

Tyler Tritten
Beyond Presence

Quellen und Studien zur Philosophie

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Beyond Presence

The Late F. W. J. Schelling's Criticism
of Metaphysics

by
Tyler Tritten

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Abbreviations Used in References and Notes on Translations

References to Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling's *Sämtliche Werke* are given in the following form:

II/1, 257, "Darstellung": II/1 = the volume number, the entirety being divided into two divisions, the first running from I/1 through I/10 and the second from II/1 through II/4; 257 = the page number(s) of the reference; "Darstellung" = the first identifying word in the title of the specific work printed in that volume. Note that often this word would be the same for many texts, e.g. "Philosophie," "Philosophische" and "Einleitung," necessitating that a following word or, as is often the case, the first word of the subtitle or second title is given. In the example given above the entire title is "Philosophische Einleitung in die Philosophie der Mythologie oder Darstellung der reinrationalen Philosophie" and so the first identifying word of the secondary title has been used.

Works by Schelling that do not occur within his collected works or editions besides those found in the collected works follow the same format as other secondary literature. If not already indicated in the body of the text the author's last name will be given, followed in italics by the first identifying word of the title and lastly by the appropriate page number. In some cases it may be necessary to have the "References Page" at one's disposal in order to identify with certainty the text referenced.

If a work has been translated and the reference is for an English edition, then I have used that translation. For the most part, however, the primary sources in German, French and in one instance Dutch have been translated by myself. In all such cases the quotation or otherwise necessary reference is given in the original language in a footnote. If the text has been referenced but not actually quoted in the body of the text, then it is likely that the original is also not given in a footnote. In my own translations I have attempted neither to render everything into as fluid English as possible nor to translate everything as literally as possible, but I often oscillate between the two as the situation requires in order to stress the point at hand as poignantly as possible. At no point, however, have I altered the original text or proposed a translation I know to be inadequate.

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Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.
What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?
One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth forever.

The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose.

The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits.

All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.

All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.

The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.

Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us.

There is no remembrance of former things; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after.

I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity.

I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it?

I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life.

I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards:

I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits:

I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees: I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me:

I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts.

So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me.

And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour.

Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.

And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly: for what can the man do that cometh after the king? even that which hath been already done.

Part I
Crisis and Method

Chapter 1

The Contemporary Crisis of Meaning

1 The Crisis: Meaning and Presence

The Leibnizian question, which found its champion in F.W.J. Schelling a century prior to Heidegger, as to why is there is something, anything at all, and not rather nothing stems from the human being's quest for meaning. What *difference* does it make that the human being is rather than not? Why am *I* here? What is the meaning of being here? Do actions have any real significance or is everything merely vain and arbitrary? In these formulations meaning is not restricted to a relation of signifier-signified or sign-event, but the question seeks significance in general. 'X' may signify 'Y' or 'Y' be attributable to 'X' and yet this entire signification may be utterly void of significance as vain, banal, profane, trivial and/or obscenely superfluous without any relevance to reality. In a system each signified may acquire a sense according to its context while one may still deem the entire system and its requisite senses utterly senseless, i.e. without significance or meaning, without making a difference.¹ Not all significations matter, i.e. make a difference; not all significations are significant, not all meanings are meaningful. The question of significance asks if anything is worthwhile, justified or even holy. Capitalistic mass production, for example, has the problem of justifying its own production. The production has a sense or content, i.e. a "what," but not a "what for." One contemplating suicide can still use language and recognize sense and predication in the world, but she is unable to see what justifies why sense or predication should be at all. The concern with a justifying end is not about the function or utility of something for some use, but it rather concerns the ultimate whence and whither of things. The question as to why there is something and not rather nothing is fundamentally existential and personal rather than cosmological or teleological. It arises from the experience of the threat of meaninglessness, i.e. nihilism.

1 Is this not Levinas' criticism of structuralism? Sense may reside in the realm of the Said, but its significance stems from the Saying.

Why is there something rather than nothing? To speak with a Heideggerian tongue, one may say that to think Being is to think that in which beings are un-concealed, i.e. to think the original clearing (*Lichtung*) that can only be called α -λήθεια, not in order to think and explain beings but for the sake of thinking Being and its clearing. As Heidegger himself writes, "... (T)he metaphysical question of Being, which asks about the Being of beings, and the question that inquires more primordially; that is, inquires into the truth of Being and thus into the relationship of the essence of Being with the essence of man. Metaphysics itself refuses to question this essential relationship" (*Nietzsche* Vol. III., 217). Metaphysics, for Heidegger, represents the thinking of *presence* or onto-theo-logical thinking, which only interrogates Being in order to ground beings and consequently the aim is always ontic. What is first of all noteworthy, and confirms the hypothesis of this work on Schelling, is the stated connection between the relationship of the essence or meaning of Being and the meaning of being human. If one poses the question of Being on account of a genuine crisis and not merely as a theoretical exercise, then it must have an essential relationship with the meaning of being human, because only the human being questions and only for her is the question significant. Only for human persons is nihilism a threat.

Not just why, but what is the *meaning* of the fact that there is something rather than nothing? Heidegger calls the line of questioning that would take Being as merely an explanatory ground and first cause for beings metaphysics in opposition to that investigating its relation to the meaning of being human. In doing so, Heidegger unfortunately brandishes the term "metaphysics" with cumbersome and unnecessary baggage while he really disparages only a certain form of metaphysics as onto-theo-logy or metaphysics that interprets Being only as presence. If the question of Being is not just academic but a confrontation with the crisis of meaning, then it must be investigated with regard to its existential significance and not merely cosmologically as the first cause of beings. Any answer to the existential crisis of meaning must also originate from beyond an egoistic center and its arbitrary positing of values. Meaning – not value – must originate from without; it must be objective. If there is meaning rather than meaninglessness, it cannot arise from the locus constituting the very crisis: the human being. Heidegger also writes, "Meaninglessness is the lack of the truth (clearing) of Being" (*Nietzsche* Vol. III, 174). A questioning of Being that only interrogates according to the assumption of presence is no longer valid given the current strain

of contemporary philosophy that stands in Heidegger's shadow. The assumptions of presence are inadequate as responses to the crisis of meaning.

The initial task, then, is to provisionally eliminate the traditional assumptions of presence as inadequate. Only then will one be able to see why the latest Schelling and his positive philosophy of mythology and revelation does not begin from this assumption. But what is the assumption of presence? So-called philosophies of presence have quite a dirty list of corollaries: subjectivity and objectivity, essence and essentialism, beings or the ontic, representation, self-reflection, reason or logocentrism, logic, permanence, substance, the same etc. Has presence an identifiable inner core? Heidegger, who made the surpassing¹ of presence fashionable, identifies it with onto-theo-logy.² Ontology is the study of being qua being (What is *Seiendes* qua *seiend*?) and for Heidegger philosophies of presence surrender Being to beings, thus (for modernity at least) to subjectivity and objectivity. Philosophies of presence can only see beings and their representation, implicating a subject-object dichotomy insofar as everything is either an object representing/portraying a subject or a subject presenting an object/predicate/attribute. There are only beings and their representation, which means there are only ontic validities with an essence or *ousia*, a word that is synonymous with presence for Heidegger. Theology then, according to Heidegger, can be nothing more than thinking the

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- 1 An attempt will be made to avoid the phrase "overcoming of presence/traditional metaphysics" in place of the word "surpassing." Surely not all representation, logic, reasoning, identity and thought on essences must be overcome, i.e. disbanded, but rather what must be shown is that while this thinking has its place it certainly does not occupy the fundamental and original place. Reason, for example, must not be destroyed but itself is in need of explanation. Why is there reason and not unreason? Should reason be unable to ground itself, then reason is problematic and must be grounded instead of doing the grounding. However, when this is not a surpassing but a destruction, the word "overcoming" will be used. In Heidegger's case the demand is not for the destruction, dismissal or denial of metaphysics – *Destruktion* is not *Zerstörung* – but for a move *beyond* or, better yet, *before* metaphysical thinking. Heidegger's project was an uncovering of the fundamental assumption of Western metaphysics (presence) but not its annihilation.
 - 2 Kant first used the term "ontotheology" when he wrote that it was "cognizing that existence (God) through mere concepts, without the aid of even the least experience, and (this) is called *ontotheology*" (*Pure*, 584). For Kant, it was thinking God's *existence* and not just His essence on the basis of reason alone. This work will show that if a thinking of God is possible, it can only be achieved experientially and not *a priori*.

ground for subjective and objective beings and their essence. This, of course, is accomplished by positing a first cause or first essence, in short, a first ontic being, even if the greatest, most benevolent and most potent one – the greatest *subjectum* – whose dignity is factually unsurpassed but who nevertheless lives as a being amongst inferiors. This first cause is still a being amidst other beings. The third part of the term “onto-theo-logy,” λόγος, indicates that medium by which beings are represented and grounded. This element seizes beings as an essence and grounds them, only able to apprehend beings as stable and permanent ontic entities with an essence. Λόγος is the manner according to which beings are apprehended and the dominance of Being by λόγος reduces Being to the permanence and stability of beings and the purely logical.³ Because the representation of beings only occurs by means of the λόγος and the logical, so the apprehension of beings rests on the bases of reflection and the rational. Reflection always means self-reflection. Subjectivity is always self-representation or presence to self and objective beings are always the self-same in their identical and perpetual representation by subjectivity. All of the listed corollaries of presence relate to Heidegger’s view of metaphysics as presence or onto-theo-logy, but is there an underlying identity permitting their unified denomination as presence? Must a critique of presence systematically discredit each and every corollary in order to surpass this type of thinking?

A large number of other contemporary thinkers also attempt to surpass metaphysics as presence. Derrida explicitly grapples with the issue and views the presupposition of presence as meaning 1) that something only really is if it can present itself to a subject in thought or intuition and 2) that the subject only really is if it is self-presence. As he wrote in *Speech and Phenomena*,⁴ “(B)eing as *presence*: the absolute proximity of self-identity, the being-in-front of the object available for repetition, the maintenance of the temporal present, whose ideal form is the self-presence of transcendental *life*...” (99). Levinas too is concerned with surpassing the philosophy of presence as evidenced by the title of his book, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*. He and Derrida both at-

3 Actually, for Heidegger, the default of Being is responsible for the primacy of beings over itself.

4 In this text Derrida attempted to expose Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology as a philosophy of presence. He attacked the notion of intentionality saying it renders the material signifier arbitrary and incidental with respect to the signified.

tempted to surpass presence through the notions of alterity and difference.

One cannot hope to give a comprehensive overview of contemporary philosophy's criticisms of presence and the shifting meanings of the word. This word must retain some of its ambivalence only to become more acutely defined through this work's own criticism of the same. Yet, perhaps one identifying characteristic all critiques of presence possess is that they attempt to move beyond identity. Identity indicates both the unification of two or more things, i.e. their fusion with one another or placement under a common category, and it indicates that which permits identification, i.e. the recognition of something as something or other in order that *that* category and *that* unification of particulars may be *identified* (I.D.ed) as having that specific *identity*. Identity as unification is expressed in the principle of identity, $A=A$, and identity as a condition for recognition is that which allows something to be specified and distinguished from others, the distinguishing characteristic (i.e. its essence) constituting the identity of a thing. Both notions of identity imply each other via permanence. One can only recognize the identification of $A=A$ if each A is permanent, i.e. a self-same, and one can only recognize the singular A if it is identified as equal with that which is only numerically distinct from it. Even when one says "Socrates is a gadfly," A^1 (the subject) must be identified with A^2 (the predicate) or the subject *as* something, but it is always the self-same identity that is in both. Identity is the prerequisite of both recognition and the unification of beings and essences. The identification of two things is only possible on the basis of each being identifiable (specifiable) and this ability to be specified as this or that assumes the underlying duration/permanence of the identical. If presence means the preponderance and predominance of beings, essence, reason, reflection etc., then this can only mean the assumption of identity before all else. There are neither beings (be they subjects or objects), essences, representation, reflection nor rational and logical thinking without the prior assumption of identity. This is the assumption of the self-same, permanent and enduring throughout all differences and changes; the ever-present identical that undergoes *metabolē*, *kinesis*, separation, re-unification etc.

Why exactly is the assumption of presence inadequate for answering the problem of meaning? If meaning originates from an identical in the form of subjectivity and not from outside it, then meaning becomes re-

ducible to use and/or exchange value.⁵ To paraphrase Protagoras' dictum, "Man becomes the measure of all things, all things great and small." This is the consequence of Fichte's position, a position that helped pave the possibility for Marxism's apparent reduction of all meaning to (exchange/use) value. For Fichte, if there is object-being it is only because of the assumed identity of ever-present subject-being, which in its extreme formulation not only has objectivity merely for its use, appropriation, exchange and discarding, but it also posits the very reality of the objective – an objective that can have nothing more than an economic value, a mere commodity. This view implies that history lacks a meaning of its own but is merely the vacuous space allotted in order to posit one's own values and goals, to erect arbitrarily one's own meaning. Should one begin from subjectivity's counterpart, objectivity thought as an assumed, identical essence, a veritable *Ding-an-sich*, then one can never answer *why* it is but only attempt to discover the sense of *what* it is. If the above assumption that the origin of meaning has to come from Being itself is correct, then any view that sees the source of being in any given identity can only lead to nihilism. To begin with identity is to begin with something, some being, some essence, some sense or some structure. One becomes deaf to the question, "Why is there something rather than nothing?"⁶ One becomes deaf to the question of Being and relegates oneself to discovering the meaning of beings, of pre-given identities and contents, but never asking why they are even there at all. If the question of the meaning of *my* existence is only answerable on the basis of the meaning of Being, then one must ask why there is something instead of nothing. One cannot begin with a pre-given identity but must rather ask: Why is there even identity at all?

To begin with identity or presence can only result in an inability to confront the real crisis of meaning. The result can only be that Being and therefore the human being as well appear as nihilistic, absurd, obscene and unjustified. If meaning, however, originates in the truth of

5 Heidegger espoused the same view, "When meaninglessness comes to power by dint of machination, the suppression of meaning and thus of all inquiry into the truth of Being must be replaced by machination's erection of 'goals' (values)" and "such positings and empowerings of power no longer conform to 'standards of measure' and 'ideals' that could be grounded in themselves; they are 'in service' to sheer expansion of power and are valued purely according to their estimated use-value" (*Nietzsche* Vol. III, 175).

6 Wittgenstein: "It is not *how* things are in the world that is mystical, but *that* it exists" (*Tractatus*, 6.44).

Being, then it is not posited or molded by subjectivity, but is given or revealed through an experience that is neither dominated by a controlling, mechanical λόγος nor by representation. The expounding of such a primordial form of experience, *aesthesis*, will be one of the tasks of this work.

2 The Crisis and Contemporary Culture

Given the foregoing, one might conclude that the surpassing of presence is synonymous with contemporary philosophy's attempt to overcome the predominance of identity in favor of difference and alterity, but the situation is more complex. Contemporary philosophy is rife with instances of philosophers exposing the inadequacies of beginning with identity. Derrida and Levinas are two examples, but there was also Nietzsche and his Death of God. This (validly) dissolved the prior source of identity employed to give meaning to the human being and reality. In recent times there was a neo-Marxist⁷ and neo-Kantian,⁸ Foucault, who pronounced the Death of Man. The death of both Man and God has destroyed the traditional sources of identity, nullifying the possibility for a unifying meaning to history and Being. Now everything seems to appear as chaotic, random, unguided, uninformed materiality without any form instituting harmony, order and identity; all points of overarching centrality and identity have been lost. If the surpassing of presence or the assumption of identity merely solved the problem of meaning, then philosophy's task would be complete and so-called post-modern philosophy would be crowned victorious,

7 Foucault was neo-Marxist insofar as essences only have local, historical origins; nothing has any sort of identity above and beyond history but all essences only result from what could be called "historical materialism." There are no essences or forms, just historical materialism. Marx himself still seemingly had a teleological end to historical becoming, the surpassing of capitalism in favor of communism. Foucault, however, dispensed with final causes and the only promise of the future is the New, a vacuous notion of novelty.

