of experience as an actual given that requires no explanation, i.e. with the givenness of sense, without first requiring that the possibility of this experience be given as the conditions without which such an experience never would have been possible. Givenness must not first be grounded in a transcendental domain of pre-givenness that would have as its primary operation the constitution of sense and sensibility. There is no need to move behind the actually given in order to elucidate its possibility as a prior condition. Transcendentalisms of all types have in common the assumption that possibility, i.e. the possible conditions of experience, must precede actuality, i.e. the givenness of sense.

Schelling states, 'Original is that which we first conceive as possible in that it is *actual*; from which we thus first conceive the possibility through the actuality.'[1] This concept of the original, therefore, announces most strongly an *anti*-transcendentalism or, more modestly stated, an *inverted* transcendentalism insofar as it begins with the facticity of the actual prior to the elucidation of its possibility, the given prior to its transcendental constitution. Schelling's account of mythology is perhaps the place where this notion of originality comes to the fore most poignantly insofar as mythology is not an invention of transcendental consciousness, but it posits itself or is auto-productive. Nancy, by contrast, while not necessarily denying this inverted transcendentalist account of mythology, nevertheless does not view myth as an auto-production (*autopoiesis*) in quite the same manner as Schelling, but views mythology as a 'work', i.e. as the product or pronouncement of a people in their attempt to ground their social and political identity. Accordingly, he calls for an interruption of this work which would render all myths inoperative. It is with this difference between Schelling's and Nancy's accounts of myth's

1 'Originell ist das, was wir als möglich erst begreifen dadurch, dass es *wirklich* ist; wovon wir also die Möglichkeit erst durch die Wirklichkeit begreifen.' F.W.J. Schelling, *Die Grundlegung der positiven Philosophie: Münchner Vorlesung WS 1832-33 und SS 1833*, (Torino: Bottega d'Erasmo, 1972), p. 128.

interruption, an interruption which Nancy baptises 'literature' or 'writing', that this essay is concerned. The proposed thesis is that Nancy would be better suited considering literature's interruption of myth as a moment immanent to mythology itself, which instead of bringing mythology to its close or fulfilment, i.e. a hiatus, actually requires that the specific myths remain as that which ought to be broken. By 'breaking' myths – which is not to be confused with demythologisation that disbands with the mythical – literature, or as Schelling calls it, 'poetry', interrupts or breaks the union between mythical identity and political identity while abolishing neither myth itself nor the political. The task is to read Nancy's interruption of myth in terms of Schelling and thus not as demythologisation but rather as iconoclasm, which would require that myths remain as the artifice to be broken but not removed or abolished.

Schelling on Myth and Mythology

Schelling views the history of mythology as the deployment of Being itself, i.e. as ontogony or onto-genesis. Mythic saying is the 'tautegorical' - as opposed to allegorical - saying of Being, which says nothing but its own configuration, its own propriety; it comes into the form proper to itself by means of self-figuration or auto-production. Myths, accordingly, do not represent a prior meaning which would exist in advance of the myth as the condition of its mythic expression; for, that would be a lapse into transcendentalism. Qua tautegorical, the meaning of a myth is only given with or, rather, *as* its actuality, i.e. as something original rather than representative. Poseidon, for example, would not be an allegorical manner of depicting the sea, i.e. a representation of the sea, but Poseidon *is* the sea.

Schelling begins his inquiry into the nature of mythology by asking if we are to take myths as true or merely as fictions. Admittedly, for Schelling, it is not to be disputed that contemporary culture no longer accepts classical myths as historically true. The very question concerning their possible falsity betrays this; for, one does not bother to question the truthfulness of that which is immediately taken as obvious and certain, e.g. the obviousness of a fact. It is a very forced question to ask if the sun really is hot or if we are just told that it is so or if it just seems to be hot, just as for the ancient Greeks it would have presumably been just as stilted to ask if Poseidon really was the sea. Is one today simply more intelligent

than the early Greeks, Egyptians et al? Were they just naive? By no means! How is it then that what is so obvious today was just as evidently otherwise for them? The only explanation for this, without simply resorting to the incredulous assumption that the Greeks were gullible dolts who would believe anything they were told, is to read the history of mythology as a fact. Schelling proposes that the narratives of the gods are to be taken as historical facts of consciousness. A fact of consciousness, like any fact, is an occurrence which could never be known in advance of its actuality, but only *post factum*, i.e. as something original, something whose actuality precedes its possibility.[2] Facts, in other words, can never be known *a priori* or never in advance of their facticity. Facts qua facts are not instantiations of ideas, but they are manifestations or revelations of ideas; that in which the idea has its very being. The factual procession of the gods in mythic consciousness does not demand that one posit deities outside of consciousness, but it only demands that one accept the history of mythological consciousness itself and the sense that it bestows as a factual occurrence. If the gods are now dead that does not mean they never existed, but it literally means exactly what it says: the gods have died; they have lost their grip on human consciousness.

The narrative of the gods, however, is not just a psychological affair, but it is an *objective* event; it is also a theogony. Consciousness simply marks the *locus* of the theogonic affair. As Schelling says, the narrative of the gods and the actual history of the gods are one and the same, or tautegorical. Schelling rejects both that the gods would have made their appearance in consciousness in order that a people would hand down the story of their emergence for posterity's sake and that a primal people (*Urvolk*) narrated fanciful stories of the gods in order to bring about genuine religious conviction in future generations. Both of these options posit a difference between the actual emergence of the gods and the mythic accounts thereof. Both accounts are wrong, because the narration of the gods and the actual emergence of the gods into consciousness are not two separate events, but one and the same. Neither may be given precedence over the other. The narration of the gods through mythic recounting is one and the same with the emergence and history of the gods themselves. Should this assumption not be granted, then the history of the gods could only be accounted for as an invention of consciousness and, consequently,

2 For example, I can never form an idea, at least an accurate idea, of my future son, until he is actually before me, until I am confronted with his facticity.

as a falsity, which would not be an explanation of mythology so much as a manner of explaining it away as merely poetic allegory. Just because the theogonic process occurs within mythological consciousness does not mean that it is dependent upon consciousness as its efficient cause. If the collective consciousness of a people (or even a solitary individual like Homer) were the author of mythic accounts of the gods, then the history of mythological narratives would have to be taken as a falsity. The only way, then, to treat myths as true or, at least, not yet as false, is to regard mythic consciousness only as the *locus* but not as the author of this theogonic process.

Mythological narratives, Schelling declares, are not a poetic invention of consciousness. He argues that poetic invention, i.e. literature, is rather the departure from and not the origin of mythological consciousness. Homer and Hesiod thus mark the decline and not the inception of mythology's history; the poetic follows rather than precedes the mythic. Surely, if these Greek poets had invented mythology, then one might find them inventing new gods. Instead, one finds Homer confirming already existent, albeit unknown and not yet named, gods.

> So where do we actually see Homer occupied with the genesis of the gods? Extremely seldom and even then only occasionally and momentarily does he let himself be drawn into an explanation of the natural and historical relations of the gods. For him they are no longer entities conceived as becoming but rather as already there. One does not ask for their grounds and primary origin...all is treated as a given and mentioned as something always already present.[3]

Homer did not invent, i.e. poeticise, the gods out of thin air, but he narrated their history and gave them names. Homer himself accepts the gods as given from time immemorial, not always known by name but

3 'Denn wo sehen wir den Homeros je eigentlich mit der Entstehung der Götter beschäftigt? Höchst selten, und auch da nur gelegenheitlich und vorübergehend läßt er sich auf eine Erörterung der natürlichen und geschichtlichen Verhältnisse der Götter ein. Ihm sind sie nicht mehr im Werden begriffene Wesen, sondern nun schon daseyende, nach deren Gründen und erstem Ursprung nicht gefragt wird...alles wird als ein Gegebenes behandelt, und wie ein von je und immer Vorhandenes erwähnt.' F.W.J. Schelling, 'Historisch-Kritische Einleitung in die Philosophie der Mythologie', *Sämtliche Werke: II/1*, (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1856), pp. 3-252 (p. 117), hereafter II/1.

always already acknowledged by tradition. Now, one might interject that this does not preclude that the gods were poetically invented, only by authors and texts of which there is no longer a historical record. Yet, in order to accept such a hypothesis one would have to believe that there was once a people, or rather a large number of disparate peoples, so naively innocent that they cognisantly invented gods for themselves only later to forget their own fabrications. Should one speculate that they were not so childish as to forget their own fabrications themselves but that this forgetting only occurred in later generations, then one would still have to ask why the inventors would have found this particular fabrication so useful. Why fabricate/poeticise gods rather than magical sea urchins or Oompa Loompas, why gods rather than disincarnate minds or brains in vats? Many fanciful hypotheses might be imagined here, but why resort to such measures? Would not such explanations always have to be more fanciful than the one that simply accepts mythology as an objective fact of consciousness? Minimally, one should at least first permit myths the opportunity to make themselves understandable before one resorts to other outside hypotheses that might make the occurrence of mythology intelligible. Importing an outside explanation rather than seeing if something can account for itself should always be a last resort.

Now, one view might suggest that myths are not poetic but rather philosophical inventions. This view too, however, fails to account for myths on their own terms and instead also views them as fanciful dress for some other doctrine and some other phenomenon, e.g. events in nature. This suggests that myths are philosophical allegories concocted as a means to convey some other truth, customarily a truth of nature. Poseidon would then just be an allegorical representation of the sea.[4] It must be stated, however, that if allegories are to be understandable and a useful didactic tool, then they must attempt to explain that which is not yet understood by means of that which is already well understood. Could a fabricated story of the gods serve as a didactic tool for the understanding of an apparently

4 I am thankful to Benjamin Berger for pointing out that the philosophical accounting of mythology does not necessarily mean that myths are philosophical inventions, but it could mean that myths are only able to be understood philosophically. At any rate, this position, while more tempered insofar as it permits that the myth was not fabricated as a mere allegory to depict a philosophical doctrine, still presupposes that the myth is not tautegorical or one with its content. The philosophical content would still be regarded as something different from its non-philosophical, i.e. mythic, form.

not yet mystified nature, i.e. a nature not yet populated by gods? What did Thales, for example, stand to gain by asserting that everything is full of gods? This explanation too, for Schelling, seems more fanciful than the myths themselves; for, a nature absent of gods would surely be more immediately understandable than a fanciful and new doctrine of the gods. How then could the latter ever work as an allegory for the former? How could the deification of nature make it more understandable if it did not already begin as deified or populated by gods? It would seem that the doctrine of the gods, as an invention of philosophical consciousness, would do more to mystify than to explain nature.

In Schelling's estimation, any view of myth as a literary (or even philosophical) invention, i.e. as a fabrication rather than the truth of things, labours under the same assumption, namely, that myths can only be explained by recourse to something outside of and prior to the myths themselves which would make these seemingly incredulous and impossible stories of the gods possible. Myths would be explained by their transcendental conditions – material or ideal – rather than being taken as literal histories of the gods. Schelling, to the contrary, suggests that consciousness has an immediate experience of the history of mythology itself and that the gods are not, therefore, merely literary inventions, disguised philosophical doctrines, allegories or personifications of nature. One only explains them away through these means. The first option should be to let mythology be viewed as a fact in order to see if it might be able to generate its own explanation.

As facts of consciousness, myths do not occur within a single consciousness, but within the consciousness of a people. 'To create a mythology, to accord to it that attestation and reality in the thoughts of men, exceeds the capacity of each individual.'[5] What constitutes a people? 'Indisputably [it is] not the merely spatial co-existence of a larger or smaller number of physically kindred individuals but the community of consciousness between them.'[6] A common form of life and a common identity of consciousness must be assumed for a living mythology, a collective consciousness. Of course, this kind of phenomenon can still be

5 'Eine Mythologie zu erschaffen, ihr diejenige Beglaubigung und Realität in den Gedanken der Menschen zu ertheilen...geht über das Vermögen jedes einzelnen' (II/1, 56-57).

6 'Unstreitig nicht die bloße räumliche Coexistenz einer größeren oder kleineren Anzahl physisch gleichartiger Individuen, sondern die Gemeinschaft des Bewußtseyns zwischen ihnen' (II/1, 62).

seen today in the adherents of political and religious ideologies. Even sports fans of a single team share a common form of consciousness that can supersede individual differences, uniting individuals into a common people, e.g. Raider Nation, Jayhawk Nation or bleeding Husker Red. There are also national mythologies that unite otherwise quarrelling neighbours, e.g. the myth of the 'American Dream'. There is thus in all these forms not only a co-originality of the myth and the consciousness thereof, but also a co-originality of the myth and the identity of a people. This indicates an 'inverted intentionality'. Instead of the subject intending and constituting an object of consciousness, the objective happening, by occurring within the subjective, is constitutive of the subject and its identity, e.g. the identity of a people, political party, fan base, etc. Instead of transcendentalism's task, which traditionally has consisted in the elucidation of the subjective conditions of objective experience, here experience, the objective happening itself, is the condition of the identity of the subjective. The Greeks, for example, prior to the advent of the Greek gods, i.e. prior to Greek theogony, were not Greek at all, but rather Pelasgian. The Greeks did not fashion Greek gods, but the Greek gods fashioned the Greeks as Greek. Although myths occur *within* the consciousness of a people, the consciousness of this people is not the author of these myths. Rather, the mythic events themselves constitute the people. The consciousness of a people is determined by the mythic experience, a people's exposure to a common sense, and not vice versa. There is no transcendental condition of mythology to be found within consciousness but rather mythology itself conditions consciousness. This cuts across the nature of traditional transcendental philosophy. Schelling erects an inverted transcendentalism which begins with the actual in advance of its conditions of possibility. It begins, to repeat, with the objective as the condition of subjectivity.[7] Schelling's inverted

7 Iain Hamilton Grant, for one, in defining the transcendental objectively rather than subjectively as 'nature potentiating itself in new acts, new forms, new phenomena, and new concepts' (Iain Hamilton Grant, *Philosophies of Nature After Schelling.* [London: Continuum, 2008], p. 182) sees in Schelling not an anti-transcendentalism but an objective transcendentalism. He concludes that 'myth is of course preconceptual, but precisely in the sense that the potentiation of the *autophusis* generates concepts' (ibid., p. 188). The concept is not a representation of a prior reality but it is the idealisation or subjectification of the reality itself. The concept is the product not of a transcendental subjectivity but of that very occurrence of the reality itself as formative of the conscious subject.

transcendentalism is Being's onto-theo-genetic production of sense in advance of the subject which will be exposed to this sense. In other words, Being is figured or potentiated theomorphically; Being is constructed or produced in terms of theogony.

Mythology's locus is subjective but the occurrence is objective or without subjective impetus. Accordingly, there is no distinction between the experience of the mythic and the mythic event itself, no distinction between the sense and the fact, hence Schelling's claim that myth is tautegorical. There is no distinction between the saying of the myth and the occurrence of the myth. Schelling denies that myths are told *by* consciousness, but the progenitor is Being itself. Being says itself. Being's genesis (ontogony) cannot be extricated from the mythic events of the gods (theogony). In turn, the theogonic process occurs within and determines the consciousness of the peoples of the world (anthropogenesis or anthropogony). As Karl Jaspers has phrased it, 'The anthropomorphy of God corresponds to the theomorphy of Man.'[8] This is also why Schelling contends that, far from falsifying the account of the gods, the fact that mythology culminates in the anthropomorphism of the Greeks marks mythology's achievement and not its failing.[9] There is a movement from ontogeny in terms of theomorphy to theogony in terms of anthropomorphy, from Being, to God(s) to Man. As Nancy himself will put it in the *Inoperative Community* – which both draws on Schelling's conception of myth and yet is an effort to distance himself from this same conception – 'Myth, in short, is the transcendental autofiguration of nature and of humanity…' '…an ontogony where being engenders itself *by figuring itself*, by giving itself the proper image of its own essence…'[10] Being's figure or 'the proper image of its own essence', i.e. the way Being produces or figures itself in its propriety, is theo-anthropomorphic. The

8 'Der Theomorphie des Menschen entspricht die Anthropomorphie Gottes.' Karl Jaspers, *Schelling. Grösse und Verhängnis,* (München: Piper, 1955), p. 177.

9 Markus Gabriel similarly remarks that 'mythology, insofar as it is the history of consciousness, is simultaneously also the history of Being [theogony] and anthropogony. [Mythologie, sofern sie Bewußtseinsgeschichte ist, zugleich auch Seinsgeschichte und Anthropogonie ist.]' Markus Gabriel, *Der Mensch im Mythos: Untersuchungen über das Verhältnis von Ontotheologie, Anthropologie und Selbstbewußtseinsgeschichte in Schellings Philosophie der Mythologie,* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), p. 38.

10 Jean-Luc Nancy, *Inoperative Community,* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), p. 54; hereafter *IC.*

objective occurrence itself, therefore, is anthropo-theo-cosmogenetic. If the gods are figured in human form, i.e. anthropomorphically or according to a theo-anthropomorphism, then the production of Being itself in terms of theogony is, written longhand, an anthropo-theo-cosmogenesis. Being figures itself in the form of gods and the gods, in turn, are figured in terms of the human.

Nancy on Myth and Literature

In the second chapter of Nancy's *Inoperative Community* he espouses literature or writing as an interruption of myth. More precisely, this calls for an interruption of ontogenesis as theo-anthropomorphism, i.e. as theogony and anthropogony. Nancy wants to hold the cleavage between Being, human consciousness, and the gods open rather than letting them be configured as a totality. As one commentator has written,

> The understanding of myth is totalitarian. Myth is self-communication, that is, it communicates only itself and communicates that it communicates itself…In other words, myth has the form of subjectivity (defined by Hegel as that which can include within itself its own contradictions, that is, as 'remainderless totality'[11]

For Nancy, mythical saying always ends in totalisation, the closure of Being and community for the institution of political totality or communitarian identitarianism. Accordingly, to interrupt myth, for Nancy, means to interrupt political totalisation, to interrupt the mythic as a generator of totalising ideologies, as the power of self-foundation on the part of a people. As another commentator has written, 'Literature is a free event of disruption by the circulation of sense, not the mythologisation of an event voiced in and by a community.'[12] While one could say mythology is also tautegorical for Nancy, such that a myth does not represent a sense but *is* the manifestation of a sense, literature, in disrupting this circulation or closed economy, would apparently constitute a disruption of the tautegorical. But does literature interrupt the sense of mythology by freely

11 Marie-Eve Morin, *Jean-Luc Nancy*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), p. 88.
12 B.C. Hutchens, *Jean-Luc Nancy and the Future of Philosophy*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), p. 18.

poeticising in a post-mythological, i.e. in a demythologised, manner or does it rather interrupt by understanding, and therefore retaining, the prior process which transpired without any subjective volition?

Nancy writes, at first in seeming compatibility with Schelling, that the birth of myth 'is identical with nothing less than the origin of human consciousness and speech. […] Myth is of and from the origin, it relates back to a mythic foundation, and through this relation it founds itself (a consciousness, a people, a narrative).'[13] By denying a distinction between the event itself and its narration, Nancy indeed affirms the tautegorical character of myth. By ascribing this narration to a mythic foundation that founds itself rather than to poetic invention, Nancy also seems to affirm the auto-poietic character of myth. However, Nancy continues, 'Concentrated within the idea of myth is perhaps the entire pretension on the part of the West to appropriate its own origin, or to take away its secret, so that it can at last identify itself, absolutely, around its own pronouncement and its own birth.'[14] Although Nancy had originally seemed to fall in line with Schelling, regarding myths tautegorically and the history of mythology itself as an auto-production, one now sees that he in fact means this in a much more limited sense than does Schelling. He views the history of mythology as something which produces and says always only itself, but only and precisely in order to acquire the figure of humanity, i.e. the anthropomorphic. In other words, Nancy suspects a reversal of the relationship between a people and its myth as it occurred in Schelling. He suspects that it is the pretension of the West to work upon itself as though Man were both his own foundation and mythology his project and product, the transcendental author of both work and product. As much as he might admit that myths are not mere poetic inventions of the human being, the human being, for Nancy, nevertheless attempts to co-opt this mythic origin as its own by putting it to work for its own project of self-foundation and self-justification. Consider, for example, the fatal flaw of myths concerning the purity of the Aryan race. In such usurpation and annexation, the subject of auto-production now becomes the human being herself, even if only as a collective body, rather than letting mythology remain as the auto-production of Being itself. That myths can be, to speak like Nancy, 'put to work' in the service of the human being herself is not to be denied. But, is this co-option or 'putting to work' of the mythic for one's own

13 *IC*, p. 45.
14 *IC*, p. 46.

means an unavoidable danger of myth? Moreover, would an interruption of this employment of myth occur by rendering it inoperative by nullifying it, i.e. by discarding myths, or by understanding it, i.e. by iconoclastically breaking the myth open and thereby exposing it, or shall one say ex-posing/ex-positing it, to possible shifts of sense?

To reiterate, for both Schelling and Nancy, myth, at least originally, is tautegorical and auto-productive. Nancy remarks, 'Myth, being immediate and mediated, is itself the rendition of the *logos* that it mediates, it is the emergence of its own organisation. [...] Myth has been the name for *logos structuring itself*, [...] the name of the *cosmos structuring itself in logos*.'[15] Schelling and Nancy find no immediate opposition here. Yet, for Schelling, Being gives itself a theo-anthropomorphic figure, whereas this is precisely the figure of totality Nancy wishes to avoid. For Nancy, if the human being structures itself in accordance with the gods and the gods in accordance with Being, then this can mean nothing other than humanity's mastery of Being by means of mythic, i.e. totalising, discourse. Myth is then not merely auto-productive but, more precisely, an 'autoimagining' or 'autofictioning.'[16] While myths are not effects of the fictitious poeticising of the human being, they are nevertheless, contrary to Schelling, fictitious. Myth, according to Nancy, harbours no secrets but, in opposition to Schelling, this for him implies that there is apparently no truth in myth either. If myth is without secret, then it can only be because it has no true content to tell; it is a fiction. The only way, according to Nancy, to break the totalising power of mythology is to make it a fabrication, to remove its truth as well. Nancy incisively remarks, 'The myth of myth, its truth, is that fiction is in effect.' It is 'an ontology of fiction.'[17] For Schelling, on the other hand, there is an ontology of sense-giving – albeit certainly not by means of the active constitution of a people or a transcendental subject who would stand at a remove from the sway of myth – and there is no sense in asking whether a *sense* is true or false, at least not if no assumption is made in favour of or against an object of which the sense would be but mere representation. Only a representation is true or false, but a fact is simply nothing other than its manifestation of a sense.

15 *IC*, p. 49.
16 *IC*, p. 53.
17 *IC*, p. 55.

If for Nancy the 'mythic will is totalitarian in its content' because it is operative as communitarian, i.e. as the communion 'of man with nature, of man with God, of man with himself, of men among themselves', then 'the interruption of myth is therefore also, necessarily, the interruption of community.'[18] In naming this interruption writing or literature, Nancy declares, 'Myth is interrupted by literature precisely to the extent that literature does not come to an end.'[19] Ian James comments that 'the figure of an unworked or inoperative community recasts the political outside any possibility of grounding or any assumption of collective identity, and outside any possibility of project or historical process.'[20] James correctly surmises that Nancy's task is to think community outside of its mythic and, therefore, communitarian figuring, noting as well that Nancy – in a move seemingly compatible with Schelling – rather founds community in a 'thinking of the "being-to" of sense.'[21] But is this 'being-to of sense' not precisely Schelling's account of the mythic as something not yet worked upon by a subject, not yet enlisted by a community or a people in its attempt to found and legitimise itself? Does this 'being-to of sense' not indicate Schelling's a-subjective auto-production and a people's *exposure* to the sense of myth as that which first constitutes them as a people subsequently? Finally, and this would be the crucial question for Nancy, even if all that were true, would that somehow preclude the culmination of this sense into a closed figure, cosmogenesis as theo-anthropomorphism. It is certainly true that while mythic peoples, in Schelling, are not the authors of their myths and are receptive to a sense bequeathed to them from Being itself, it is nevertheless always according to a mythic, i.e. theomorphic, manner. Does Schelling's account of the 'end' of mythology, then, as the theo-anthropomorphic bring mythology to a close by enveloping it within a divine-human totality or might there be a never-to-be-totalised remainder, an experience or reception of sense that always and necessarily precludes the closure of communitarian discourse, the bane of both identity politics and communist ideology? In other words, does this 'end' figure exhaust the sense of mythology; does it exhaust mythological experience and narration by bringing to some pre-ordained *telos*?

18 *IC*, p. 57.
19 *IC*, p. 64.
20 Ian James, *The Fragmentary Demand: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Jean-Luc Nancy*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), p. 186, hereafter *FD*.
21 *FD*, p. 191.

Schelling without Secret and Nancy without Politics

Nancy seems to be suggesting that the 'end' of mythology could mean nothing else than the fulfilment of humanity's essence such that mythology would not bear its own truth, apart from the question of the human, but it would instead be or become the expression or fulfilment of a people's will toward self-foundation; its entelechy finally achieved. Nancy suggests, in particular, that all auto-production ensues from the 'will as subjectivity presented (and representing itself) as a remainderless totality.'[22] Yet, as Ian Hamilton Grant correctly surmises, 'Schellingian subjectivity is neither substrate nor *Ich*, but rather the *itself*, the *auto*.'[23] This is not Hegel's subject, at least as it is interpreted and criticised by Schelling. The 'itself' or the 'auto' in auto-production indicates no essence (nor even a Fichtean transcendental consciousness), i.e. no pre-existent subjectivity, which would fulfil itself in a movement *a potentia ad actum* but rather only the act of production itself, the exposure of sense as such. The secret content of mythology is then for Schelling certainly not some product or an enveloped subject, not even its 'end' figure as the theo-anthropomorphically constituted, but its secret is nothing other than *productivity itself*. Mythology, even for Schelling, expresses first and foremost only the truth of productivity or expressivity. Myth is tautegorical because it is a unity of saying, productivity, or expressivity with what is said, produced, or expressed. *À la* Levinas, however, what is said can never encapsulate saying itself, what is figured can never encapsulate, i.e. totalise or exhaust, the construction of figure as such. In Schelling's terms, there is always an 'indivisible remainder [*ein nie aufgehender Rest*]'[24], a remainder which always remains unthought because it cannot be annexed into the totality of the said, namely, the theo-anthropomorphic figuration of

22 *IC*, p. 57. Note also the following quote by Nancy, 'The ontology of subjectivity is also the ontology in which being – as subject – is foundation.' Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Experience of Freedom*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 6; hereafter *EF*.

23 Iain Hamilton Grant, *Philosophies of Nature After Schelling*. (London: Continuum, 2008), p. 168.

24 F.W.J. Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*, (Albany: SUNY, 2006), p. 29. All of Tyler Tritten, *Beyond Presence: The Late F.W.J. Schelling's Criticism of Metaphysics*, (Boston: De Gruyter, 2012) could be read as a defence of why *nie aufgehender Rest* is best translated as 'never presencing remainder' rather than as 'indivisible remainder'.

Being. Ontogenesis occurs, so to speak, upon an anterior silence that it can never deign to speak, not to be subsumed by the structuration of any *logos*. This, and not the theo-anthropomorphic totality, is the true secret of mythology, which is, therefore, neither a fiction nor the disclosure of any secret or esoteric content. Now, if writing or literature marks the event whereby the silence of the unsayable interrupts what is said, the event whereby every figure is iconoclastically broken without possible suture, then Schelling and Nancy are not that far apart (though it would also be a grave error to dismiss their differences as insignificant). But one must then note that literature does not interrupt in order to silence mythological saying or in order to preclude all figuration, but it only interrupts to unsay or to de-figure, which requires that what is said and what is figured precede as the artifice to be iconoclastically broken. Literature would interrupt mythology by breaking, puncturing, or subverting the figure only in order to reveal its uncloseable *fissure* and inexhaustibility. Mythology might talk right over this rupture, just as many people are not silenced when they are interrupted but continue to talk right over their interpolator. This does not mean, however, that nothing has happened, that narration continues unscathed by literary criticism. This only says that literature has not interrupted by demythologising – which would also not be Nancy's intention – but by *critiquing* myth as communitarian. Critical philosophy, unlike in Kant's transcendentalist project, cannot precede doctrinal elements (what Kant conveniently terms 'dogmatism'), but it can only follow the doctrinal. Criticism is, at it were, not an autonomous or self-sufficient science, but it requires a pre-given content.

Literature's interruption cannot then also put an end to or silence political discourse – a discourse which impossibly dispenses with myth – but it does critique the totalising tendency of politics, at least as a project of communitarian self-foundation, as a work of communism rather than as the unworking of community, as Nancy might put it. Nancy himself writes, 'The task of what has been designated as *écriture* (writing) and the thinking of *écriture* has been [...] to render impossible a certain type of foundation, utterance, and literary and communitarian fulfillment: in short, a politics.'[25] Nancy surely cannot be under the delusion that he will put an end to political discourse and its mythical apparatus. Rather, he can only hope to offer a discourse that levels a *critique* of the political, not an anti-political discourse but, shall it be said, an a-political discourse, a

25 *IC*, p. 69.

discourse otherwise than the political, a critique of the political. As Andrew Norris helpfully writes:

> His conception of the truth that decisions must reflect is an apolitical one. [...] What Nancy terms 'politics' is devoted to its own erasure. While the task of unworking may never be complete, what guides it is the vision of a world purged of politics[26]

The political must be written under erasure, but writing under erasure is still a writing. There is a large difference between writing under erasure and not writing at all. Nancy's task is, as it were, politics under erasure, a self-effacing or, perhaps better, self-interrupting politics, perhaps even a self-critiquing or self-iconoclastic politics that breaks its own mythologies.

Politics may be, so to speak, an indispensable evil, but that does not mean that one must simply acquiesce to its oscillating play of identitarian and communitarian demands. What is odd is that Nancy sometimes forgets this side of Schelling. Nancy himself acknowledges, 'Ecstasy [...] by way of Schelling and Heidegger, implies no effusion, and even less some form of effervescent illumination. It defines the impossibility, both ontological and gnosological, of absolute immanence [...] or of a pure collective totality.'[27] What does this ecstasy signify if not that indivisible remainder that is the saying of what is said in mythology, the cosmic production of the theo-anthropomorphically produced figure, the *auto* of auto-production which is not yet a subject?[28] Community is not necessarily communitarian, not necessarily a breed of identity politics. Perhaps, the communitarian, i.e. mythological, identity between God, Man and Being is the edifice that

26 Andrew Norris, 'Jean-Luc Nancy and the Myth of the Common', *Constellations: An International Journal of Critical and Democratic Theory* 7:2 (2000), pp. 272-295 (p. 289).

27 *IC*, p. 6. Nancy also writes in a similar vein, 'Being is the "freedom" of the withdrawal of presence and meaning that accompanies every disclosure, or more exactly, that permits disclosure as such' (*EF*, p. 41). Why Nancy is, despite the heritage of his own early thought in Schelling and Heidegger, at times unwilling to admit this aspect of Schelling, in whom this trope is quite prevalent indeed, sometimes appears as nothing less than deliberate omission.

28 As another commentator of Nancy succinctly states, 'Quite simply, then, community prepares us for communal relations without substance or subject.' Wilhelm S. Wurzer, 'Nancy and the Political Imaginary After Nature', in *On Jean-Luc Nancy: The Sense of Philosophy*, (London: Routledge, 1997) pp. 91-102 (p. 98).

subsists only in order to become iconoclastically broken, the interrupted totality. Interruption requires the totality that it breaks open; inoperativity requires operativity; myth's sabbatical presupposes that it has first been 'put to work' and not vice versa.[29] The mythic whole is itself mythic, i.e. not really an all-encompassing totality after all. The whole of mythology reveals no particular secrets. 'One could say', proclaims Schelling in an extremely telling and astounding passage, 'that *everything particular of mythology is false*, but *the process itself [is] not in error*.'[30] Schelling himself calls not so much for the post-mythological but for an interruption of myth that allows the mythic totality to remain, but only as exposed and understood. What is exposed is that every particular content of mythology, even its end figure, is false and, yet, the process itself is by no means a fabrication poeticised out of thin air. This new religion – religion, because mythology is certainly not poetry or literature, but a binding of consciousness to the gods – Schelling names philosophical religion. This new religion in which no god and no myth escapes uninterrupted, without critique and unscathed, dare one say, is perhaps the politics of the future. The religion of the future and the politics of the future are perhaps but interruptions of a mythological age which very well is not quite yet and never will be at its end.

29 Ian James writes concerning Nancy and the attempt to render myth not obsolete but inoperative, 'The interruption of myth articulates, for Nancy, that necessary moment when the fictions upon which community, political relationality and, indeed politics, are based are thrown into hiatus, by the very existence of community as inoperative, as that which can never be subsumed into a shared identity or mythic foundation' Ian James, 'On Interrupted Myth', *Journal for Cultural Research*, 9:4. (2005), pp. 331-349, (p. 342).

30 '[...] man kann zugeben, *alles einzelne der Mythologie ist falsch*, aber darum *nicht der Prozeβ selbst Irrthum* [...]' F.W.J. Schelling, 'Die Mythologie', in *Sämtliche Werke II/2*, (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1856), pp. 135-674 (p. 167).

Spinoza's Principle of Essential Derivation

DINO JAKUŠIĆ

> I do not doubt that the demonstration of P7 will be difficult to conceive for all who judge things confusedly [...] because they do not distinguish between the modifications of substances and the substances themselves, nor do they know how things are produced.
>
> — *Ethics*, IP8s2[1]

Introduction

In the second *scholium* to Proposition 8 in the first part of his *Ethics*, Spinoza seems to imply that in order to understand some of the most fundamental propositions of his work (e.g. that '*it pertains to the nature of a substance to exist*') we need to be able to approach the *Ethics* free from confusions in judgement which we might habitually possess. In order to reach this state we need to be aware of the difference between substances themselves and the modifications of substances (modes). Moreover, we need to know how 'things' are produced. The difference between substances and modes seems to be provided by Definitions 3 ('what is in itself and is conceived through itself') and 5 ('that which is in another through which it is also conceived'). We do not seem to be told 'how things are produced' before IP16 which states that: '*From the necessity of the divine nature must follow infinitely many things in infinitely many modes*'[2]

The aim of this paper is to help us reach clarity in understanding 'how things are produced.' This should, as Spinoza claims, enable us to understand some earlier propositions of the *Ethics*.[3] Additionally, it should help us to clear a path towards answering two of the most difficult questions regarding Spinoza's system: 1) why is there anything except absolute substance (or why are there modes of any kind); and 2) by what principle, granted that we 'observe the [proper] order of philosophizing',[4] i.e. that we begin with absolutely infinite, unique and indeterminate substance, can we infer the existence of a plurality of finite, determinate and numerically distinct modes.[5]

I will refer to the principle behind the question 'how are things produced?' or 'how do things follow from essences?' as the 'Principle of Essential Derivation'. Since Spinoza does not use *derivare* when discussing the idea that all things follow from the necessity of God's essence[6] it may seem inappropriate to identify this idea as the 'principle of essential derivation', as opposed to, for example, the 'principle of following'. I will, however, use *derivation* rather than *following*, in order

1 References to Spinoza's *Ethics* will follow the practice found in *Ethics*, trans. by Edwin Curley (London: Penguin Books, 1996), where the Roman numeral designates the section of the *Ethics*; a letter designates whether the reference refers to the proposition, definition, or axiom; and the final number designates the number of the proposition, definition, or axiom referred to. References to Spinoza's correspondence are taken from *The Correspondence of Spinoza*, ed. and trans. by Abraham Wolf (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1928), and will be cited as 'Ep.' followed by the number of the letter. The *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect* will be cited as *TdIE*, while the *Short Treatise on God, Man, and His Well-Being* will be cited as *KV*; both will follow the pagination of Gebhardt's *Spinoza Opera* as provided in Curley's translation designating volume/pages/lines in *The Collected Works of Spinoza*, ed. and trans. by Edwin Curley (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985).

2 A short comment regarding such a production can be found in IP15s. IP6, which focuses on the inability of one substance not being able to produce another, rests on our understanding of how things are produced, rather than explaining the mechanism of this production.

3 For example IP7: '*It pertains to the nature of a substance to exist.*'

4 IIP10s.

5 I intend to use the phrase 'thing' and 'things produced' in a very loose sense. Under this sense 'modes' would qualify as 'things', however, so would attributes (which are not modes) if it were the case that they are produced by the essence of God. The question about the relation between modes and attributes in this context will be discussed below.

6 '*Ex necessitate divina naturae infinita infinitis modis* [...] ***sequi*** *debent*' (IP16, bold emphasis mine).

to avoid any confusion with the more common use of 'following' in philosophy, i.e. the logical following of conclusion from premises.[7]

This paper is split into two sections. The first section will formulate the Principle of Essential Derivation and explore *which* 'things' can be derived from essences. The second section will analyse the constitutive parts of the Principle in greater depth in order to achieve a clear understanding of *why* things are derived from essences. Moreover, it will aim to designate the place of this Principle within the whole of Spinoza's system.

1. Essential Derivation: What is derived and in what way?

As previously mentioned, IP16 states:

> *'From the necessity of the divine nature there must follow infinitely many things in infinitely many modes'*

From this proposition we can extract two claims:

> (a) There is at least one case (divine nature) in which things are derived from the nature or essence[8] of something else;
>
> (b) in the case of the divine essence, the infinity of things in the infinity of modes needs to be derived from this essence.

In order to justify claim (b) Spinoza appeals to nothing other than the second part of the definition of God: '...a substance consisting of an

7 Spinoza uses *sequi* for both what logically follows in an argument and what is derived from the essence. The benefit of using the term *derivation* rather than *following*, unless *sequi* explicitly refers to logical inference, is in the fact that such practice encourages us to treat the relations between propositions as metaphysical and the justification for inferring later propositions from the earlier ones (and from definitions and axioms) needs to be sought in Spinoza's metaphysics, rather than just in his ability of logical reasoning. Moreover, since the exact relation between logical categories and their metaphysical application is not explicitly raised in Spinoza, unlike in, for example, Kant and Hegel, it seems prudent to keep the language of logical and metaphysical inference separate.

8 I take Spinoza to be using *nature* and *essence* interchangeably in most of the cases. That this is one of such cases is evident from the demonstration of IP16.

infinity of attributes, of which each one expresses an eternal and infinite essence.'[9] In order to justify the claim (a) Spinoza appeals only 'to the fact that [...] from any given definition of any thing a number of properties [...] really do follow necessarily from it (that is, from the very essence of the thing)...'[10]

Hence it appears that there is a principle, 'the fact' that properties necessarily follow from definitions, for which Spinoza believes no justification is necessary; it is not even stated as an axiom or listed under the definitions. Let us analyse this 'fact' further. We can find at least three claims implicit in it:

> (1) The essence of a thing is given through the definition of the thing;
>
> (2) from any essence (not just divine essence) a number of things are to be necessarily derived ('follow necessarily');
>
> (3) things derived from essences are to be understood as *properties*.

Spinoza seems to take as a given that we all understand that we can derive certain properties from an essence. How are we to understand this? If we consider essences to be, in our contemporary sense, designators of the necessary and sufficient properties of things, then it seems intuitive that to give the definition/essence of the thing is to give a list of its necessary and sufficient properties. This, however, is not how Spinoza understands the relation between essences and properties.

In the *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect* Spinoza tells us that 'to be called perfect, a definition will have to explain the inmost essence of the thing, and to take care not to use certain *propria* in its place.'[11] The concept of *propria* was a common scholastic term for 'qualities which necessarily *follow from* the essence of the thing, but do not constitute the essence itself'.[12] Therefore, Spinoza draws a distinction between qualities

9 ID6.

10 IP16.

11 *TdIE* II/34/29-31.

12 Yitzhak Melamed, 'Spinoza's Metaphysics of Substance: The Substance-Mode Relation as a Relation of Inherence and Predication', in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 78(1) (2009), 17-82 (p. 67). Original emphasis.

which constitute the essence of a thing and are therefore included in the definition of the thing and qualities which are derived from the essence of the thing but do not constitute it. Taking this into account we can say that in IP16 Spinoza tells us that from the divine essence we can derive infinitely many *propria*.[13] They are themselves not necessary *constituents* of the divine essence, but they necessarily come from it. Understanding this enables us to establish the first characteristic of the Principle of Essential Derivation – things follow from essences as *propria* and they do so *necessarily*.

Establishing the first characteristic of the Principle of Essential Derivation enables us to understand why the claim (b) of the IP16, the one proposing that the infinity of things in the infinity of modes is to be derived from the nature of God, is sufficiently justified only through the appeal to the definition of God. Since God is a substance consisting of an infinity of attributes, and since every attribute expresses an eternal and infinite essence, it is clear that an infinity of things derive from the infinity of essences, and these things are understood as *propria*.

Turning from the discussion on *propria* for the moment, something has to be said about another concept that is central to the Principle of Essential Derivation: *cause*. We have established that from the essence of God (and from any properly defined essence) certain things follow as *propria*. Starting with IP16c1 Spinoza tells us that it follows from IP16 that 'God is the efficient cause of all things which can fall under an infinite intellect.'

Throughout the *Ethics*, Spinoza gives us further details about God's causality. We are told that 'God is a cause through himself and not an accidental cause,'[14] that he is the first cause,[15] that he is the immanent rather than the transitive cause of all things,[16] and that he is the efficient cause of the existence and essence of things.[17]

In what way are we to understand God as a cause? Is He the cause in the same sense in which I am the cause of this paper? Certainly not, at least not in a way I ordinarily understand myself to be the cause of

13 Unlike in *TdIE*, in IP16 Spinoza does not use the term *propria*, but more general *proprietates*. It is, however, safe to assume that he intends *proprietates* in the technical sense of *propria* (cf. Melamed, 'Spinoza's Metaphysics of Substance', pp. 68-9).
14 IP16c2.
15 IP16c3.
16 IP18.
17 IP25.

anything. Spinoza denies that God possesses volition and intellect,[18] and I would certainly not say that I could have caused this paper to exist without volition and intellect. In fact, Spinoza seems to be saying that God's causal activity is to be understood through the fact that *propria* necessarily follow from His nature.[19]

In order to clearly understand God as a cause we need to direct our attention to Spinoza's idea of causal inherence. Spinoza tells us that '*Whatever is, is* ***in*** *God, and nothing can be or be conceived without God.*'[20] Moreover, in the Letter 73 to Oldenburg, Spinoza also informs us that: 'Like Paul, and perhaps also like all ancient philosophers, though in another way, I assert that all things live and move in God…'

The notion of causation Spinoza is employing is reminiscent of the Neoplatonic notion of emanation. As Erik Perl puts it, the Neoplatonists distinguished between 2 types of causation: 'horizontal' in which one thing causes another within the same ontological order (e.g. parents causing offspring) and 'vertical' in which lower ontological order (in this case *propria*) are caused by the higher ontological order (in this case essences or attributes). This 'vertical' causation, however, is not to be understood as a process (since then it would involve duration and temporality while we are currently at the level of eternal essences), but 'nothing but a dependence of what is determined on its determination'.[21]

This understanding of causation enables us to clarify several of Spinoza's claims. One such clarification concerns the Spinozist notion that everything is in God. For everything to be *in* God does not mean that God is to be seen as a container of entities other than Himself,[22] but that the essences and existence of all things depend on the essence and existence of God (whose essence and existence are 'one and the same'[23]). If we interpret Spinoza's conception of causation as 'vertical causation' of inherence and combine it with what we have said about *propria* we can discover another characteristic of the Principle of Essential Derivation, namely, that *propria* are ontologically dependent upon the essences from

18 IP17s.
19 1P17dem.
20 IP15, bold emphasis mine.
21 Eric D. Perl, *Theophany: The Neoplatonic Philosophy of Dionysius the Areopagite* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2007), pp. 17-19.
22 Such an interpretation would make the first axiom of the *Ethics* ('Whatever is, is either in itself or in another') very strange.
23 IP20.

which they are derived. To summarise, the Principle of Essential Derivation at work in Spinoza tells us that *things are necessarily derived from essences as propria and are, as such, in the ontologically dependent relation of inherence to essences from which they are derived.*

Understanding the Principle sheds light on other parts of Spinoza's system. In ID5, Spinoza tells us that modes are 'that which is in another.'[24] Modes should therefore be understood as inhering in essences, as being effects of a 'vertical' cause. Since we know that the effects of 'vertical' causes are *propria* of essences, we can conclude that the infinitely many 'things' derived from God's infinite essence are *modes*.[25]

Specifying that modes are the products of the Principle of Essential Derivation might seem redundant since we know that 'except for substances and modes there is nothing.'[26] Therefore, if we know that God is the first cause[27] as well as the cause of both the existence and essence of things,[28] there is nothing left to be derived but the modes. In order to emphasise this, I will now consider that to which the Principle of Essential Derivation does *not* apply.

24 'By mode I understand the affections of a substance, *or* that which is in another through which it is also conceived.'

25 Understanding the mutual relation between 'vertical' causation and *propria* can also illuminate other claims made by Spinoza, for example, a *prima facie* counterintuitive claim (which is posited as an axiom IA4) that 'The knowledge of an effect depends on, and involves, the knowledge of its cause.' If we understand the relation between causation and *propria*, namely that *propria* necessarily follow from essences given through real definitions and are ontologically dependent on them it becomes clear why we cannot understand a *proprium* (an effect) on its own. If we could, we would be able to completely understand something which is essentially of a *dependent nature* without understanding what it depends on. It would be similar to the absurdity of understanding the meaning and the necessity of the Pythagorean theorem without ever knowing what a triangle is. If Spinoza takes the Principle of Essential Derivation as a given and does not see it as necessary to define its essential constituents, it seems reasonable to read IA4 as an axiom (essential constituents being *propria* and Neoplatonic causation. Spinoza only defines 'cause of itself' in ID1, without defining the concept of cause as such).

26 IP15dem.

27 IP16c3.

28 1P25.

1.1 The limits of essential derivation

Based on the foregoing discussion of the Principle of Essential Derivation, it is clear that the Principle does not apply to Spinoza's arguments for positing God's nature as consisting of the infinity of attributes infinite in their own kind. As we have said, the Principle of Essential Derivation applies to things derived (as *propria*) from essences which they inhere in and hence cannot apply to essence(s) of the first cause. Attributes, we are told in ID4, are not *propria*, but constitute the essence of substance (God). In this sense, Spinoza's attributes *are* God, rather than *propria of* God.

Nevertheless, by understanding the Principle of Essential Derivation and the concepts of *propria* and 'vertical' causation, we are more likely to understand Spinoza's arguments prior to either IP16, where the Principle is most concretely invoked, or IP21, where Spinoza's discussion of modes begins. That the Principle of Essential Derivation is of such pedagogical import is hinted at by Spinoza himself in IP8s2, where Spinoza comments on how the demonstration of IP7 will be difficult to understand to all those who '[do not] know how things are produced'. In the *Short Treatise*, Spinoza tells us that philosophers often make assertions about God describing Him as 'self-subsisting, being cause of all things, eternal and immutable.' While doing this, such philosophers are thinking they are listing His attributes, i.e. describing something belonging to God's essence, while they are actually only listing certain *propria* of God. Unlike the attributes, Spinoza continues, *propria* 'do, indeed, belong to a thing, but never explain what the thing is.' Moreover, such philosophers have sometimes ascribed to God things which, to Spinoza, do not even seem to be *propria* of God, such as omniscience, mercy, and wisdom. The only attributes which God consists of are 'infinite substances, each of which must of itself be infinitely perfect' even though 'it is true [...] that up to the present only two of all these infinites are known to us through their own essence; and these are thought and extension.'[29] This suggests that the demonstrations of propositions prior to IP16 and IP21 (such as the demonstration of IP7 referred to in the opening quotation of this paper) will proceed in a different way than the rest of the propositions, since the early propositions are not derived through the Principle of Essential Derivation.

29 *KV* I/44/4 – I/45/25.

1.2. Neither *propria* nor essences

Before turning to this alternative method of demonstration, I would like to emphasise an interesting insight from the *Short Treatise*. As mentioned above, in the *Short Treatise* there seem to be some characteristics of God (i.e. God's omniscience, mercy, and wisdom) which cannot be sufficiently explained through the Principle of Essential Derivation since they are not *propria* of God. At the same time, strangely, they do not compose the essence of God.

Something similar, which are neither *propria* nor essences, can be found in the *Ethics* as well. One such 'thing' is *quantity*. In IP8s2 Spinoza states that 'no definition involves or expresses any certain number of individuals' and that 'this cause, on account of which a thing exists, either must be contained in the very nature and definition of the existing thing (*viz. that it pertains to its nature to exist*) or must be outside it.'[30] Similarly:

> If twenty men exist in Nature [...], it will not be enough [...] to show the cause of human nature in general; but it will be necessary in addition to show the cause why not more and not fewer than twenty exist [...] But this cause [...] cannot be contained in human nature itself, since the true definition of man does not involve the number twenty. [...] Why each of them exists, must necessarily be outside each of them.[31]

This suggests that the existence of a particular entity cannot be sufficiently explained through the Principle of Essential Derivation, since the reason for an existence of a determinable, quantifiable, finite entity (like an individual man) cannot be derived from an essence. The essence of a man is itself, however, 'an eternal truth' and would, as such, be derivable from first principles, however 'a man is the cause of the existence of another man'.[32] This suggests that essential derivation is insufficient to explain the existence of *finite* modes:

30 Original emphasis.
31 IP8s2.
32 IP17s2.

> *any thing which is finite and has a determinate existence, can neither exist nor be determined to produce an effect unless it is determined to exist and produce an effect by another cause,* ***which is also finite and has a determinate existence*** [...] *and so on, to infinity.*[33]

This, however, seems strange, since IP25 said that God is the efficient cause of both the essence *and* existence of all things. To understand this apparent incompatibility, we need to understand that although the Principle of Essential Derivation is not sufficient to explain the existence of finite things, it nevertheless is *necessary* for such an explanation. When following the 'proper order of philosophising,' we need to understand the series of causes starting from God and proceeding downwards. Spinoza writes:

> But note that by the series of causes and of real beings I do not here understand the series of singular, changeable things, but only the series of fixed and eternal things. For it would be impossible for human weakness to grasp the series of singular, changeable things, not only because there are innumerably many of them, but also because of the infinite circumstances in one and the same thing, any of which can be the cause of its existence or nonexistence. For their existence has no connection with their essence, *or* (as we have already said) is not an eternal truth. But there is also no need for us to understand their series. The essences of singular, changeable things [...are] to be sought only from the fixed and eternal things, and at the same time from the laws inscribed in these things [...] according to which all singular things come to be, and are ordered.[34]

This suggests that while the infinity of finite things are brought into and removed from existence by an infinity of 'horizontal' causes, such things ultimately come from eternal essences and laws posited by such essences. Thus, we are still allowed, even required, to call God the cause of all finite things (since, ultimately, finite, temporally existing particulars are dependent upon the infinite, eternal essences of such particulars). God can,

33 IP28, cf. also IP21 and 22. Bold emphasis mine.
34 *TdEI* II/36/21 – II/37/2, emphasis mine.

therefore, be called a 'remote cause' of all things, however it is important to notice that Spinoza was reluctant to call God a remote cause. In the *Short Treatise* he tells us that God is '*in a sense*, the remote cause of all particular things.'[35] In the *Ethics*, Spinoza explains this qualification in more detail:

> Since certain things had to be produced by God immediately, namely, those which follow necessarily from his absolute nature, and others (which nevertheless can neither be nor be conceived without God) had to be produced by the mediation of these first things it follows: I. That God is absolutely the proximate cause of the things produced immediately by him [...] II. That God cannot properly be called the remote cause of singular things, except perhaps so that we may distinguish them from those things that he has produced immediately, or rather, that follow from his absolute nature.[36]

Spinoza, therefore, emphasises that God cannot properly be identified as a remote cause since this would imply that he has no significant connection with the effect. This, of course, would be unacceptable due to IP15, which states that whatever is, is in God, and IP18, which states that God is the immanent, not the transitive, cause of all things.

These considerations show us which things, derivable from the essence of God, are sufficiently explained by the Principle of Essential Derivation: modes considered as *propria* and derived either immediately or through mediation, while ultimately composing essences of finite things. What the Principle cannot sufficiently explain is the existence of finite things.

It seems that only two kinds of *propria* can be *immediately* derived from the infinite essence of God. The first is what is usually called 'immediate infinite modes', described in IP21. These are modes directly derived from the absolute nature of any of God's attributes: We only know of two of them and their names are: Motion (derived from the attribute of extension) and Understanding (derived from the attribute of thought).[37] I will call the second kind of *propria*, which can be immediately derived

35 *KV* I/35/18.

36 IP28s.

37 Spinoza calls each one of them (and the infinity of others which we are ignorant of) 'a Son, Product, or Effect created immediately by God.' (*KV* I/48/16-7).

from the infinite essence of God, 'adjectives' of God or *adjectival propria* following Spinoza's suggestions on the ways of understanding *propria*.[38]

Adjectival propria are *propria* which follow directly from the absolute essence of God, but do not seem to fall under the category of 'immediate infinite modes'. Firstly, Spinoza never talks about them as being on the 'level' of immediate infinite modes or as names for these modes. Secondly, they seem not to be derived from the essence of each attribute considered 'infinite in its own kind' (as Motion and Understanding seem to be). Instead, adjectival *propria* seem to apply equally throughout attributes, regardless of specific attributive determinations. Unlike immediate infinite modes which are *propria* of God's infinite essence understood separately from the infinity of each attribute, *adjectival propria* seem to be the product of God's essence understood absolutely, or taken as a *totality*.

The eight types of causes considered as *propria* of God listed in the *Short Treatise* can be taken as examples of *adjectival propria*. There may also be a case for reading God's *power* as an adjectival *proprium*. I will consider this possibility below. First, however, I will address a potential anticipatory concern which could be raised against such a reading.

1.3. *'God's power is his essence itself'*

Some might say that God's power cannot be a *proprium* of God since IP34 states that '*God's power is his essence itself.*' This would suggest that, just as attributes are not *propria* since they *are* essences of God, God's power could not be a *proprium* since it is '*his essence itself*'.