8 Foucault was a self-entitled neo-Kantian insofar as there were no things themselves (phenomena) for him. This was his break with the phenomenological tradition. There was also no pure phenomenological experience; things are understood only on the basis of the *arché* (explicated as an *episteme*) of an epoch, hence his archaeological method. For Foucault the locus of the understanding is not a faculty of transcendental consciousness but a discursive, historical framework constituting particular epochs of history. Contra Foucault, this work will attempt to show that a certain form of affective receptivity or *aesthesis* precedes all forms of understanding.

the epoch that definitively answered the questions of meaning and Being. Yet, far from answering the problem of meaning, contemporary philosophy's iconoclastic attempts to overcome the idols of identity have only served to bring the crisis of meaning to the fore.

Similar to what could be called the "historical materialism" of Foucault is what could be called the "sociological materialism" of Girard.⁹ In Girard's book, *Violence and the Sacred*,¹⁰ he claims that the differences between individuals and peoples do not lead to destruction, violence and in general a loss of meaning, but rather a total loss of differences leads to violence and meaninglessness by establishing an equilibrium where everything becomes a replication of the same, where everything and everybody has equal right to claim the true and the good for their side. With the loss of differences a state of indifference or "nondifferentiation" and arbitrariness ensues, which is descriptive of contemporary society. Given the above, this should be surprising, as contemporary philosophy, insofar as it wishes to dispense with all forms of identity or the same, should be able to create the opposite of the same, namely the different. Yet, contemporary philosophy's overcoming of all forms of identity occurs as a *destruction* of these identities. For exam-

9 Although both Girard and Foucault seem to want to account for essences not as universals but on the basis of the limited and local, there are large differences between the two. Foucault argues for the primacy of the historical as formative, while Girard argues for the primacy of the cultural and social as constitutive of the formation of essences. Obviously, both views can be traced back to Marx's dialectical materialism. Foucault posits a more extreme thesis than Girard, who allows for some natural identity and similarity between disparate geographical and temporal localities that Foucault could never concede. For example, see Girard's *Violence and the Sacred* where he claims "the physiology of violence varies little from one individual to another, even from one culture to another" (2) and on pg. 34 he suggests that a woman's menstrual cycle invokes fear of violence because "any bloodletting is frightening." This suggests the experience of any bloodletting is *de facto* traumatic apart from any sort of knowledge that would tie it to murder and violence. See also pgs. 56–57, 90 and 167 for his view on the violence inherently associated with twins, the unity of rites to be observed in disparate cultures and the unity of the mask respectively. Each of these also lends credence to the claim that Girard does allow for universal similarities, which Foucault could never accept. This, of course, could be attributed to Girard's interest in psychoanalysis which Foucault did not share, as the latter viewed psychoanalysis itself as a modern creation whose life cannot be stripped from the context of modernity's propensity for confession. See his 3-Volume *History of Sexuality*. The only things Foucault ever recognized were the body and its pleasures.

10 Similar, if not identical, theses can be found in numerous other books by Girard, e.g. *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*, *The Scapegoat* and *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*.

ple, in place of the Death of God and the Death of Man only an empty, vacuous nullity and a mutual reciprocity – a dangerous equality – remains where all claims and all values have equal validity, as if in the Hobbesian state of nature/war. After deconstruction, where everything is now equally justifiable, everything appears as absurd, without a proper space or hierarchy; everything becomes brute obscenity. This is why contemporary philosophy's overcoming of identity has not resulted in a resolution of the crisis of meaning but heightened it instead, leading to a state of nihilism (Nietzsche) and relativism (Derrida, Foucault).¹¹ Contemporary philosophy's iconoclasm is synonymous with a crisis in meaning. For a philosophy that speaks of difference *ad nauseum* its effect is an ironic corrosion of differences. As Girard astutely observes, "Far from toiling the cause of peace and universal understanding...anti-religious demystification is every bit as ambiguous as religion itself. If it takes up arms against a certain type of violence, it may well bring about another, undoubtedly more destructive type" (*Violence*, 136–7). Consider also the following: "A dynamic force seems to be drawing first Western society, then the rest of the world, toward a state of relative indifferentiation never before known on earth, a strange kind of nonculture or anticulture we call modern" (*ibid.* 189). The impetus is not just a theoretical question of meaning but the crisis of meaning. While this crisis confronts all epochs, it confronts each and is posed by each in its own way. The peculiar character of the crisis today is not that meaning may be evil or ugly but that meaning may be in a certain sense absent insofar as contemporary thought attempts to remove all forms of overarching identity and meaning. The consequence is the threat of universal violence and destruction because everything is just as valid as the next, a veritable Hobbesian state of nature. Girard describes the apparent consequence of the contemporary crisis, writing:

Today the reign of violence is made manifest. It assumes the awesome and horrific form of technological weaponry. These weapons, as the "experts"

11 The caricature of these two authors often lumps them together unfairly though many of their theses are in fact oppositional. For example, Derrida, insofar as meaning is not constituted by the soul of a word or statement, i.e. the proposition, but its body as material signifier, argues that nothing stands outside the text. Foucault contends that the world is not at all a text (actually "book") and that nothing can be read from the world. This is a consequence of his rejection of the world as phenomenon and accordingly his further rejection of the hermeneutical tradition. While they both deny the possibility of meaning outside of its discursive context, they both also vehemently disagree about the locus of discursivity.

blantly inform us, are what is keeping the whole world more or less in line. The idea of "limitless" violence, long scorned by sophisticated Westerners, suddenly looms up before us. Absolute vengeance, formerly the prerogative of the gods, now returns, precisely weighed and calibrated, on the wings of science. And it is this force, we are told, that prevents the first planetary society, the society that already encompasses or will soon encompass the whole of humanity, from destroying itself. (*ibid.* 240)¹²

The crisis is not solved by contemporary philosophy's destruction of identities but has in fact become more acute and in a certain sense peculiar to this epoch on account of this overcoming. The crisis of meaning has taken the forms of nihilism, relativism and parallelism.

Nihilism and relativism, as just seen, resulted from the ensuing non-culture that emerged as a result of contemporary thought's iconoclastic proclivity. Relativism is closely related to the loss of sense. Not surprisingly, those philosophers that *rightly* undermined the unity underlying language are those burdened with the problem of relativism and a loss of any stable and permanent notion of sense. Derrida's philosophy and its notion of *différance* is the prime example and aspects of Nietzsche's thought fall into this category as well.¹³ Foucault's philosophy and to an extent Marx's represent a historical relativism. Foucault does not permit an inner identity of essences but their identity is always extrinsic, a

12 Also note:

"...(T)he history of modern society is marked by the dissolution of differences...the modern world manages to retain its balance, precarious though it may be; and the methods it employs to do so, though extreme, are not so extreme as to destroy the fabric of the society...primitive societies are unable to withstand such pressures; violence would quickly get out of hand and trigger the mechanism of generative unanimity, thus restoring a social system based on multiple and sharply pronounced differences. In the modern Western world nothing of this kind takes place. The wearing away of differences proceeds at a slow but steady pace, and the results are absorbed more or less gracefully by a community that is slowly but steadily coming to encompass the entire globe." (Girard, 188) and

"The Western world is in a perpetual state of crisis, and the crisis is always spreading. As its ethnological basis falls away, its specific nonspecificity becomes more pronounced. The Western world has always had a penchant for anthropology. And that penchant becomes more urgent as the situation around us worsens." (238)

As all unifying symbols and discourses are destroyed so are the world's cultural and ethnological contents, signaling a lapse into rampant individualism and isolationism, or anthropology.

13 One might also place Wittgenstein's view that *Sprache ist Gebrauch* (language is use) into this group.

historical construct. Both linguistic relativism and the relativism resulting from the destruction of the unity once thought to underlie history implicate nihilism because both imply that Being is nothing, a vapor. They implicate that there is nothing beyond material signifiers and material historicism.¹⁴ Why there is something and not nothing is not a question either one of these philosophies can begin to answer. Lastly, an undesired consequence resulting from attempts at overcoming presence comes from Levinas. Insofar as he attempts to avoid the identity of the same, self-present subjectivity, he accounts for the genesis of the ego and its singularity on the basis of its dephasing in the face of the Other, radical alterity. This experience of the alterior and anterior precedes all cognitive judgment and representation; it is a new way of thinking an original *aesthesis* as affectivity. The problem is if he thinks this Other as so alterior that no *a priori* of relation is allowed. Alterity cannot be so alterior that it is parallel in the sense that a parallel universe is parallel. A parallel universe by definition has absolutely no contact and no relation with this one and is *de facto* unthinkable, unrecognizable, unexperienceable and irrational.¹⁵ Descartes' substances were all too parallel. His *res cogitans* and *res extensa*

14 Emile Fackenheim defines historicism as that which "leaves no room, beyond the history of metaphysics, for an independent inquiry into metaphysical truth...-Historicism, in the classical sense, is the position which asserts that all philosophical questions are superseded by historical questions" (*Metaphysics*, 60–61). He argues that historicity, contra historicism, must assert metaphysical truth for internal consistency (64–65) and that historicity gives historicism a firm ground, making what it wants to say understandable (67).

Hans Blumenberg says, however, of historicity: "It can be expressed...as the impossibility of always speaking of a given content, or of conceiving it as always being understood, in the same way. The negation of this impossibility, in turn, is what is alleged in the dogmatic mode of thought" (*Work*, 272). In Fackenheim and Blumenberg both historicity and historicism exclude the possibility of the identical repetition of an object as if the historical context of its appearing bore no relation and thereby exercised no effect upon the appearing. Unchanged, identical repetition is impossible. Historicism, however, is more delimiting than historicity insofar as historicism asserts not only that historical conditions exert an influence on the appearing phenomenon but that there is no phenomenon at all, that the so-called phenomenon is a historical construction. Historicity denies that the phenomenon repeats itself *identically* in all historical situations but it does not reduce the phenomenon to these historical conditions, i.e. it does not efface the phenomenon.

15 Movies about parallel universes (is it even sensible that a plural of "universe" exists?) are really not about that at all but instead about universes that in at least one instance intersect with this universe.

shared nothing more than a relation of alterity to each other but even a "relation of alterity" must still be a relation and demands a point of contact. Descartes' reification and division of the subjective and objective, however, was really not a relation of alterity but, in fact, not a relation at all. In like manner Levinas' Other stands in danger of the same fate. Together, these three (nihilism, relativism and parallelism) comprise the pitfalls of contemporary philosophy's destruction of presence.

Even the most uninitiated reader has surely noticed a glaring absence thus far in the attempt to show the relation between meaning and presence, namely the fact that time remains unmentioned. If the foregoing is correct in assuming 1) that any questioning of the genesis and revelation of meaning must take into account its relation to presence and non-presence and 2) that any serious questioning of the problem of meaning must take into account the meaning of Being, whose horizon is none other than history and therefore time, then an analysis of time and history must not only occur but must occupy front and center rather than being relegated to an incidental buttress. While an analysis of presence necessarily entails an analysis of its counterparts: absence, difference, non-identity, novelty etc., it also necessarily concerns temporality. What is the presence of the present without past and future? What are difference and novelty without the concept of a real future? If one inquires into the meaning of an artifact or person, one naturally begins by examining the course of their lives and if Being itself becomes thematic so must history. One cannot assume history as merely the expression of Being so that the analysis of history exhausts all possible analyses of Being but it is certainly the departure point. What constitutes the temporality of history though? Is it simply a subjective form with the result that historical time is nothing more than a generalized, abstracted, empty space for change or is time more than an abstraction or an empty vesicle in which historical events can occur? If time holds a clue to the meaning of history and perhaps Being itself, then it must be more than the most generalized and largest abstraction of temporal instants but instead temporalization must be at the heart of time. If one asks about the meaning of Being, then one has already assumed that Being is not incidentally "in time," implying that time is yet a larger horizon, but that in some sense Being has temporalization at its heart. Temporalization is assumed as objective and universal (though not abstract and general), and temporalization must precede historicization rather than the historical process constituting time as the void form through which history acquires its ordering. Time is only a horizon for Being if it can be wrested from presence,

i. e. from being merely a structure of consciousness, so that time can become more than an empty receptacle through which a point moves and more than a separating of past and future on the basis of the given present identity that merely undergoes alterations as it passes through time. Time itself must be a *happening*, not just a schema ordering before and after from the viewpoint of the present but a temporalizing event. The trick will be how to think this temporalization without assuming a constant and identical present on the basis of which the division of past from future would occur. If time, as the most universal horizon, can be shown to be fundamentally and essentially dissonant and not the form of an identical point of presence travelling through empty time as though through an empty space, then the philosophy of presence shall be surpassed. If this objective temporalization can be shown to be synonymous with the truth or clearing of Being, then nihilism can be surpassed. If and only if this can be done will Being be thought for its own sake and not as a cosmological and existentially insignificant ground for beings. The temporalization of Being – *if* it is – must be something that is revealed as a real happening, as an event itself.

The crisis concerns a loss of meaning and if one wishes to grapple with this crisis one must assume a meaning of Being and the possibility of its interrogation. This can only occur through an interrogation of the horizon of history and its temporality.¹⁶ This work neither desires nor has the prerogative to act as a rogue and brashly embark upon this line of thinking on its own. That is a task of which its humble author is incapable and, moreover, finds quite unnecessary because there is a predecessor for such an undertaking – Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling.

16 This author is not unaware that many readers will not allow themselves to make these assumptions. Many readers do not assume a meaning of Being, viewing Being only nominally, i. e. as the largest possible abstraction and thus as a genus. Many are also unable to assume that history *may* have any sort of coherency beyond its external aggregation as merely a collection of its parts. For these readers, the hope is that they are able to paradigmatically accept these assumptions in order to understand this work and hopefully by the end of the work these assumptions will no longer appear groundless but will have acquired a credibility that allows one to see the validity in assuming these hypotheses. Even if this hope should remain unfulfilled, the inference remains valid that *if* it is the case that one wishes to proceed with such a line of questioning, then these are assumptions that one cannot avoid accepting as minimally provisional *termini a quo*.

3 The Crisis and Schelling

Two immediate questions are: “Why Schelling?” and “Which Schelling?” Schelling himself attempted to grapple with the problem of nihilism as well as the question as to why there is something instead of nothing, but in what ways and in what context? Moreover, Schelling is known as a very syncretic philosopher whose philosophy was in a constant state of flux, hence the question, “Which Schelling?” In response to the first question, there are many indications that Schelling stood on the boundary between the traditional metaphysics of presence and the origin of contemporary thinking’s criticism of this mode of thought.¹⁷

17 This is historically accurate if one accepts the canonical view that modernity found its culmination in Hegel and that contemporary philosophy began with Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. (For information as to how and in what ways Schelling influenced Kierkegaard see pgs. 122–138 in Michelle Kosch’s *Freedom and Reason in Kant, Schelling, and Kierkegaard*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006. Also see “Das Unvordenkliche der menschlichen Freiheit. Zur Deutung der Angst bei Schelling und Kierkegaard” in *Kierkegaard und Schelling. Freiheit, Angst und Wirklichkeit*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003.)

Heidegger claimed Hegel was the logical outcome of the philosophy of presence. He has written of Hegel, “Here the entire tradition of metaphysics has absolutized and focused itself: God-Nature-Man and in general everything in the entirety of the metaphysics of being. [Hier hat sich die ganze Tradition der Metaphysik verabsolutiert und konzentriert: Gott-Natur-Mensch; und alles im Ganzen der Metaphysik des Seins überhaupt.]” (*Deutsche*, 32). Yet, in his four-volume series on Nietzsche, he pursued the thought that even Nietzsche’s central thoughts of “will to power” and “the eternal return of the same” belong to the philosophy of presence. Heidegger writes, “...(W)e must always think his [Nietzsche’s] sole thought, and thereby the unitary guiding thought of Western metaphysics, to its own intrinsic limit. Then we will experience first and foremost how decisively Being is already overshadowed by beings and by the predominance of the so-called actual” (*Nietzsche* Vol. III., 157). However, he has also said that Schelling’s infamous text of 1809, *Of Human Freedom*, is the “summit of the metaphysics of German Idealism [Gipfel der Metaphysik des deutschen Idealismus]” (*Metaphysik*, 83). On page 141 of the same lecture he ascribes the culmination of traditional metaphysics to Nietzsche. Peter Warnek partially resolves this conflict by viewing both Nietzsche and Hegel as the culmination of Western metaphysics with the caveat that Nietzsche is this culmination only as an inversion of the tradition (“Reading Schelling after Heidegger” in *Schelling Now*, 173). In any case, if Heidegger’s claim concerning Schelling is accurate and his late philosophy says something different than the *Freiheitschrift*, then it likely surpasses German Idealism and accordingly the traditional metaphysics of presence. According to Warnek, Heidegger viewed Schelling as caught in the first be-

For example, Fackenheim claimed that Schelling was “indisputably” the originator of both idealism and existentialism (*God Within*, 51) and Walter Schulz made a similar pronouncement in his *Die Vollendung des Deutschen Idealismus in der Spätphilosophie Schellings*.¹⁸ Fackenheim argues that Schelling has not received credit for these two feats due to his unclear style and method along with a confused content. While it may be fair to say that his style and method are unclear and even fair to say that his content was in a perpetual state of flux, this work hopes to show that the content was not a confusing barrage of nonsensical *non sequiturs* devoid of any real and novel insight. Fackenheim views the possibility of this move from idealistic to existentialist thought in Schelling through his notion of the Fall, that radical break between essence and existence signaling a crisis in idealism itself. Schelling’s first mention of “leap,” implying the chasm created by the Fall, occurred as early as 1804. This recognition allegedly foreshadowed the insight of Schelling’s later philosophy that there is an unbridgeable chasm between *Daß* (That/quoddity) and *Was* (What/quiddity). Fackenheim contends that as early as 1804 Schelling came to question the ability of reason to ground itself and absolute truth, and with this failure the breach with natural theology was drawn. Idealism cannot answer the question of why there is something rather than nothing, why there is reason rather than unreason.

ginnings and determinations of traditional metaphysics due to his idealist affirmation of the primacy of the will (*ibid.* 176).

- 18 “But at the same time (Schelling’s) philosophy throws light onto the *first rudiments of the great post-idealistic philosophers*. The ‘transition’ from Idealism to post-Idealism is one of the darkest problems of philosophy’s history. We have become accustomed, in the lineage of Feuerbach, Marx and Kierkegaard, to tearing open a nearly unbridgeable cleft between Idealism and post-Idealism. [Seine Philosophie aber wirft zugleich Licht auf die *Grundansätze der großen nachidealistischen Philosophen*. Der “Übergang” vom Idealismus zum Nachidealismus ist eines der dunkelsten Probleme der Philosophiegeschichte. Wir haben uns daran gewöhnt, in der Nachfolge der Feuerbach, Marx und Kierkegaard zwischen Idealismus und Nachidealismus eine fast unüberbrückbare Kluft aufzureißen.]” (*Vollendung*, 8).

Schulz’s book lucidly brings the problem of this text to the fore, namely that nihilism ensues from total mediation, which precludes the appearance of novelty. Nothing can appear at the end that was not already in and mediated out of the beginning. If Schelling would complete this mode of philosophizing as Schulz suggests (*ibid.* 306), then Schelling would be the culmination of nihilism and Western metaphysics. The issue of presence is only pertinent insofar as it either culminates in or surpasses nihilism.

Manfred Frank is a contemporary commentator of Schelling who in his book, *Der unendliche Mangel an Sein: Schellings Hegelkritik und die Anfänge der Marxschen Dialektik*, attempts to show that Schelling's notion of Being as pre-reflexive was adopted from Hölderlin and that its application as a critique against Hegel was the germ for the critiques raised against Hegel by Feuerbach and Marx.¹⁹ In this text he writes, "Finally we know that both Feuerbach and Marx have adopted essential arguments of their critique of Hegel from Schelling – and indeed ones which ever since have remained tied to their names (10)."²⁰ This would indicate that Schelling not only stood at the origins of existentialist thought but also at the beginnings of the tradition of materialist and historical philosophy. Contrary to the canon, Schelling was not a mediator between Fichte's Subjective Idealism and Hegel's Absolute Idealism. Not only did Schelling first found Idealism before Hegel, but he was also the first to see the cracks in its edifice.²¹ As already mentioned, Schelling's eventual critique against Hegel, asserts Frank, was the origin of Feuerbach and Marx's²² critiques, which subsequently lead to their historical/materialistic philosophies.²³ The material principle found in Schelling's philos-

19 Interspersed within Frank's book are also numerous comments that attempt to bring Schelling into a close relation with the existentialism of Sartre.

20 "Schließlich wissen wir, daß sowohl Feuerbach wie auch Marx wesentliche Argumente ihrer Hegelkritik – und zwar solche, die seither mit ihrem Namen verbunden geblieben sind – von Schelling übernommen haben."

Hans Michael Baumgartner similarly wrote, "In his arguments, Schelling already anticipates the essential points of critique of the post-idealist, i. e. materialist, Hegel-critique of a Ludwig Feuerbach or Karl Marx [In seinen Argumenten nimmt Schelling bereits die wesentlichen Kritikpunkte der nachidealistischen bzw. materialistischen Hegel-Kritik eines Ludwig Feuerbach oder Karl Marx vorweg]" (*Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling*, 155).

21 Frank insists that in the time period before Hegel had published the *Phenomenology* Schelling already began to see the real difference between what would constitute his future non-idealistic thought and Hegel's not yet developed idealism.

22 Marx saw Feuerbach as an "inverted Schelling [umgekehrte Schelling]" (*Schelling, Offenbarung* 41/42, 18–19).

23 See *Mangel*, 159. Also see pg. 179 for Frank's claim that the intuition of pre-conceptual Being was already to be found in Schelling's earlier *Naturphilosophie* and that this accounts for "*das materialistische Prinzip*." Feuerbach apparently sees Schelling's value in his *Natur-* and not his *Identitätsphilosophie* because it is here that the Absolute as Nature, i. e. as the material principle and not Spirit, posits nature (180–181). Feuerbach's estimation of Schelling's philosophy was nearly bi-polar (and so was Kierkegaard's stance towards Schelling, who while following Schelling's lectures in Berlin moved from "indescribable joy" at the mention

ophy reached as far as Adorno according to Frank. “Feuerbach found, by the way, prefigured in [Schelling’s] philosophy of nature his ‘material principle’ (*Thesen*, 1.c., Bd. 9, 256), which Adorno has still expressly recognized contra Hegel (*Negative Dialektik*, 1.c., 182) (footnote, 182).”²⁴

Slavoj Žižek sees this material kernel in Schelling’s so-called freedom period,²⁵ also claiming that Schelling had an influence on Marx as well as materialistic thought in general. He also attributes to Schelling’s philosophy the impetus to a vast array of other forms of thought. He says, “It is now clear that the entire post-Hegelian constellation – from Marxism to the existentialist notion of finitude and temporality as the ultimate horizon of being, from deconstructionist ‘decentering’ of the self-presence of *logos* to New Age obscurantism – has its roots in Schelling’s late philosophy”²⁶ (*Abyss*, 4). Žižek also attempts to show that the Freudian notion of

of the word actuality to viewing his lectures as drivel and having nothing to do with real existentialism (*Notes of Schelling’s Berlin Lectures*, xxi-xxiii). Before the 1830s Feuerbach gave some acknowledgement of Schelling’s influence on his philosophy but since the 1830s Schelling is nothing more than a rogue and confused mystic. (See *Mangel*, pg. 182, footnote 18 for a collection of quotes by Feuerbach that only serve to impugn and belittle him. See pgs. 196–197 for evidence that Feuerbach did not arrive at a decisive critique against Schelling until later since he was even complementary of him in his dissertation in 1828. For a list of six Feuerbachian critiques of Hegel that have their origin in Schelling see pgs. 203–205.) While Feuerbach found value in the *Naturphilosophie*, the late philosophy was for him useless theological speculation. Unfortunately for Schelling’s reputation Marx credited the real scientific explication of the insight into the Real Principle, the material principle, to Feuerbach and not to Schelling, but nevertheless he did believe that Schelling influenced Feuerbach. (See *Mangel*, 184–185).

Concerning Marx’s relation to Schelling, Frank argues 1) that he was influenced by him via Feuerbach, placing his materialism in the lineage of Schelling’s positive philosophy (see pg. 207); 2) that he was informed of Schelling’s Berlin lectures of 1841/42 via Engels, who attended these lectures; and 3) that a quote from *Ökonomisch-philosophischen Manuskripte* indicates a direct link (see pg. 215 and footnotes).

- 24 “Übrigens fand Feuerbach in der Naturphilosophie sein »materialistisches Prinzip« (*Thesen*, 1.c., Bd. 9, 256) vorgebildet, das noch Adorno ausdrücklich gegen Hegel anerkannt hat (*Negative Dialektik*, 1.c., 182)” (footnote, 182).
- 25 *Philosophische Untersuchungen über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit und die damit zusammenhängenden Gegenstände* (1809) and especially the second draft of *Die Weltalter* (1811–1815).
- 26 By “Schelling’s late philosophy” Žižek actually means the freedom period (see previous footnote) and not Schelling’s latest positive philosophy of mythology and revelation.

the unconscious as that dark ground of drives responsible for such things as the infamous death drive is prefigured in Schelling. Paul Tillich²⁷ also attests to this link between Schelling and Freud.²⁸ Ironically, Žižek claims that Schelling was able to move from idealistic to post-idealistic thought due to a recourse to pre-modern theosophy.²⁹ He writes, “The paradox, of course, is that *it was his very ‘regression’ from pure philosophical idealism to pre-modern theosophical problematic which enabled him to overtake modernity itself*” (*Indivisible*, 8). That Schelling stood at the crossroads of idealist and post-idealistic thought lends *prima facie* historical justification to suspect that Schelling is a natural place to look in the search for the downfall of modernity.

Fackenheim, Frank and Žižek witness that Schelling’s late philosophy constituted the pivot between idealism, materialism and existentialism. Žižek attempts to broaden the influence even further insofar as he claims that Schelling’s philosophy pre-figured the thinking of time as the horizon of Being itself³⁰ and the deconstruction of the self-presence of the subject as a subject with λόγος or with reason. In this respect he believes Schelling played an integral role in the surpassing of modernity as such. If one accepts the account of the above testimonies, then does that mean Schelling might have something to say about the surpassing of the metaphysics of presence? Andrew Bowie believes Schelling has much to say to contemporary philosophy precisely because of the groundbreaking critique of presence. Bowie rightly says that “[Schelling] was probably the first to establish many key themes in European philosophy that reappear

27 Tillich recounts, “What I learned from Schelling became determinative of my own philosophical and theological development” (*A History of Christian Thought*. New York: Harper & Row, 1968. pg. 438).

28 “(Schelling) was the first to use the term ‘unconscious’ in philosophy, and through a special line of thought Freud received this term, and used it for empirical psychological purposes” (*A History of Christian Thought*. New York: Harper & Row, 1968. pg. 421). See also pg. 48 of Beach, Edward Allen. *The Potencies of God(s)*. State University of New York Press: Albany, 1994. for the same claim.

29 That the German mystic Jakob Böhme exerted a great influence upon Schelling is well-documented.

30 As Schelling shows, this view of time is not the customary view. “It is easy to say – and is now a universally accepted opinion – that time is not real, that it is not independent of our mode of representation” (*Ages: 2nd Draft*, 122). Žižek adds that Schelling critiques not simply the formalism of time but the “prerogative of the present involved in it” (*Abbyss*, 30), which amounts to the prerogative of being over Being.

in the work of Nietzsche, Heidegger,³¹ Levinas, Derrida, and others” (Schelling, *History*, ix). The themes that Bowie claims Schelling established are none other than those that have to do with presence and its surpassing. Bowie touches upon Schelling’s critiques of representation, reason, subjectivity-objectivity, self-presence, truth as propositional and a one-to-one correspondence with reality, logic and contingency. All of these critiques constantly recur in contemporary philosophy.

Aspects of Schelling’s philosophy suggest an alternative to a representational conception, without giving up the demand, which he still shared with Hegel, that philosophy explicate a notion of reason. The fact is that by establishing the “otherness” of being in relation to any subject-object structure, Schelling began to show the impossibility of “self-presence” and of any representational or metaphysical realist conception of truth, an approach usually assumed to have begun only with Nietzsche, Wittgenstein or Heidegger...Schelling denies that the world emerges via any kind of logical necessity: “what we call the world, which is so *completely contingent* both as a whole and in its parts, cannot possibly be the impression of something which has arisen by

31 The link between Schelling and Heidegger is so strong that Jason M. Wirth has written that while Heidegger did recognize Schelling’s importance for him, he kept him at bay by (over-)emphasizing the system in Schelling, “otherwise he would have already been Heidegger” (*Schelling Now*, 7). In the same book Joseph Lawrence wrote, “The link in a chain to Hegel is now generally conceived as a link in the chain to Heidegger” (*ibid.* 13) and Peter Warnek speaks of “the immense debt Heidegger’s own thinking owes to the work of Schelling, a point which has yet to be fully elaborated with clarity and depth” (*ibid.* 169). Warnek argues that to the extent that Hegel is the culmination of Western metaphysics, Schelling, as often thought of Nietzsche, must show the next possibility for thought (*ibid.* 173). Further in accord with this work is Warnek’s contention that nihilism is the historical event defining our age (*ibid.* 175). Elsewhere, in *Heideggers Wege* [Tübingen, 1983], pg. 138, Hans-Georg Gadamer has stated that for Heidegger, “behind Kierkegaard and later even behind Nietzsche the late Schelling always became more visible [hinter Kierkegaard und später sogar hinter Nietzsche der späte Schelling immer sichtbarer wurde.]” This quotation was taken from Wilson, J.F. *Schelling und Nietzsche: Zur Auslegung der frühen Werke Friedrich Nietzsches*. Walter de Gruyter: Berlin, 1996, pg. 3. Also note Gabriel Marcel, who wrote, “...Schelling, completely otherwise and much less directly than Kierkegaard, has prepared the terrain – must it be said for the philosophy of existence?” “Amongst contemporary thinkers it is Heidegger and apparently he alone...who appears authentically related to Schelling. [“...Schelling, tout autrement et beaucoup moins directement que Kierkegaard, a préparé le terrain – faut-il dire pour la philosophie de l’existence?” “Parmi les penseurs contemporains, c’est Heidegger et vraisemblablement lui seul...qui apparaît comme relié authentiquement à Schelling.”]” (“Schelling” in *Revue*, 86).

the *necessity of reason*...it contains a *preponderant* mass of *unreason*" (Schelling 1972 p. 99). (Schelling, *History*, 35)

The task of this work, however, is not archival. The situating of Schelling's unique historical position is only important to insulate the questioning embarked upon here from anachronism.³² This work looks to Schelling for help in responding to the crisis of meaning, a question for which he can be of assistance due to his historical locus and the nature of his philosophy. Now, if Schelling is indeed helpful in answering the problematic of this work, that can only strengthen the historiographical claim that he is not only a prophetic forbearer of themes in contemporary philosophy but that he constitutes the very transition itself from modern to contemporary thought.³³

Returning now to the question of "Which Schelling?" one must simply ask which period of his thought grapples with the same crisis of nihilism and which period attempts to analyze it in a way that is enlightening in regards to the critique of presence. This is Schelling's latest period of positive philosophy³⁴ in which the historical phenomena he interprets are

32 For further support insulating against anachronism in using Schelling to approach the present problematic see Habermas' essay "Theory and Praxis" in *Dialektischer Idealismus im Übergang zum Materialismus* and also note that Žižek has called Deleuze "a great Schellingian" (*Abyss*, 61). Deleuze, in *Difference and Repetition*, only has good things to say of Schelling, often remarking how Schelling has tragically not been credited with everything he has accomplished. Though too far afield to take up explicitly, Deleuze's question of existential meaning in his text and its relation to repetition and whether or not repetition has the quality of the leap of faith *à la* Kierkegaard or an impersonal φύσις *à la* Nietzsche (pg. 11) is a question that has more relevance to the problematic outlined here than one would otherwise assume. Frank too asks, "'Repetition' – does Kierkegaard have this thought from Schelling? ['Wiederholung' – hat Kierkegaard diesen Gedanken von Schelling?]" (Schelling, *Offenbarung* 41/42, 23).

33 Bowie writes, "The fact is that (Schelling) seems to qualify in certain ways as a post-metaphysical thinker, thereby rendering the demarcation between the metaphysical and the post-metaphysical more problematic than it has usually been thought to be" (Schelling, 68).