If this were correct, however, then power would probably be listed, besides Thought and Extension, on the list of the known attributes, which it is not. This interpretation is additionally problematic insofar as power, understood as an attribute, would be 'infinite in its own kind', which would lead to the absurd notion that the infinite number of other attributes were themselves *powerless*. Finally, following A.D. Smith's understanding of power in Spinoza, we can see that God's power is not something which

38 'The following are called *Propria* because they are nothing but *Adjectives* which cannot be understood without their *Substantives*' (*KV* I/35/a). Spinoza probably intended to understand all *propria* and modes as adjectives (cf. Melamed, 'Spinoza's Metaphysics of Substance, p. 47), however, I will reserve the term for this specific group of *propria*.

composes the essence of God, but something which is to be derived from it:

> A thing's power, after all, is determined, indeed constituted, by what it can cause; and causation for Spinoza is ultimately a matter of *what flows or follows from something's nature* (e.g., 1p16d). Such a *nature is not*, conversely, to be understood by specifying *a thing's power* in terms of what it can and cannot cause. *Something's nature is given by its definition*; and this, Spinoza tells us (e.g., Ep. 60), ought to consist in a specification of its proximate efficient cause (which may be internal), rather than its possible effects.[39]

Therefore, if we understand the definition of God, we understand God's essence as an absolutely infinite totality of attributes. From this we can derive that God's power is infinite since from God's essence follow infinitely many things in infinitely many modes. God's power is therefore a *proprium* of God, however, it seems to be of a different kind than immediate infinite modes.

1.4. Essential derivation

After seeing what immediately follows from the essence of God it is time to see what can be derived 'remotely', the so-called 'mediate infinite modes' derived from the modification of the 'immediate infinite modes' (IP22). As implied above, we could conclude that one last group of things can follow via Essential Derivation, i.e. the essences of finite things. Finally, we reach the group of entities which cannot be sufficiently explained through the derivation from essences and 'vertical causes', but need to include 'horizontal causation' in their explanation: individual finite things.

At this point we can formulate the Principle of Essential Derivation in even more detail: from the definition or essence of x, things are derived by necessity (rather than by volition) as *propria* under the x of 'vertical

39 A. D. Smith, 'Spinoza, Gueroult, and Substance' in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (Article first published online, 2012), DOI: 10.1111/j.1933-1592.2012.00611.x. p. 29. Emphasis mine. Subsequently published in 88(3) (2014), pp. 655-88.

causation'. Things derived in such fashion are eternal, with eternal essences, ontologically dependent on God for their existence. Two kinds of things are *directly* derived from God's essence (hence sufficiently explainable through the Principle): 'immediate infinite modes' and *adjectival propria*. As mentioned above, the Principle cannot sufficiently explain the existence of such finite things themselves. The existence of finite modes or particular things needs to be explained through the infinite series of 'horizontal', finite causes as well as their dependence on essences derivable from God.

2. Why are things derived?

In the previous section I have tried to explain Essential Derivation through Spinoza's conception of *propria* and causation. One question now presents itself: what legitimises Spinoza's use of these concepts in the way he uses them?

The concept of *propria* was not invented by Spinoza. As Melamed points out, 'Spinoza follows a common Scholastic (and ultimately Aristotelian) threefold distinction' between essence, *propria*, and accidents.[40] As Witt helpfully informs us, the concept of *propria* originates from Aristotle's concept of ἴδιον which is used to distinguish between essences (definitions) of things and the thing's non-essential, but necessary properties (ἴδιον). To illustrate this, Witt gives us Aristotle's own example: the capability to learn grammar would be a *proprium* of man, however, the capacity of sleep would not be, since it has nothing to do with the essence of man. The reason for such a distinction, Witt continues, is based on the idea that when Aristotle asks what an essence of an entity is he is not asking 'what are its necessary properties?' (as we might today), but simply 'what is it?' If a question of essence is taken to be the latter, it seems natural that the answer is to be sought within the correct definition of x.[41]

Just as *propria* is a Scholastic term subsequently adopted by Spinoza, the concept of 'vertical' causation was not new in Spinoza's time.

40 Accidents being 'qualities at least partly caused by a source external to the thing', in the context of this paper such a source would be the infinity of finite modes. Cf. Melamed, 'Spinoza's Metaphysics of Substance', p. 67.

41 Charlotte Witt, *Substance and Essence in Aristotle: An Interpretation of* Metaphysics VII-IX (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), pp. 106-7.

It seems to have its origins in the Neoplatonic conception of emanation:[42] the power of existing inherent in the One of Neoplatonism flows spontaneously from the One, as it does from Spinoza's God, creating entities lower on the ontological hierarchy without inclination, will, movement, and dissipation of its divine power.

But how is Spinoza justified in adopting the pre-Modern conceptions of *propria* and vertical causation? Does he simply adopt the concept of *propria* since it was a commonly available philosophical conception of the logic of essences of his time? Did he then eclectically combine it with the Neoplatonic concept of emanation? By combining *propria* with emanation, Spinoza can say that certain things necessarily follow from the essence of God and are therefore hierarchically and ontologically dependent on God through 'vertical' causation.[43] If this were so, it would seem that Spinoza's system does not develop naturally but is rather 'rigged', inviting the criticism that he is simply working with a tacitly adopted, outdated conception of essence. I would like to suggest an alternative reading, in which the essence-*propria* relation is not simply an understanding of essence adopted from the metaphysics of the time, but is justified by the system itself.

In order to make this argument I would like to ask the question of the ontological status of the Principle of Essential Derivation and of what I have called *adjectival propria*. As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, Spinoza does not himself invoke anything like the Principle of Essential Derivation. By investigating this 'principle', I do not intend to posit it as a metaphysical principle supervening on the transitions in Spinoza's system, but as a pedagogical tool which might illuminate the transitions present in the system, a 'principle', which simply describes what is happening in the system. The Principles does not 'do any work' within the System so it is not to be understood as, for example, a premise within an argument, or as a principle of deductive inference. The same should be said of *adjectival propria*, which have a similar ontological status. Spinoza himself uses this term for didactic description.

The *adjectival propria* described above include eight 'types' of causes and the concept of power. If these *propria* were things following

42 As Melamed points out ('Spinoza's Metaphysics of Substance', p. 66), in Ep. 43 Spinoza suggests that 'modes emanate from God's nature.'

43 Any 'vertical' causation therefore becomes eminent causation in the strong sense – every cause is of more, rather than more *or* equal perfection than the effect.

directly from the essence of God they would be rather strange. They would neither be substances, nor 'immediate infinite modes' and since Spinoza writes that 'except for substances and modes there is nothing,'[44] such *adjectival propria* would have no being whatsoever. If *adjectival propria* cannot fall under the category of substance, or under the category of the 'immediate infinite modes', then *adjectival propria* cannot be *things*. To use Scholastic terminology, they do not possess *ens formalis*, only *ens rationis*.[45]

How might this justify Spinoza's employment of the concept of *propria*? Understanding power as an *adjectival proprium* suggests that *adjectival propria* are to be used for didactic descriptions. In that case, the reason why there are *propria*, why things must necessarily follow from essences, is not based on the reliance of early modern philosophy on an Aristotelian understanding of essences. The reason why things follow from essences comes from the fact that we understand God as 'a being absolutely infinite, that is, a substance consisting of an infinity of attributes, of which each one expresses an eternal and infinite essence.'[46]

If we were able to understand the definition/essence of God, we would understand, clearly and distinctly, the consequences arising from such a nature. Understanding this definition, however, is very difficult, since everyday thinking and confused concepts handed down to us by the philosophical tradition get in our way. Once we are able to rid ourselves from prejudices and confused judgements, however, and are able to entertain in our mind the true definition of God, we will clearly and distinctly perceive the fact that 'from the necessity of the divine nature there must follow infinitely many things in infinitely many modes.'[47] Once we are able to think God clearly we witness the infinite unstoppable *power* of creation. We realise that for such power not to be there, there would need to be an equal or greater power to stop it; however, as Spinoza often tells us, 'this is absurd.' And nothing but the understanding of the definition of God is required to see this absurdity. Therefore, 'the fact that the intellect infers from the given definition of any thing a number of

44 IP15dem.

45 Other things derived from essences, such as infinite modes and anything derived from them would possess *ens formalis*. Quantity *as such* would similarly not possess *ens formalis* in the same way numbers and universals do not posses it for Spinoza. Quantity and numbers, however, are not adjectival *propria*.

46 ID6.

47 IP16.

properties that really do follow necessarily from it (that is, from the very essence of the thing)'[48] is not 'the fact' which Spinoza inherits from the tradition, but something that becomes obvious to us once we understand ID6 clearly and distinctly. In order to understand Spinoza's system, it is sufficient to understand the definition of God and the rest should unfold before our mind.[49]

If there is any weight to this reading, we can conclude that Spinoza uses the concept of *propria*, not because he simply inherited the concept from the tradition, but because Spinoza realises that from God, the infinity of things will follow. Since the concept of *propria* was used in the seventeenth century to describe a phenomenon of 'things that follow from essences', Spinoza adopts this concept to describe the observation that an infinity of things follow from the essence of God. Such an adoption was likely meant to clarify the thinking of Spinoza's contemporaries. Spinoza could not have written the *Ethics* using a completely novel set of concepts. Such work could not be understood. What he could do, and what I believe he has done, is use the metaphysical concepts of his own time in order to 'point beyond them'. The concept of *propria* is therefore not a metaphysical law to be invoked in order to make his system work. It is rather a concept which Spinoza's contemporaries could understand, used to *illustrate* the true nature of God to them and therefore guide their thinking to the true philosophical starting point.[50]

As a result, Spinoza's *Ethics* needs to be read at least twice: first, as *medicina mentis*, curing philosophical thought from its metaphysical prejudices by enabling us to understand the essence of God; second, as a

48 IP16dem.

49 This is the 'alternative method of demonstration' I was referring to in the section 1.2.

50 I believe Deleuze has something similar in mind when saying that only ID6 is a real definition, while the preceding ones are nominal. See Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, trans. by Martin Joughin (New York, NY: Zone Books, 1990), p. 20. Unlike Deleuze, however, I propose that the nominal definitions are there in order to reconceptualise commonly used concepts of that time in a new framework. Another point of contact with Deleuze's reading is the idea that in the *Ethics* 'it is no longer a matter of finite understanding deducing properties singly, reflecting on its object and explicating it by relating it to other objects. It is now the object that expresses itself, the thing itself that explicates itself' (Ibid., p. 22). Once again, however, my reading reaches the similar conclusion while following a different trajectory than Deleuze.

description, rather than a derivation, of what clearly follows from the nature of God.

Conclusion

There is, however, a difficulty with this reading. It seems to me that Spinoza's Neoplatonic understanding of 'vertical causation' cannot be explained in the same way. While we could conceive that the concept of *propria* is invoked as a description of what one can see unfolding when one understands the absolute essence of God, it is difficult to see why this unfolding would be emanative and eminent.

It seems intuitive that God, understood as absolute infinity, could be understood as the first cause of everything, but what justifies seeing Him as an eminent cause. How can we, in this manner, justify the claim that what is derived from the essence of God is of lesser perfection[51] than God rather than that the only thing that unfolds is the eternal, infinite power of being? If Spinoza does not simply adopt *propria* in a traditional manner and combines them with the Neoplatonic conception of the cause, what is the reason for absolute infinity to produce modes of lesser perfection, or, what is the same, any modes at all, especially the finite ones? The answer to this question still remains a mystery.

I have started this paper by trying to understand what is the principle at work behind Spinoza's claim that 'things follow from essences'. The principle, which I have called the Principle of Essential Derivation, seems to combine the scholastic concept of *propria* with 'vertical causation' of Neoplatonism. I have suggested that these two concepts either appear in Spinoza because they come as baggage of his philosophical tradition, or because there is a subtle justification for their usage, based on the requirement to think the definition of God clearly. I have argued that Spinoza's use of the concept of *propria* can be read according to the latter possibility. However, such a systematic justification of the use of vertical causation remains lacking, for it is unclear, from the Spinozist perspective, why *propria* would be of lesser ontological perfection than substance itself.

51 Which it should be since it contains more determination, cf. Ep. 50.

Time After Death: The Account of Fecundity in Levinas's *Totality and Infinity*

ROBERT KING

'tu déploieras ton vol vers ces régions inconnues que ton coeur demande'
— Chateaubriand, *René*[1]

'Chronos, thinking he swallows a god, swallows but a stone.'
— Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*[2]

§1 The Opening Problematic

It is, as the title suggests, to Levinas's first major philosophical treatise, *Totality and Infinity*, that we turn in this essay. The reason we chose to focus our attention on this work without, in the main, regard for the later developments of his thinking is that in *Totality and Infinity* the concept of fecundity, which drops out of his later works, plays a crucial role. It is by way of this concept that Levinas first works out his response to what he sees as the philosophical (in the final analysis metaphysical and ethical,

1 François-René de Chateaubriand, *René* (Paris: Larousse, 1991), p. 54.

2 Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, trans. by Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), p. 58; hereafter cited parenthetically as TI.

though in its primary articulation ontological)[3] problem of death. Levinas's analysis of death is of interest to the reader of his works for many reasons; the reason which guides the present essay is the intrigue of his account of time, and in particular the account of eschatological time, which is worked out through the concept of fecundity.[4] It is the thesis and work of the present essay to contend that through his account of death and fecundity Levinas puts forward an account of three different timelines which converge on the (possibility of the) death of the subject – the subjective, historical, and eschatological time.

Totality and Infinity opens with an announcement of the task which lies before the (moral) philosopher. 'Everyone will readily agree' reads the first line, 'that it is of the highest importance to know whether we are not duped by morality' (TI 21). The task, is to evidence the *true* alignment of morality and reality; to show that *being itself* harbours within it the *beyond being* (beyond *totality*, opening onto the *infinite*), a realm which escapes war and opens a space for morality - or more correctly, a time of *eschatology*. Levinas's (indirect) response to this challenge is the claim that 'Being is exteriority' (TI 290). The aim of the present essay is to understand this statement, to explicate the manner in which, *in being*, there is 'produced'[5] the *beyond being*. In other words, to clarify the manner in

3 For another account (from which the present essay does not disagree, but hopefully makes an advance on) of Levinas's account of the problem of death as an ontological problem see Simon Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), Chapter 5.4. It is interesting to note that the ontological confrontation with death in *Totality and Infinity* is one of the most obvious points of distance between Levinas's earlier and later writings.

4 Another reason to be interested in Levinas's analysis of death is because death is a problem which Levinas tackles again and again throughout his *oeuvre*. For a treatment of the manner in which Levinas tackles death over the full breadth of his philosophical writings see Sarah Allen, *The Philosophical Sense of Transcendence: Levinas and Plato on Loving Beyond Being* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2009) and Michael L. Morgan, *The Cambridge Introduction to Emmanuel Levinas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). The latter says little on the theme of temporal discontinuity and inexplicably ignores the role of *fecundity* (wherein this discontinuity originates); both of which are themes which will come to take the spotlight in this essay, and which are, as we understand it, central themes for any consideration of the role of death in Levinas's philosophy.

5 Production is a technical term in Levinas's philosophy. 'Production' signifies both the coming to appearance or consciousness (its phenomenological aspect) as well as the production of artefacts (TI 26). Here the term retains its full significance: being,

which morality resides within reality, as reality's production of its own beyond.

Levinas is well known to be a philosopher of transcendence, of the *beyond being*. But despite his protestation against the limits, violence, and myopia of ontology, he is not simply *against* being, just as despite his invocations of the Good beyond being and his assertion that the face of the Other comes to us not of this world, he is not a simple Platonist (in the pejorative sense). Such a misunderstanding is widely held by many of those who have not studied Levinas's work, and thereby often acts as a deterrent against his being taken as a serious contemporary (post-Nietzschean) philosopher. But Levinas's philosophy is not a simple (Nietzschean) Platonism in which the world is understood in terms of degraded perfection, the copy of an ideal realm of originary Identity. Likewise, Levinas's God is no (again Nietzschean) divine *telos*. Levinas is not a thinker of Identity – neither originary nor ultimate identity; such a style of thinking which, since Nietzsche, has seemed to us naïve. Rather, as Derrida early noted, Levinas's thought is an ethics (of ethics) of originary Difference.[6]

It will not be the work of this essay to put forward Levinas's account of originary difference (which would require an investigation of his treatment of substitution from *Otherwise than Being* and the manner in which Levinas therein transforms 'experience' or 'sensation'[7]). Nor will we give an account here of Levinas's non-teleological conception of the divine. Rather, we will focus on the manner in which Levinas conceives of the relationship between Infinity and the Totality, with particular emphasis on the complexities and non-linear nature of this connection. More

through the phenomenological investigation of *Totality and Infinity*, *appears as* exteriority, and being is also *productive of* exteriority. It is with a focus on the second sense of production that this essay proceeds.

6 An ethics of ethics would be an account of something like the 'conditions of possibility' of ethics – an account of ethical subjectivity. For Derrida's treatment of *Totality and Infinity* see 'Violence and Metaphysics' in Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans by A. Bass (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978). For an account of the problems with characterising Levinas's philosophy as a transcendental philosophy (as phrases such as 'conditions of possibility' would suggest), see Paul Davies 'The Face and the Caress: Levinas's Ethical Alterations of Sensibility' in *Modernity and the Hegemony of Vision*, ed. by David Michael Levin. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 252-272.

7 Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, trans. by Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1998).

specifically, we will look into the 'production' of the beyond from within being – or in Levinas's self-confessed clumsiest of expressions, the 'in' of the In-finite. We chose *Totality and Infinity*, in part, in order to demonstrate the long-standing nuances of Levinas's engagement with ontology. Despite the fact that, in *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas's definition of ontology can be seen to be insensitive to the ontological difference,[8] this never led Levinas to a misinformed rejection of ontology. The subtle account of the *saying* and the *said* which is developed in *Otherwise than Being* in order to contest the primacy of the ontological difference is not entirely foreign to Levinas's earlier work. On the contrary, the interplay between being and the beyond already finds its first expression in the account of fecundity – the site of the production of transcendence within being – which we will explore across *Totality and Infinity*.

§2 The Problem of Death and its Relation to Time

> In my religious being I am in *truth*. Will the violence death introduces into this being make truth impossible? Does not the violence of death reduce to silence the subjectivity without which truth could neither be said nor be? (TI 253)

This is the manner in which the problem raised by death is framed in the opening of §IV — the section, importantly, in which Levinas presents his accounts of love and fecundity. Death is given to us as a violence, a violence threatening to silence subjectivity and thereby deny the possibility for truth. We know that, for Levinas, the social relation takes place in language, the language in which the other judges me, speaks to me the sixth commandment, 'thou shalt not kill', and that same language in which I issue my response, the apology for my being, my deference to the Other. It is in language that morality resides, and so too, truth. Language is the medium of contact between the Other and myself, the only manner in which I can be with the Other in respect of their alterity. Language is the moral instrument of expression.

In order for there to be language there must be a consciousness: a separated being capable of self-expression. What death threatens is the

8 C.f. Jeffrey L. Kosky, *Levinas and the Philosophy of Religion*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001).

extinction of this consciousness or, more rightly, it signals the eviction of this separated being from the world in which the social relation takes place.[9] Death threatens the possibility of a *personal* expression. As Levinas states elsewhere, it intimates the possibility of 'being transformed into a pure loss figuring in an alien accounting system' (TI 56). It threatens the silent (unapologetic, defenceless) incorporation of the subject into the regime of *history*. For '[e]xistence in history consists in placing my consciousness outside of me' (TI 252). History is always written by the survivor, its arrangement takes place where and when the individual can no longer take a stand and speak for himself, where his interior being is elided. History does not account for the individual *qua* individual, but takes only his dead, chitinous shell into account, only the individual's completed *works* in which he is perceived only as his *will*.[10] History has room for the individual only in the form of his material effects in the world.

Death, in threatening to take the inner life of the separated subject, their reasons and *language* from the world, threatens to silence subjectivity, bringing an end to discourse, truth, *morality*. Without the possibility of apologising for one's being, there can be no morality, as morality itself depends on discourse between I and Other. Morality is just that discourse in which I recognise the Other as an individual, with an interior life which extends infinitely beyond his outward comportments and ever denies comprehension. With death impersonal reason wins out. The possibility of interpersonal reason, the reason of morality, loses to the cold reasoning of history, the reasoning also of *politics*.[11] The reason which denies the separation of individual existents treats each individual as

9 Levinas is sure to make a point of the unknowability of death - that death lies not in the dyad: *being/nothingness*, but escapes all comprehension. We cannot say that with death there is a movement from being into nothingness, for it is of the very nature of death that we *cannot know* what it heralds. All one knows is that with death one is disallowed expression. As such, death already marks the limits of being (and non-being), the limits of ontology. This notion of the unknowability of death is one which remains constant throughout Levinas's oeuvre, from the early works such as *Time and the Other* to *Otherwise than Being* and making an appearance in interviews such as *The Philosopher and Death*.

10 That is, in Levinas's understanding, a willing projection of possibilities.

11 Politics is not written-off completely at the end of *Totality and Infinity*. It is, in fact, possible to read Levinas's project therein as a political one. Even so, this project is necessarily one of redefining the political. Any turn to the political over the course of *Totality and Infinity* is possible only as subordinate to morality.

analogous, each as a *will*[12] conforming to the same model. Under such a model, the subject is subsumed within a forced accord between existents.

But all is not lost, for a possibility of escape presents itself. What if:

> revolted by the violence of reason that reduces the apology to silence, the subjectivity could not only accept to be silent, but could renounce itself by itself, renounce itself without violence, cease the apology for itself [?] (TI 253)

It is this 'renunciation' that we will explore.

First, however, it is necessary to consider the workings of subjectivity so as to more fully comprehend the problem that death harbours for it. We will discover therein the 'paradox' of time: the seeming opposition of a subjective and objective time in which subjectivity, death and history meet. And in dissolving this paradox - a paradox which we will discover hinges on the will - the phenomenon of fecundity will obviate the erosion of morality in death.

§2.1

The I first encounters itself in the enjoyment of its elemental wanderings and through this enjoyment accomplishes a certain degree of separation. But the true feat of separation, the instantiation of an existent with the depth of interior life, begins when the I establishes a home: 'Circulating between visibility and invisibility, one is always bound for the interior of which one's home, one's corner, one's tent, one's cave is the vestibule' (TI 156). The home acts as the nucleus for the activities of labour and possession, it provides the space, both figurative and real, into which one may withdraw from the world with the products of one's labour and in which one can possess and pose the world. Thus, in this procedure the I first truly discovers a world. In doing so the I also discovers itself by way of a process in which the world is fixed in place and thereby offered up for arrangement and presented as a range of possibilities for the I.

In labouring one gives to matter a fixed form, one works on the elemental world, taking clay from the soil to be thrown, harvesting timber to be carved. Through labour the world becomes fixed in reference to the

12 We shall return presently to this notion of the *will*.

self. Each product, each work one creates, 'keeps a certain proportion to the human body' (TI 161) and so offers itself up to that body, is possessable by the I. One can take these works into the home as goods, as furnishings (*meubles*); and with this fixing of the world, one can arrange an interior space, a space of calm and of *light*, a structured space one dictates. It is this calming of the otherwise turbulent exterior world which allows for the birth of interiority, i.e. the possibility of retreat from the elemental rush of indefinite matter. The interiority of the home permits the interiority of thought, the psychism of inner life recalcitrant to totality.

Labour and possession place the world at one's beck and call:

> The labour that draws things from the element in which I am steeped discovers durable substances, but forthwith suspends the independence of their durable being by acquiring them as movable goods, transportable, put in reserve, deposited in the home. (TI 157)

Labour secures the world because it 'removes being from change'. And it is impossible to detach this effect of removing things from change from its effect on time. Labour operates by way of an overcoming of a future which threatens uncertainty and powerlessness:

> [possession, in essence durable] does not only endure as a state of mind; it affirms its power *over time*, over what belongs to nobody - *over the future*. Possession posits the product of labour as what remains permanent in time, a substance. (TI 160)[13]

It is this future, opened by way of labour and possession, after which we must inquire.

Possessions bring possibilities. Through labour, the separated being, as interiority or personality, first finds itself as a *will*. Solid structures make projects possible; they enable 'the primordial grasp' (TI 158). Determinacy opens up the possibility of a time (*a future*) in which things might be arranged, put to work for one's own ends: a time in which one is no longer caught up in responding immediately (timelessly) to the elemental nature of the world prior to its constitution as a world of possibilities. Labour delineates forms: the contours of the jug, the corners of the table.

13 Emphasis added.

The I finds itself as a will, as master of projects, as discloser of a world, caster of light. Yet it is not possible to understand how the I comes to be such a will (nor understand the approach of mortality) until we have considered the role of the body in this procedure.[14] In particular it will be necessary for us to consider the manner in which the temporality which opens through labour does so because of the unique position of the body in the world.

The body is the regime in which the order of labour and possession can be enacted; it is the very centre of action. But in this same capacity, the body is also a traitor. In labouring the I discovers in the body its own weakness, its susceptibility to disease and death.[15] The body, as the point of contact between the I and the world, the meeting place of interiority and exteriority, reveals the *dependence* of independence: the manner in which the willing of the body rests on the exterior.

> The sovereignty of enjoyment nourishes its independence with a dependence on the other. The sovereignty of enjoyment runs the risk of a betrayal: the alterity from which it lives already expels it from paradise. Life is a body, not only a lived body, where its self-sufficiency emerges, but a cross-roads of physical forces, body-effect. In its deep-seated fear life attests this ever possible inversion of the body-master into body-slave, of health into sickness. (TI 164)

To enact an interior life is dependent upon the exterior world on which one labours. In its operation in the world, in its opening onto the exterior, the body is open to the whims of the world (to the steel blade), and as a part of the world it is open to the treachery of its chemical make-up (internal poison). And moreover, one senses this precarity of bodily existence. Here death first enters consciousness and from it unfolds time: the time of interiority.

14 For a more extended consideration of the body in its connection to time see Richard A. Cohen, *Levinasian Meditations: Ethics, Philosophy, and Religion* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2010), Chapter 1.2.

15 In connection with this treason that the body lodges it would be ideal if we could explore Levinas's notion of suffering - the experience of a body in illness, a body confronted by its own inefficacy. Unfortunately we haven't the space to do so. For Levinas's writings on this see *Totality and Infinity* §III C, and *Time and the Other*, trans. by Richard A. Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1987).

The perception of this constant threat, of the imminence of death, the unknowability of its time of coming, opens up the time of subjectivity. The time of the separated being emerges as a constant *labour* towards the postponement of this imminent threat, towards a stilling of the future (TI 165). How does this experience of death take place in consciousness? — we must turn to the account given of the product of labour: the work. '[I]s not this interiority manifested on the outside by works? Do not works succeed in breaking through the crust of separation?' (TI 175). What the labouring body forms, what it gives over to possession, is the work (the jug, the table). Just as the body is a meeting place of interior and exterior in which death lingers, so too the work — product of effective separation — at once ties the separated being to the world. With the completion of each work, the will absents itself from the finished product such that no work can be the expression of the one who creates it. In the substantiality which labour and possession deliver to matter, there lies a threat to the very will that labours and possesses.