34 Bruce Matthews says the positive strain is "demonstrated in his writings and lectures from 1810 onwards" (Schelling, *Grounding*, 30). Many texts, if relevant, will be quoted in this work that date back to this point but the emphasis concerns those later texts studying the historical phenomena of mythology and revelation. Walter Schulz suggests that only the last four volumes of Schelling's *Sämtliche Werke* comprise the late philosophy because only there is the division between positive and negative philosophy (113). He views the immediately preceding lectures as a "period of preparation" in which the whole of the late philosophy is

mythology and revelation. The primary texts are his Berlin lectures on the “Philosophy of Mythology” and “The Philosophy of Revelation” and the *Urfassung der Philosophie der Offenbarung* from the 1830s and even the Erlanger lectures, *Initia Philosophiae Universae*, dated 1820/21, though other relevant texts will be used when appropriate and/or necessary but all only stemming from his latest work.³⁵

The guiding question for his positive philosophy was “Why is there something rather than nothing?” As he formulates it:

Still, if I go so far as to grant that these substances and forces actually explain these phenomena – a position about which I hardly feel convinced in every regard – there is always a question that remains: From where do these substances and forces themselves derive and for what purpose? What type of necessity do they have to exist and why are there such things?... (T)here nevertheless remained for me always an unanswered question: Why are there such beings at all? (*Grounding*, 92)

His question is also asked here and it assumes that one cannot simply posit a first being. The reason he asks this question is, also like here, on account of nihilism and the pointless striving of time as a flowing recurrence of the same without an ultimate whence and whither.

A generation passes away, and another arises to itself again pass away. In vain we expect that something new will happen in which this turmoil will finally find its goal; everything that happens happens only so that something else again can happen, which itself in turn becomes the past to something else. Ultimately, everything happens in vain, and there is in every deed, in all the toil and labor of man himself nothing but vanity: *everything* is vain, for vanity is everything that lacks a true purpose. Thus far from man and his endeavors making the world comprehensible, it is man himself that is

contained. He suggests that the late philosophy adds nothing new but only provides the methodological consciousness of the preparatory time. In contrast to this view is the fact that the explicit distinction between positive and negative philosophy can be found in *Das System der Weltalter*, a lecture series delivered in 1827/28. Schulz may be correct that the prior period of freedom can be seen as a preparatory phase for the late philosophy but the explicit distinction between positive and negative philosophy marks its cognizant advent prior to the 1841/42 lectures published in the collected works.

- 35 Although all of the works from his late philosophy were only published posthumously and some were compiled by means of students' lecture notes, Schelling did pen or at least dictate some of the works himself. Many original manuscripts were destroyed during the course of WWII. The present situation is that these texts are not critical editions. This work remains undeterred by this unfortunate situation because the task is not an archival one aimed at presenting Schelling's view but a philosophic meditation on an existential crisis.

the most incomprehensible and who inexorably drives me to the belief in the wretchedness of all being...It is precisely man that drives me to the final desperate question: Why is there anything at all? Why is there not nothing? (*ibid.* 93–94)

The human being is not the answer to the question, what is assumed as comprehensible so that everything may be anthropocentrically interpreted from this firm basis, but the human being begs the very question, nay *is* the question, of why there should be something rather than nothing. If there is an answer to the vanity of one's situation, an answer to the crisis of meaning, then it and the human being's true essence must be constituted from the outside rather than from the human being as the ground upon which Being could be explained. The questioning of human being and the questioning of Being are in search of the same – a solution to apparent destitution. Schelling's questioning also assumes that a tautological conception of time cannot answer the problem but that is the very symptom of the destitution. If there is meaning, then this must come in the form of the new or the different but certainly not in the isomorphic returning of the same. In early modernity, the primary formulation of the assumption of presence was the conception of Being as a duality of subjectivity and objectivity but Schelling sees this as inadequate. In his 1830 lecture, *Einleitung in die Philosophie*, he exclaims that "a characteristic deficiency by which all those systems jointly and severally fell; it is none other than the one already mentioned, namely merely logical justification or subjectivity"³⁶ (4–5). Schelling's positive philosophy does not question Being from the primacy of the present but through a history that is not constituted from a primal point of enduring presence that would simply pass through time and history. The crisis that confronted Schelling is nearly identical to the contemporary one and the manner in which he asks the question and the method by which he attempted to answer it are closely aligned with the method of contemporary thought's attempt at surpassing presence.³⁷ Hopefully Schelling, due to

36 "... (E)in charakteristischer Mangel, durch den alle jene Systeme insgesamt fielen; es ist das kein anderer, als der bereits genannte, nämlich die bloße logische Begründung, oder die Subjektivität."

37 Bruce Matthews writes in a section entitled "Expectations in Berlin" from pgs. 6–14 of *Grounding* about how the climate in Berlin at the time was primarily marked by a concern of nihilism and the lack of a place for faith in the light of the panlogism of Hegel's system. He writes:

"What was hoped for [from Schelling] was the declaration of a new interpretive framework that, unlike Hegel's system, would repress humanity's desire for

his position as predecessor, will be able to avoid the pitfalls into which contemporary philosophy has fallen and in so doing exacerbated instead of resolving the crisis.

Most secondary literature shows Schelling's relevance to contemporary thought but never grasps his essential idea. Take Manfred Frank's *Der unendliche Mangel an Sein* as an example. He shows that Schelling's critique of Hegel exposes the inadequacy of the absolutization of mediacy and reflection and that this exposes negativity as an artificial construction of thought and not a real ontological beginning, but he never broadens this to a critique of Western metaphysics as a whole and its consummating presupposition of identity/presence. He only shows the historiographical context between Hegel, Schelling and the materialism that followed this polemic. Further, insofar as the succeeding materialism, whose seeds he finds in Schelling, was a historical philosophy, he curiously fails to discuss Schelling's theses on mythology and its relation to historicity, ethnology and the origin of language. Here the desire is to show Schelling not only had prophetic insights anticipating a future philosophy but that he was the beginning and cause of contemporary thought. The claim in its strongest formulation is to show that the fundamental thought of his late philosophy occurs in his view of time and that this temporality precludes all possible origins and assumptions of identity once and for all.³⁸

meaning that transcends the present...The intensity of the desire for some way of making meaning in a world rendered meaningless by reason's excesses speaks to the crises of the human spirit...both personally and culturally...The crises that he [Schelling] foresaw would occur only if philosophy proved itself incapable of countering the growing force of cultural nihilism; a possible future that could only be avoided if philosophy could somehow offer a viable system that promised a new redemptive paradigm." (14)

Schelling's philosophical problematic was not only in tune with the one here but the concrete historical and cultural setting was also similar to today's, at least as described above by Girard.

38 Jason M. Wirth once wrote:

"Schelling's questions and philosophical sensibility were utterly out of sync with his time. In fact, in many ways, the lectures still retain their strange, unique voice and concerns, although, in their own unprecedented way, they address the question of difference at the heart and the ground of all history. They are one of the most radical reconsiderations of the nature of historical time, and they anticipate some of the twentieth century's most penetrating investigations of this question" (*Historical-Critical*, viii)

Edward Allen Beach wrote, "According to Schelling, traditional Western philosophy committed the error of treating the essences of things as changeless and fixed in eternity. As a consequence, time was relegated to a merely representation-

This is not simply one form of presence to be surpassed amongst others but that Gordian knot holding all forms of identity together. To grasp his fundamental thought on time is to understand his definitive surpassing of identity. Accordingly, the trajectory of the text will follow the Schellingian epochs of time.

4 Structure of the Text Arranged According to Epochs

The Past is the time of eternity, the Present the fallen, disjointed time of history and the Future the time of reconciliation. Each of these three has its own respective temporality.

Eternity is the section in which the positive philosophy is first introduced and separated from the negative. The past of eternity is *das unvor-denkliche Sein* (unprethinkable Being) preceding the divinity of God. The present is the genesis of a *Was*, the selfhood and identity of God, i. e. His divinity. The future is the end of creation in *Mensch* (Man).

Between eternity as the Past time and history as the Present time is the pre-historical decision, the primal act that is the Fall. This act, according to Schelling, is the first historical act though it does not fall within the time of history. This act is constitutive of the division of peoples according to their language and mythologies. The time that ensues from this intermittent deed is the meaningless time that gives rise to the crisis of meaning serving as the impetus to this work.

Historical time is characterized by the time of mythology with its own past, present and future. Special revelation constitutes the bridge between the Present and the Future. The third time is a Future state of glorification. Whether this time could ever become actual, i. e. present, is one of the decisive questions with which this work burdens itself. The question is synonymous with the question of whether or not the Good could be completely actualized, completely present.

* * *

As early as 1809 in *Of Human Freedom*, Schelling wrote that “the world as we now behold it, is all rule, order and form; but the unruly lies ever in

al status and treated as the phenomenal medium in which the static, essential verities would appear” (*Potencies*, 111).

the depths as though it might again break through, and order and form nowhere appear to have been original, but it seems as though what had initially been unruly had been brought to order" (34). If the custom is to assume permanence and stability in order to explain motion and change, then Schelling did the opposite by assuming the latter and making the former problematic. His philosophy moved against the norm³⁹ insofar as he did not assume reason in order to explain Being but had to begin with a positive account of Being in order to explain the being of reason. This is more in accord with experience. Order, identities and essences appear as derivative and the chaotic appears not merely as a distortion of given order but as older than all order and identity. To view order and permanence, or any form of identity, as original is to begin with presence, the perpetual presence of the identical underlying and reappearing amidst all differences, differences which could ultimately be nothing more than the alterations and affectations of the One. To reject that this could be original, to assert instead that this is always imbued with the stain of derivation, is to reject the possibility of beginning with the One, the Same, the Present or the Identical. The question here is how this relates to the crisis of meaning for the human being, history and Being.

39 Karl Jaspers has written that Schelling "had radical thoughts in conservative form. [...hätte er radikale Gedanken in konservativer Gestalt.]" (*Schelling*, 7). Jaspers also notes in complete justification, "With Schelling there is not a fixed terminology. Being and being can invert their reciprocal sense; beyond being can again mean Being; the word Spirit is used for the third potency and for that beyond being which holds sway over all potencies; God can indicate that beyond being or its first appearance. Yet, in the context the presentation is clear. [Bei Schelling gibt es keine feste Terminologie. Das Sein und das Seiende können ihren gegenseitigen Sinn umkehren; das Übersein kann wieder Sein heißen; das Wort Geist wird für die dritte Potenz gebraucht und für das alle Potenzen übergreifende Übersein; Gott kann das Übersein oder dessen erste Erscheinung bedeuten. Je im Zusammenhang ist die Vorstellung deutlich.]" (*ibid.* 170).

Chapter 2

Positive Philosophy as Both Method and Object: A Methodological Analysis

Philosophy does not have a set methodology, but oscillates between rationalism and empiricism, the *a priori* and *a posteriori*, dependent upon its object of study. The object of study ought to determine the method but a further peculiarity consists in the uncertainty of philosophy's object. The object determinant of Schelling's late philosophy pivots around a positive philosophy of mythology and revelation. This indicates its object in a general and a particular sense. Philosophy is universal and in this sense always has as its object σοφία; therefore, one speaks of particular philosophies, e. g. feminist philosophy, gay philosophy, philosophy of history, philosophy of nature etc., only with difficulties. Schelling asserts that the absolutely positive is σοφία and consequently his positive philosophy does not *de facto* denote any special object of study. However, insofar as Schelling contends that the phenomenon of his late philosophy is revelation and that revelation is only understandable within the context of mythology (II/4, 20, "Offenbarung, 2ter Teil"), he seemingly limits himself to a particular domain as well instead of philosophy simply being universal. The objective is to show the erroneous nature of this apparent division between philosophy as universal discipline and as limited to a particular domain. The dichotomy of particular and universal is misleading insofar as the universal, σοφία, is individual and not general, and the particulars, mythology and revelation, allegedly disclose the universal. By explicating Schelling's methodology, the object of study will come into focus, i. e. his fundamental thought, where a philosopher begins before drawing his consequences:¹ *That* something is precedes *what* it is; free

1 "If one wants to honor a philosopher, then one must grasp him here, in his fundamental thought, where he has not yet gone on to the consequences. For against his own intentions he can go astray in the subsequent development and nothing is easier than to go astray in philosophy, where every false step has infinite consequences and where one on the whole finds himself on a path surrounded by an abyss on all sides. The *true* thought of a philosopher is precisely his fundamental thought from which he proceeds" (Schelling, *Grounding*, 130). By recommenc-

or original willing determines something's essence only through its actuality. For the originality of freedom, essence does not precede actual existence.

1 The Phenomenological Criterion

Schelling's methodology is complex and variant. As a starting point though, one could characterize positive philosophy as a type of phenomenology. Schelling writes:

Here the question is not which viewpoint must be won from the appearance so that it may be comfortably explained under a philosophy, but conversely, which philosophy is required in order to, being on a par with the object, attain the same stature as the object. It is not, how must the phenomenon be indexed, turned, reduced to one aspect or stunted in order at best to be explainable from principles that we at once advanced so as not to be transgressed, but rather: To where must our thoughts be broadened in order to stand in proportion to the phenomenon? (II/2, 137, "Mythologie")²

Philosophy ought to tailor itself to its object and not vice versa. The phenomenon should never be contorted in order to fit a pre-given schema nor dismissed or "explained away." Adequacy is just as indispensable as Ockham's razor. If a phenomenon escapes the bounds of a given philosophical position, then the phenomenon is not to be altered in order to make it intelligible for that viewpoint but the philosophical viewpoint is to be altered even at the expense of explaining what factually cannot be reduced to the rational. As Schelling says, "Everybody sees that beside a mighty and strong reason, which admittedly in a certain manner appears to govern things, a great and mighty portion of unreason is mixed with all

ing with Schelling's fundamental thought, one will see that he should have surpassed traditional metaphysics, i.e. the philosophy of presence, despite the fact that he is still too often burdened by the rhetoric of a primal "subject."

- 2 "Hier fragt sich nicht, welche Ansicht muß von der Erscheinung gewonnen werden, damit sie irgend einer Philosophie gemäß sich bequem erklären lasse, sondern umgekehrt, welche Philosophie wird gefordert, um dem Gegenstand gewachsen, auf gleicher Höhe mit ihm zu seyn. Nicht, wie muß das Phänomen gewendet, gedreht, vereinsseitigt oder verkümmert werden, um aus Grundsätzen, die wir uns einmal vorgesetzt nicht zu überschreiten, noch allenfalls erklärbar zu seyn, sondern: wohin müssen unsere Gedanken sich erweitern, um mit dem Phänomen in Verhältniß zu stehen."

being”³ (II/4, 23, “Offenbarung, 2ter Teil”).⁴ Most objects of study are not tidy but messy and unsystematic; truth is not always clean. That a philosophical view should be erected in light of the object as the only absolute criterion constitutes what could be called Schelling’s phenomenological starting point.

This starting point is neither Husserlian, Hegelian nor even Heideggerian. Schelling does not begin with a transcendental ego, absolute concept or any sort of apodictic beginning but with historical phenomena – freedom’s deeds or the revelation of the will. Philosophy of revelation is then meant in the same sense as philosophies of nature, history, art etc. (*Grounding*, 187).⁵ The object of study is the historical phenomenon of revelation just as a philosophy of nature has as its phenomenon nature.⁶ In no way does a philosophy of revelation implicate a Christian philosophy if that means orthodoxy. This philosophy is not based on an authority but is just as free as any other philosophy.⁷ The first criterion, as with all philosophies that do not merely explain away, i. e. discredit, their object, is the phenomenon itself and for Schelling the primary phenomenon is Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ.⁸ As Schelling writes, “Chris-

3 “Denn das sieht jeder, daß neben einer mächtigen und starken Vernunft, welche die Dinge allerdings auf gewisse Weise zu regieren scheint, auch ein großer und mächtiger Theil Unvernunft allem Seyn beigemischt sey.”

4 “(The world) contains a preponderant mass of unreason, so that one can nearly say that the rational is only the accidental. [Sie enthält eine überwiegende Masse von Unvernunft, sodass man beinahe sagen könnte, das Rationale sei <nur> das Accidens.]” (*Grundlegung*, 99–100).

5 Although this does not imply that Schelling only engages in particular philosophies because, as shall be seen, for him the universal is what revelation reveals.

6 “...Christianity has reality just as well as nature. [...(D)as Christenthum hat eben so gut Realität als die Natur.]” (Schelling, *System*, 13).

7 “But it is not concerned with orthodoxy – I reject this, because it would give a completely false standpoint for the philosophy of revelation...(I)t is not the task of the philosopher to align himself with any dogma whatsoever. [Aber nicht um Orthodoxie ist es zu thun – ich weise dieß von mir ab, weil es einen ganz falschen Standpunkt für die Philosophie der Offenbarung geben würde...es ist nicht die Aufgabe des Philosophen, mit irgend einer übereinzustimmen.]” (II/4, 80, “Offenbarung, 2ter Teil”).

8 One begins with this historical appearance as the fact itself and not as a representation of a prior meaning or fact. “The chief content of Christianity is just Christ himself, not what he said, but what he is, what he has done. Christianity is immediately not a teaching, it is a fact, an objectivity, the teaching is always only the expression of the fact... [Der Hauptinhalt des Christenthums ist eben Christus selbst, nicht was er gesagt, sondern was er ist, was er gethan hat. Das Christenthum ist unmittelbar nicht eine Lehre, es ist eine Sache, eine Objektivität, die

tianity must be the object of philosophy in its literality and historicity (emphasis Schelling's)"⁹ (*System*, 9). The object is a given fact and not a doctrine to which one must align oneself.¹⁰ No attempt should be made to "prove" the verity of the phenomenon, i. e. to proselytize, but one should attempt to make it understandable; one should only attempt to think what is already given (*Urfassung*, 426). A philosophy of revelation is not dogmatic but explicative (*ibid.* 427), just as the phenomenological method neither proves nor persuades but merely makes understandable.

One may not begin by assuming the impossibility of revelation. Should that be true, it can only be known at the end and cannot be assumed from the beginning. In order to be phenomenological and not reductionistic, one must initially assume the possibility of everything experienced in order to avoid dismissing the phenomenon out of hand. Facts always precede their full comprehension and to dismiss the possibility of comprehending a given fact prematurely dismisses the given *as* it is given. That not everybody has experienced revelatory events is both possible and probable. Many profess to know about Jesus of Nazareth and yet nothing of Jesus as the Christ. The intelligibility of the division between the historical Jesus and the Jesus of faith is not the question here. That there is a longstanding tradition of people who have had this revelatory experience suffices to demand serious examination and not immediate dismissal. That the historical event of the Christ is only revelatory for those invested in the event, for those who have internalized it, cannot be disputed. By no means does a philosophy of revelation have an evangelical task. Its task is only to make this object understandable for those who experience it and possible for those who may. Philosophy cannot cause acceptance but it can convey an object's possibility (*Urfassung*, 426). Although not everybody experiences freedom, unconditional love, mystical rapture, despair etc., this is not a reason to dismiss them as phantasmal. That they may be phantasmal is also not to be excluded but that the phenomena are to be taken seriously and not explained away constitutes Schelling's phe-

Lehre ist immer nur der Ausdruck dieser Sache...]" (II/3, 196–197, "Erster Teil"). Those who would use the Bible and other historical accounts as a text of doctrines miss the historical. The event of the Christ is not the accidental clothing for mediated teachings but the revelatory event itself.

9 "Das Christentum in seiner Buchstblichkeit und Geschichtlichkeit mu Gegenstand der Philosophie sein."

10 "Christianity is for philosophy not so much an authority as an object... [Das Christentum ist aber fr die Philosophie nicht sowol Autoritt als Gegenstand...]" (Schelling, *System*, 13).

nomenological starting point. The object always inhabits the place of primacy against the theory. Insofar as Schelling's phenomenon is revelation, he practices what could be called a "historical phenomenology."

Schelling's decision to study the historical phenomenon of revelation is two-fold. 1) This phenomenon purportedly provides a response to the crisis of meaning, the crisis of human existence and history – nihilism. 2) According to Schelling, revelation as a special object corresponds to philosophy as universal. He asserts, "The essence of Christianity consists in its principle and development in being a historical intuition of the universe [*Universum*]"¹¹ (*Urfassung*, 5). Postponing a more thorough justification of the last statement for now, Schelling advances two hypotheses: 1) *das Universum* is a deed, i. e. the product of freedom and 2) freedom can only be known via its effects, i. e. by virtue of its deed. Freedom that does not will remains forever ensconced in darkness; freedom is only recognized in its effects. Schelling contends that freedom is the highest, namely, σοφία. That σοφία exists is the assumption one makes when one practices φιλο-σοφία. One cannot and does not strive for that whose reality is preemptively discarded. That freedom is real and not epi-phenomenal is Schelling's basic assumption.

Philosophy consists in her beginnings and Schelling's beginning is freedom. Freedom's philosophical explication, the method appropriate for this phenomenon and how this phenomenon makes itself cognizable in its effects, particularly revelation, have yet to be determined. Still, to discuss Schelling's account of freedom understandably the following questions shall prove helpful:

- What is thinking?
- What is the difference between quiddity and quoddity?
- What is the directionality of positive philosophy opposed to negative philosophy?
- Does his methodology begin from its *terminus a quo* or its *terminus ad quem*?
- In what sense is his method empirical?
- Does he commence from the prior or question the posterior for its ground?
- What does "historical" mean?

11 "Es besteht das Wesen des Christentums darin, im Prinzip und in der Entwicklung eine geschichtliche Anschauung des Universums zu sein."

Each of the following subsections corresponds to these questions respectively.

2 Denken and Nachdenken

Positive philosophy's object consists not in the abstractions and conceptualizations of mere thought but in the facticity of the real and historical. Mere thinking or pure reason elucidates the essence of things, i.e. what things would be and indeed must be *if* in fact they were, but that said essences actually exist reason alone can never show. The empty thinking of reason belongs to negative philosophy. A bachelor must be an unmarried man but that bachelors exist follows neither from reason nor concept formation but from experience. *Negative philosophy only concerns itself with essence and indeed necessary essences while positive philosophy concerns itself with existence, with accidents and facticity, namely the actuality of the actual.* Peculiarly, negative philosophy would be true even if nothing existed (II/3, 128, "Begründung"), just as it is eternally true that a unicorn have one horn. Positive philosophy emphatically asserts but negative philosophy does not assert anything. In Schelling's words, "To the assertion belongs before all else that which is asserted; negative philosophy, which is actually the philosophy that does not assert anything, must therefore be driven past its limits" ... "(I)n this sense negative philosophy is not a system" (*ibid.* 133).¹² He attempts to express the same when speaking of the Platonic distinction between διάνοια and ἐπιστήμη. Geometry falls under the domain of διάνοια and is therefore not a knowing science. Geometry "comprehends" things but does not "know" anything (*Einleitung*, 18); it is a "nicht wissendes Wissen [non-knowing knowing]" (*Initia*, 38 & 39). Negative philosophy is not without value when it fulfills its proper role but one errs by viewing it as a positive science.

Hegel, according to Schelling, attempted to move seamlessly and imperceptibly from negative to positive philosophy when he began with the concept of Being rendered by a double-negation. Hegel argues that pure Being, the original immediacy,¹³ is not non-being or not not something.

12 "Zum Behaupten gehört vor allem ein Haupt; darum mußte auch die negative Philosophie, welche eigentlich die nichts behauptende ist, über ihre Schranken getrieben werden" ... "in diesem Sinn ist die negative Philosophie kein System."

13 Note that by positing Being as indeterminate immediacy Hegel already places it in relation to determinacy and mediation; his end has already determined his point of departure.

Formally regarded two negations yield a positive but materially two negations a positive does not make.¹⁴ Hegel believed he could prove the reality of absolute being on the basis of its concept.¹⁵ Schelling's thesis is that Hegel transforms Kant's critical philosophy, i. e. his negative philosophy, into a positive one by making reason autonomous and self-acknowledging, (a condemnation he also levels against Kant). Reason is then both form and matter, knower and known. The critique of reason becomes the science of reason (II/3, 57, "Begründung"). This synthesis of form and matter conflates the *quid* and *quod* of things. That something exists cannot be gleaned from its concept. Reason comprehends the actual but not its actuality (*ibid.* 61).¹⁶ For Hegel, however, the identity of thinking and Being seems to consist of an equivalence.

Perhaps Manfred Frank in *Der unendliche Mangel an Sein* levels the best critique against Hegel's notion of immediacy, i. e. pure Being. From the viewpoint of Schelling's critique against Hegel, Frank shows that Hegel's immediacy is itself a product of mediation (reflection) and consequently that his immediacy is effete. Hegel wants to think negativity as a principle but according to his own criteria he cannot have this as a speculative assumption; he must derive this negativity. All derivation is

14 Hegel acknowledges as much, writing, "This pure being is after all a *pure abstraction*, and therefore *absolutely negative*; regarded immediately it is nothing" (*Enzyklopädie* part I, "Die Logik", 87, *Werke*; VI).

15 Schelling already exposed the inadequacy of beginning with an abstract concept in his *Philosophie und Religion* in 1804. Here he repudiates the possibility of reaching the Absolute by means of description because descriptions are always conditioned, describing by means of opposition, merely saying what the Absolute is *not*. All description, all philosophy based on conceptualization, is merely negative, elucidating what the Absolute would be but never that it actually is. Using this method, the Absolute can only appear as a product, an *Indifferenz* achieved by the removal of all difference, content and reality (17). "For all possible forms of expressing the Absolute are actually only manners of appearance of the same in reflection. [Denn alle möglichen Formen, das Absolute auszudrücken, sind doch nur Erscheinungsweisen desselben in der Reflexion.]" (20). This means reflection or conceptualization cannot move from the Absolute forwards but only backwards from its own position.

16 Admittedly, what is real is in at least some respect rational insofar as what is senseless cannot exist anywhere, however, that what is rational is real does not follow. The rational in the strict sense of the logical indicates only the negative aspect of existence, namely the logical idea as that without which nothing *could* exist but not that by which things *do* exist. The world may indeed lie in the nets of reason but Schelling questions how it came to be so entangled because the world cannot obviously be reduced to mere reason.

a form of mediation though. If immediate, pure Being is negated negation, then this immediacy results from the mediation of negation (*Mangel*, 43). Moreover, negativity's negation of opaque Being is not *a priori* demonstrable but only knowable *a posteriori*. That something is rather than nothing, that something reaches the light rather than remaining in the dark opacity of pure Being is an *a posteriori* fact and therefore not derivable. Hegel, amazingly, attempts to understand reflection, the self-mediation of the negative, as if it could be its own ground of immediacy.¹⁷ Frank criticizes exactly this point, correctly arguing that this implies that both mediation (reflection) and immediacy, *Setzen* and *Voraussetzen*, imply each other (*ibid.* 48). Hegel's desired *terminus a quo* (*die Voraussetzung*), the immediacy of pure Being, becomes the *terminus ad quem*, the result of the positing (*das Setzen*) and mediation of the self-negating negative. Immediacy is not the presupposition of negation's mediation but mediation is its own assumption, alpha and omega. Nothing escapes the self-reflection of the same. Not only is immediacy the result rather than origin, but immediacy vanishes. Mediation is beginning, middle and end; all that remains is a circular reflection without a ground, without a *terminus a quo*. There is no true beginning and end, past and future, but only presence, self-presence. As Frank remarks, negation in Hegel not only effaces his assumed immediacy via double negation but even itself as real negation (*ibid.* 50). Real negation is an active positing, a positivity.^{18,19} Double negation without any reference to an assumed im-

17 Frank writes, "Notwithstanding, Hegel asserts as a result of self-relation that the immediacy (A1) is unrelated and independent of negation, which – as independent of determination – already bears in its name that it cannot be the result of the negation of reflection. [Gleichwohl behauptet Hegel als Resultat der Selbstbeziehung die unbezogene und von Negation unabhängige (!) Unmittelbarkeit (U1), die doch – als bestimmungsunabhängig – schon im Namen trägt, daß sie nicht Resultat der Reflexions-negation sein kann.]" (*Mangel*, 57).

18 Frank also incisively states, "The 'assumption' is the factual and in this respect positive subsistence of negation in general. If it would not be this, then negation would not have anything upon which it could reflect in order even to be able to bring forth condition-N – non-negation. Even in this, A2 (the second immediacy) therefore proves to be conditioned through the positive subsistence of A1. Incidentally, no necessity at all exists to found the beginning with negation. [Die >Voraussetzung< ist der faktische und insofern positive Bestand von Negation überhaupt. Wäre sie das nicht, die Negation hätte nichts, worauf sie reflektierend sich beziehen könnte, um den Zustand – N – Nicht-Negation – überhaupt hervorbringend zu können. Auch darin erweist sich U2 mithin als bedingt durch den positiven Bestand von U1. Übrigens besteht gar keine Notwendigkeit, mit der Negation den Anfang zu machen...]" (Frank, *Mangel*, 58).

mediacy, which itself would not be simply the product of mediation, can never ground being but only nothingness (*ibid.*). To repeat, two negations a positive do not make or two negations constitute not Being but only non-Being as vacuous concept.

Das Denken (thinking) which does not have the object as the ultimate criterion but manufactures it from its own conceptualizations and empty movement is not true thinking. Thinking should always be more than thinking about thinking, more than pure thinking or reason herself. If reason experiences only its own content, if the form of reason renders its own content, if that immediately given to thought is really only the product of the self-mediation of reason, then the object of study never demands the place of primacy over that which thinks it. This would not correlate to a historical phenomenology; the historically given is not there to be thought and comprehended but thought, reason herself, believes it can know the object without ever having to experience it as something actual. Reason herself believes it can know the phenomenon irrespective of its actuality. Reason knows under the species of eternity, i. e. without recognition (*Erkennung*). As mentioned above, that a bachelor be unmarried and that a unicorn have one horn can be known without any actual experience, without any recognition or acknowledgment. Schelling rejects this form of knowing as legitimate.²⁰ *Das Denken* in Schelling, far from being the self-mediation and self-recognition of pure reason, is a *Danken*. Where nothing is given to be thought thinking is impotent. Reason can only think the actual in its actuality thanks to experience, thanks to that which is given to be thought.

While Schelling himself does not employ the rhetoric of *Danken*, he does distinguish positive thinking or original thinking as that which relates to an actual object (*Grundlegung*, 94). He also explicitly relates *Denken* to the past, namely to that which is already there to be thought, asserting that the original meaning of the word was “sich erinnern”

19 The word “positive” derives from the Latin perfect participle of “ponere.” Positivity indicates that which has been “put” or “set” – the “positum” (Geldhof, *Revelation*, 93).

20 Illegitimate would then be a knowing under the species of eternity, which is not knowledge proper because it is a “nicht wissendes Wissen,” a non-knowing knowing, insofar as it is without a *Haupt*. Negative philosophy has a proper function but not the acknowledging function proper to positive philosophy. True knowledge does not know under the species of eternity but it knows spatio-temporal objects.

(460).²¹ The origin to be thought in original thinking cannot be manufactured from the self-presence of reason but stems from the past. The trace of the origin is entrusted to the present from the past. The origin is neither the product of thought nor of double-negation nor of the mediation of reason. The origin is not a product at all; it is not the last but the first. The free origin is not yet something in being, not yet a being. Schelling writes, "To have the principle for itself, not merely through beings but free from beings, will therefore no longer be able to be a fact of pure thinking but accordingly only a fact of scientific thinking that transcends immediate thinking" (II/1, 364, "Darstellung").²² The origin is given from the past and is never immediately present.

Original thinking is a positive thinking because only thanks to the positive, to that actually given prior to that which will think it, does thinking have something to think. Positive philosophy is a historical phenomenology; this is original thinking – a *Danken*, even if Schelling does not employ this rhetoric. In conjunction with "sich erinnern"²³ *Denken* also relates to *Dehnen*. *Dehnen* means to extend or stretch. True thinking stretches beyond the limits of the Present epoch into a Past immemorial and a Future still yet to come. True thinking operates not under the species of eternity but only temporally and therefore also historically.

True thinking always has an object apart from itself. She who thinks over thinking does not think because an object rendered simply by thought alone cannot be original (*Einleitung*, 14).²⁴ Original, positive

21 True thinking finds its impetus in reminiscence. That which is to be thought can only be thought reminiscently because in and of itself it is unprethinkable (*unvor-denklich*), i. e. not able to be thought before it has become past and therefore only cognizable in reminiscence and indicated by means of present memorial.

22 "Das Princip für sich, es nicht bloß durch das Seyende, sondern frei vom Seyenden zu haben, dieses also wird nicht mehr Sache des reinen Denkens, demnach nur Sache des über das unmittelbare Denken hinausgehenden, des wissenschaftlichen Denkens seyn können."

23 Also of note is that "sich erinnern" contains that which is inner. To remember something is to internalize (*verinnerlichen*) it. Historical knowing, in Schelling's sense, has nothing to do with archiving but with an internalization of one's own past/Past, an assumption of it as one's own. To reminisce is not merely to recount past events but to appropriate them.