The work which is produced has being only as given by the one who creates it; it has no being in itself, no identity. And 'because it is not in itself a thing[, it] can be exchanged and accordingly be compared, be quantified, and consequently already lose its very identity, be reflected in money' (TI 162). The work opens onto the *economy* within which the separated being works (an economy, as we will see, akin to that in which death threatens to consume interiority). How does the work open onto such an economy? The work or product of labour, as drawn from the exterior, is given over to the *possibility* of being arranged in the home, yet remains in that exterior world from which it was first absent. As formed into a substance — not incorporated into the willing of the I, but existing apart – it does not retain only the aspect which the labourer intended: it is open to interpretation. In such a manner the work can be converted into a monetary form and take on an existence in the market as a commodity, divorced from the one who laboured to produce it. Thus, *one's will is alienated in the work*; one is denied *expression*. The will which went into its creation immediately abandons the finished product, which is handed to the vagaries of a silent market:

> The worker does not hold in his hands all the threads of his own action. He is exteriorised by acts that are already in a sense abortive. If his works deliver signs, they have to be deciphered without his assistance. If he participates in this deciphering, he speaks. Thus the product of labour is not an inalienable possession, and it can be usurped by the Other. Works have a destiny independent of the I, are integrated in an ensemble of works: they can be exchanged, that is, be maintained in the anonymity of money. (TI 176)

The I has no voice through its work, but in it must silently accept the designation which the Other gives to it. It is in this manner that the individual is 'exteriorised' by his already 'abortive acts'. By contrast, one only speaks, language is only instituted, in the face-to-face; only when a separated being meets another in respect of that other's alterity. Before language, in the economy of labour and possession, one remains silent - one shares a frontier with the Other, to be sure, one shares the frontier of the market, but one does not encounter the Other [*autrui*] as *Other* [*Autrui*]. One contacts the other, through one's work, only as the dead husk of a will, and sees the Other only as a will playing on this husk. The economic relation is distinct from the social (moral) relation, because the encounter of I and Other takes place only as an encounter between oppositional forces. Because the identity of the work is not secure, it can be re-defined, re-worked, and it is therefore open to the Other's *Sinngebung*, that is to say that the Other can assign meaning to the individual's dead work. And it is purely in the *Sinngebung*, purely as an intention or *will* that the Other is perceived.[16] The Other and I encounter one another only as oppositional wills meeting through the work.

In the economic circulation of the work one is struck dumb, and here the threat of being taken only as a work — as a dead will — arises and reigns in history, in death: History is the 'history of the historiographers, accounts of the survivors, who interpret, that is utilise the works of the dead' (TI 228). After the death of an individual, that individual is only present in their works. But such works offer no access to the inner life of the individual. History is written by the survivor, by the Other as *another will*.

The Other's will, as the I encounters it through the work, appears as the threat of death, the threat of being silenced (no longer allowed to express oneself). In this threat a second *time* opens, a time opposed to that

16 For there is the Other even outside of the face-to-face, only an Other without language - without moral sanction, judgement.

of subjectivity – the objective time of history. This historical time is in opposition to the interior time of the postponement of death. The time of the Other – the time in which only the Other's will bears effect – threatens as death. This conflict between subjective and historical time is the paradox of time which we have said resides in death: there is the time of interiority, of my will, working to postpone death, but there is also a time *against* this time: the time of history, the time of the Other's will. Two times, each of which rests in *willing*, each of which is opened and encountered through death – death wherein these two times meet. In the one direction the I recoils from death, opening the time of interiority; in the other direction death opens out onto an 'objective' time, a time in which one's interiority, one's will is elided as by the force of an external will.

§2.2

Before we pass from death to its overcoming through fecundity (which is equally the dissolution of the paradox we have just outlined), we must make one final detour by way of Levinas's conception of *violence*.

It is the manner in which death and history appear and are experienced in the work as the confrontation of two wills, which leads Levinas to speak of the *violence* of death. Violence always works to bend the will of another, to deny the sovereignty of the Other who, perceived as a will, is seen to express himself only as an intention. Violence, going from one will to another, attempts to break the other, to deny the Other. It is the conflict of wills in which the Other and I feature only as opposed wills. Thus, this contact, which is before language and outside of morality, is far from exemplifying the encounter which constitutes the social relation. It is this contact, less than encounter, which it is the prerogative of *politics* to broker.

According to Levinas, the paradox of *two times of the will* leaves us with a violent conflict of wills or, what is the same thing, the reality of war (the war which in the preface to *Totality and Infinity* threatens morality). Death is violence, the violence of history – the will of history. But one can oppose history in *speaking up for oneself*. In other words, one can contest the appropriation of one's work and confirm one's interior life against objective time. But to act according to this logic would always be to *counter*act, to place one will *against* another will. This attempt to broker a

peace between two *wills* is the response of politics. It is this response which threatens the assimilation of interiority into the realm of an impersonal reason, a result no more sympathetic to separation and interiority than is the result of the economic relation. Both politics and history act within a totality, a region without the rupture of separation; in such a situation there remains always the inescapability of death (indeed, in the alienation of the will, in the reification of personal reason into a tyrannical state, death lies).

But there is an alternative response to the threat of death. As well as turning to the brokering of politics, one can also assume a serene silence — a silence *both more and less* than language, a silence other than the forced silence of death - a resistance *other than the violence that haunts history*. One can subvert the violent clash of wills not in active resistance, but through passive delegitimation and thereby make space for the only law which counts, the law of the social relation – the sixth commandment. This resistance beyond resistance, this silence which is other than the suppression of language, is that which, born in *love*, bears a child: the child which subverts the reign of Chronos, devourer. 'It is not the *nothingness* of death that has to be surmounted, but the *passivity* to which the will is exposed inasmuch as it is mortal' (TI 243).[17] This must be done for subjectivity, for separation — and so morality — to survive. The separated being must have a route by which to survive its own death: death must be overcome, must be *transcended*, for reality to be other than war; for morality to take its place before politics.

To do so requires that we part from the view in which the I and Other are conceived merely as wills.

§3 Love and fecundity - overcoming death

It is incumbent on us now to explore the manner in which Levinas resolves the temporal paradox (the opposition of subjective and historical time) and envisages the separated existent overcoming death. This resolution will be effected through the phenomenon of *fecundity* which is outlined in the section entitled *Phenomenology of Eros* located in §IV of *Totality and Infinity*. To do this we must consider first the route through which the *time* of fecundity is opened up – the time that moves *beyond* paradox – *love*. In

17 Emphasis added.

§IV, we are presented with the disclosure of a dimension *beyond* the totality, the dimension from which the face of the Other and moral judgement hail.

This beyond first opens through love, but whilst it is from this beyond that judgement comes, in the loving (in contrast to the social) relation there is no judgement. In love the I enters into a unique relation with the Other. Similar to the ethical relation, the I relates to the face of the Other. However, in love, the I is not *judged* but pardoned. In love one *need not speak*, for one is already accepted, condoned, without language. This absence of language in love is of the utmost importance because it is this feature of the loving relation that allows for the I to choose silence, and so to debarb death.[18] In love one need not make a case for oneself, for there is a bond with the beloved that does not require language, and it is thanks to this feature of love that 'revolted by the violence of reason that reduces the apology to silence, the subjectivity [can] not only accept to be silent, but [can] renounce itself by itself, renounce itself *without violence, cease the apology for itself*' (TI 253).[19] Instead of struggling against the threat of death (the threat of silent incorporation into the regime of history) it is possible for the I to renounce all struggle by ceasing to defend itself. It can *choose silence*. Outside language lies the *beyond*.

18 There is another reason one might draw attention to this feature of love. Language, in instantiating an inter-personal reason also provides the route by which *le tiers* appears in the social relation, and in the same manner, provides that fluid medium which ossifies into the impersonal reason of politics (in a mechanism akin to the inevitable closure through articulation of the saying and the said as appearing in *Otherwise than Being* - for a consideration of the importance of the saying and the said to any political project Levinas might hold see Critchley's *The Ethics of Deconstruction*, Chapter 5.4). It is possible to argue (as does Adriaan Peperzak in *To the Other: Introduction to the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas* [West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1993], Chapter 5) that in eros we discover a familial structure which comes before any political structure - that the erotic relation is one which 'excludes the third part, [...] remains intimacy, dual solitude, closed society, the supremely non-public' (Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, p.265) (an account which is immediately at odds with Critchley's assertion that: 'politics provides the continual horizon of Levinasian ethics,' p. 223). This result of §IV might well be taken as another line of argumentation by which to assert the raising of morality over politics as we have sought it (with Levinas) since the first lines of *Totality and Infinity*. Unfortunately, we have not the space to explore this line of inquiry here.

19 Emphasis added.

'Love aims at the Other; it aims at him in his frailty [*faiblesse*]' (TI 256).[20] In this way, love does not aim at the height of the Other as encountered in the face-to-face of the social relation, but instead moves toward a beloved who, rather than judging, opens herself to the lover. What is this frailty that the Other exhibits in love? It is not the 'inferior degree of any attribute' (TI 256), not a lack of virility, it is rather a positive feature of the beloved. Levinas's description of the beloved as frail is not meant to place the beloved *below* the Other who appears in the face-to-face; it is not to strip them of the height of alterity exhibited in the ethical relation. The frailty of the beloved *is* the very alterity of the Other.

Frailty is articulated in the nudity in which the beloved presents herself to the lover; it is the nudity which lays bare the *beyond being*. The beloved stands before the lover – denuded, open, baring all – at once *beyond* this world and open to every splinter and graze with which the world threatens the beloved. It is in this nudity, in the extreme honesty with which the beloved greets the lover, that one *desires* the beloved. One desires to 'come to the assistance of his frailty' (TI 256). That is to say, the desire that one has for the lover is motivated by the manner in which, in nudity, in frailty, the Other lies in this world, all too much in this world, and yet is not of this world. One desires what Levinas terms the 'ultramateriality' of the beloved:

> [A] sort of paroxysm of materiality. Utlramateriality does not designate a simple absence of the human in the piles of rocks and sands of a lunar landscape, nor the materiality that outdoes itself, gaping under its rent forms, in ruins and wounds; it designates the exhibitionist nudity of an exorbitant presence

20 The designation of the beloved as 'frail,' in connection with Levinas's definite portrayal of the beloved as feminine might well be seen as problematic. If we had more space then we would like to discuss this. As it stands, all we can say is that the nature of frailty as it will be explored in this essay should readily evidence that it needn't be tied only to a misogynistic conception of woman. For a variety of feminist perspectives on Levinas, c.f. Stella Sandford, *The Metaphysics of Love: Gender and Transcendence in Levinas* (London: The Athlone Press, 2001) and Tina Chanter, ed., *Feminist Interpretations of Emmanuel Levinas* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001). For a *précis* of the literature see Allen's *The Philosophical Sense of Transcendence*.
Despite these concerns, we will follow Levinas in his use of the feminine pronoun.

> coming as though from farther than the frankness of the face. (TI 256)

It is in this play between presence and absence, between the here and the *beyond*, that the beloved presents him/herself not 'as a possible to be grasped' (TI 257), but as a 'clandestine' opening onto a realm beyond possibles, beyond presence. In love one desires this beyond. And the experience of loving is that of a fleeting contact with this beyond, in the manifestation of the beloved. Such a contact immerses one in this realm beyond possibilities, wherein one might leave behind the arbitrary attachment to self-identification as only a will.

How can we understand this desiring love, which glimpses the beyond but is not taken into it, not lost in it as in a mystical unity which would herald the end of separation and bespeak the return of totality (the threat of Parmenidean being)? Levinas defines this experience of a glancing contact with the beyond as the *caress*. To caress or touch the beloved is not to grasp the Other as a possession, and yet it nonetheless involves a return to the self at the very moment of acquaintance. The caress is the way the I contacts, as by a certain grace, this nude form. But this form which tells its secret, nonetheless keeps this secret. When one caresses the other, gently closing one's fingers around the thigh of the beloved, one does not take in one's hand the *beyond*. For this beyond does not permit of possession; it denies all projects and arrangements in a willed future. Rather, with the contraction of one's hand one's fingers do not take hold of that with which they make only a fleeting contact, and rather press only upon one's own palm. One moves towards the beyond, but falls back on oneself; *one transcends only to return to immanence*. Yet this experience is not one of frustration, for in the 'exhibitionist nudity' of the beloved, one desires not an object, but desires the Other as *Other*, as *wholly Other*, that which escapes the grasp. One does not loose oneself in love, but rather *finds oneself*, transformed by this beyond of which the I has caught sight; one rediscovers oneself functioning apart from the egoist, solitary operation of the will:

> The caress consists in seizing upon nothing, in soliciting what ceaselessly escapes its form toward a future never future enough, in soliciting what slips away as though it *were not yet*. It searches, it forages. It is not an intentionality of disclosure but of search: a movement unto the invisible. (TI 257)

Herein lies the opportunity to move beyond the realm of personal projects; herein lies the opening onto a 'future never future enough, more remote than the possible' (TI 255). In the figure of the beloved one desires the *beyond* and moves towards this beyond in a befitting manner, opposed to any prehensile annulment of alterity.[21] This desire is wholly opposed to violence, for it does not see the Other as a will, nor is the activity of desire itself an activity of willing. In love the subject is not met by an Other who, as an oppositional will, threatens to silence them (who threatens death), but rather the I joins the beloved Other in a silent communion. Herein lies the route by which death can be overcome.

But this *beyond* onto which love opens is not consummated, is not *accomplished* in love. The beyond is *'produced'* only in the fecundity which love makes possible. The son[22] is the product of love, which, as a product *not produced in a willing act*, allows the I to transcend itself, allows *trans-substantiation*: a movement beyond death. To understand the operation of fecundity we must first spend a moment considering the manner in which the lover and beloved come together in the loving relation; that is to consider *voluptuosity*.

Voluptuosity expresses the union of the lover and the beloved, the coincidence of sensing and sensed. It is this coincidence, this satiety of feeling in love, wherein the lover loves 'the love the Beloved bears [them]' (TI 266), which accounts for the transformation Levinas describes as taking place in the lover. It is a unity which respects difference or alterity. In love the I desires not to contain or control the lover, but to revel in the coincidence of feeling uniting the parties across the distance of separation. The I loves the love of the beloved which is a separated being. Thus, in love sensing and sensed coincide, but not as a One; there is a similarity, a mirroring, but not a monism. So in the 'experience' of the caress (which is not experience proper as it transcends sensibility), the hardened identity of the I – holder of projects – is transformed in the intimacy of love: 'An amorphous non-I sweeps away the I into an absolute future where it

21 'Eros is not accomplished as a subject that fixes an object, nor as a pro-jection, towards a possible. Its movement consists in going beyond the possible' (TI 261).

22 The gendering of the child is another point at which we might raise issue with Levinas's account of love and fecundity. For a discussion of this see Sandford's *The Metaphysics of Love*, Chapter 3.

escapes itself and loses its position as a subject. Its "intention" no longer goes forth unto the *light*, unto the meaningful' (TI 259). In love I bleed into the beloved, swept away by an 'amorphous non-I', but I also hold onto my identity. What is lost is a tenacious hold on my projects. It is in this coincidence *beyond* projects, in which we have already noted the opening onto a 'future beyond possibles', that the I and the lover can bring forth a child.

The I is transformed not through itself and the beloved alone in love, but this transformation is consummated in becoming another, quite literally an Other, as the child.

What is key is that this child is brought about beyond my volition, apart from my willing project or intent. The child is consummated quite outside of my power to work, or to 'labour' to bring it about. The child is born as by a miracle, produced by me, but not *willed* by me. In this manner the child takes on a structure and ontological significance other than that of the 'work.' As a product occurring outside the will, the child does not harbour the same threat of silence that lingers in the work. The child, rather than bearing the threat of death, allows one, by renouncing the will, to overcome death:

> The project invented or created, unwonted and new, emanates from a solitary head to illuminate and to comprehend. It dissolves into light and converts exteriority into idea. Whence we can define power as presence in a world that by right resolves itself into my ideas. *But the encounter with the Other* [...] *is required in order that the future of the child come to pass from beyond the possible, beyond projects*. (TI 267)

Through voluptuosity I lose my projects in the Other, in the beloved, and as such the son is never only my project, never a path I illuminate alone. The union (without dissolution) of lover and beloved in voluptuous rapture gives to the I the 'possibility' of a project beyond projects – a project to be accomplished in the region of the *beyond*. As Levinas writes, 'both my own and non-mine, a possibility of myself but also a possibility of the other, of the Beloved, my future does not enter into the logical essence of the

possible' (TI 267). The son is a product of both myself and the beloved, beyond my control and beyond any desire to control.[23]

And in this sense, as a future beyond possibles, paternity is both a self-identity and at once a distinction within identity. I identify not only with myself, but also with my child, who is both I and an Other: 'me a stranger to myself [*moi étranger à soi*]' (TI 267):

> Fecundity encloses a duality of the Identical. It does not denote all that I can grasp—my possibilities; it denotes my future, which is not a future of the same—not a new avatar: not a history and events that can occur to a residue of identity, an identity holding on by a thread, an I that would ensure the continuity of avatars. (TI 268)

The son is a future which is my future insofar as it depends on my past, yet it does not fall into that past, i.e. it does not merge with that past. Certainly, the son does not take up my history or my identity completely as his own, despite the fact that he still relates to my history and my identity. In the son a new future is described, a future of the I which escapes the I's past. As Levinas writes, this future is 'my future in a very new sense, despite the discontinuity' (TI 268). The future accomplished in the son is a future *beyond* as a result of this very discontinuity. It is a future in which the I is not encumbered by its identity or its past. 'The relation with the child – that is, the relation with the other that is not a power, but fecundity – establishes relationship with the absolute future, or infinite time' (TI 268).

The son is infinite, forever recommencing youth. A future without age, outside this charnel house of the body; a future which escapes death: 'Fecundity continues history without producing old age. Infinite time does not bring eternal life to an ageing subject; it is *better* across the discontinuity of generations, punctuated by the inexhaustible youths of the child' (TI 268). The son, a product of the I, goes beyond the I, trans-substantiates the I, transports the I beyond its will. 'By a total transcendence, the transcendence of trans-substantiation, the I is, in the child, an other' (TI 267). It is not in the lyrics of the poets that death is

23 Of course it is possible that one might force the child, might force one's own longings for life, one's own projects, on the child. But the ideal of parenthood - no less the ontological nature of paternity - is not to act as *Emile*'s tutor.

overcome, but in the figure of the child. As myself, beyond my will, the I escapes the threat of deathly silence under the reign of impersonal history: fecundity forces a rupture in the timeline of history.

§4 What it means for the *Good* to be produced and the signification of eschatological time

'Fecundity engendering fecundity accomplishes *goodness*.'
(TI 269)[24]

The escape from totality, the Infinite beyond which is opened through love and fecundity is, in its surplus, the accomplishment of the good. This nomenclature is not simply the recycling of a Platonic phrase, but that the beyond is produced as goodness is important for understanding the divine nature of the beyond. To escape the confines of history in eschatological time (which we explore below) is to move into a time of divine judgement; it is to move into a time in which God judges history through the Other that judges the I.

The good beyond being, which fecundity accomplishes, cannot be divorced from the time beyond history. The time of eschatology is a time in which the whole of history is judged, not because of that history's coming to an end, but becomes something from outside of history intervenes. This beyond being which opens in fecundity is the region from which the face precipitates into the consciousness of the I. The Good is the region from which the judgement of morality is issued, spoken by the Other; the judgement – obscure light – which filters through the face of the Other in the social relation. This beyond, this *infinite time*, is necessary for morality. As Peperzak notes: 'The *aporia* to which the contradiction between the cruelty of world history and the demand for a fair judgement [that open up in the face-to-face encounter] leads cannot be resolved without appealing to another time and "history" beyond the actuality of this encounter.'[25]

The face appears within the totality, but there must be something beyond the face, something to which the language of the other speaks, for there to be the possibility of eschatological time—for judgement to issue in the face-to-face. If not, eschatological judgement is condemned by the

24 Emphasis added.
25 Peperzak, *To the Other*, p. 195.

time of history and reason, the apology is silenced, and the survivor (not God) alone is judge. We saw that in history there was not time for moral judgement, only a time of violent conflict. History acts as closure, as judgement, to be sure – it caps off a totality, drawing the separated being out of their interiority, into a time in which they are judged in silence. The discontinuity introduced through fecundity opposes this. It is an opening that denies the closure of history, the once and for all appropriation and containment of dead works:

> The judgement of consciousness must refer to a reality beyond the sentence pronounced by history, which is also a cessation and an end. Hence truth requires as its ultimate condition an infinite time, the condition for both goodness and the transcendence of the face. The fecundity of subjectivity, by which the I survives itself, is a condition required for the truth of subjectivity, the clandestine dimension of the judgement of God. (TI 247)

Fecundity is this rupture in the timeline. Through it the eschatological breaks forth out of the historical, drawing each present out of its history, forcing a clean instant from out of duration. It is in *rupture*, in *disturbance*, *shock*, *fissure*, that morality resides; in the infinite which lies like a fault line in totality – the beyond which moves beyond from within – from which radiate the tremors of *Goodness*. This irruption of eschatological time (this 'end of history'[26]) completes the circle which is formed of the trinity of ruptures found in the text; and so consummates the departure from a linear (classical) or dialectic logic which *Totality and Infinity* promises.

The ruptures: *Infinity* within *Totality*, as encountered in, as overflowing, the separated subject; *Transcendence* within *Immanence*, the voluptuousness of the erotic relation, of *love*; and the *Eschatological* time which calls an end to *History*, not as a judgement at the end of the 'long arm' of history, but as discrete yet infinite judgement, which bears not on a history, but on each instant in an *infinite* time open to the Good. As we read *Totality and Infinity*, this is the order in which we encounter these three sites of disturbance, just as it is the order in which they are

26 Cf. Emmanuel Levinas, 'Messianic Texts' in *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism*, trans. by Seán Hand (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

phenomenologically encountered, for Levinas's method is, as he confirms in the preface, a phenomenological one (TI 28). Yet there lies in this sequence an order of dependence which does not follow a linear route: infinity, the first disturbance within totality, i.e. the infinite distance of separation from I to the Other, is opened up by (and dependent upon) the production of the *Good* and Infinite, eschatological, time accomplished in fecundity. In a similar manner, there can be no fecundity without love (the 'second' rupture), nor love without separation (the 'first'). *The ruptures of Totality is a circle turning both directions; to infinity in both directions*: to the *infinity of separation* and the *infinity of time*.

Without fecundity there would only be an insular subjectivity threatened by the death harboured in its own willing, its own corporeal existence—a willing that opens onto the threat of an objective history in which the will is silenced. Fecundity allows for morality, which *is, only* if it can be maintained that 'being is exteriority'; not a logical or dialectic suppression of separation and personality. Fecundity allows for the infinite distance between existents which is exteriority: 'The discontinuity of generations, that is, death and fecundity, releases Desire from the prison of its own subjectivity and puts an end to the monotony of its identity' (TI 304). Fecundity emancipates transcendence;[27] permits the '*exister multiple*' on which the *truth* of morality rests.

> Being is produced as multiple and as split into same and other; this is its ultimate structure. It is society, and hence it is time. We thus leave the philosophy of Parmenidean being. (TI 269)

We have seen, then, that the key to Levinas's account of totality and infinity is the production of the latter within the former, and more precisely we have seen that this production finds its locus in death. In death three timelines – subjective, historical, and eschatological – make contact and immediately diverge. The struggle in being between the novelty of the subject's will and the impersonal force of history is escaped in the opening of an eschatological horizon. The conflict (war) inherent in being demands, produces, the beyond. Levinas is not, as we stated at the opening of this essay, a simple Platonist. His account of transcendence is not one of worlds (be it two, fewer, or more), and it is at no point an account of

27 C.f. *Totality and Infinity*, §IV, E. Transcendence and Fecundity.

degraded perfection. Levinasian transcendence is rather a temporal transcendence—the transcendence of a future never to be made present.

Adrian Johnston: *Prolegomena to Any Future Materialism, Volume I*

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Review of Adrian Johnston, *Prolegomena to Any Future Materialism, Volume I: The Outcome of Contemporary French Philosophy* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2013), Pbk. pp. 280.

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Adrian Johnston's *The Outcome of Contemporary French Philosophy* is the first volume of his yet to be finished trilogy *Prolegomena to Any Future Materialism*. *Outcome* represents an attempt at 'clearing the ground' within contemporary philosophy for Johnston's 'transcendental materialism', which he will develop in the rest of *Prolegomena*. Volume II, *A Weak Nature Alone*, will provide the necessary conditions ('at the level of metatranscendental substance') and volume III, *Substance also as Subject*, will provide the sufficient conditions (at the level of transcendental subjectivity) for his philosophy.

Johnston's critique of contemporary materialism in *Outcome* focuses on Jacques Lacan, Alain Badiou, and Quentin Meillassoux. He treats them as forming a philosophical lineage, with Badiou formulating a mathematical ontology faithful to the late Lacanian thesis, 'the big Other does not exist,' and with Meillassoux's speculative realism bolstering Badiou's attempts at an (anti-Kantian) asubjective transcendentalism. Like Badiou and Meillassoux, Žižek is also one of Johnston's 'fellow travellers' in transcendental materialism and so his 2008 book, *Žižek's Ontology*, can be read as a sort of companion piece to this first volume of *Prolegomena*.

While *Žižek's Ontology* uncovers the materialist kernel of Kantian and post-Kantian idealism, *Outcome* exposes the disavowed idealist tendencies of contemporary French materialism. Johnston's 'immanent critique' of Lacan, Badiou, and Meillassoux shows that they fail on their own terms to develop a materialism that is truly robust, atheistic, and materialist: (1) a robust materialism would sufficiently account for subjectivity without reducing it to an epiphenomenon in the manner of eliminative materialism; (2) an authentically atheist materialism would be purged of all repressed religiosity and safeguarded against the 'spiritualist obscurantism' of philosophical idealism; (3) a genuinely materialist materialism would be not merely contemplative or speculative but instead engaged with empirical sciences that study concrete (material) entities. According to Johnston, the failure of Lacan, Badiou, and Meillassoux to provide such a materialism stems from their reliance on mathematical formalism (and idiosyncratic rationalism) and their shared anti-naturalism, e.g., their antipathy toward biology and neuroscience.

Johnston begins *The Outcome of Contemporary French Philosophy* with a discussion of the challenge of secularising materialism. The title is an allusion to Friedrich Engels's essay, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy*. Johnston seeks to recover the spirit of Engels's and Lenin's polemics in which they 'expose and critique a number of [...] efforts to disguise and pass off idealist notions as materialist concepts' (13-14). He takes it as a given that any materialism worthy of the name must also be atheistic, and he bemoans the fact that even contemporary materialism has been infected by the post-secular turn in continental philosophy. He appropriates Lacan's Lenin-style critique of eighteenth-century French materialism (à la Sade, Diderot, and la Mettrie), which allegedly represents the basic philosophical paradigm of modern natural science. Lacan argues that materialism has not yet been genuinely secularised insofar as matter comes to assume the attributes traditionally predicated of God (e.g., 'eternality', 'indestructibility', 'omnipotence', etc.). In short, materialism remains 'religious' insofar as it rehashes the religious belief in the existence of the 'big Other', albeit in the figure of Nature or Matter. Adopting this Lacanian insight, Johnston articulates a formula for a genuinely atheistic materialism: 'there is just a weak nature, and nothing more. All that exists are heterogeneous ensembles of less-than-fully synthesized material beings, internally conflicted, hodgepodge humbles of elements-in-tension—and that is it' (37). Badiou

and Meillassoux also develop materialist ontologies 'in light of the nonexistence of Being as the totality of the One-All', however, Johnston argues, they lapse into spiritualist obscurantism when it comes to providing an immanent ontogenetic account of the subject.