24 "She who wants to think over thinking ceases to think. This thinking, which makes itself into an object, cannot possibly at the same time be an original thinking relating to the object itself and consequently is not a true thinking. [Denn wer über das Denken denken will, hört eben auf zu denken. Dieses Denken, welches sich selbst zum Gegenstande macht, kann unmöglich ein ursprüngliches,

thinking is a *Nachdenken* (speculation) and *Nachdenken* is always a *Nachdenken über* (speculation about something). That which it thinks or speculates *about* is not of its own machinations but what it has experienced. Pure reason can never experience or acknowledge anything actual, but only the essence of things, e.g. that a unicorn would be a horse with one horn, if only it would actually exist. The antithesis of merely conceptual reason is ecstatic reason. This does not think the determinations of the origin, what must be contained in its concept, e.g. the solitary horn, but it thinks *in-ceptively* prior to *conceptualization*. This thinking attempts to think the most original, i.e. the absolute *prius*, that prior to the concept. This *prius* cannot be thought analytically. To think the absolute *prius* is to acknowledge a ground or origin anterior to oneself, independent from one's own conceptual machinations. The absolute *prius* accounts for the question of why there is something rather than nothing or why there is reason rather than unreason; therefore, one cannot give an account of it through rational means and certainly not through reason alone. Conceptual reason necessarily conditions the conceived object and consequently conceptual reason cannot think the *absolute prius* (as opposed to a relative one). This *prius* predates reason and its conceptual apparatus. Merely conceptual reason falls under the domain of negative philosophy, a philosophy which at most can strive for the absolute *prius* but can never obtain it. This *prius* is only accessible for the positive method – if accessible at all. As mentioned above, the object determines the appropriate method and not vice versa. The movement of thought now demands a temporary oscillation away from the methodology and back to the object in order to further delineate that which Schelling attempts to think, his fundamental thought.

3 *Daß Es Ist* and *Was Es Ist*; That It Is and What It Is

Schelling attempts to think that anterior to the concept. The concept of something explicates the essence of a thing, enumerating its essential properties and excluding the accidental ones; it enumerates everything the thing must include in order for it to be what it is. Insofar as the concept explicates the essential, to think that prior to the concept means to think that without essence. Schelling refers to this as the pure *Daß*, name-

auf den Gegenstand selbst sich beziehendes Denken zugleich, und folglich kein wahres Denken sein.] (Schelling, *Einleitung*, 14)

ly, *daß es ist*, without a *Was*. Pure *Daß* without *Was*, without essence, can be nothing more than pure accident. The accidental contrasts the essential. The essential would be even if the object were not actual; a triangle would have three angles even if no triangles existed. The accidental refers to the actuality of the essential. Therefore, the accidental bereft of all essentiality is pure actuality or Being²⁵ itself. One should see in this ontological difference. Being itself is not a being but other than all beings, than all that is a self-same, than all beings that have an essence and identity, i.e. that are identical to themselves. The first step is not to prove the existence of a being anterior to all conceptualization but only to show how it can be thought. This goal can be achieved by contrasting the pure *Daß* to the dialectical.²⁶

Relation founds dialectical thinking and relation is the precondition of both similitude and difference, the equal and unequal, the identical and the non-identical. Dialectical mediation is always self-relation because even when the relation is to something other, that alterity is the condition of the self's appearance as a self-same over and against what it is not. This is, at least, the traditional interpretation, e.g. a toddler sees itself in the mirror but instead of seeing herself she sees something foreign. Eventually the child recognizes this Other as herself and one concludes that the different or dialectical alterity is the precondition of self-relation and consequently of self-recognition. This, however, conflates two types of difference. If the toddler did not recognize herself in the first moment, then she also did not recognize the other as conceptually or generically different from herself, i.e. as having a different essence and identity than herself. If that had been the case, then the child would also have recognized herself in the first moment because this type of difference presupposes an identical concept or genus, and the abil-

25 Bowie remarks correctly, "Though Schelling evidently thinks in terms of ontological difference, he often uses *Seyn* and *Seyendes* interchangeably" (*Schelling*, 192, footnote 2). Both terms will predominantly be rendered as "Being." When the discussion concerns a being or being as a whole, namely that which is actual, then the term "(a) being(s)" will be employed.

26 Since the objective is not yet the "proof" of the existence of this unprethinkable facticity but rather only how it can be thought, the following will actually be a practice in negative philosophy. By this means the reality is not shown but only the "inverted idea [*umgekehrte Idee*]", namely the idea enabling one to think the non-conceptual, that without essence. The proof of its reality and the progression from it must await the abductive, scientific-empirical, historical approach. At the moment, the task is only to clarify what is wanted.

ity to differentiate that which does *not* belong to that identity implies the ability to recognize that which *does*. If one can recognize conceptual or generic difference, then one must already presuppose a given identity, concept or genus from which the other differs. This is conceptual difference. The toddler, however, did not recognize herself in the first place and therefore the existence of a generic identity, i.e. a concept or essence, cannot be presupposed. Yet, despite this lack, the toddler still sees something, the toddler still relates. Relation is the condition of conceptual, i.e. dialectical difference, and the condition of identity or sameness, but what is the precondition of relation?

In *Ich und Du* Martin Buber uses the term “*a priori* of relation.” This term expresses what Schelling once regrettably called “identity” and “indifference.”²⁷ What he wished to express (or at least should have expressed) did not yet have anything to do with identity or difference but was and is their precondition. The *a priori* of relation is the Same but never a self-same; therefore, insofar as it is destitute of all essence, concept and identity one could call it Difference itself but then that is only an internal qualification because it does not stand in a relation of difference with something else. This type of difference is neither dialectical nor reflexive, i.e. it is a-conceptual.

Returning to the toddler, one must assert that even in the moment of actual self-recognition the child could never have recognized her reflection unless she already, albeit non-thematically, knew herself beforehand. One cannot recognize one’s image unless one already knows that it is oneself one sees (Bowie, *Schelling*, 85 & 132). If one cannot recognize oneself, one will certainly not be able to recognize one’s image as oneself. To speak liberally, a pre-reflexive, not yet thematized self must have in-sisted before the reflexive, thematized self ex-isted. This pre-reflexive self is the *a priori* of explicit, thematic self-relation. Frank asserts that Schelling’s view of Being in his late philosophy is irreducible to self-relation (*Mangel*, 15).²⁸ Frank explains that reflection always has two terms but the *a priori* of relation is a simple, an a-conceptual, a-reflective fact (*ibid.* 60). This immediacy prior to thematic relation is not, as above with Hegel, the

27 “The use of terms like identity and indifference is perhaps more misleading than helpful in the effort to characterize the groundless” (Snow, *Schelling*, 177). Already by 1809 Schelling explicitly states, “As (indifference) precedes all antitheses these cannot be distinguishable in it or be present in any way at all” (*Human*, 87).

28 Frank contends that Schelling appropriated this thesis from Hölderlin, who apparently held this position as early as 1794 (*Mangel*, 25).

product of reflection, an immediacy defined negatively via the negation of actual difference, but this immediacy precedes reflection and relation. This immediacy must be assumed as the *condition sine qua non* of every possible relation. Schelling certainly does not deny the possibility of self-relation; he merely shows that it must be situated in a pre-synthetic simplicity (*ibid.* 64). All thesis is synthesis,²⁹ a relation to something other than what can be analytically drawn from the concept, but the issue here is the *a priori* condition of syn-thesis or copulation, that undergirding the identification of differents without itself standing in this relation. *Denken* in the late Schelling is an *Erinnerung* of a primal Past, a pre-reflexive Past,³⁰ a Past stretching (*Dehnen*) even beyond the time of history. This Past was not a past moment in the dialectical chain but is anterior to the entirety of the chain. This Past *was* not but *is* a “has been.”³¹ The original does not fall into self-relation, i. e. self-*presence*, but it is the withdrawn Past making presence and self-presence possible. That the toddler can be present to herself by means of dialectical alterity and subsequent identification with the alterior is only possible on the basis of the child’s pre-thetic closeness to herself, on the basis of the child’s already always

29 All thesis is synthesis because all *Behauptung* must have a *Haupt*. The statement, “A bachelor is an unmarried man” is not an emphatic assertion, i. e. not an assertion (*Be-hauptung*) at all, because it does not say anything factual but only the essential. From Kant, however, one now knows that all real assertion is not analytic but synthetic; therefore, all real thesis is necessarily synthesis and surpasses the mere concept.

30 Emphasizing that the *prius* of reflection itself can never be assumed into reflection, that it is reflection’s essential Past, an unprethinkable Past, Frank writes, “As beyond reflection, Being is certainly ‘something unsayable,’ on whose border thinking suspends itself indeed... [Als das Jenseits der Reflexion ist Sein allerdings “etwas Unsagbares”, an dessen Grenze das Denken zwar sich aufhebt...]” (*Mangel*, 190).

31 The perfect, “has been,” opposed to the simple past indicates the significance of the past for the present, i. e. its causal efficacy. For the toddler though, as has just been shown, this efficacy is not yet thematic and consequently is not produced by means of a judgment (Kant) or repetitious experience (Hume’s constant conjunction). A newborn, who as of yet has no experience of a certain sound, still turns her eyes toward the unknown sound. Causality is efficacious before its thematization. Causal efficacy is the most primordial relation, the most original point of contact with the Real. The human being is naturally causal through experience; only with repetition does he scientifically seek a “true” cause. The efficaciousness of the cause, however, is singular and not a generalization, a singular “has been,” a *once* upon a time that need not be repeated. The newborn is a causal realist, testifying to the objective reality of causality and the causal efficacy of the past, contra Hume (II/1, 519, “Darstellung”).

having a Past, i.e. having always already been herself before this identity became thetic, an asserted thesis in synthetic self-presence.³²

The principle of identity reads $A=A$, but for Schelling $A=A$ is not the *antecedens* but the *consequens*. This formula may express the origin but this expression neither dissolves nor subsumes it. The origin is not equivalent to its synthetic expression but it possibilizes synthesis, judgment and expression. To say that it is not subsumed into its expression means that reflection or the dialectic does not sublimate the *a priori* of relation. Relation can never fully express the indispensable condition of relation. The *a priori* of relation never becomes a part of the dialectical process but remains the outer-dialectical fact.³³ The identity formula, $A=A$, expresses something conceptual, an *Allgemeinbegriff*, in fact the most abstract concept possible. However, the pure *Daß* prior to all *Was* precedes the concept. $A=A$ is conceptual. The *concept* of the absolute *prius*, as posterior, does not coincide with this *prius* itself. Hegel, for one, attempted to resolve the relation without asking for the condition of relation, i.e. for the *a priori* of relation (*Mangel*, 160–161).³⁴

32 Another overlooked condition possibilizing reflection is the mirror itself. The mirror is the unseen condition standing outside of and possibilizing reflection.

33 That the absolutely Positive, the absolute *prius*, actually exists is not yet known. The point is that if such positivity would be, then it would never be sublated into its expression. It would always be the “indivisible remainder,” the residue never subsumed into its own process.

34 Hegel’s dialectics also entails teleological notions that do not appear in the late Schelling. In Hegelian dialectics everything is guided by the imminent future, which is the truth of his dialectic. The Son, e.g. births the Mother (*Mangel*, 167). The end always births the beginning because nothing precedes the concept, which can do nothing more than present its content. Real novelty is impossible. The future is imminent because all possible content immanently resides in the concept. The end is fatalistic, acting as the efficient motor propelling everything that precedes it to show itself. Dialectical movement can only be a real happening and not just an essential movement of thought if outer-logical reality has first been secured. In other words, the pure *Daß* is a materiality preceding the ideal dialectic; it is the reality of the past before the future. Hegel does not have this matter prior to the ideal and consequently the future takes precedence over the past. Hegel’s Absolute is an organism presencing until its culmination. Schelling’s Absolute is akin to a materialism preceding any essential being, preceding any organism that must presence on the basis of its teleological principle. Radical materialism always precedes the ideality of the teleological because the teleological assumes the existence of an organism. To begin antecedent to organism affirms ontological difference because radical materialism affirms Being before beings, i.e. entities or organisms with an essence/concept. If this work can successfully justify its thesis, then it must show a material base in Schelling pre-

That dialectical thinking has necessary results is undeniable but the *Daß* antedates all dialectics. The *Daß* is not a being that necessarily is but rather pure and accidental facticity. A brief foray into the ontological argument should illustrate the point; however, one must bear in mind that this excursus is only a homologous tool and the present inquiry is not about God. The structural relation between the necessary and the accidental in that argument parallels the relation between the necessary dialectics of the *Was* and the unprethinkable *Daß*, but the topic here does not yet concern God. The thesis is that necessity as a modality does not refer to the actuality of something, but to the manner, i.e. mode, of being, to the *modus operandi*. The ontological argument asserts that there is a concept of that greater than which nothing can be conceived.³⁵ The being expressed in this concept, as the argument asserts, must necessarily exist because not to exist would be a privation admitting the possibility of the greater. Schelling insightfully remarks that this being, God, would in fact exist necessarily, if only it would exist, i.e. the necessity refers to its “Art der Existenz” and not to “die Natur des Existierenden” (*Einleitung*, 23). In other words, this being does not necessarily exist; it exists necessarily. The necessity is a modality indicating the mode of existing but not that the being having this *modus operandi* must exist. One may retort that this being *must* exist because its existence is determined through nothing outside of itself. If this being exists, then it would admittedly be the being whose existence is not determined from without; however, such being is not a necessary existent but in fact accidental existence (*ibid.* 23). Dialectical thought may yield a necessary and essential movement of thought, a necessary movement from essential determination to essential determination, but that this movement also be actual does not follow. If one wants that something is, then this *Daß es ist* must precede *Was es ist*. One must begin with an outer-dialectical, i.e. *accidental*, facticity.

Negative philosophy can only speak of the essence of things and not their existence. Although he occasionally strayed, mistakenly viewing his own critical philosophy as a positive one, Kant’s critical philosophy

ceding organism, teleology and beings. That preceding beings affirms Heideggerian ontological difference and that preceding the hegemony of a unifying telos accounts for Deleuzian difference – Difference itself – which is never even a self-same, namely *das Selbe* that is never *das Gleiche*.

35 That this concept exists must itself be taken as an accidental fact of consciousness.

should have remained a merely negative philosophy.³⁶ That is the nature of *critical* philosophy, namely to restrict all assertions to their proper domain or rather simply to *criticize* and never assert anything. Kantian propositions should never speak of the positively existing *Ding-an-sich* but only assert how “it” appears under the categories of the understanding. The understanding, for Kant, is categorial, constituting essences and demarcating concepts from one another while never being able to assert the existence of the *Ding-an-sich*. Kant forbids dogmatic metaphysics, i. e. the transgression from reason to existence, but he never condemns the opposite movement (II/3, 169–170, “Begründung”). Kant condemns the movement from immanence to transcendence but never the opposite. His antinomies find sustenance only in the immanence of dialectical reason. Kant does not impugn all transcendence but only the transcendence of the prior dogmatic metaphysics of reason (if it had a genuine transcendence at all) that attempted to reach into the transcendent from an immanent locus. A forbidden transcendence only occurs if one begins with the concept and moves to existence, but if one begins with that anterior to the concept, no boundary is transgressed. Kant merely forbids transcendence for dogmatic reason’s transcendental use of the categories and shows how it leads to antinomies, which do not occur outside of reason, where one may choose to commence with Being, the pure *Daß*, and not the categories of the understanding, which illuminate always only the *Was*. Schelling’s philosophy radicalizes Kantian philosophy, stringently forbidding the path from immanence – dialectical or conceptual reason – to transcendent existence.³⁷ One must learn to think inceptively, i. e. speculatively, rather than merely conceptually.

The immediately foregoing has indicated that positive philosophy begins from the pure *Daß*, i. e. accidental facticity. This does not begin with possibility and then move to actuality but actuality precedes possibility.

36 Had Hegel attempted to do more than ask how one can construct concepts and aspired for a philosophy of origins, then he too would have ignored Kant’s view that criticism is only negative and regulative, unable to constitute actuality. That Hegel fashioned himself as a philosopher of origins is questionable even in the light of Schelling’s and Frank’s assertions to the contrary. That he only asked how one could conceptualize the given is a more favorable and, perhaps, accurate reading than their reading of him.