Johnston points to symptoms of 'the return of the religious repressed' (92) in his rigorous textual analyses of Lacan, Badiou, and Meillassoux. In the case of Lacan, Johnston focuses on the problem of phylogenetic 'archaic heritage' in Freud's metapsychological speculations. His aim is to question Lacan's prohibition on investigations into the historical origins of language and anything that precedes the symbolic-linguistic. Lacan points out that speculations about preverbal structures – with respect to both phylogenetic ancestry and ontogenetic infancy – represent a methodologically fraught attempt to approach the real from within the conditioned confines of the symbolic order. The pre-symbolic (phylogenetic) real is not only epistemologically inaccessible but also an object that 'lends itself to organized deliriums'.[1] In addition to the problem of retrospective fantasy of origins, Lacan also rejects what he takes to be the determinist and essentialist assumptions in evolutionary anthropology, as in Ernst Haeckel's thesis that 'ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny'. Lacan does not deny determinism per se, but he articulates it in terms of structuralism instead of naturalism. Indeed, according to his notion of the *parlêtre*, the individual as a speaking being undergoes a process of denaturalisation in his (traumatic) entry into the symbolic order, whereby he is overwritten by signifiers and becomes irreducible to his original genetic constitution. While Lacan's ideas regarding the 'subject of the signifier' are essential to Johnston's transcendental materialist theory of subjectivity, he takes issue with Lacan's foreclosure of pre-symbolic history, especially in the phylogenetic sense. Drawing on the work of Daniel Lord Smail, Johnston notes that Lacanians suffer from a 'Judeo-Christian hangover', a term referring to the narrow framing of human history 'according to the short chronology of sacred, or Mosaic, history.'[2] Lacan's use of religious rhetoric – e.g., 'in the beginning was the Word' and the 'Holy Spirit'– draws him dangerously close not only to

1 Jacques Lacan, 'Le symbolique, l'imaginaire et le réel' in *Des noms-du-père*, edited by Jacques-Alain Miller (2005), p. 27. Paris: Éditions du Seuil., quoted in Johnston, *PAFM Vol.1*, p. 65.

2 Daniel Lord Smail, *On Deep History and the Brain*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (2008), pp. 3-4, quoted in Johnston, *PAFM Vol.1*, p. 71.

linguistic idealism but also spiritualist obscurantism. In addition, Lacan problematically appropriates the Christian notion of creation ex nihilo in his discussion of the supposedly cause-less irruption of the symbolic order. In the forthcoming volumes of *Prolegomena*, Johnston will focus on phylogenetic and ontogenetic questions regarding the pre-symbolic in order to give Lacanian metapsychology a materialist/naturalist foundation.

According to Johnston, unintended vestiges of religiosity also remain in Badiouian materialism. Johnston begins by discussing Badiou's Lenin-style distinction between 'democratic materialism' and the 'materialist dialectic'. The former, as Johnston notes, is 'wholly compatible and thoroughly complicit with the socioeconomic order of late capitalism' (89). Its presupposition, according to Badiou, is that 'there are only bodies and languages', while in the materialist dialectic, 'there are only bodies and languages, except that there are also truths.'[3] Although he endorses this distinction in principle, Johnston takes issue with Badiou's concept of truth insofar as he grants truth only to the purely formal sciences like mathematics, while dismissing empirical sciences like biology and neuroscience as inadequately formalised/conceptualised and as bordering on pseudoscience. Johnston worries that '[Badiou] risks uncritically ceding the entire ground of the life sciences to democratic materialism's biopolitical scientism' (90). As Johnston notes, Badiou inherits his antinaturalism directly from Sartrean existentialism, which he attempts to synthesise with Althusserian structuralism: the result is a mathematised ontology of Being as the non-All combined with a theory of evental subjectification. 'The subject of the event' is where Johnston detects the persistent problem of religiosity in Badiou's purportedly immanentist and materialist ontology. He notes, 'Without an explanation and delineation of the biomaterial conditions of possibility for the genesis of a more-than-biological subject of evental truth, Badiou is left with obscurantist religious language,' as per his 'persistent use of the theologically saturated signifier "grace"' (92). Johnston stresses that the life sciences and neuroscience are no longer reductive in the way that Badiou believes but are in fact now reflective of dialectical materialism. Johnston further suggests that 'the sciences of the body, properly understood, are presently pointing to what could be called an existential materialism,' (91) given that they indicate a fundamental indeterminacy in

3 Alain Badiou, *Logiques des mondes: Lëtre et l'événement, 2*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, (2006), pp. 12-13, quoted in Johnston, *PAFM Vol.1*, p. 90.

human nature compatible with the idea that existence precedes essence. Johnston prefers to forge an alliance with the natural sciences in the battle against religion as he believes that 'despite Badiou himself repeatedly trumpeting the "death of god" as supposedly brought about [...] by Cantor's infinitization of infinity itself, it will take more than mathematics to kill (the idea of) God once and for all' (101).

Like Lacan and Badiou, Meillassoux's materialism represents a Lenin-style assault on religious metaphysics and Kantian-style idealism. Johnston credits him with overcoming the 'short chronology of sacred history' with his focus on ancestrality. Meillassoux's ontology of 'hyper-Chaos' seems to draw the most radical conclusions from the Lacanian thesis that the big Other does not exist. His argument for the 'necessity of contingency' builds on Badiou's appropriation of the Cantorian conception of infinity and relies on a radical rejection of the principle of sufficient reason. Like Lacan, he regards the notion of creation ex nihilo in radically atheist terms. Meillassoux is close to Kant in his rejection of the God-Substance of pre-Kantian dogmatic metaphysics, however, like Badiou he is vehemently opposed to the idealist motif of epistemological finitude, which he blames for the new fideism in 'post-secular' continental philosophy. That said, Meillassoux goes on to develop a 'divinology', in which he denies absolutely the existence of the eternal God, yet argues that it is impossible to refute the future possibility of a God that may come into existence by way of creation ex nihilo. Divinology denies the *être* of God as per traditional metaphysics, yet it allows for the future *peut-être* of God. This is indeed a paradoxical reversal of the notion of creation ex nihilo, which theology uses to justify faith in God the Creator. Meillassoux paradoxically justifies faith in the possibility of God the Created. Johnston laments the fact that Meillassoux's demolition of post-Kantian fideism gives way to a speculative messianism that could bolster the anti-materialist and post-secular strands of contemporary thought. He also laments Meillassoux's assumption that atheism 'inevitably results in the "impasse" of "despair" as "sadness, tepidity, cynicism and the disparagement of what makes us human"',[4] and he compelling argues that Meillassoux's narrow

4 Quentin Meillassoux, 'Appendix: Excerpts from L'inexistence divine', Translated by Graham Harman in *Quentin Meillassoux: Philosophy in the Making*, by Graham Harman, 1 75-238. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, (2011), p. 237, quoted in Johnston, *PAFM Vol.1*, p. 199.

divinological focus on the inextinguishable possibility of a God-to-come, instead of the infinite other possibilities, betrays a certain wishful-thinking. Johnston is particularly harsh in his critique of Meillassoux, but he is keen to show that his divinology is not a complete aberration from the materialist lineage beginning with Lacan. Indeed it is a symptom that can be traced back to the anti-naturalist and formalist/neo-rationalist tendencies in contemporary continental materialism.

Johnston remarks that Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Mao 'must be rolling around in their graves', given the less than unequivocal stance against religiosity among their materialist heirs. For his part, Johnston endorses dialectical materialism with critical modifications. He approvingly notes that dialectical materialism is non-mechanistic in that it 'admits a bidirectional flow of causal influences between matter and mind' and it is non-eliminative in that it acknowledges a meaningful distinction between matter and mind. However, Johnston notes that dialectical materialism remains a 'naïve' realism insofar as it 'fails to include and account for the place of the role of the mental observer of the nonmental object facts and realities [...]' (152). Thus dialectical materialism remains very much susceptible to Kantian critique. Agreeing with Žižek, Johnston states, 'one cannot be an authentic materialist if one presupposes the being of a mind distinct from matter without delineating the material production of this very distinction itself' (152). Johnston argues that materialism has to provide a 'metatranscendental' account of the immanent genesis of the transcendental distinction between mind and matter (or, Thought and Being). Badiouian and Meillassouxian speculative realism represents an attempt to surmount transcendental critique and to embarrass Kantianism by aligning it with the supposedly absurd solipsism of Berkeleyan metaphysical idealism. Although their post-dialectical materialism avoids naïve realism, they nevertheless fail to provide a robust account of the ontogenetic emergence of the mind, or, 'more-than-material subject' (Johnston's term). Not only are the 'transcendental materialist' efforts of Lacan, Badiou, and Meillassoux insufficiently robust, but, Johnston argues, they also harbour problematic idealist tendencies.

Following Badiou, Johnston notes that Lacan provides important resources for steering materialism between the Scylla of scientism and the Charybdis of obscurantism, however, he also endorses Badiou's objections to the Lacanian tendency toward 'linguistic idealism', i.e., 'an antimaterialist, macro-level idealism of the symbolic order' (17). That said,

Johnston goes on to show that Badiou's and Meillassoux's efforts to avoid both Lacanian idealism and naïve realism lead them to lapse into absurdity and to rely on obscurantist notions. Furthermore, he argues that deep vestiges of anti-materialist idealism remain in Badiou and Meillassoux.

Badiou's ontology is avowedly Platonist, by which Badiou means that the mathematics he employs is not merely a finite discursive construct fabricated by the human mind, but rather that it touches on the Real, or being qua being. Johnston points out that the defence of Badiou's materialism along these lines confuses materialism with metaphysical realism. Badiouian mathematics may be ontologically real but this does not make it *eo ipso* material. Johnston suggests that Badiou's 'justifications for equating ontology with mathematics [...] rest, at least in certain respects, on [...] Heidegger's notion of ontological difference,' and he challenges 'the very possibility of simultaneously being a materialist...and... accepting a clear-cut distinction between the ontological and the ontic' (81-2), noting that a materialist should be suspicious of Badiou's pure ontology of being qua being. Johnston goes on to argue that Badiou ultimately fails to step out of Kant's 'long shadow' in his two-pronged attempt to develop a non-subjective transcendentalism and a non-transcendental subjectivity. Badiou's talk of spatiotemporal appearance of worlds before or without a subject purportedly lapses into absurdity and his ungrounded notion of the '*compter-pour-un*' – i.e., the transcendental condition/operation by which the pure multiple of being qua being is constituted as a structured appearance – remains mired in speculative obscurantism. (Badiou himself suggests that counting-for-one is akin to the transcendental unity of apperception minus the self-conscious subject). Moreover, Badiou's 'immanentist' account of the 'transubstantiated' 'subject of the event' seems no more genuinely materialist than Kant's account of the subject, insofar as it relies on obscure spiritual notions like 'grace' and 'fidelity' and not on naturalistic ontogenetic explanations.

Johnston reads Meillassoux's speculative realism as an attempt to furnish Badiou with what the latter needs in order to construct a transcendentalism 'purified of all Kantian and/or idealist traces of an invariably accompanying subjectivity' (9). In Johnston's view, Meillassoux not only falls short in this regard, but he also 'implicitly contests Badiou's claims to be an uncompromising, full-fledged materialist' (9) insofar as his speculative realism depends on discoveries in the natural sciences, which

in Badiou are not granted the ontological dignity of formal mathematics. Meillassoux's 'arche-fossil' argument serves both a critical and a transcendental function. This argument is the heart of Meillassoux's 'Leninist' strategy of reducing all idealisms to the 'absurdity of a Berkeley-style solipsism' and forcing them into a comparison with ridiculous Christian denials of discoveries in palaeontology, geology, and astrophysics. Second, Meillassoux uses this argument to construct a metatranscendental account of ancestral space-time as the necessary condition for the transcendental. However, Johnston points to some problems with Meillassoux's argument. First he notes that he has no argument on rational grounds against an 'absolutization of the correlate', as in absolute idealism, the implication being that Meillassoux's invocation of Berkeleyan solipsism sidesteps the challenge of post-Kantian idealism in Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. Meillassoux himself endorses a neo-rationalism that entertains wild 'logical possibilities' that are prima facie no more tenable than the solipsism of absolute idealism. This becomes clear in Meillassoux's ontology of hyper-Chaos, which Johnston describes as a 'rationalist ontologization of Hume's empiricist epistemology of causality' (161). Johnston shows how Meillassouxian contingency is unable to explain why reality and experience are not radically unstructured anarchic flux (i.e., the problem of frequentialism) and he argues that Meillassoux unwittingly veers close to Leibnizian rationalism, despite his rejection of pre-Kantian metaphysical necessity and the logical principle of sufficient reason. Johnston takes him to betray the spirit of dialectical materialism in repeating the (pre-Kantian) motif in anti-empirical rationalist metaphysics of conflating logical possibility with ontological possibility. Johnston uses Hume to argue that Meillassoux's radical contingency is ultimately unreasonable and no less absurd than the idealist philosophies he mocks. Finally, Johnston criticises Meillassouxian hyper-Chaos for 'reviving the originally religious notion of creation ex nihilo' (167). This is important for Johnston as he wishes to distinguish his 'genetic transcendentalism' (borrowing from Schelling, Hegel, and Lacan) from Meillassoux's idea of genesis ex nihilo, which responds to the 'hard problem' of how life and consciousness emerge with the non-explanation of hyper-Chaos.

Johnston suggests in passing that Badiou's and Meillassoux's 'non-Hegelian assaults on Kantianism [...] ultimately fail' (9). Reading *Outcome* in conjunction with *Žižek's Ontology*, we can assume that he

thinks that Badiou's and Meillassoux's emergentist accounts of the subject fail because they also do not proceed along Hegelian and Schellingian lines. Emergentist ontologies, like those of Badiou and Meillassoux, attempt to advance beyond dialectical materialism, which itself fails to adequately overcome naïve dualism. However, because of their anti-naturalism, Johnston charges, emergentist accounts in Lacan, Badiou, and Meillassoux risk lapsing into spiritualist obscurantism. Johnston's transcendental materialism represents an attempt to reconcile a materialist monist ontology with a 'genetic transcendentalism'. In *Žižek's Ontology*, he constructs a speculative ontology (on the basis of Žižek's amalgamations of Kant, Schelling, Hegel, and Lacan) that outlines 'the immanent genesis of the transcendent'. Johnston distinguishes his own position from Spinoza-style dual-aspect monism, which allows for epistemological dualism (unlike eliminative materialism) but still denies 'ontological heft' to at least one of the aspects. He contrasts this in *Žižek's Ontology* with William Hasker's notion of 'emergent dualism', which stipulates that the mind emerges out of the brain and achieves relative independence, and that the emergent mind and the originary brain reciprocally influence one another. This is important for Johnston's attempt to develop a naturalist emergentism as a foundation for dialectical materialism. In *Outcome*, Johnston says in passing that his position can be characterised as an 'emergent dual-aspect monism', wherein both aspects 'enjoy the heft of actual existence [...]' (180). Yet, as he acknowledges, Johnston's attempt to account for the genesis of the 'transcendental' – i.e., the domain of subjectivity, which, as in Kant, furnishes the possibility-conditions for experience – is not the same as the cognitive-neuroscientific account of the emergence of consciousness. It remains to be seen in the forthcoming volumes how Johnston will reconcile his conception of subjectivity (via his amalgamation of German idealism and Lacanian metapsychology) with models of the brain-mind relationship taken from cognitive neuroscience and analytic philosophy of mind. This project of forging a rapprochement between transcendental philosophy and the contemporary sciences is an enormously tall order and it is not yet clear how he will make good on his plan to provide the 'sufficient conditions of possibility' for subjects by means of contemporary science while 'preserving' (in the sense of *Aufhebung*) the subject. We know that Johnston rejects the motif of 'embodied subjectivity' (as in, e.g., Merleau-Pontian phenomenology), but his recurrent references in

Outcome to 'more-than-material' subjectivity still do not tell us much about what conception of subjectivity is at issue here. If we look to his *Žižek's Ontology*, we can assume that Johnston will continue to defend a Hegelian conception (with Lacanian modifications) of subjectivity as dynamic negativity coterminous with self-sundering substance, but we might expect to see in his forthcoming project the emergence of a significantly different conception of subjectivity. If so, given that Johnston is a subtle dialectical thinker, we can expect that it will involve an *Aufhebung* of his previous Žižekian amalgamation of German idealism and Lacanian metapsychology.

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Idealism and Emergence: Three Questions for Adrian Johnston

BENJAMIN BERGER

Adrian Johnston is one of the most exciting voices in contemporary philosophical debates regarding the relationship between the material world and mind, or what Johnston calls 'more-than-material subjectivity'. Despite the fact that Johnston ordinarily uses the term 'idealism' in a pejorative manner (preferring, for his own project, the label 'transcendental materialism'), he draws heavily upon German idealism in an effort to defend his account of the emergence of subjectivity. In what follows, I raise three questions for Johnston's new materialism, all of which stem from a concern for the relationship between German idealism, *Naturphilosophie*, and conceptions of emergence.

I. Transcendental Subjectivity

Johnston's transcendental materialism aims to elucidate the manner in which subjectivity emerges from matter. But in what sense is this emergent subjectivity *transcendental*?

It should go without saying that Johnston's 'transcendental' must be understood in light of his insistence that his materialism necessarily incorporates aspects of Kant's critical turn. But how are we to understand the Kantian heritage within Johnston's transcendental materialism? Johnston does not simply *invert* Kant's transcendental philosophy, such that matter becomes the transcendental field for an emerging subject. Rather, Johnston sees material nature as the 'metatranscendental' plane from which transcendental subjectivity arises. How then might we understand the transcendental nature of this subjectivity?

As I see it, the following are the two most basic ways one might understand the notion of an emergent subject:

> Either: 1) the subject which emerges is a being that 'immanently *transcends*' matter insofar as the human animal achieves an ontological structure that 'goes beyond' the mechanical, chemical, and organic structures of the natural world. Such a subject would be *distinct* from nature and yet wholly dependent upon nature as its material origin. (This, I take it, is the manner in which Hegel remains a post-Kantian philosopher, unabashedly dedicated to a robust conception of freedom, but equally committed to elucidating how Spinozist substance immanently *becomes* this subjective freedom.)
>
> Or: 2) the subject which emerges from material nature is *transcendental* subjectivity, responsible for conditioning the world for possible objective experience. Such a transcendental subjectivity would not be identical to the cognising individual (empirical subject), but would rather define the very *structure* of the world as rationally organised, i.e. consisting of substances, causes and effects, etc. It follows that prior to the emergence of this transcendental subjectivity, nature would not only lack individual subjects or a class of subjects, but it would lack all rationality *as such*.

In the postface to the first volume of his *Prolegomena to Any Future Materialism*, Johnston writes, 'Perhaps rewriting [transcendental materialism] as "transcendent(al) materialism" might be more appropriate and accurate.'[1] Such a label would indicate that Johnston is 'deliberately play[ing] with the erroneous but oft-made equivocation between the transcendental and the transcendent.'[2] But it isn't clear to me what novel conception of subjectivity results from playing with the transcendental/transcendent distinction, and in fact, this play seems to only collapse the difference between the two.

Allow me to return to options (1) and (2) above in order to draw out this point. If (1) subjectivity emerges from substance as an 'immanent transcendence', then Johnston is right to demand that philosophy provide both an ontogenetic *and* phylogenetic account of this subjectivity. But if

1 Adrian Johnston, *Prolegomena to Any Future Materialism, Volume I: The Outcome of Contemporary French Philosophy* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2013), p. 178.

2 Ibid.

(2) *transcendental* subjectivity, i.e. reason *as such*, is emergent, then a further explanation of such emergence is in order, namely, a *logogenetic* account of how the rational structuring of the cosmos *itself* arises from a pre-rational ground. In other words, the emergence of *transcendental* subjectivity cannot be reduced to phylogeny, but must be thought of in terms of *logogeny* or logogenesis.[3]

Although (1) the immanently transcendent subject and (2) transcendental subjectivity are logically distinct and therefore require logically distinct genetic accounts, one can certainly think of them as coinciding and thereby tie logogeny to phylogeny. One might think, for example, that at a particular moment in the evolutionary development of the human brain, human being transcends the merely organic realm and *in doing so* the world becomes rationally organised for the first time via the emerging transcendental subjectivity corresponding to emerging empirical subjects. According to this perspective, prior to the emergence of the human species, nature is entirely without determination (i.e., without substances, causes and effects, etc.), since the transcendental subjectivity which structures the world only arises with the emergence of human beings, and, moreover, only *for* human beings. This interpretation of the emergence of subjectivity is based upon a psychological reading of Kant, and for that reason it has absolutely nothing to do with the fundamental insight of idealism, that being is rational. Furthermore, by making the rational structure of the world dependent on human thought, this position undermines its own efforts to describe the emergence of subjectivity, since this pre-rational emergence must lack all rational structure. It is worth mentioning here that Johnston's suggestion to write transcendental materialism as 'transcendent(al) materialism' invites reading his project along these lines, but I would be surprised if this were Johnston's intention, particularly considering his objections to Meillassouxian hyper-chaos.

3 It should be clear that I use the term 'logogenesis' to mean something very different from its ordinary sense in Schelling scholarship, i.e. a philosophical method whereby reason *comprehends* nature in successive categorial stages. Cf. Hermann Krings, 'Die Konstruktion in der Philosophie: Ein Beitrag zu Schellings Logik der Natur' in *Aspekte der Kultursoziologie: Aufsätze Soziologie, Philosophie, Anthropologie und Geschichte der Kirche zum 60. Geburtstag von Mohammed Rassem*, ed. Justin Stagl (Berlin: Dieter Reimer, 1982). I employ the term 'logogenesis' to signify the actual genesis of rationality as opposed to a philosophical method of construction.

Let us consider another possible interpretation of the emergence of subjectivity with reference to emergent subjects (1) and (2) above. What if both the immanently transcendent subject and transcendental subjectivity indeed emerge, but their geneses do not coincide? It is possible to conceive of the emergence of reason as prior to the emergence of human beings (or, for that matter, prior to the emergence of organic life). I believe something like this is at work in the thought of the late Schelling. In the Munich lectures *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, Schelling considers how the world became rational:

> The whole world lies, so to speak, in the nets of the understanding or of reason, but the question is *how* exactly it got into those nets, since there is obviously something other and something *more* than mere reason in the world, indeed there is something which strives beyond these barriers.[4]

It is important to note that, for Schelling, the world does not become entangled in reason because of a particular or generic existence; the genesis of reason is distinct from (and more fundamental than) the potentiation of nature into spiritual life. As we saw above, if logogeny and phylogeny coincide, then prior to the emergence of human spirit, nature must lack *all* rationality—an anti-idealist position Schelling rejects even in his latest lectures. That nature itself 'lies in the nets of reason' is therefore not due to the development of the human brain, but to an ontological event more fundamental than the emergence of the human species. From this perspective, the emergence of the transcendental is distinct from the emergence of that being (or species) which immanently transcends nature. Whether or not the late Schelling sees this genesis of reason as occurring in time is not important here. What matters is that Schelling raises the question about the genesis of structure *without* conceiving of this structure as dependent upon human subjects.

These are the two basic ways one might see the emergence of transcendental subjectivity, either *with* a species of 'immanently transcendent' beings or *before* the emergence of such beings. From a Hegelian perspective, both of these accounts of the emergence of subjectivity are deeply flawed, because they each depend upon a

4 F.W.J. Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, trans. by Andrew Bowie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 147.

distinction between a pre-rational ground and rational existence. Whether the transcendental is seen to arise *with* or *before* the emergence of empirical subjects, the very notion that the transcendental has a pre-history means there is some originary, nonrational truth of being which reason cannot access. In this way, *any* genetic account of reason is caught within a logic of essence, presupposing a gap between an irrational essence and a rational appearance—a gap that is overcome, according to Hegel, in the logical transition from essence to the concept. Thus, in terms of (1) and (2) above, Hegel rejects any account of (2) the material genesis of the transcendental, instead focusing on how reason, in its self-externality, i.e. nature, immanently becomes fully-fledged reason, i.e. spirit, an ontological process we might associate with (1) 'immanent transcendence'.

Johnston is generally sympathetic to Hegel's critique of essentialist logic, and therefore I would assume that Johnston would likewise reject what I have called 'logogenesis' as worthy of philosophical thought. But in order to dismiss any notion of 'logogenesis', it is not enough to go along with Hegel's critique of essentialism. It is *also* necessary to commit to the idealist notion, shared by Hegel *and* Schelling, that being itself is rational *prior to any human experience*. And *here* is where Johnston's use of the term 'transcendental' becomes not only terminologically confusing but, potentially, conceptually problematic: If Johnston refuses anything like a 'logogenesis', then he must be committed to the Hegelian idea that material nature has *always* been (self-)conditioned for possible experience, and hence there can be no account of the emergence of transcendental subjectivity—the aim of transcendental materialism.

But perhaps when Johnston speaks of the emergence of transcendental subjectivity he does not have in mind the emergence of reason *as such*, but merely the particular way in which human beings understand the world. If this is Johnston's intention, his project might be a relatively straightforward *inversion* of transcendental idealism after all. Indeed, Johnston might have in mind a philosophical system wherein nature, rational in itself, conditions the possibility of subjectivity. The young Schelling developed his system along these lines in his break with Fichte, and, interestingly, Schelling remains committed in these early years to incorporating an account of transcendental subjectivity *within* this inverted Fichteanism. According to Schelling, it is only because spirit emerges from the dynamic processes of nature that the philosopher can develop a system of transcendental idealism, i.e. a system which deduces

how nature is produced for a subject, this latter production (the production of nature *as cognisable*) being ontologically dependent upon the former (the production of spirit *from nature*). On this account, the natural emergence of the subject *makes possible* the philosophical standpoint of transcendental idealism, hence Schelling's insistence that the philosophy of nature grounds transcendental idealism.[5]

Of the various possibilities I have considered here, this early Schellingian perspective seems closest in spirit to Johnston's transcendental materialism. If this assessment is fair, then the following point remains essential: What is the difference between nature as cognised by the transcendental subject and nature as described by the philosopher of nature? Schelling believes it is possible to ground transcendental idealism in speculative physics, because nature is already rational, prior to reason's fullest expression in human being. One convincing way of grounding the uniquely human form of reason in nature, therefore, is to take up the stance of absolute idealism and interpret being as Idea, whether the Idea is unfolded through intellectual intuition (Schelling) or logic (Hegel). How does Johnston's materialist perspective assess this standpoint of absolute idealism? And what philosophical methods does transcendental materialism employ which might access the determinations of nature that underlie the natural objects conforming to the categories and intuitions of transcendental subjectivity?

II. Hegel contra Schelling

That Schelling, more so than Hegel, remains committed to some conception of the 'transcendental' at key moments in his philosophical development raises the question of Schelling's role in Johnston's proposal for a new materialism. Despite Johnston's self-identification as a neo-Hegelian, I think there are important ways in which Johnston's project appears far more Schellingian than Hegelian in spirit.