37 According to Bruce Matthews Schelling’s work was a continuation of many Kantian motifs (*Grounding*, 32). Axel Hutter asserts more specifically that Schelling’s own program was a continuation of Kant’s *Vernunftkritik* (critique of reason) (*Geschichtliche*, 131).

One also knows now that σοφία precedes both sensibility and discursiveness, i.e. dialectical determination or conceptuality. Σοφία is the highest, after which all should strive, hence φιλο-σοφία. That one desires not just to reach the essential and *possible* but what *actually* exists is indubitable. Since Kant, only one possibility remains; one must begin with the positively existing (or abandon the enterprise for origins, i.e. renounce the striving for σοφία). The possibility of fully distinguishing positive and negative philosophy has now first been attained.

4 Positive and Negative Philosophy: Progression and Regression

Negative and positive philosophy properly refer to directions, regression and progression respectively. The regressive method moves from the *posterius* to the *prius*, i.e. from the consequence to the origin, whereas the progressive moves forward from the *prius* to its effects (*Einleitung*, 24). The *prius* from which positive philosophy progresses is the absolute *prius*, the *Daß* without *Was*, the outer-dialectical fact, the *a priori* of relation, the Same which internally viewed is Difference itself, which is never a self-same. This correlates again to the interpenetration between object and method. Positive philosophy properly speaking indicates the directionality of a method, namely a progression; however, the progression commences from an ontological *terminus a quo*, the absolute *prius* or the absolutely positive. The positive in positive philosophy indicates method/direction and object; the ontological and the methodological can never be divorced.

Schelling insists that “positive philosophy can begin purely for itself” and “it can also receive its task merely from itself and also first give to itself its actual beginning because this beginning is of the sort that it is not in need of grounding”³⁸ (II/3, 93, “Begründung”). This is not a reproach of the regressive method, as negative philosophy should only be reproached when it falsely views itself as positive (as in Kant and Hegel) unaware of its negative or critical character. Negative philosophy may reach its boundary, subsequently desiring a positive philosophy, but

38 “...die positive kann rein für sich anfangen...” “Ihre Aufgabe kann sie also auch bloß von sich selbst erhalten, und ihren wirklichen Anfang ebenso auch sich selbst erst geben; denn dieser ist von der Art, daß er keiner Begründung bedarf...”

there is not a mediation from the negative to the positive. Negative philosophy may think the concept of the *prius* but not its actuality and not the progression from it. While negative philosophy may show the need for positive philosophy, there is not a bridge betwixt the two. Positive philosophy begins by itself. It begins with that before being, i.e. with that which is not yet actual, in order to progress to it. The regressive method, however, begins with what is in being and asks for its causes, but these causes therefore only appear as things *in* being, namely as that which already is “als seiend” (*Grundlegung*, 454). A regressive method can never escape the assumption of presence and can never know real ontological difference. Even if it should arrive at Being itself having regressed from the totality of beings, Being only appears as the being of beings, their ground and cause, and not for itself. There is no bridge from the negative to the positive; the positive must begin by itself because only positive philosophy questions Being in its original commencement, its inception, and not as a ground for beings. The regressive method always begins with beings and their concepts hoping to be able to regress to their cause, to the first being. Positive philosophy begins with *das Wesen*, Being itself before it is being. Only positive philosophy could possibly question the meaning of Being as such and not just as the being of beings.

Walter Schulz in his seminal work, *Die Vollendung des deutschen Idealismus in der Spätphilosophie Schellings*, proposes a different reading of Schelling. He does not view Schelling as the surpassing of German Idealism and consequently of modern philosophy as such but rather as its culmination (*Vollendung*, 329). He, contra Frank, does not find an extra-rational, outer-dialectical facticity in Schelling but he remarkably believes Schelling’s late philosophy is reducible to the self-mediation of reason, the self-mediation of the same. The crux of the matter lies in the relation between negative and positive philosophy. Schulz says that Schelling’s late philosophy begins with a negative philosophy that without rupture flows into a positive one. He argues that reason’s positing of the *prius*, the outer-dialectical fact, as incomprehensible enables its comprehension (*ibid.* 327). He suggests that reason somehow “acknowledges” its unthinkable content (*ibid.* 329). Whence comes acknowledgement though without experience? Schulz suggests that this is an insight of reason but whence arises this “insight?” How anthropomorphically must one think reason in order to attribute it with acknowledgement and intuition? Schulz indicates that reason in Schelling mediates and binds itself, an absolute self-mediation (*ibid.*). Despite the acceptance Schulz’s theses have received, these conclusions are untenable. Reason in Schelling is not self-

positing but completely passive, only able to comprehend what is given to it but incapable of yielding its own content to itself. Schelling neither begins with reason insofar as he asks how being became caught in the nets of reason in the first place nor does reason mediate itself. Schelling affirms that it “is a necessary question: Why is there sense at all, why not nonsense instead of sense?...The whole world lies as it were caught in reason, but the question is: How did it come into this net, (because in the world is manifestly something other than and something more than pure reason, indeed even something striving beyond these borders)” (*Grundlegung*, 222).³⁹ According to Schelling negative and positive philosophy stand side by side and while they are not mutually exclusive there is nevertheless not a bridge from the negative to the positive.⁴⁰

A few authors have already questioned Schulz regarding what has become the Schellingian canon. Thomas Buchheim, in his article “Zur Unterscheidung von negativer und positiver Philosophie beim späten Schelling,” explicitly disagrees with Schulz’s thesis that negative philosophy completes itself by building a bridge into the domain of the positive (*Berliner*, 127–129). He admits that what negative philosophy wishes to obtain positive philosophy contains, but this does not entail a transition from the negative to the positive. The striving of the negative is indeed for recognition, argues Buchheim, but the recognition of the actual only occurs in positive philosophy (*ibid.* 128). If reason in negative philosophy becomes ecstatic reason, i. e. *nachdenkendes Denken* capable of acknowledging something other than its own essential but effete structure, then this is only because it has been ecstatically posited by positive philosophy (*ibid.* 129). Reason, contrary to Schulz’s thesis, cannot be an absolute self-mediation and acknowledge its own content. Reason comprehends the actual but the actuality of the actual cannot be derived from reason. In short, reason alone (logic) cannot speak of truth and falsity but only validity and invalidity, possibility and impossibility. Reason can examine the actual but it cannot judge it.

Edward Allen Beach also distances himself from Schulz. He declares, “Despite his recognition of reason’s limitations, Schulz places far greater

39 “...ist eine notwendige Frage: warum ist Sinn überhaupt, warum ist nicht Unsinn statt Sinn?...Die ganze Welt liegt gleichsam in der Vernunft gefangen, aber die Frage ist: wie ist sie in dieses Netz gekommen, <da in der Welt offenbar noch etwas Anderes und etwas mehr als blosser Vernunft ist, ja sogar noch etwas über diese Schranken Hinausstrebendes>.”

40 “The positive system can begin by itself. [Das positive System kann von sich selbst anfangen.]” (*Grundlegung*, 118).

stress on the rationalistic elements and goals of Schelling's project" (*Potencies*, 171). Note also, "The more plausible conclusion to draw is that the primary doctrines of the positive philosophy were arrived at separately from those of the negative philosophy..." (*ibid.* 173).⁴¹ These theses are neither as strong as Buchheim's nor the one here. He only argues that positive philosophy *can* begin by itself, not that it *must*. He says this conclusion is *probable* and not definitive. Is the strong thesis defensible or only Beach's weak one?

The heart of Schulz's⁴² stance is that there is no outer-dialectical fact, that even the ground of dialectics, i. e. the *a priori* of relation, is the result of relation and mediation. This, however, reduces Schelling to Hegel.⁴³ As Axel Hutter astutely observed, in Schulz's presentation there is no difference between Hegel's metaphysics of absolute Spirit and the late Schelling (*Geschichtliche*, 30–31).⁴⁴ Even as early as 1804, however, Schelling

41 Beach also laments that Schulz ignores the unconscious, mystical or irrational in Schelling (*ibid.* 175).

42 Schulz is certainly not without well-respected supporters. Habermas argues in his article, "Dialectical Idealism in Transition to Materialism," that either negative philosophy can conceive existence and positive philosophy is thereby nullified or it cannot and consequently negative philosophy becomes invalid (*New Schelling*, 75). This, however, is false. Negative philosophy can *comprehend* the actual without having to *know* it as actually existing. Given his alternative, Habermas views the eventual abandonment of negative philosophy as the origin of existentialism, ultimately being fulfilled in Heidegger.

43 Joseph Lawrence wrote in his article, "Schelling's Metaphysics of Evil," "To understand Schelling is above all to understand that he is not Hegel: ontological polarity can never be resolved in a developmental process" (*New Schelling*, 168).

44 Two quotations by Jens Halfwassen help show how Hegel's rejection of an outer-dialectical fact corresponds to the rejection of transcendence, enclosing Hegel within the confines of subjectivity. He writes:

"With this separation of every actual transcendence-relation of thinking Hegel differentiates himself... from the late Fichte and from the late Schelling... since they found subjectivity which mediates itself to itself in an Absolute *transcendent* to [subjectivity, an Absolute] that no longer has the character of subjectivity. [Mit diesem Abschneiden jedes wirklichen Transzendenzbezugs des Denkens unterscheidet Hegel sich... vom späten Fichte und vom späten Schelling... indem sie nämlich die sich zu sich selbst vermittelnde Subjektivität in einem ihr *transzendenten* Absoluten fundieren, das... nicht mehr den Charakter der Subjektivität hat.]" (Halfwassen, *Hegel*, 381)

The *a priori* of relation is transcendent to the totalizing mediation of subjectivity in its quest for complete self-presence. Schelling cannot be reduced to Hegel; Schelling does not bring German Idealism to its fulfillment, but he pushes thought past idealism and, in so doing, beyond the metaphysics of presence.

criticized those attempting to reduce the Absolute to its negative description, i.e. to its essence. They begin with identity as a coincidence of opposites and not as prior to relation (*Religion*, 18). Positive philosophy's task, however, is to begin from the *a priori* of relation, the absolute *prius*, and move outwards. Again, as Schelling wrote in 1809, "Indifference is not a product of antitheses, nor are they implicitly contained in it, but it is a unique being, apart from all antitheses, in which all distinctions break up" (*Human*, 87). Schelling clearly states, "Positive philosophy can begin purely for itself" (II/3, 93, "Begründung") and one must accept this at face value because even if negative philosophy is brought to its borders where it demands its own ground and possibility, this ground can never be thought as more than a first being, a first cause.⁴⁵ Only if positive philosophy can begin by itself can the philosophy of presence be avoided. Negative philosophy can admittedly function as a propaedeutic to positive philosophy, showing how the history of philosophy has been nothing but negative philosophy, always desiring to be positive but never able to do it. This propaedeutical beginning though

Hegel, rather than Schelling, brings idealism to its summit. Halfwassen again writes correctly,

"...Hegel's metaphysics of absolute subjectivity represents the most extreme fulfillment and completion of this approach. Yet, at the same time the fundamental philosophical approaches of the late Fichte and the late Schelling prove... how subjectivity can be conceived and grounded in its self-relation due to a principle of absolute unity, to seek the solution of this ground problem, however, through the founding of subjectivity in an *Absolute transcendent* to [subjectivity], that is more original than subjectivity itself. [...stellt Hegels Metaphysik der absoluten Subjektivität wohl die äußerste Erfüllung und Vollendung dieses Ansatzes dar. Zugleich beweisen aber die fundamentalphilosophischen Ansätze des späten Fichte und es späten Schellings... wie die Subjektivität in ihrer Selbstbeziehung aus einem Prinzip absoluter Einheit begriffen und begründet werden kann, die Lösung dieses Grundproblems aber in der Fundierung der Subjektivität in einem ihr *transzendenten Absoluten* suchen, das ursprünglicher ist als die Subjektivität selbst.]" (*ibid* 469)

Hegel, contra Schelling, not only provides the fulfillment of idealistic thinking, but also of traditional metaphysics, i.e. of onto-theology or the philosophy of presence.

- 45 The translator of Heidegger's *Identity and Difference*, Joan Stambaugh, argues in her introduction to this text that Schelling's late philosophy recognizes not a ground but the groundless, which is not a synthesis of antitheses. She accepts this thought of Schelling as being closer to Heidegger than to German Idealism (11). In fact, she contends that Schelling is closer than anybody to Heidegger's problem of identity due to his basis *before* ground and existence, and this already in his text *Of Human Freedom* (10).

is not positive philosophy's beginning; it merely shows the inadequacy of her historical precedent.

The absolutely positive commences from the pure *Daß*. One may retort that this origin has thus far been more or less identified with σοφία and that positive philosophy therefore begins with what it seeks. Is this not question begging? Has not the truthfulness of what is desired been presupposed before its corroboration? One must note that all science assumes what it wants to know. Knowledge always follows searching. Positive philosophy does not begin with the *knowledge* of the highest; it begins by *wanting* it. This indicates again the nature of philosophy as a *striving* after wisdom. One must first want wisdom before one can know it, i. e. possess the science of wisdom. Positive philosophy is without assumption insofar as it begins prior to being, assuming no being as the certain and apodictic first being. Something is always given in advance though, not a *Voraussetzung* but *das Voraus-gewollte* (*Grundlegung* 461). Positive philosophy does not beg the question, assuming the knowledge of what it seeks; it only begins with the willing of what it seeks, the wanting of what it seeks, and assumes that this striving is not futile.

5 Wanting, Believing and Knowing

If positive philosophy would not begin by itself, then its phenomenon would always be a non-phenomenon, i. e. never the thing itself in its inception but only the mediated, conceptual result of negative philosophy. Schelling's novelty lay in his commencement with and progression from the positive instead of arriving at a false positivity via the mediation of the negative. Positive philosophy begins by itself with a *Wollen* (willing) and not a *Wissen* (knowing). The desire implied in all scientific beginnings strives for an object and does not believe that the searching is futile; the desired object is always provisionally assumed to be possible and real. Should one be mistaken, then this can only be known at the end of the inquiry but it always begins with these assumptions. The burden of proof lies with those wishing to falsify it. This does not beg the question because knowledge is only at the end.⁴⁶ The analysis has come full

46 "The same is beginning and end, only with the difference that because the true *prius* is only known at the *end*, philosophy can only begin from a wanting. [Anfang und Ende ist dasselbe, nur mit dem Unterschied, dass, da das wahre Prius

circle from the phenomenological criterion to positive philosophy's beginning with *das Vorausgewollte*. Everything begins with a striving for the comprehension of an object that one cannot prematurely explain away. The analysis to this point has not yielded anything that cannot be unpacked from the concept of philosophy itself – a striving for wisdom. As Schelling said, "Positive philosophy could potentially begin purely for itself with the mere dictum: 'I want that which is beyond being'"⁴⁷ (II/1, 564, "Darstellung").

As a *Wollen*, philosophy's beginning is not properly an assumption, not properly a *terminus a quo*, but its beginning is, so to speak, its ideal, its *terminus ad quem* (*Grundlegung*, 407). The condemnation of negative philosophy, its primary inadequacy, did not consist in false maneuvers but that more is wanted (*ibid.* 394). Negative philosophy yields essential determinations of what could exist but not the actually existing. The desire for being, for the actual as actual, is not peculiar to philosophy but all research that is progressive and not merely analytic begins with a *Wollen* (*ibid.* 395).⁴⁸ All progressive research is first guided by its ideal (*ibid.* 394); *Wollen* is the *a priori* condition of all progressive knowledge.⁴⁹ This *Wollen* is the beginning of all research but that does not mean that it could *occur* without any prior experience. The point is that this *Wollen* is not *derived* from experience (*ibid.* 392). This is an impossibility because desire by its very nature exceeds what is the case and strives for what ought to be by reaching into the future. Positive philosophy does not know in order that it may believe but it believes in order that it may know. Positive philosophy and, again, every progressive science begin with *Glauben* (faith/believing). *Glauben*, says Schelling, is simultaneously a willing and a doing; one cannot believe and remain unmoved (*ibid.* 260).⁵⁰ Belief always acts towards a definite purpose, essential for

nur am *Ende* ein erkanntes ist, die Philosophie nur von einem Wollen anfangen kann.]" (*Grundlegung*, 405).

47 "Die positive Philosophie könnte möglicherweise rein für sich anfangen, mit dem bloßen Ausspruch: 'Ich will das, was über dem Seyn ist'..."