I believe Johnston is absolutely right to ally himself with Hegel in constructing a contemporary philosophy of emergence. Indeed, if we want to discuss the history of philosophy in terms of problems and solutions, it

5 See §63 of Schelling's *Allgemeine Deduktion des dynamischen Prozesses oder der Kategorien der Physik* as well as *On the True Concept of Philosophy of Nature* (p. 7 in the present issue) for some of the clearest expressions of Schelling's position of this period.

is fair to say that Hegel comes closer than anyone to 'solving' the nature-spirit problem of post-Cartesian philosophy when he (along with Schelling) describes spirit as emerging from nature. However, for Hegel, such emergence is not *historical*; historical emergence is confined to the goings-on of *spirit*. This is not to say that nothing *happens* in nature for Hegel, but rather that nothing *philosophically interesting* happens in nature.[6] To be sure, 'the very stones cry out and raise themselves to spirit.'[7] But from the perspective of philosophical reason, the *Aufhebung* of inorganic matter into life is a *logical Aufhebung*. There is nothing philosophically significant, on Hegel's view, to the notion that inorganic matter organises itself in such a way that life emerges *in time*; likewise for the emergence of the human soul from the animal. Thus, while Hegel provides a spectacular account of the ontological dependence of subjectivity on the material world, he does not conceive of a natural-historical emergence of the subject.

Throughout Schelling's thought, however, we find descriptions of a far more historically active nature, and by the Berlin lectures of the 1840s, Schelling is absolutely clear that the negative philosophy of mere onto-*logical* movement must be supplemented with a positive philosophy of *actual becoming*. Schelling, far more than Hegel, is the idealist philosopher concerned with the *historical* organisation of matter into more-than-material subjectivity. Of course, for Schelling—unlike Hegel—the emergence of spirit from nature depends upon nature's self-*potentiating* activity rather than its impotence, and perhaps herein lies Johnston's commitment to Hegel's brand of *Naturphilosophie*. But bracketing questions about nature's potency or impotence, it is worth asking: how will Schelling fit into the second and third volumes of *The Prolegomena to Any Future Materialism* given the fact that he surpasses Hegel in granting nature a philosophically relevant history?

6 See, for example, §249 and the *Zusätze* to §339 from the *Encyclopaedia. Hegel's Werke*, Volume 7: *Vorlesungen über die Naturphilosophie als der Encyclopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse, Zweiter Teil*, ed. Karl Ludwig Michelet (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1842), pp. 32-33, 431-442; *Hegel's Philosopy of Nature, Part Two of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830)*, trans. by A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 20-22, 278-285.

7 *Zusatz* to §247, Ibid., p. 24; p. 15.

III. Atheism

It is well known that the late Schelling incorporates significant aspects of Christian orthodoxy into the 'positive philosophy' meant to surpass Hegel's system. Although Engels's wholesale rejection of the late Schelling is in many ways preposterous, the Marxian scepticism concerning the *particular* form of religious language in the positive philosophy (e.g., the conception of God as the *Herr des Seyns*) is fully justified. But the elements of Christianity found within German idealism are by no means exhausted in Schelling's Berlin lectures. The entire tradition of German idealism—Hegel's idealism included—is Christian through and through, containing thoughtful interpretations of revelation, the fall, and the Holy Trinity. And yet Johnston's neo-Hegelian project fundamentally rejects any materialism which is not uncompromisingly atheistic, such that—as far as I can tell—any philosophical reflection on 'grace' or 'the holy' is dismissed as a 'regression' to spiritual obscurantism.

Of course, atheist neo-Hegelianism has a long intellectual history, and my third question for Johnston is, in part, directed to the neo-Hegelian tradition from which his transcendental materialism draws inspiration. In particular, I wonder if this tradition's commitment to atheism—and its apparent blindness to subtler monotheisms—does not prevent Johnston from seeing just how far Hegel's system goes in describing emerging structures of being. As I understand them, both Schelling and Hegel—far more nuanced in their engagement with religion than, for example, Marx and Freud—interpret the divine life as *emerging* in the historical community of a people, a people *ontologically dependent upon* an impersonal natural world. By my lights, this is neither simply atheistic nor a lapse into a dogmatic, two-worlds Christianity, but falls under a third category which Johnston's spiritualist/materialist binary fails to acknowledge.

I believe Johnston's failure to acknowledge this third option may have significant consequences for his project. In *Adventures in Transcendental Materialism*, Johnston pits his neo-Hegelian materialism against neo-Spinozism, the latter being represented primarily by Althusserian and Deleuzian streams of thought. Broadly speaking, Johnston sees this contemporary battle as one between a *reductionist* materialism (Spinoza-Deleuze) and an *emergentist* materialism (Hegel-

Lacan-Žižek). But if we consider the *Pantheismusstreit* which sets the stage for Hegel's own critique of Spinoza, it becomes apparent that certain features of Hegel's anti-Spinozism are missing from Johnston's critique of neo-Spinozism. In particular, we should recall that Jacobi identified Spinozism not only with *fatalism* and *nihilism*, but with *atheism* as well. Does Hegel's immanent critique of Spinozist substance not aim to overcome all three of these supposed outcomes of Spinozism? If so, then utilising Hegelian dialectic in an aggressively anti-religious manner is not only questionable on hermeneutic grounds, but it thwarts Johnston's own effort to overcome Spinozist tendencies in contemporary thought, since one of these tendencies is the dismissal of all things theological in the name of 'immanence'.

Of course, Hegel does not champion a Christianity of the *bad* infinite, in which God is either posited in another world or relegated to the 'beyond being'. Hegel's God is the truly infinite life which is nothing other than the spirit of the human community, an ontological process depicted in religious, pictorial thinking as the divine *kenosis* and subsequent resurrection of Christ. Hegel's God is therefore not a transcendent being, but an *image* of an immanent, infinite process emerging from sheer finitude, not entirely unlike the manner in which subjectivity emerges from substance. Why then, from a Hegelian perspective, should philosophy limit the discourse that might describe this emergent spirit to biological, psychological, and political terminology?

My hunch is that Johnston's fidelity to Baconian empiricism leads him to reject any phenomena that cannot be investigated to some extent by the natural scientist. But this seems one-sidedly empiricist for a neo-Hegelianism of the subject. After all, Hegel's *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* identify *two* seminal thinkers of our modern era: Francis Bacon, for his commitment to a scientific method which allows thought to extract truths from the *externality* of nature; and Jakob Böhme, the theosophist who bequeaths to modern thought—despite his unphilosophical method—profound truths about the *inwardness* of spirit. For Hegel, no manipulation of the natural world will reveal the ontological determinations of such inwardness. But that is not to say that the philosophy of spirit should be pursued in the absence of a philosophy of nature. Rather, the philosophy of inwardness should *follow* the philosophy of externality, because it is the immanent movement of nature itself from

which determinations of the inner spirit, such as Böhmean personality, emerge.

It seems that for Johnston, religious language is necessarily bound up with some form of anti-materialism, and therefore any serious commitment to materialism entails rejecting religious language. In a debate with Žižek, Johnston expresses this commitment to materialism while acknowledging that such a commitment risks collapsing the depth of being into a flat ontology. Johnston writes, 'I would rather my materialism fall flat than be three-dimensional in [a] non-materialist manner.'[8] Johnston deserves praise, not only for his sincere reservations about supernatural language, but for acknowledging the risk that accompanies this preference, i.e. the risk of constructing a materialism without depth in order to guard against immaterialism. I wonder, however, if Johnston also sees any merit in taking the *other* risk, i.e. the risk of speaking, as Hegel does, of God. Such a risk involves maintaining a language of the infinite without forgetting that such an infinite is entirely dependent upon finitude:

> 'God himself is dead' it says in a Lutheran hymn, expressing an awareness that the human, the finite, the fragile, the weak, the negative are themselves a moment of the divine, that they are within God himself, that finitude, negativity, otherness are not outside of God and do not, as otherness, hinder unity with God.[9]

8 Adrian Johnston, *Adventures in Transcendental Materialism: Dialogues with Contemporary Thinkers* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), p. 148.

9 *Hegel's Werke*, Volume 12: *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, second volume, ed. D. Philipp Marheineke (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1832), p. 253; *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, Volume III: The Consummate Religion*, ed. Peter Hodgson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), p. 326.

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Transcendentalism in Hegel's Wake: A Reply to Timothy M. Hackett and Benjamin Berger

ADRIAN JOHNSTON

I would like to begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to both Timothy M. Hackett and Benjamin Berger for their illuminating and serious engagements with some of my recent work. I found both Hackett's and Berger's reflections upon my labours, especially their questions and challenges, thought provoking and productively stimulating. It is a real pleasure to be read so carefully and well.

Given the different characters of the two essays to which I am responding here—Hackett's is more of a sympathetic reconstruction of the first volume of *Prolegomena to Any Future Materialism* (*PAFM*) while Berger's is more of a critical assessment of transcendental materialism—my reply will be slightly weighted in the direction of answering the queries and objections posed by Berger. However, Hackett justifiably calls on me for further clarification of certain aspects of *The Outcome of Contemporary French Philosophy* through providing previews of the yet-to-appear second two volumes of the *PAFM* trilogy (*A Weak Nature Alone* and *Substance Also as Subject*). I indeed will spend time doing so. Moreover, I also will employ some of Hackett's accurate observations regarding my ideas in the course of addressing Berger.

Before fulfilling Hackett's request for a contextualisation of *PAFM, Vol. I* in relation to *Vols. II* and *III*, a number of his remarks indicate that I should supply some additional specifications apropos my relationship with the tradition of dialectical materialism (specifications along these same lines also can be found in, for instance, my most recent book, *Adventures in Transcendental Materialism: Dialogues with Contemporary Thinkers* [2014]). First, I consider dialectical materialism, starting with Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, itself to be a continuation of F.W.J. Schelling's and G.W.F. Hegel's post-Fichtean turns, with the Schellingian and Hegelian critiques of Immanuel Kant's and J.G. Fichte's subjectivisms as well as,

correlatively, Schelling's and Hegel's defences of more materialist, naturalist, and realist positions (in the guises of their objective and/or absolute idealisms, especially as involving their non-reductive, anti-mechanistic philosophies of nature). In particular, I interpret Hegel's post-Spinozistic metaphysical program, announced in the preface to the 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit*, to think 'substance also as subject' (with me taking this slogan as the title of *PAFM, Vol. III*) as the key precursor of the first of Marx's eleven 'Theses on Feuerbach' (and this whether Marx was aware of this anticipation or not). I construe this thesis of 1845, less renowned than, albeit of equal importance with, the famous eleventh thesis, as implicitly laying the foundations for both historical and dialectical materialisms by explicitly identifying and problematising 'contemplative' materialisms (i.e., those of history hitherto, from the ancient Greek atomists through Baruch Spinoza and the eighteenth-century French materialists and up to Ludwig Feuerbach himself, as neither historical nor dialectical).

In both Hegel's Spinoza critique and Marx's Feuerbach critique, what renders a materialism satisfactorily non-contemplative, in the language of Thesis One, is its willingness and ability to include within itself an account of subjectivity as immanent-yet-irreducible to the material domains covered by the natural sciences of physics, chemistry, and biology. Such agency, in its interlinked theoretical, practical, and socio-historical dimensions, arises and stays inseparable from its physical, chemical, and organic grounds (as an aside, I would assert, in line with Schelling, Hegel, Marx, and Engels, among others, that a categorically anti-naturalist materialism is not really materialist strictly speaking). Nonetheless, with German idealist and Marxist arguments against reductivism in the background, materially emergent subjects come to achieve powers of self-determination independent of determination by the natural substances out of which they initially emerge (both phylogenetically and ontogenetically). Moreover—this additional twist is crucial—these individual and trans-individual subjective strata, as more-than-materially-natural transcendences-in-immanence *vis-à-vis* material nature, come to enjoy powers of, as Analytic philosophers of mind would put it, 'downward causation' over their original, pre-existent substantial bases (Hegelians, Marxists, and Lacanians speak of this in terms of 'concrete universals', 'real abstractions', and 'structures that march in the streets' respectively). In other words, the denaturalised subjects

generated out of natural substances both are to be non-reductively included within any thorough materialist ontology of the substantial as well as reciprocally come to affect and perturb nature from an 'extimate' (internally external, intimately exterior) position within it (to resort to another bit of Lacanese with topological connotations). All of this is essential to a post-contemplative materialism (i.e., 'any future materialism', as per the title of my trilogy), one taking on board some of the momentous insights of the overlapping orientations of German idealism and Marxism.

In relation to the preceding and returning to Hackett's comments on my positioning with respect to certain past materialisms, I put forward transcendental materialism as fundamentally faithful to dialectical materialism, as a twenty-first century permutation of the latter. Indeed, I elsewhere trace transcendental materialism's origins back to the 1796 'Earliest System-Program of German Idealism' of debated authorship (Hegel, Schelling, and Friedrich Hölderlin being leading candidates) but clearly pointing toward the philosophical trajectories of both Schelling and Hegel. Hence, I identify transcendental materialism as 'the latest system-program of German idealism'. Contextualising the mature Hegel's substance-also-as-subject agenda as an offshoot of this 1796 system-program, I view Marxian-Engelsian non-contemplative materialism, itself arguably a descendent of this same Hegel, as a major extension of the post-Fichtean program first foretold in Hölderlin's 1795 '*Über Urtheil und Seyn*' ('On Judgment and Being'). I situate transcendental materialism in this historical lineage.

Hackett hints that I am not a convinced dialectical materialist per se. The above stipulations about dialectical and transcendental materialisms aside, Hackett's sense here is far from entirely inaccurate. In fact, there are two basic manners in which my transcendental materialism takes its distance from Marxist (particularly Engelsian) dialectical materialism—and this despite my deep solidarity with and fidelity to the much-maligned Engels of *Anti-Dühring*, *Dialectics of Nature*, and *Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy*. The title of *PAFM, Vol. I* is a nod to Engels's *Ludwig Feuerbach* and *PAFM, Vol. II* devotes a sizeable amount of space to discussing Engels and his disputed Soviet legacy, this primarily non-Western tradition being another casualty, along with what Alain Badiou and Slavoj Žižek identify as 'the idea of communism', of the late-twentieth-century collapse of Really Existing Socialism.

That noted, first, I consider the interpretations both critical and sympathetic of Hegel, Schelling, and German idealism articulated by Marx, Engels, and many of their followers (such as V.I. Lenin) to be, on multiple points, inaccurate or plain wrong. Without getting sidetracked by going into the details of this here, suffice it for the time being to say that my reconstruction of German idealism (and Marxism's persistently fraught relations to it) is quite different from the picture of 'classical German philosophy' furnished by many Marxists, Marx and Engels included. Second, (and as is elucidated in *PAFM, Vol. II*), I judge Engels and his Soviet descendants as having lapsed into the indefensible lop-sidedness of massively overemphasising the seamless continuity of interconnectedness weaving together all levels and layers of realities non-human and human alike. Especially with what becomes orthodox, doctrinaire dialectical materialism under J.V. Stalin (i.e., his infamous 'diamat'), the Engelsian current, whose 'rational kernel' I nevertheless seek to salvage and reactivate, minimises or negates altogether the discontinuities, gaps, ruptures, and splits arguably of a piece with any robust theory of strongly emergent subjectivity in its autonomy and irreducibility (for the simplistic worldview of diamat, such a theory would be nothing more than a strain of the pathological ideology of bourgeois individualism). Like Jean-Paul Sartre, Badiou, and Žižek, I believe that macrostructural determination is never so total and absolute as to leave no elbow or wiggle room for the sorts of subjects of concern to the idealisms of Marx's and Engels's great German philosophical predecessors.

As regards Hackett's demands for clarifying previews of *PAFM, Vols. II* and *III*, I already have provided such outlines in two recent interviews (with Peter Gratton in the on-line journal *Society and Space* [2013] and with Graham Harman on the website of Edinburgh University Press [2014]). However, Hackett voices some specific concerns to which I should speak here. To begin with, he wonders what precise conception of the subject will be defended throughout the rest of the *PAFM* trilogy. Basically, I advocate on behalf of a Kantian/post-Kantian view of the transcendental subject as an autonomous, spontaneous, and self-determining agency constitutively involving reflexive and recursive structures and dynamics—with, as Lacanian theory indicates, many of these structures and dynamics being unconscious (and not exclusively [self-]conscious, as a plethora of readings of German idealism incorrectly assume or assert). Additionally, and by contrast with many Anglo-

American Analytic philosophers of mind, I am preoccupied more with the natural emergence of sapience and less with that of sentience (the latter being the 'hard problem' of conscious qualia obsessed over by many Analytics participating in debates about the mind-body relationship). As with the 'Spinozism of freedom' pursued differently by both Schelling and Hegel (as well as, more recently, versions of this sought after by the later Sartre, Badiou, and Žižek), my ambition is to formulate what cannot but appear, on first glance, to be a paradoxical juxtaposition of opposed sides: on the one hand, a materialist, quasi-naturalist ontology acknowledging the sorts of (over)determination associated with Marxism, psychoanalysis, and the natural sciences; and, on the other hand, an anti-reductive theory of transcendental subjectivity enjoying self-relating independence.

Hackett evinces special scepticism about whether a defence of the transcendental subject is even an option for a materialist, such as myself, who grants a foundational legitimacy in accounts of who and what human beings are to neurobiology and cognitive science. Obviously, this touches upon a gargantuan set of issues historical, philosophical, and scientific. I have dealt with a number of these at length and in detail throughout much of my extant work (as have Žižek and Catherine Malabou too). In the present context, I will restrict myself to observing that Hackett's sense of incompatibility between the transcendental and the natural-scientific, a sense he shares with many others (including people on both sides of the Analytic-Continental divide), tacitly rests, in no small part, on an image of material nature as a substantial Totality of efficient-causal relations within which each and every entity and event is exhaustively integrated and put in its dictated place (by Spinoza's God, Laplace's Demon, and the like).

One of the main tasks executed in *A Weak Nature Alone* (*PAFM, Vol. II*) is the jointly philosophical, psychoanalytic, and scientific debunking of the pictures of 'strong nature' underlying the incompatibilist intuitions expressed by Hackett. The 'weak nature' referred to in its title (a phrase taken from Hegel [*die Ohnmacht der Natur*]) is the ontological zero level of material substance(s) as a monistic, factical groundless ground lacking the causal-deterministic 'strength' of a Nature as a One-All endowed with airtight uniformity and wholeness (in addition to Hegelian and Marxian historical-theoretical tools, *PAFM, Vol. II* also deploys resources from, among other sources, Freudian-Lacanian metapsychology, 'kludge' models of the human central nervous system, John McDowell's 'naturalism of second nature', and the Stanford School of the philosophy of

science in the service of an uncompromisingly materialist diminishing of the purported commanding powers of the natural). Although these 'weaknesses' of nature as under- or in-determinations within it are far from being themselves sufficient conditions for the type of transcendental subjectivity I seek to preserve within the constraints of a materialist ontology—*PAFM, Vol. III* deals with these sufficient conditions—they are, nonetheless, absolutely necessary conditions. That is to say, if nature were not weak *qua* under/in-determining in specific crucial fashions (i.e., if nature instead were 'strong' *qua* totally, flatly deterministic without exception via efficient causal laws), then it would not be possible for autonomous, spontaneous agency immanently to emerge out of natural-material being alone (in Hegelese, for subject *an und für sich* to surface within substance *an sich*). Paraphrasing Kant, by limiting nature's determinism, I leave room for the subject's freedom (albeit very differently from Kant's transcendental idealist manoeuvres along these lines in both his theoretical and practical critical philosophies, the Third Antinomy most famously).

I suspect that Hackett's doubts about the ultimate compatibility between any kind of naturalism (including my quasi-naturalism of nature as, in Lacanian jargon, a 'barred Real') and transcendentalism are historically motivated by his awareness of the fact that Kant, as the founder of transcendental approaches, insists upon a Newton-influenced, although idealism-qualified, picture of nature. Not only does Kant tether transcendental philosophical tactics and strategies to the anti-realist, anti-materialist metaphysics of transcendental idealism—his basically Newtonian vision of nature in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, one he awkwardly tries to hold onto in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* despite his reflections on biological matters pulling him in directions away from it, dictates an anti-naturalist conception of free, self-determining subjectivity (it is no accident that the third *Critique* becomes so invaluable to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Schelling, and Hegel, especially in their different nature-philosophical efforts). Therefore, any successful naturalist challenge to Kant's notion of nature (one he himself arguably already begins to sense the pressure of in his third *Critique*) will go a long way towards allaying the concerns voiced by Hackett. The seventeenth- and eighteenth-century notions of nature Kant adheres to in his own distinctive way, despite subsequent advances in the natural sciences having rendered them inaccurate and obsolete, have not disappeared from intellectual,

cultural, and socio-economic landscapes. Diverse (and even incompatible) vestiges and descendants of them survive, for instance, amidst partisans of extreme reductivisms and eliminativisms, biopolitical ideologues, priests of the almighty gene, soldiers and merchants of the pharmaceutical industrial complex, and entrepreneurs, however petty, of the eco-friendly, organic, holistic, etc. Transcendental materialism has many enemies amongst the living as well as the dead.

Although this seems less likely to be in the background of Hackett's worries, the baseline consensus about 'transcendental arguments' amongst Analytic philosophers (in their sub-disciplines of epistemology, philosophy of mind, and Kant scholarship) is that, when all is said and done, these essentially (try to) function as decisive refutations of Cartesian-Berkeleyan and/or Humean scepticism. Analytics generally agree that transcendentalism ultimately consists in argumentative manoeuvres wherein one's starting premise is something even a sceptical interlocutor is willing initially to acknowledge (for example, that there is experience, language, belief, etc.); the transcendentalist arguer then reverse-engineers one or more necessary conditions for this premise being the case, with these thus inferred conditions of possibility for the premise amounting to transcendental necessities initially unacknowledged by the sceptic but supposedly now immune to the sceptic's doubts. This agreement amongst Analytics about what transcendental arguments are partly rests upon a historical narrative according to which Kant's overriding purpose, in the first *Critique* specifically and his transcendental apparatus generally, is to refute Humean scepticism (and, to a lesser extent, Cartesian-Berkeleyan scepticism, as in the first *Critique*'s 'Refutation of Idealism').

Kant here, as in other instances, demarcates a boundary between Analytic and Continental orientations. Apropos transcendentalism, Analytics interpret the Kantian legacy through the historical lens of Kant's relations with pre-Kantian philosophies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (those of René Descartes, George Berkeley, and David Hume, among others). Continentalists, by contrast, are more influenced by modifications of Kant's critical-transcendental turn coming into effect already during his lifetime with the advent of post-Kantian German idealism *à la* Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. These different historical foci make a huge philosophical difference to what one takes to be the scope and sense of 'the transcendental'. First and foremost, the epistemological anxieties animating Analytic conversations about transcendental arguments

stem from an acceptance of early modern versions of the distinction between subjective mind and objective world. Paraphrasing Hegel, the figure of the sceptic invoked by Analytics is far from sceptical enough insofar as this figure dogmatically takes for granted an elementary metaphysical worldview centrally involving a type of subject-object distinction that ought to be called into serious question. One lowest common denominator amongst Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel is, through their shared critiques and rejections of Kant's thing-in-itself and alleged two-worlds metaphysics, precisely a profound problematisation of Kantian and early modern, pre-Kantian ways of distinguishing between mind and world, subjects and objects. An upshot of this is that Continentalists engaged with transcendentalism, from the post-Kantian German idealists through today, are not dominated by the modest, narrow epistemological agenda of refuting the (insufficiently sceptical) Cartesian-Berkeleyan and Humean scepticisms kept alive in the Analytic tradition. If, like me, one fundamentally accepts late modern dialectical-speculative arguments undermining (if not liquidating altogether) the early modern subject-object dichotomy lying at the root of Analytic discussions of transcendentalism, then one should feel far less nervous and inhibited with respect to the manoeuvre of combining the transcendental with the material.

I now will shift my focus to Berger's queries and criticisms apropos transcendental materialism in general. To start with, Berger, like Hackett, pushes me to specify the exact construal of transcendental subjectivity with which I operate in my framework. In the context of responding to Berger, I can and should add to what I already indicated about this in response to Hackett that my not-entirely-anti-Kantian transcendentalist theory of the subject is one significantly shaped by the 'primacy of the practical' interpretation of transcendental idealism pioneered by Fichte (and differently elaborated by Schelling, Hegel, and even Marx). In a somewhat heterodox manner, I, like a few others, construe the primacy-of-the-practical reading of Fichte as entailing that he is not the solipsistic anti-realist, a sort of post-Kantian Berkeley, he often is seen as being. Fichte's emphasis on subjective spontaneity, coupled with his repudiation of Kant's separation between phenomenal objects-as-appearances and noumenal things-in-themselves, historically clears paths to Schellingian and Hegelian objective/absolute idealisms. This distinctive Fichtean emphasis also points precisely in the direction of a project seeking to think the immanence of the reflexive and recursive

dynamics of self-determining subjective negativity to a one-and-only lone plane of existence. Such a project already is heralded in the aforementioned 'Earliest System-Program of German Idealism'.

In the wake of German idealism, I aim to accomplish something similar, albeit taking into account a number of developments intervening between the early-nineteenth and early-twenty-first centuries, particularly Marxist historical and dialectical materialisms, Freudian and Lacanian analysis, and numerous advances in the natural sciences. Of course, claiming that there is a stream of continuities between post-Kantian idealisms and transcendental materialism requires, among other things, problematising depictions of the German idealists as spiritualist subjectivists rabidly hostile to anything materialist, naturalist, and/or realist (Žižek and Frederick Beiser, for example, both do stellar jobs demolishing these sorts of depictions). As Hackett notes, my 2008 book *Žižek's Ontology: A Transcendental Materialist Theory of Subjectivity*, following Žižek himself, attempts to uncover (proto-)materialist moments within the texts of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. Some of my more recent writings go further along these lines, especially with respect to Hegel. In addition to *Adventures in Transcendental Materialism* and *PAFM, Vols. II* and *III*, two recent essays also strive to substantiate both historically and philosophically these links between German idealism and transcendental materialism: one entitled '"Freedom or System? Yes, please!": How to Read Slavoj Žižek's *Less Than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism*' to appear in the volume *Repeating Žižek* edited by Agon Hamza and forthcoming from Duke University Press; and another entitled 'Where to Start?: Robert Pippin, Slavoj Žižek, and the True Beginning(s) of Hegel's System' just published in a special issue on 'Critique Today' of the on-line journal *Crisis and Critique* edited by Hamza and Frank Ruda. These speak to many of Berger's reservations apropos my appropriations from this pivotal stretch of the history of philosophy.

Relatively early in his essay, Berger posits an exclusive disjunction upon which many of his subsequent questions and objections rely. Believing he has detected an ambiguity plaguing my post-Kantian-style genetic transcendentalism of emergent subjectivity, he tries to force me to choose between what he presents as two separate, incompatible characterisations of such a subject as transcendental: either, one, this subject as a transcendence-in-immanence *qua* an emergent phenomena grounded in, yet autonomous from, physical, chemical, and organic

nature(s); or, two, this subject as the active set of possibility conditions for the very establishment of a categorically and conceptually structured and knowable reality, including 'nature' itself. As some German scholars are fond of commenting (not without a smidgen of national pride), any philosophical exchange of the past two centuries, if pushed far enough, sooner or later boils down to the alternative 'Kant *oder* Hegel' (as was true for the prior history of philosophy up through early modernity with the choice between 'Plato or Aristotle'). And, of course, the dilemma Berger poses for me essentially attempts to present an either/or between Kant and Hegel: either an anti-realist, anti-materialist, and anti-naturalist primacy of the theoretical in which a subjectivist transcendental idealism partitions a subject-dependent phenomenal sphere of formed objects from a subject-independent noumenal expanse of formless things (i.e., Berger's Kantian second option); or, a realist, materialist, and quasi-naturalist primacy of the practical in which a non/post-subjectivist absolute idealism speculatively envisions a single 'rationally' structured reality to which both subjects and objects belong like the parts of an organic whole (i.e., Berger's Hegelian first option).

Were I simply to accept Berger's Kant-*oder*-Hegel dilemma exactly as he formulates it, I obviously would favour the Hegelian first option. However, both Hegel, on my understanding of him, and I reject this as a false dilemma. Why and how? My explanation for the uncompelling artificiality of this forced choice might best get underway by turning to a distinction omnipresent throughout Hegel's systematic philosophy, namely, that between the 'in itself' (*an sich*) and the '(in and) for itself' ([*an und*] *für sich*). In very broad terms, the Hegelian passage from the substantial to the subjective involves a shift from the *an sich* to the *an und für sich*. For Hegel's absolute idealism, one of the instances of this movement is the transition from *Natur* to *Geist*, from substance-in-itself as the natural to subject-for-itself as the spiritual. The latter includes within itself the sublated natural that has become in and for itself through being known by concept-mongering, more-than-natural subjects.

Before proceeding further, I want to highlight three crucial points made by Berger with which I concur. First, I think he is quite right to maintain that 'reason' (*Vernunft*) as per Hegel's absolute idealism pre-exists the transcendental subjectivity of Kant's subjective idealism. This is because pre/non-subjective actuality is, for Hegel, already in itself (independently of the 'for itself' of knowing subjects) configured according

to the dialectical-speculative logic of extra-mental concepts, categories, ideas, and notions as themselves objectively real (in addition to them as subjectively ideal if and when these become mentally known). Second, and related to the preceding point, Berger correctly recognises that Hegel would dismiss the later Schelling's 'nature in the nets of reason' talk as reintroducing an already sublated and surpassed Kantian-type form-content dualism in which 'nature' is reduced to being no more than an unknowable 'formless lump' like Kant's thing-in-itself in being held apart from 'reason' as form(ing). Third, I agree with him that ontogeny and phylogeny, on the one hand, and 'logogeny' (a.k.a. 'logogenesis'), on the other hand, do not coincide. The genetic emergences of mindedness and like-mindedness indeed are separate matters from, although not unrelated to, the very genesis of the objectively real forms of the Real *an sich* (i.e., absolute idealist concepts and categories as pre/non-mental). On these points, Berger and I see eye to eye.

However, to refer back to Berger's dilemma, there is a big difference, albeit as part of a Hegelian (and also Schellingian) dialectical-speculative identity-in-difference, between the rationality of the Real in itself and this 'same' rationality in and for itself. In other words, there is a far-from-negligible distinction for Hegel between, on one side, formed reality as not (yet) thought or known (although knowable at least in theory thanks to its inherent structuration) and, on another side, this reality as cognised by thinking and knowing subjects immanent yet irreducible to it. In the context of this exchange with Berger, one can conceive of the preceding in connection with the trajectory from the reality of natural substance in itself to the ideality of spiritual subject in and for itself. The wide category of the latter (i.e., subjectivity *als Geist*) contains within itself, as certain of its instantiations, aspects of Kant's transcendental subject both theoretical and practical (as attested to at various moments in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, *Science of Logic*, *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, and *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, namely, all of Hegel's *magnum opera*).

Despite seriously disagreeing with Pippin's extremely Kantian reconstruction of Hegel's philosophy, I believe Pippin justifiably draws attention to the enduring (although heavily qualified and modified) role of the unity of apperception of the first *Critique*'s 'Transcendental Deduction' within the architecture of Hegelian *Wissenschaft* (he and I being at odds about the exact nature and scope of the B-Deduction's background role

therein). Thus, in this vein, I would assert that Kantian-style transcendental subjectivity *qua* possibility condition(s) for actual knowledge, whether 'logical' or 'real' (with *Logik* and *Realphilosophie* as the two major components of the Hegelian System as Encyclopedia), continues to fulfil an indispensable function in Hegel's mature philosophy. The 'subject' of the post-Spinozistic Absolute 'substance also as subject' could be said to be the operator making possible the transition from the in-principle knowability of the Absolute in itself to the in-fact knowing of the Absolute in and for itself (as Absolute knowing including within itself the thus knowing subject). If I am correct that the cognitive unity of an apperceiving subject, with its network of concepts and categories, is an unavoidable mediator between the Absolute *an sich* and *an und für sich*, then Berger's forced choice between Kantian or (ostensibly) Hegelian alternatives loses its force, falling away as a false dilemma precisely on Hegelian grounds. *Contra* Berger, Hegel's post-Kantian (rather than pre-Kantian) immanent critiques of Kant lead to a sublation *als Aufhebung* (instead of straightforward negation without reserve or remainder) of subjectivist transcendental idealism (as anti-realist, anti-naturalist, and anti-materialist) in and through absolute idealism (as realist, quasi-naturalist, and peculiarly materialist—and, at the same time, non-dogmatic *qua* post-critical, arrived at by passing through, and not bypassing, the strictures of Kant's epistemological Critique).

Admittedly, even the more Kantian transcendental facets of Hegelian subjectivity can and should, by Hegel's lights, be significantly supplemented in a non-Kantian fashion by an absolute idealist account of the (onto)logical, physical, chemical, organic, anthropological, phenomenological, psychological, legal, moral, political, social, cultural, and historical (pre)conditions for configurations and operations like the unity of apperception and deontological moral agent of pure practical reason. My heterodox materialist extensions of Hegelianism focus first and foremost on the natural and biological preconditions for the emergences of more Kantian (and Fichtean) dimensions of transcendental subjects (hence my recurrent talk of a 'meta-transcendentalism' of substance in relation to a transcendentalism of subject, that is, the objective possibility conditions in real being for the genesis of the subjective possibility conditions of ideal thinking/knowing). To address Berger's either/or once more, just because Hegel—the following often holds for Schelling too—does not consider the transcendental subject *à la* Kant's subjectivist idealism to be the ultimate,

unsurpassable ground zero of reality *überhaupt* does not mean for him that this subject is unimportant or non-existent altogether. I will return to some of these contentions later when addressing Hegel's rapport, raised by Berger, with Francis Bacon specifically and empiricism generally.

Related to the above, some of Berger's wording of the second Kantian option of his dilemma raises the historically and philosophically tricky topic of the connections between transcendental and empirical subjectivities. Based on what I already have said above about Kant or/versus Hegel, and without getting bogged down in interpretive details with respect to various permutations of the transcendental-empirical couplet (to borrow a Foucauldian turn of phrase) in Kantian and post-Kantian German idealism, I will limit myself here to suggesting that there is a transcendental dimension of subjectivity distinct from both (to quote Berger) 'the cognising individual (empirical subject)' as well as 'the very structure of the world as rationally organised'. Not only, as I have indicated, is this the case for Hegel—a fuller appreciation of Kant's first *Critique* and his larger philosophical corpus reveals that Kant also would object for a number of reasons to a complete conflation of the autonomous, spontaneous agency of his transcendental subject with the formed realities of theoretical reason it is responsible for forming (such a collapse would preempt the very possibility of the sequel *Critique of Practical Reason*).

Berger is wrong to suggest that one must decide between two, and only two, mutually exclusive choices: either the transcendental subject of subjectivist transcendental idealism or an empirical self. Put differently, I would maintain against Berger that a transcendental theory of subjectivity (along with a certain transcendentalism more broadly) is far from impossible without the two-worlds metaphysics of Kant's idealism. Any consistent Hegelian (and members of certain species of the Schellingian genus) ought to hold the same position: An already formed natural/substantial reality *an sich* comes to know itself *an und für sich* if and when it internally generates out of itself cognising subjects equipped with suitably, satisfactorily articulated logical (*qua* dialectical-speculative) matrices of categories and concepts—with such subjects as possibility conditions for knowing that are themselves neither directly identical with the formed reality of nature/substance (as per Berger's construal of Kantian transcendental idealism) nor merely non-transcendental. Moreover, a handful of Analytics (including epistemologists, philosophers of mind, and Kant scholars) contributing to the previously mentioned

evaluations of (Kantian) 'transcendental arguments'—some names I have in mind are Quassim Cassam, Arthur Collins, Michael Friedman, Paul Guyer, Ross Harrison, Rae Langton, McDowell, Jay Rosenberg, Jonathan Vogel, and Kenneth Westphal—likewise explore and defend the feasibility of Kantianism/transcendentalism without transcendental idealism as Berger understands the latter. In fact, the bulk of Kant scholarship for decades has been eager to distance Kantian Critique from any two-worlds metaphysics, thereby also inadvertently bearing indirect witness to the strength of Fichte's, Schelling's, and Hegel's criticisms of these metaphysical elements of Kant's transcendental idealism. Of course, on the more recent Continental side of things, Badiou's *Logics of Worlds* (2006), a source of inspiration for me as a transcendental materialist, is an example of an attempt to fuse a transcendentalism with a materialism (although, in *PAFM, Vol. I*, I reach the considered verdict that Badiou [productively] fails in this endeavour).

I wish now to turn my attention to the knotted issues of logogeny, religion/theology, and empiricism-versus-rationalism raised throughout the rest of Berger's paper. As noted earlier, I agree with Berger that logogeny, the genesis of the 'logical' as the form of already structured non/pre-subjective reality, is a separate matter from either phylogeny or ontogeny. Berger seems to suspect either that I would repudiate the very notion of logogeny altogether or that I would denigrate it as of little to no philosophical interest. Neither suspicion is warranted.

As with Hegel's *Naturphilosophie* on my reading, transcendental materialism *à la* the *PAFM* trilogy is preoccupied with solving the riddle of what and how natural substance must have been and be in light of the fact that it has produced out of itself denaturalised subjects. For Hegel and countless others past and present (including myself and numerous non-, or even anti-, Hegelians), the realms of the organic appear to be the special zones of mediation in and through which this denaturalisation of nature embodied and epitomised by human beings transpires. A consequence of this is that I have remained focused thus far on biology, rather than physics, chemistry, or the cosmology and astrophysics that would need to be drawn upon by a materialism concerned precisely with the problem of logogeny.

Given my anti-reductive, anti-eliminative commitments as a post-contemplative materialist inspired by historical and dialectical materialisms, I indeed would resist attempts to dissolve the life-scientific

details relevant to my concerns in the *PAFM* trilogy into physical, chemical, and/or cosmological bases. That is to say, my privileging of biology over other natural sciences in a materialist theory of subjectivity is philosophically principled. Some of these principles come to the fore with particular sharpness in an ongoing debate between Žižek and me centred on the relations between philosophical materialism and scientific naturalism (the three chapters of the second part of *Adventures in Transcendental Materialism* are instalments from this debate). My prioritising of things biological likely explains why Berger anticipates that I would rubbish or downplay the matter of logogeny. However, doubting that logogeny is directly relevant specifically to my account of the subject is different from denying either its existence or philosophical attractions.

Perhaps, several years down the road (and certainly only after completing *PAFM*), I will take up the difficulty of logogeny from a transcendental materialist perspective. Berger's suggestive musings on this definitely encourage and entice me to think about doing so. My neglect of physics, while principled in connection with a theory of subjectivity, is neither principled nor necessarily permanent apart from such a theory. Were I to take up this topic, my Hegelian-style philosophical intuitions initially would incline me to begin with hunches about the genesis of *logos* as involving a dialectical-speculative simultaneous co-emergence of (and co-determination between) form/structure and content/matter. That said, I have multiple reservations about and objections to the kinds of pictures of logogeny Berger evidently prefers, especially those of a late-Schellingian, rationalist-theosophical sort.

At the close of his intervention, Berger wonders 'if Johnston also sees any merit in taking…the risk of speaking, as Hegel does, of God.' I can state bluntly that I see little virtue and much vice in such talk. Before explaining and justifying this blunt statement, it ought to be noted that Berger's mention of Hegel here is of a piece with a prior assertion of his according to which German idealism is 'Christian through and through'. This assertion is, at best, a massive oversimplification of the ambivalent, multidimensional, and volatile relations with Christianity specifically and religion generally maintained differently by Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel; at less than best, it is simply false. Setting aside the complicated cases of Kant and Fichte—Schelling and Hegel clearly are the two German idealists monopolising the concerns shared between Berger and me in this context—only the very late, Berlin-era Schelling of the 'positive

philosophy', the anti-Hegelian theosophical mouthpiece of the conservative Prussian authorities, perhaps could be described justly, albeit still with certain caveats, as 'Christian through and through' (and setting aside such attempts as those of Manfred Frank, Jürgen Habermas, and Žižek to rehabilitate the later Schelling in the service of secular leftisms). Contrary to popular myth, it is not the Hegel of the 1820s who is an apologist for reactionary Prussia, but, instead, the Schelling of the 1840s, summoned to Berlin by the Prussian government precisely in order to 'stamp out the dragon seed of Hegelianism'. Additionally, the early Schelling, first more Fichtean and then more Spinozist, of the philosophies of nature and identity overtly revolts against the Protestant theology taught to him, Hegel, and Hölderlin at the *Tübinger Stift* (with Hegel and Hölderlin similarly rebelling). And, the middle-period Schelling of such works as the *Weltalter* drafts (1811-1815) is too unorthodox and eclectic in his cherry-picking from Christianity and other traditions to qualify as thoroughly, recognisably Christian in any standard manner.

In the case of Hegel's rapport with Christianity, the complications multiply further. Starting with such youthful writings as *The Positivity of the Christian Religion* (1795-1796/1800), *The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate* (1798-1799), and *Faith and Knowledge* (1802), a tense, uneasy relation to his religious/theological background is a thread of consistency running through his otherwise shifting, non-traditional stances *vis-à-vis* this monotheism over the entire course of his lengthy intellectual itinerary. Similarly, I would remind Berger that Hegel's invocations of 'God' (especially in Spinoza's wake) are notoriously ambiguous—so much so that, ever since the 1830s and the fragmentation of the Hegelian school into left, centre, and right wings, just about every possible construal of the (ir)religious nature of Hegel's philosophy has been upheld, from seeing him as an orthodox Lutheran to discerning within his teachings an especially virulent, insidious atheism. Quite recently, there is even the Žižekian reading (presaged by Feuerbach, G.K. Chesterton, and Ernst Bloch) according to which Hegelian-style Christianity is nothing other than 'the religion of atheism', religiosity's own immanent critique and self-subversive overcoming of itself. At a minimum, all of this illustrates how and why Berger's sweeping characterisation of German idealism *en bloc* as ostensibly Christian to the core is, if nothing else, much too quick and easy.

Berger also brings up the *Pantheismusstreit* triggered in 1785 by F.H. Jacobi's deployment of the figure of Spinoza. Referring to my revisitation of Hegel's Spinoza critique with an eye to its contemporary relevance (in the first part of *Adventures in Transcendental Materialism*), Berger attempts to problematise my religion-free version of Hegelianism by arguing as follows: Jacobi's Spinoza is an atheist; Hegel seeks to leave Spinoza behind; Therefore, Hegel seeks to leave atheism behind. There are several fatal flaws with this syllogism. To begin with, Hegel hardly accepts the Jacobian interpretation of Spinoza as completely accurate historically and philosophically. And, as I am at pains to emphasise and elucidate in *Adventures in Transcendental Materialism*, Hegel, as the thinker of sublation *par excellence*, is a post-Spinozist in both senses of the prefix 'post-', namely, both as moving beyond by breaking with (i.e., discontinuity as cancellation/negation) as well as moving forward by advancing with (i.e., continuity as preservation/elevation). As with the German word '*Aufhebung*', whose spontaneous dialectical-speculative logic is operative in Hegel's reading of Spinoza's philosophy (and of the history of philosophy overall), the ambivalent convergence of opposites condensed in the prefix 'post-' is a perfect incarnation of the non-one-sidedness Hegel always aspires to achieve. Hence, contrary to any impression to the effect that Hegel tosses everything Spinozistic overboard, his philosophy, as he himself maintains any philosophy worthy of the name must, begins with Spinozism (although it does not, as Jacobi insists any self-consistent, consequent philosophy does sooner or later, end with Spinozism). In particular, Hegel's 'substance also as subject' agenda central to transcendental materialism, an agenda which I trace back to 'The Earliest System-Program of German Idealism' and show to be a guiding red thread across the full arc of Hegel's mature philosophy (as shown in *Adventures in Transcendental Materialism*, *PAFM*, *Vols. II* and *III*, '"Freedom or System? Yes, please!"', and 'Where to Start?'), cannot be grasped properly without appreciating his profound debts to Spinoza's anti-transcendent immanentism and corresponding idea of infinity as the identity-in-difference of the infinite and the finite (with the difference between the infinite and the finite being a difference internal to the infinite itself). Hegel's problem with Spinoza's immanentism is not its insistence on immanence, but on a specifically subjectless immanence entailing exhaustive natural-causal determinism and an inexplicable gap between the appearing of finite attributes/modes and the being of infinite substance.

What is more, during the period of their youthful friendship, Hegel soaks up a largely positive assessment of a non-Jacobian Spinoza from his post-Tübingen contact and collaborations with Schelling in the late 1790s and early 1800s (not to mention also from Hölderlin possibly as far back as their Tübingen days together as seminary students).

Additionally, on my reconstruction of Hegel and his 'system-program', the Hegelian complaint about Spinozistic atheism (as per Jacobi) is not that Spinozism is irreligious, but that it is, in a way, not irreligious enough—to be more exact, an insufficiently heterodox sublation of historically established monotheisms. With the benefit of hindsight provided by my earlier noted recasting of Marx's first thesis on Feuerbach as itself a variant of 'substance also as subject', one defensibly could contend that Marx's criticisms of Feuerbach's contemplative materialism echo, however wittingly or not, Hegel's difficulties with Spinoza's purported atheism. Incidentally, one should recall that, before Jacobi, the contemplative-yet-militant materialists of eighteenth-century France drew inspiration from Spinoza read as an atheist, determinist, fatalist, materialist, and naturalist—something well known to Hegel, Feuerbach, and Marx. Anyhow, to reinforce the parallel I am in the course of establishing here, just as Hegel considers all genuine philosophy as starting from the standpoint of Spinozism (*qua* immanentist monism at odds with traditional theologies of transcendence), so too does Marx deem it necessary for a viable post-contemplative (i.e., historical and/or dialectical) materialism to be arrived at specifically in traversing, and not skirting around, the 'fiery brook' (*Feuerbach*). As I observed previously, similar dynamics also structure the crucial Kant-Hegel relationship.

For Marx, Feuerbach's essentialist 'human nature' eternally transcends actual socio-historical humans and, with its accompanying naturalistic reductivism, nevertheless sustains a partially justified anti-materialist backlash against the shortcomings of a contemplative materialism leaving no real space whatsoever for various phenomena associated with subjectivity broadly characterised. Thus, from Marx's perspective, Feuerbach is unknowingly and secretly complicit in propping up dualistic idealisms both religious and metaphysical with his inadequate, faulty materialism. Likewise, for Hegel, Spinoza's 'Nature' (a.k.a. 'God' *qua natura naturans*) is a contemplative construct that, as such, fails explicitly to include subjectivity within itself as demanded by the strictures of Spinoza's own immanentism of the true infinite—hence this

immanentism's susceptibility to the dialectical immanent critique of it carried out by Hegel. The One-All of Spinoza's infinite substance as a Totality/Whole, as later with Feuerbach's (human) nature, is covertly transcendent in its implicit exclusion of the contemplating subject *qua* reflective, reflexive position, one situated within the finite attributes and modes of a temporal/historical existence, from which any and every philosophy/theory is constructed. Moreover, as the historical reception of Spinozism amply testifies via both the French Enlightenment and Jacobian counter-Enlightenment, this contemplative naturalism, like Feuerbach's naturalistic materialism, provokes and feeds anti-materialist, anti-naturalist reactions, usually of mystical, spiritualistic types (such as, in Hegel's conjuncture, Jacobi's Protestant Pietism, Friedrich Schleiermacher's theology of religious feeling, and much of contemporaneous Romanticism). Well before the 'Theses on Feuerbach', the *Phenomenology* dwells upon these dynamics of disavowed complicity and dependence between a partly Spinoza-inspired secular Enlightenment and its sundry discontents (in this 1807 text's sections on 'Faith and pure insight' and 'The struggle of the Enlightenment with Superstition' under the heading of 'Self-alienated Spirit. Culture'—related reflections are to be found throughout Hegel's corpus). Basically, Hegel's attitude to such standard theism-versus-atheism disputes is well expressed by Lenin's 'Both are worse!' I will return to this last point at the end of my intervention when adding further stipulations about transcendental materialism's disposition toward religion and related matters.

My philosophical reasons as an atheistic materialist for not 'speaking of God' are not unrelated to my exegetical/historical reconstructions of German idealism. These reasons are both theoretical and practical. On the theoretical side, I consider the epistemological problematisations of the idea of God by the 'Transcendental Dialectic' of Kant's first *Critique* and associated texts—for me, Kantian Critique must be worked through and, as a point of no return in the history of philosophy, cannot plausibly be circumvented in silence—to undermine severely this idea as per the monotheisms of established religions and rational theologies. In this same vein, if epistemologically irresponsible God talk is permitted, then any and every philosophical problem is exposed to being lazily conjured away, without actually being resolved, by supernaturalistic hocus-pocus, seemingly made with smoke, mirrors, incantations, and gesticulations to vanish into the pseudo-profound depths of a mystical, incense-scented fog.

Furthermore, transcendental materialism is a post-critical (instead of pre-critical) materialism reckoning with these Kantian epistemological challenges in conjunction with a commitment to a naturalism entailing recognition of the checks and restrictions imposed by the methods and results of the natural sciences. As such, I consider the questions around logogeny posed by Berger to be open ones best addressed primarily by physicists, astronomers, and cosmologists. At least within the present historical situation, such empirically informed investigations into the origin(s) (or lack thereof) of the physical universe (again, I will touch upon Hegel's relations with empiricism and things empirical soon) are both more epistemologically justifiable as well as more intellectually promising than any purely *apriori*, non-empirical musings about the genesis of formed bodies and structured realities. In particular, Schelling, unlike Hegel, too often permits himself cavalierly to thumb his nose at Kantian Critique, freely helping himself to the magical powers of a mysterious intellectual intuition allowing supposedly direct knowing access to the root creative powers of all creation itself. Against Berger's Schellingian leanings, I would largely replace Schelling's theosophical myths about logogeny with a Hegelian-style philosophical engagement with today's natural sciences dealing with the enigmas of the ultimate sources of material existence.

Such a Hegel-inspired engagement definitely would not be tantamount to a capitulation to the likes of Stephen Hawking. I mention Hawking specifically not only because he trumpets the ostensible 'death of philosophy' from a pro-science (as opposed to, for instance, Heideggerian and/or postmodernist) standpoint, but also because he is a natural scientist who, through his work in theoretical physics and cosmology, has contributed to investigations into logogeny. Although, unlike Berger, I basically more or less would prefer Hawking's to Schelling's general manner of approaching the mystery of logogeny, the former's anti-philosophical sentiments are dubious to the point of indefensibility. In the spirit, although not the letter, of Hegel's *Naturphilosophie*—I would be the first to admit, as I believe Hegel would too if he were alive today, that many of its empirical, scientific details are now obsolete and incorrect—I would assert *contra* someone like Hawking that science invariably and inevitably relies (or, at least, should rely) upon philosophy: for the non-empirical conceptual and categorial grounds of its thinking both theoretical and methodological; for creative inspirations for its research programs; for the productive cross-fertilisation of one or more of its

branches or sub-branches with fields beyond the natural sciences themselves; for situating itself in connection with histories, politics, cultures, societies, ethics, and the like; and, for speculatively exploring both intra- and inter-disciplinary future possibilities stemming from but exceeding what is currently accepted as present-best *aposteriori* knowledge.

If philosophy is dead, so too is science; if the latter is alive, so too is the former. Nonetheless, especially as regards the topic of logogeny, a theoretical philosophy (i.e., a metaphysics *qua* integrated ontology and epistemology) entirely divorced from science is indeed as good as dead, and certainly deserves to die. To speak like a more Kantian McDowell, without vivifying empirical frictions, speculation becomes a frictionless spinning in a spooky, ghostly void. Contrary to Berger's anticipations, I neither categorically dismiss the notion of logogeny nor belittle it as of no philosophical import whatsoever. However, unlike him, I consider it preferable in the contemporary circumstances of knowledge to tilt the balance between philosophy and science apropos logogeny in a direction favouring the priority of scientific over philosophical investigations into this area.

Connected to the preceding, Berger's essay also brings up the interpretive difficulties of Hegel's positioning *vis-à-vis* both the empirical, experimental sciences as well as the rationalism-empiricism conflict so central to Kant and his early modern predecessors. Like Kant (i.e., as a conscientious post-Kantian), Hegel cannot be pigeonholed as either a rationalist or an empiricist, despite more often than not being identified by friends and foes alike as essentially a rationalist. The reasons for the persistent misidentification of Hegel's philosophy as a rationalism are too numerous and complex to go into here. Some of them have to do with the four-centuries-old philosophical divide geographically materialised by the English Channel. The Anglo-American Analytic tradition, born partly out of vehement hostility to a certain (caricature of) Hegel, has its roots in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century British empiricism. For this tradition, depicting Hegel as a rationalist usually is seen as helping to discredit him. The Franco-German Continental tradition is, historically speaking, primarily an outgrowth of seventeenth-century Continental rationalism. Moreover, French philosophers steeped in rationalism-centric retellings of the history of philosophy have exerted a pronounced influence over the past sixty-plus years of Continental philosophy both in and beyond

Europe. With these historical leanings of the land of Descartes and Nicolas Malebranche—this is part of why Gilles Deleuze's discovery of Hume is such an unconventional revelation for him and also lies behind the neo-rationalism of the mid-twentieth-century French epistemologists and structuralists—French or French-inspired readings of Hegel, including even very sympathetic ones, are prone to downplay, obfuscate, or blot out altogether Hegel's more positive assessments of and relations to the early modern empiricists. If, as Berger proposes, I err in the direction of overemphasising the more empiricist sides of Hegelian philosophy, I knowingly run this risk so as to counterbalance the chronic underemphasising of these sides in both the antipathetic and supportive historical receptions of this philosophy. Any answer to the question 'What would Hegel do?' always should involve the combating of 'one-sidedness' (a damning word constantly employed by Hegel throughout his writings).

Both *PAFM, Vol. II* and 'Where to Start?' underscore how and why both Kant and Hegel openly celebrate the grandeur of Bacon as the British empiricist founder of modern scientific method. With reference specifically to Bacon's stress on the active role of the subject as experimenting scientist in the production of knowledge of nature, Kant honours him as a towering precursor of the critical 'Copernican revolution' and its transcendental idealism. Hegel, in characteristically playing off Kant against himself, treats the productive powers of Baconian subjective activity not as a predecessor (as such inferior, however important also) of Kant's transcendental unity of apperception. Instead, by Hegel's lights, Bacon's conception of such apperceiving is superior to Kant's in being realist and naturalist, thoroughly immanent to this one-and-only material world (i.e., not hemmed in within the confines of the two-worlds metaphysics of transcendental idealism). Obviously, this Hegel is a forefather of the transcendental materialist theory of subjectivity. As I substantiate in my debate with Pippin and the second volume of the *Prolegomena*, Hegel's appropriation of the B-Deduction in the third book ('The Doctrine of the Concept') of the *Science of Logic* and elsewhere is one inflected by a partly Bacon-inspired insistence on rethinking the subject of the transcendental unity of apperception independently of transcendental idealism. Similarly, and in terms of Hegel's philosophical disposition toward empirical sciences, I must content myself in the present limited space with referring to passages such as paragraph 246 of the *Encyclopedia* (in the introduction to the *Philosophy of Nature*).

Before touching upon my objections to invoking God at the level of practical philosophy—the past six paragraphs are elaborations of my theoretical-philosophical objections to this—I feel obligated to gloss what might be described as Hegel's potentially embarrassing 'Darwin problem', as it were (something hinted at by Berger). My sense of this obligation is due both to my just-defended emphasis on the importance of empiricism and the empirical sciences for Hegel as well as to my earlier mentioned focus on post-Darwinian biology from a (neo-)Hegelian angle. To cut a long story short—much ink already has been spilled on this problem haunting Hegelians to this day—I interpret Hegel's *Naturphilosophie* such that his apparently unqualified pre-Darwinian denials of the very possibility of evolution (as per the likes of Jean-Baptiste Lamarck) are to be understood as expressions of his still, to this very day, quite far from illegitimate efforts to walk a fine line between, on one side, pre-modern and non-scientific hylozoism, pantheism, and vitalism (*à la* Aristotle, Spinoza, and/or Schelling) and, on an opposed side, modern scientific atomism, determinism, and mechanism (*à la* Isaac Newton, Pierre Simon Laplace, and Kant, among others). In his *Philosophy of Nature*, Hegel's *Vernunft*-level finessings of the continuities and discontinuities between the physical, the chemical, and the organic are motivated by profound dissatisfactions with both sides of this opposition. On Hegel's assessment, hylozoism-pantheism-vitalism emptily sees subjectivity everywhere and atomism-determinism-mechanism blindly sees it nowhere (at least nowhere within nature itself). Once again, in Leninist fashion, both forms of one-sidedness are worse to Hegelian dialectical-speculative reason.

From my exegetical perspective, Hegel's ruling out of the reality of evolutionary processes in nature is based on the following syllogistic reasoning: One, early-nineteenth-century standards of scientificity for the natural sciences remain dominated by eighteenth-century atomism-determinism-mechanism; Two, this atomism-determinism-mechanism either denies the actual existence of the structures and dynamics proper to organic life generally and human life specifically or (as illustrated in the section on 'Observing Reason' in the *Phenomenology*) is utterly powerless to explain them properly in its own terms (with Hegel's models of life being deeply and directly indebted to Kant's 'Critique of the Teleological Power of Judgment' in the third *Critique*); Therefore, three, an early-nineteenth-century natural science *qua* science of evolutionary processes in nature either denies the actual existence of the structures and

dynamics proper to organic life generally and human life specifically (treating everything as reducible to lifeless matter) or is utterly powerless to explain them properly in its own terms (implicitly or explicitly positing an unexplained, miraculous leap from lifeless matter to living organisms). Either way, such an evolutionary 'science' would be doomed from its inception immediately to refute and defeat itself before it could get going anywhere at all; its 'scientific' commitments to atomism-determinism-mechanism always-already analytically abort its supposed object, life, before this object even can be born and begin to 'evolve'.

If I am right that this is Hegel's reasoning, then a re-envisioning of nature satisfactorily threading the needle between the Scylla of hylozoism-pantheism-vitalism and the Charybdis of atomism-determinism-mechanism, a re-envisioning to which he himself substantially contributes in the *Philosophy of Nature*, indeed would allow for ideas of evolution in senses different from the confused notions of it Hegel harshly condemns (not without good reasons, as I hope to have shown just now). My concept of 'weak nature', articulated both historically and philosophically in *PAFM, Vol. II* and indebted to Hegel (along with Marxism, psychoanalysis, Analytic philosophies, and the sciences up to their current cutting edges), implies that today's natural sciences (raised to the dignity of their Notions, as Hegel would say) reveal themselves to harbour spontaneous dialectical materialist tendencies capable of giving both the efficient causes of mechanism and the final causes of teleology their respectful dues. Arguably like Hegel, I aim to comprehend without pre/non-scientific mystifications how nature itself happens internally to have eventuated through its own evolution in denaturalised and (self-)denaturalising beings who nonetheless still, for all that, remain fully immanent to an Otherless nature. And, although Hegel entertains what now, with the benefit of post-Darwinian hindsight, look to be indefensible views regarding natural history—both in this case and others, I am anything but a brittle all-or-nothing dogmatic defender of Hegel and German idealism clinging rigidly to each and every letter of their historical texts—he advocates the reality of a natural history in a very crucial and precise way: To the extent that human beings, including their spiritual *als geistige* existences both as singular subjects and trans-generational collectives, are outgrowths of nature still continuing to be internal to it, human history in fact is natural history, the history written by and reciprocally overwriting in turn a self-denaturalising nature. To think otherwise is erroneously to make of

Hegel's *Natur-und-Geist* pair a dichotomy of the sub-rational, sub-speculative understanding (*Verstand*).

Prior to sketching the justifications for my atheism at the level of practical philosophy, the preceding three paragraphs naturally lead into me responding to Berger's suggestions to the effect that my transcendental materialist brand of neo-Hegelianism is, in actuality, a crypto-Schellingianism. Berger is not without warrant in suggesting this (if nothing else, both Schelling and Hegel are post-Fichtean objective/absolute German idealists possessing their own philosophies of nature). To begin with, I owe a great deal to Žižek and, in *Žižek's Ontology*, I myself suggest that he is perhaps, at least in certain fashions, more of a Schellingian than a Hegelian, his self-identifications as the latter notwithstanding. What is more, I would concede to Berger that Schelling is a source of inspiration for transcendental materialism, and this in two ways: First, his conflict ontology of a nature plagued from within by inner antagonisms and tensions between clashing forces and impulses, an ontology to be glimpsed in such early texts as 1798's *On the World Soul* and 1799's *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature*, is, along with Hegel's *Ohnmacht der Natur*, a forerunner of both Freudian-Lacanian psychoanalysis as well as my 'weak nature alone' (I already signal this in my treatments of Schelling in *Žižek's Ontology*); Second, Schelling's delicate, although unstable and unsatisfactory, balancing acts between philosophy of nature and transcendental philosophy, attempted intermittently from 1797 through roughly 1802 (and particularly prior to his 1801 public break with Fichte), strive toward a goal shared between him, Hegel, and myself, namely, a conceptualisation of the objective reality of nature able to accommodate within itself the subjective reality of irreducibly more-than-natural dimensions of autonomy. Later, in Schelling's 1809 *Freiheitsschrift*, this morphs into the Jacobi-defying project of thinking 'system' also with 'freedom'. Incidentally, any Spinozism of freedom is a pointed retort to Jacobi's contention that one must choose between either the Spinozism of systematic reason or the freedom of a *salto mortale*.

Despite these concessions to Berger, I nevertheless continue to perceive myself as more Hegelian than Schellingian. Of course, Schelling is notorious for being an extremely mercurial thinker. His intensely Protean character is not undeserving of Hegel's later accusation that he was guilty of conducting his philosophical education on the public stage.

Given this, the exercise of trying decisively and definitively to criticise Schelling is akin to the attempt to nail Jello to a wall, as Bill Clinton once famously remarked about the Chinese endeavour to erect a Great Firewall against unmitigated flooding by the global Internet (since then, recent history thus far has not been terribly kind to Clinton's prediction of this futility). Correspondingly but inversely, the flip side of this coin is that, given the inconsistent mass of claims and arguments made by Schelling over the six decades of his intellectual itinerary, everybody (and, hence, nobody really) can be shown to be at least partly 'Schellingian', whatever that might be.

These cautionary observations made, I will run the risk of a few generalisations regarding Schelling in order to clarify why I do not accept Berger's depiction of me as a closet Schellingian. First and foremost, even the early Schelling, with his rationalistic, formalistic constructions and deductions, is overall much too Spinozistic for my tastes (I would refer again to my contemporary reactivation of Hegel's Spinoza critique in *Adventures in Transcendental Materialism*). I deem Iain Hamilton Grant's Spinozistic-Deleuzian reconstruction in *Philosophies of Nature After Schelling* of Schelling's first decade of philosophising (1794-1804) largely (although not totally) accurate—and this to Schelling's detriment insofar as it makes him all the more vulnerable to Hegel's wounding barbs about 'the night in which all cows are black'. For dialectical-speculative reasons, the *Verstand*-type distinction of Spinoza, Schelling, and Deleuze between the productivity of *natura naturans* and the products of *natura naturata* (like the Heideggerian 'ontological difference' between ontological Being and ontic beings) appears to me to be too neat and clean both philosophically and scientifically. Directly stemming from this, I see the periodic winning out in Schelling's thought of a mystical, pantheistic *'hen kai pan' à la* both Spinozism and Romanticism to be symptomatic of an underlying failure ever truly and properly to achieve the Hegelian thinking of 'substance also as subject'. Furthermore, and again by unfavourable contrast with Hegel, Schelling's post-Hölderlin, nature-philosophical version of the Spinozism of freedom oscillates between two equally dissatisfactory poles, those of either the panpsychism of a Fichtean subjectivity writ large in the guise of Spinoza's God/Nature or a Spinozistic pantheism in which subjectivity and everything (apparently) finite is swallowed wholesale into the flat, monochromatic abyss of a formalised One-All of Absolute Identity/Indifference. Essentially, Schelling shows himself to be trapped between,

in his own terms, one-sidedly dissolving philosophy of nature into transcendental philosophy (panpsychism) or vice versa (pantheism). It is left to Hegel, particularly in his mature systematic *Encyclopedia*, to establish a Spinozism of freedom authentically fulfilling 'The Earliest System-Program of German Idealism', one stepping off Schelling's erratic see-saw and attaining a genuine equilibrium between the objective and the subjective, the natural and the spiritual. The vast bulk of my German idealist loyalties lie with this Hegel rather than Schelling.

My last words on this occasion with respect to Schelling before concluding this response to Hackett and Berger will be answers to Berger's queries about whether and, if so, how Schelling features in the forthcoming two volumes of *PAFM*. As I remarked several paragraphs ago, the chapters on Schelling in *Žižek's Ontology* already provide indications of the Schellingian pre-history to the transcendental materialism also at stake in my trilogy-in-progress. However, *A Weak Nature Alone* (*PAFM, Vol. II*) does not weave Schelling's work into its narrative, preferring instead to push off from Hegel's *Naturphilosophie* for reasons spelled out above. But, there probably will be some additional engagement with Schelling in *Substance Also as Subject* (*PAFM, Vol. III*). In particular, I anticipate discussing him therein in three respects: first, his influences on nineteenth-century science and medicine as well as foreshadowings of psychoanalysis; second, his Spinozistic excesses as susceptible to yet more Hegelian and post-Hegelian criticisms; and, third, his later Hegel critiques as failing to hit their mark. Apropos this third point, 'Where to Start?' anticipates my pro-Hegelian counter-offensive against the late Schelling's anti-Hegelian distinction between 'positive' and 'negative' philosophies.

I finally come to the practical-philosophical commitments rendering me averse to various things divine. These are more socio-political than anything else. I maintain fidelity to much of what is essential to the Left Hegelian and Marxist ideology critiques targeting both the institutional and intellectual realities of religions and theologies. Therefore, I confess to having trouble flirting with rhetoric associated with those who provide a haven (and heaven) for child molesters, a bully pulpit for misogynists and homophobes, a gospel for rapacious capital, a megaphone for cheerleaders of war crimes, and, on the whole, one whopper of a massive apology for a miserable status quo. Furthermore, the Lacanian thesis of the big Other's non-existence (*Le grand Autre n'existe pas*) and its philosophical-political

extensions by Badiou and Žižek, all of which entail an especially rigorous atheism both in theory and practice, are integral to my own thinking (as such texts of mine as *Žižek's Ontology, Badiou, Žižek, and Political Transformations: The Cadence of Change* [2009], and *PAFM, Vol. I* already reveal). Additionally, from Schelling through Søren Kierkegaard, Martin Heidegger, and onward up through the present, history exhibits an undeniable correlation, if nothing more, between a Romantic-style religiosity and cultural/socio-political conservatism or even worse right-wing deviations (particularly in the German-speaking world of the past two-hundred-plus years).

To take the most extreme example, I assume a middle position between those who portray Heidegger's Nazism as a direct expression of his philosophy and those who depict it as an unfortunate lapse entirely unrelated to his not-explicitly-political thinking. As explained in the final chapter of *Adventures in Transcendental Materialism*, although I think it untenable to maintain that any theoretical ontology necessarily and straightforwardly points to one and only one practical politics as its unique complement/partner, I also think that theoretical ontologies push, sometimes quite powerfully, in certain practical-political directions rather than others. For me, the mixtures of Pietism, Romanticism, Spinozism, and mysticism swirling through Schelling throughout his career from start to finish strongly nudge him eventually towards the politically reactionary Christianity of his twilight years (and, unlike Berger, I do not consider Engels's scathing assessments of Schelling's Berlin lectures to be without merit). Through Hölderlin, Schelling, and a selective reading of the post-Kantian idealists, Heidegger inherits this tainted philosophical-political legacy. Whether the German nationalism of the Napoleonic Wars, the anti-semitic *Burschenschaften*, Prussia under Friedrich Wilhelm III, or National Socialism, a dark, disturbing thread of parallels seems to intertwine insufficiently dialectical speculations with an obscurantist bent, ones caught up with the anti-Enlightenment post-secularisms of the past two centuries, and tumblings into the pits of the far Right (the later Georg Lukács's *The Destruction of Reason* is worthwhile reading on this score). As the preceding suggests, I seriously doubt that all of this can be chalked up to mere coincidence alone.

I wish to conclude this intervention by adding some supplementary twists to the matter of atheism as parsed by Berger in relation to both Hegel and me. I agree with Berger's claim, conveyed through, for instance,

his references to Jakob Böhme's influence on later German idealism, that Hegel cannot be labelled an atheist without further significant qualifications. However, I am convinced that Hegel's *Vernunft*-level sublation of the *Verstand*-level opposition between religion and atheism results in a new type of atheism (instead of a more sublime or sublimated Protestantism or Romantic-style Christian mysticism, or even a wooly-headed, impossible fudge between the religious and the irreligious). His ruthless, unflinching dialectical destructions of metaphysical realisms, transcendences, immortalities, and their ilk leaves nothing behind for the sustenance of traditional believers (Bruno Bauer makes this case rather well in 1841).

Nonetheless, as with Marx's subsequent breakthrough to a post-contemplative materialism (as non-mechanistic, non-reductive, historical, and dialectical), Hegel already arrives at a new, unprecedented atheism unshackled from the *Geist*-less dogmas of those simply substituting an all-powerful Nature for the old God of the faithful. With both Hegelian atheism and Marxian materialism, a common ambition is to explain, rather than just explain away, everything (seemingly) 'spiritual' (for instance, mindedness, like-mindedness, the historical, the social, the superstructural, and so on). Both struggle to acknowledge and do justice to topics and phenomena typically dominated by spiritualisms, dualisms, and the like without, for all that, ceding an inch of immanentist ground to any sort of anti-realist, anti-naturalist subjective idealism.

In this shared Hegelian-Marxian spirit, transcendental materialism, although unwaveringly atheistic, is far from being so in mechanistic, reductive, or eliminative fashions unwilling and unable to recognise and account for everything that at least appears to be (relatively) autonomous *vis-à-vis* the natural and/or material. As alluded to above, I, like a number of others past and present, see the Nature-with-a-capital-N of scientistic monisms and determinisms (whether Spinoza's *natura naturans*, Laplace's Demon, or whatever else along these lines) as a mere substitute for the religious God, with the powers of the latter directly transferred without noteworthy modifications to the former. Such traditional materialisms and naturalisms rely upon yet another version of the Lacanian *grand Autre*, hence failing truly to be atheistic in continuing to believe and have faith in an all-embracing Almighty (as the first chapter of *The Outcome of Contemporary French Philosophy* shows, Lacan implicitly calls for the secularisation of materialisms that remain theistic despite [self-]deceptive

appearances to the contrary—for them, it very much is the case that 'God is unconscious').

Hence, my 'weak nature alone' (i.e., 'There is just a weak nature… and nothing more,' as I phrase this ontological axiom in *PAFM, Vol. I*) is doubly atheistic: First, it is atheistic in the standard, familiar manner signalled by the adjective 'alone', namely, in asserting, along with established varieties of materialism and naturalism, that nothing supernatural exists over and above nature *qua* physical and physically grounded existences; Second, it is atheistic in a more radical fashion signalled by the adjective 'weak', namely, in denying to this one-and-only nature the divine attributes of inescapable, irresistible omnipotence and all-determining, uninterrupted unity. This second, more radically atheistic dimension of my position is also, as I explained much earlier here, what allows for a non-reductive reconciliation between, on the one hand, a materialism of an under-determining substantial immanence and, on the other hand, a transcendentalism of a self-determining subjective transcendence-in-immanence coming to be precisely in and through the breathing room of these cracks of under-determination. Again, this is nothing other than a new Spinozism of freedom as the latest system-program of German idealism. As necessary (albeit not sufficient) conditions for autonomous reflexivities and recursions independent of direct control by the bump-and-grind efficient causal mechanisms governing most natural realities, lone nature's weaknesses mean that nature does not foreclose in advance the possible emergences out of itself of denaturalised subjects. Whereas the strong Nature of classical, pseudo-atheistic materialisms and naturalisms is really just a monotheistic God in disguise, my weak nature alone is a de-divinised baseless base (and, unlike the deism of the Enlightenment compromising between Christian theology and Newtonian mechanics, not only is there the obvious difference of my Godless 'alone'—the 'nature' remaining in my picture is anything but a synchronised clockwork machine unfailingly functioning according to a lawful, preordained harmony). Again by contrast with the omnipotent and omniscient parental/paternal divine of monotheisms, the weakness of my nature is akin to that of the feebleness, neglectfulness, and blindness of parents unable and unwilling to keep their offspring under their control and thwart their unruly children's rebellions. The preceding should help further illuminate, in response to Berger, why I do not and

cannot, as a matter of fundamental philosophical intuitions and principles, have recourse to anything godly.

And yet, as with Hegel and Marx, my atheistic apparatus, unlike what is usually called 'atheism', does not unreservedly sweep away everything religious *in toto*. Instead, as with Hegelian *Naturphilosophie* and Marxian dialectical historicism, it preserves a place for the experiences and sensibilities typically associated with more 'spiritualistic' mindsets. It works to demonstrate how a non-reductive, non-mechanistic, and non-eliminative naturalism of a lone weak nature (as susceptible to self-denaturalisations) makes for a materialism both allowing and accounting for phenomena traditionally dear to anti-materialist idealisms. This account is not only socio-historical, but also metaphysical, with historical and dialectical materialisms ultimately resting on presupposed or posited metaphysical foundations.

What is more, I go a step further along these lines and counter-offensively turn the tables on the religiously inclined. To cut a long story short—what follows is a condensed recapitulation of the closing section of a forthcoming essay of mine entitled 'Psychoanalysis and Philosophy: A Transcendental Materialist Engagement with Freud and Lacan' to appear as a chapter in the *Handbook of Psychoanalysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities* edited by Anthony Elliott, Jeffrey Prager, and David Radford—the birth of empirical, experimental modern science with Bacon and Galileo Galilei all too often is portrayed as resulting in 'disenchantment', namely, the purging from the image of worldly being of all things supernatural and the 'enchantment' they allegedly foster. From this perspective, the profane scientific liquidation of everything held sacred by various religious dogmas (i.e., gods, souls, afterlives, theodicies, and so on) brings about a general cultural crisis of purposelessness and valuelessness, allegedly throwing out the baby of 'meaning' with the bathwater of superstition. From Kant's late-eighteenth century, with the German Pietists and Romantics, through today, the territories of European philosophy have remained continually well-populated with advocates pleading for an anti-scientific, post-secular 're-enchantment' of existence as a desperately needed counter-thrust against a spiritual wasteland of nihilism whose steady expansion is said to be driven by the natural sciences, their technologies, and their pervasive influences on cultures and societies (interestingly, Jacobi is the individual responsible for introducing the term 'nihilism' into the vocabulary of Continental philosophy).

Transcendental materialism rejects the assumptions and parameters of this false dilemma still brandished by backward-looking, idealistic neo-Romantics and neo-Luddites, who are profoundly religious whether overtly or covertly, consciously or unconsciously. If enchantment in the forms of awe-inspiring sublimity and wondrous creations are what is desired, then is not science in a way more enchanting than the most mystical of religions? How really miraculous are the miracles executed by an anthropomorphised God when compared with the most (seemingly) banal occurrences in the physical universe of the natural sciences? To take the instance of a single human birth, how incomprehensibly incredible is the divinely dictated incarnation of one soul in one body by comparison with this identical event viewed as the outcome of the infinitely improbable meeting, not arranged by any heavenly guidance whatsoever, of a unique sperm and a unique egg (with the improbabilities condensed within this encounter vertiginously multiplying: these two persons procreating, these two persons having been born themselves, the human race having arisen and taken shape as it did, the planet earth and the solar system having crystallised as they did, and on and on…)? For many Christians, a living person, for example, represents part of God's pre-established, top-down plan for the entirety of spatial and temporal creation, itself a manageable total organisation governed by sensible, reasonable final causes according to which each and every thing has its proper assigned place and purpose. By contrast, for the sciences as interpreted and appropriated by transcendental materialism, a living person is a staggeringly unlikely singularity who, despite the overall statistical odds against this, nonetheless 'miraculously' has come into being.

Viewed from vantage points furnished by such diverse fields as theoretical physics and evolutionary biology, the anthropomorphising picture-thinking of theologies is nowhere near imaginative enough to embrace much of creation. The manners in which this constrained cogitating strains to grasp the this-worldly habitually hurl whatever is confronted into a monochromatic abyss of the divine. The pre-Cantorian infinite of religions is insufficiently infinite. The miraculousness of their miracles is minuscule next to the brute fact of the spatio-temporal existence of any matter whatsoever. To embellish upon a cliché, scientific truths are indeed far, far stranger than religious fictions. Referring once more to the topic of logogeny as broached by Berger, cosmological inquiries into this matter informed by such disciplines as quantum physics

and string theory are virtually guaranteed to be incalculably, immeasurably weirder and more fantastic than anything dreamed up along these lines in the past by armchair-bound theologians and rationalist metaphysicians—and this in addition to the non-negligible virtue of such scientific inquiries actually being epistemologically justifiable and defensible. Wonder is as much the product of science as the prompt for philosophy. At the same time, it is a source of difficulties and disturbances for religion.

Within my framework, the ideas of science do not inevitably result in the affects (and effects) of nihilistic disenchantment. One of the many important lessons of psychoanalysis is that apparently automatic and self-explanatory connections between ideas and affects are, in truth, anything but natural and necessary. That said, the 'enchantment' of incarnate existence science potentially can bring about is not equivalent to that associated with religion hitherto. My materialism is neither disenchanting nor (re-)enchanting as these alternatives are defined and characterised by those who typically tend to invoke this distinction; it ought to be noted that those who do almost always are promoters of (re-)enchantment. As I have explicated above, transcendental materialism, as a contemporary extension of Marxian historical/dialectical materialism, takes the invaluable lesson of Marx's first thesis on Feuerbach in particular to heart. It thus avoids repeating reductivists' and eliminativists' fatal mistake of brushing aside and leaving behind what thereby become unexplained leftovers nourishing and sustaining idealist reactions against the understandably felt poverty of materialist outlooks. Therefore, I strive to advance an account of more-than-material constellations and processes formulated nonetheless in accordance with the strictest materialist commitments and without the slightest bit of surreptitious spiritualist cheating. At the same time, the picture of the sciences *à la* transcendental materialism surpasses religions when measured by the standards of sublimity as amazingness, incredibleness, wondrousness, and the like.

Enchantment is too precious to leave its lights under the baskets of non/anti-scientific religions and theologies. The verso of this recto is that scientific atheism is too valuable to be left to garden-variety atheists, whether Julien Offray de La Mettrie and Baron D'Holbach or Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens. As per my transcendental materialist tarrying with the *Weltanschauung* of the natural sciences, the science-revealed accidents, contingencies, fragilities, improbabilities, rarities, and vulnerabilities marking life in general and human life in

particular, sources of purportedly disenchanting (and depressing) nihilism for science's myriad, variegated enemies, are transubstantiated into enlivening sparks of appreciation, astonishment, and even, sometimes, adoration. Transcendental materialism not only refutes the charge that science devalues life—it vigorously strikes back with the reciprocal accusation that science's religious adversaries are neither willing nor able to value it nearly enough.

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'[A]s nothing that is not appearance can be an object of experience, it follows that the understanding can never go beyond the limits of sensibility within which alone objects are given to us. Its principles are merely rules for the exhibition of appearances; and the proud name of ontology, which presumes to supply, in a systematic form, different kinds of synthetic *a priori* knowledge of things in themselves [...] must be replaced by the more modest name of a mere analytic of the pure understanding.'

Kant, CPR A246-A247/B303-B304

'... they did not observe the [proper] order of philosophizing. For they believed that the divine nature, which they should have contemplated before all else (because it is prior both in knowledge and in nature) is last in the order of knowledge, and that the things which are called objects of the senses are prior to all.'

Spinoza, *Ethics*, IIp10s

The *Critique of Pure Reason* makes it clear that there is no place for systems such as Spinoza's in the new order inaugurated by Kant's transcendental philosophy. Yet ever since this interdiction, philosophies that situate themselves in a broadly post-Kantian tradition have repeatedly turned to Spinoza to develop a variety of ontological, hermeneutic, and political systems. Focusing on Spinoza's metaphysical thought, the 27th volume of Pli invites papers that explore the various ways in which Spinoza's *own system* can be used to counter or accommodate Kantian strictures to ontology, as well as the ways in which Spinoza's conception of properly ordered philosophy influenced the broad sweep of metaphysical Spinozisms to have emerged after Kant, while themselves being systems far-removed from pre-Critical Rationalism.

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The deadline for submission is **17th January 2015.**

Notes for Contributors

- Submissions should be sent to plijournal@warwick.ac.uk.
- They should be double spaced in rich text or word document format, in Times New Roman font.
- Accepted submissions will be printed from the electronic copy supplied. References and notes should be given in the form of footnotes, and book titles should be italicised.
- Footnote references should conform to the style of the following examples:

  Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1929), hereafter *CPR*.
  Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault* (Paris: Minuit, 1986), p. 24.
  Daniel W. Conway, 'Genealogy and Critical Method', in *Nietzsche, Genealogy, History*, ed. by Richard Schacht (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 318-33 (p. 320).
  David Sedley, 'The Structure of Epicurus' *On Nature*', *Cronache Ercolanesi*, 4 (1974), 89-92 (p. 90).

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