48 The dialectics of mere *Denken* is simply definitional, describing the essence of the possible. Here one finds what may rather be termed axiomatic thinking. For this type of thinking adequacy is just as if not more important than consistency.

49 The notion that all research and not merely philosophy begins with desire is reminiscent of Kierkegaard and his idea of the comical. See his *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* for more on this notion.

50 "Faith is also necessarily *willing* and as such also *acting* and in philosophy the expression is especially valid: Show your faith through works. [Der Glaube ist also

both life and philosophy. All science arises from belief and those who separate belief and knowledge do not know what they want (*ibid.*).⁵¹ There is no knowledge where there was not first a faithful searching. Experience is never pure but always colored by desire. There is no fact/value distinction.

The three moments of philosophy are 1) *das Wollen* (the ideal or *terminus ad quem*); 2) thought's conceptualization of what is wanted (the so-called hypothesis or *terminus a quo*); and 3) the ensuing science (*terminus per quem*) that attempts to acknowledge and know absolute being, the highest (*Grundlegung*, 117). Positive philosophy does not move from thought to transcendent reality but begins with its ideal in order that its *terminus a quo*, its assumption, be more than a mere determination of thought. *Glauben* can only be consequently shown to be true by means of the science, a science first enabled by *das Glauben* (*ibid.* 395). The human person lives not by intuition but by faith. Knowledge is never immediate but always only mediated by the ensuing science. This science leading to knowledge is conducted *through* – and not *from* – the posterior.

6 Empiricism: Subjective, Objective and Scientific (Abduction)

“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”⁵² (*Grundlegung*, 128). That philosophy wants this positive beginning is hard to dispute but philosophy could not think this unprethinkable *Daß* unless it reveals itself. This origin, if not to remain ensconced within

notwendig *Wollen* und als solches auch *Handeln* und in der Philosophie gilt vorzugsweise der Ausspruch: Zeige deinen Glauben durch Werke.]” (Schelling, *System*, 65).

- 51 Is empiricism as induction and not abduction (see the following section) even possible? Even the physical sciences can only confirm a hypothesis by first having posited one, by having posited an expected (and desired) consequence. Does not the hermeneutic circle always color the interpretation of facts even in the physical sciences? A fact, e.g. an atom, indeed precedes its comprehension but that does not entail that facts can be vacuously known outside of an interpretive schema and its rules of interpretation. The changing model of the atom is a case and point of the fact that rule and case always occur concurrently and never in isolation.
- 52 “Originell ist das, was wir als möglich erst begreifen dadurch, dass es *wirklich* ist; wovon wir also die Möglichkeit erst durch die Wirklichkeit begreifen.”

the eternal darkness of nothingness, must be a freedom that has chosen to reveal itself via its deed. If Being reveals itself, then its revelation is the result of a deed. One cannot say that this decision is a necessary consequence, only that it has happened. Real happenings are not analytic but events that first come into being as a result of *actus*. If knowledge is only at the end, it is because philosophy assumes a primal decision and the completion of the deed is also only at the end (*ibid.* 116). The ensuing science of positive philosophy is empirical because a science of the deed and just as a person is only known empirically through her actions and words, likewise with positive philosophy.

Schelling enumerates three types of empiricism: subjective, objective⁵³ and scientific empiricism. Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi represents the first type, an empiricism based on personal feeling that is neither knowing nor philosophical (*Grundlegung*, 249). There is no science here but only the immediacy of feelings. Jacobi stringently defended God against any conceptions that would render Him less than personal and yet he also argues that God can only be known by means of reason⁵⁴ (*ibid.* 252). This seems counter-intuitive. Does one not stand in an empirical relation to personality? Through what channels is another person revealed than in her acting? Can one's acts and inner thoughts be known otherwise than empirically? Jacobi wants to find a subjective assurance of God in the immediacy of personal feeling but reserve knowledge proper to the domain of reason. This attributes more to reason than merited. The understanding is active, but reason is passive, merely capable of discernment. As seen above, reason secures the negative, the idea, but only the understanding can actively seek the positive, the existent (*ibid.*). Schel-

53 This second form of empiricism is actually also subjective but it views itself as objective insofar as it asserts that God objectively moves in the subject. This signifies the mysticism/theosophism of Jakob Böhme (*Grundlegung*, 249). Schelling has obvious affinities with this approach insofar as, as will be seen, he views mythology as an objective process whose locus is the subjective, i.e. the consciousness of man.

54 Jacobi has argued that reason must be the God-recognizing faculty because an animal does not acknowledge God and the animal, according to Jacobi, possesses understanding but is without reason. Schelling correctly remarks that according to this line of argumentation "Jacobi could conclude thusly: Only man denies God, the animal does not deny Him; therefore, reason is, according to its nature, that which denies God... [...so könnte Jacobi so schließen: Nur der Mensch läugnet Gott, das Thier läugnet ihn nicht, also ist Vernunft ihrer Natur nach das Gott läugnende...]" (*Mythologie*/41, 190).

ling's contention, at least, is that passive reason serves as a handmaiden to the actively seeking understanding.

The second form of empiricism rests on more than personal feeling but vouches that the objective, god, moves itself in the subject. This empiricism is an objectivity whose locus is the subjective. The main representative of this theosophistic tradition is Jakob Böhme. As just mentioned, insofar as the locus of the objective is the subjective, the theosophist purports to having herself become the essence of being (*Grundlegung*, 261). This is a stronger assertion than contemplation but is a fusion with the object (*ibid.* 264). Schelling's critique of this form of empiricism is two-fold:⁵⁵ this thesis neglects the effects of the Fall, i. e. the presence of evil, distortion, privation, estrangement etc.⁵⁶ and it posits a god⁵⁷ that moves itself but not one that acts. Regarding the first critique, experience shows that an immediate relationship with the divine, an immediacy of knowledge, does not subsist (*ibid.* 261). The human being may essentially be the understanding of Being⁵⁸ but in her actual situation this would have clearly been lost. As Schelling phrases it, in the human being "...this science is only potential, no longer actual in him. The substantial principle contains all knowing potentially, but this knowing is *concealed* in him and must first be awakened by something other"⁵⁹ (*ibid.* 262). One has become like empty reason, a potential but not actual understanding. Concerning the second critique of objective empiricism, its god never acts, at least not historically, but only moves itself into being

55 Schelling actually also gives a third reason. Böhme's god does not act but must first give birth to itself, i. e. give itself being. In order to achieve this the god once trapped in a rotary motion of drives magically extricates itself from this eternal frustration. Schelling complains that one can no longer follow Böhme when he makes this incomprehensible move – incomprehensible at least for a god that never acts but only moves itself (II/3, 124, "Begründung"). That a god must first give itself being in its own natal process is unbefitting.

56 One can accept the reality of these privations without having to accept the doctrine of original sin.

57 The word "god" instead of "God" is used here because a god that cannot act is not personal and thus "god" would not function as a name but as an inanimate entity. "That" or "which" and "itself" will also be employed in place of "who," "whom" and "whose" for the same reason. This god is a thing a not a person.

58 The justification of this thesis occurs in the next chapter, which shows that Man is the end of creation.

59 "...diese Wissenschaft ist nur *potentia*, nicht <mehr> *actu* in ihm. Das substantielle Princip enthält der Möglichkeit nach alles Wissen, aber dieses Wissen ist in ihm *verborgen* und muss erst durch ein Anderes erweckt werden."

(*ibid.* 177). The God who acts does not require an accouchement process to acquire being; this is unworthy of God. A god which would simply move itself is unavoidably subsumed by its own movement. This god could never be an indivisible remainder and never begin a process independent of itself (i.e. this god cannot create), but this god is always involved, sublated and implicated in all its movements. This god cannot act. All its movements are moments of its own genesis.⁶⁰

Empiricism, says Schelling, is a speculative method, while rationalism precludes invention and ingenuity (*Grundlegung*, 248). Rationalism is analytical, always parsing the concept, extracting all its implications. Empiricism explores and rummages. Empiricism first seeks a concept rather than beginning with one (*ibid.* 381). This constitutes its seeking and speculative character. Reason, however, analyzes and parses;⁶¹ the understanding aligns itself with empiricism, first inquiring about which concept is appropriate to the phenomenon. Given the phenomenological criterion only an empirical method that emphasizes a seeking understanding should be expected. Not reason but only the understanding is appropriate for the phenomenon under question here (*ibid.* 256–257). The aim is not the erection of doctrine but rather a perpetual explaining of facticity to satisfaction.

The phenomenon under question is both pre-discursive and pre-sensible. The non-sensible or supersensible seemingly excludes empiricism; however, Schelling argues that the supersensible only became supra-empirical in Kant. He contends that such a restricted empiricism was not that of Bacon, Pascal and Newton (*Grundlegung*, 271). True, philosophical empiricism has no right to exclude anything experiential, be it in nature, history, the human being or her acts (II/3, 112, “Begründung”). One should not equate empiricism with sensibilism. Empiricism is indeed restricted to the experiential but that domain is larger than the sensible. A freely acting intelligence, i.e. a person, is supersensible but the recognition of a person, her intents, desires and deeds, is not executed *a priori* but *per posterius*. A person’s character is only revealed through her acts, which do fall into experience, even sensible and not just inner

60 Despite the excursus into Jacobi’s and Böhme’s views of the divine to elucidate their two respective forms of empiricism, one should note that the topic here has as of yet not said anything about God as such.

61 In depicting reason as a merely passive handmaiden, Schelling wanders from Kant’s notion of reason, which does more than analyze and parse but extends beyond the given towards the transcendental ideals, namely I, world and God. Yet, even for Kant, these are only regulative and not constitutive ideals.

experience. That recognized through the posterior can still indicate supersensual anteriority. Freedom is supersensual but it is sensually and experientially revealed. Insofar as sensible acts indicate freedom, this experience is capable of indicating the supersensible. Kant criticized all metaphysics on the basis of the supersensible but this approach does not reach into the supersensible, but the supersensible makes itself sensible.⁶² She who ventures to reject this possibility declines any scientific approach to freedom and all domains with freedom as their prerequisite, e.g. ethics, psychology, history, art, aesthetics etc. The only form of empiricism adequate to freedom and positive philosophy is scientific empiricism.

Freedom, positivity and the experiential refer not to generals but are denoted by indexical reference, indicating the absolutely singular (Buchheim, 144). Indexicals can point to persons, e.g. the indexical pronouns "I," "you," "he" etc. This signifies the importance of the name for positive philosophy, as only the proper name refers to a person without totalization, i.e. without reducing the person to a thing or object that can always be pigeonholed with a stagnant essence and identity by means of a totalizing concept. Positive philosophy wishes to denote that free of all essence, the Naked Existent that contains nothing general but is rather absolute singularity, that which can be demarcated only by name (II/3, 174, "Begründung").⁶³ Only a name is appropriate because only the name signifies without describing, only the name signifies without representation, only the name signifies without implicating any determinate essence. The absolutely special cannot be gleaned from reason because it cannot be gleaned from the general. This, however, does not entail that the absolutely singular is not universal. A distinction must be made between the general and the universal. This singularity is "*das πᾶν*" (II/3, 174, "Begründung") but not as a genus or totality. Rationalism deals in generals and empiricism can recognize individuals. Empiricism, then, seemingly lacks universality and rationalism particularity (*Grundlegung*, 457). The general is opposed to the particular but what is wanted is not a general particular but a universal singular. This singular is not a particular over and against others because it does not have its identity by

62 Positive philosophy denies that the supersensual is known by rational means (II/3, 115, "Begründung").

63 Benjamin S. Pryor wrote in "Giving Way to...Freedom: A Note after Nancy and Schelling," "The freedom of being is being's infinite inessentiality, the absolute singularity of existence that is not a singularity torn away from something or the final resting place of a process of becoming" (*Schelling Now*, 226).

means of its particular essence. *Das Wesen, das Ist* (Being, which Is) is not a generalization produced by double negation but is an expressed affirmative. *Das bloße Wesen* (mere Being) is universal due to its generality; however *das Wesen, das Ist*, is a universal individual. Universal individuality is freedom. As mentioned above, this origin is such that its actuality precedes its possibility and this is what the word “original” indicates.⁶⁴ Such an origin, as has been repeatedly stated, is the absolute *prius*, meaning it cannot be known from a prior concept. Therefore, the original, freedom, can only be known through its acting, i.e. abductively.

The term “abduction” stems not from Schelling but from Charles Sanders Peirce; however, it is similar to Schelling’s “scientific empiricism.”⁶⁵ Peirce once wrote to William James of his great indebtedness to Schelling (*Grounding*, 221–222); therefore, this association perhaps has historical and not just thematic merit. Abduction for Peirce posits a problematic hypothesis in order to account for a surprising observation (*ibid.* 74). Schelling’s astonishing observation, for which one cannot account through rational explanation, is the fact that there is something rather than nothing or that there is sense (*Sinn*) rather than chaos (*Wahnsinn*), reason rather than unreason. Any attempt to explain this *fact* must make recourse to that which is not merely rational, be it sub- or hyper-rational. In other words, only a “rogue” explanation is in order. As Schelling states, “The question is whether one can say that philosophy has actually comprehended a fact when one explains that it is rational” (*Urfas-*

64 “To be sure one must at some time imagine such a being, e.g. by productions, deeds, acts, whose possibility is first comprehensible through its actuality. What would come to fruition according to a previously present concept nobody calls original. Original is that from which one first admits the possibility, when one has the actuality before one’s eyes. [Denn man muß ein solches Seyn zuweilen wohl sich vorstellen; z. B. bei Hervorbringungen, Thaten, Handlungen, deren Möglichkeit erst durch ihre Wirklichkeit begreiflich ist. Was nach einem voraus vorhandenen Begriff zu Stande kömmt, nennt Niemand Original. Original ist, wovon man die Möglichkeit erst zugibt, wenn man die Wirklichkeit vor Augen sieht.]” (Schelling, II/4, 341–342, “Andere Deduktion”). Schelling’s notion of originality constitutes a doctrine of repetition capable of standing alongside Kierkegaard, Nietzsche or Deleuze whilst remaining his own.

65 This author was surprised and disappointed to discover that the correlation between Peirce’s abduction and Schelling’s scientific empiricism had already been drawn by Jason M. Wirth in his introduction to Schelling’s *Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology* (2007). This surprise was reassuring as a confirmation of this interpretation although it trumped the novelty of this interpretation.

sung, 20)...“for much appears in actuality, which does not appear to be a consequence of reason but of freedom”⁶⁶ (*ibid.* 21). He who assents to such an explanation does not do so merely on the basis of the argument’s rational persuasiveness but ultimately everything rests on the believer’s *decision*⁶⁷ to accept it.⁶⁸ The believer’s warrant for this decision can only be ethical or practical in conjunction with the explanation’s commensurability with experience (*Grounding*, 75). The latter criterion corresponds to the phenomenological criterion and the former to positive philosophy’s beginning as a *Wollen*. Positive philosophy begins by wanting wisdom. Its ultimate dissatisfaction with negative philosophy was that it failed to surrender what was wanted, namely a real and positive origin that does not emanate into being but one that acts freely. There is no necessity for one to be dissatisfied with negative philosophy and demand a positive one, but *if* one wants more than a rational world but also a meaningful world created by the free willing of wisdom, then one has no other alternative. Nobody is coerced to want this but if one does, then one must begin with this *Wollen*, with the assumption that being is meaningful and not just the logical emanation of blind mechanism.⁶⁹

66 “Die Frage ist, ob man sagen kann, daß die Philosophie eine Sache wirklich begriffen habe, wenn man erklärt, daß sie vernünftig sei...denn es erscheint in der Wirklichkeit gar vieles, was nicht Folge der Vernunft, sondern der Freiheit zu sein scheint.”

67 “Decision” as opposed to “choice” is not necessarily a conscious selection. A decision, as opposed to a choice, could precede all consciousness of options.

68 Perhaps Hume’s greatest achievement was showing that all causal explanations are abductive. The causes and effects, so-called, are given in experience but the causal relation is not. Hume, as is well known, accounts for this deficiency with his doctrine of constant conjunction. The constant conjunction of two things psychologically alleviates what initially should have appeared shocking, transforming the surprising and non-predictable fact into something mundane and commonplace. When the conjunction is not constant but infrequent, retaining its shocking character, e.g. a miracle, Hume dismisses the phenomenon, viewing it not as an aberration but simply as false. The phenomenological criterion precludes that a phenomenon be dismissed without first undergoing rigorous examination; therefore, abduction accounts for those surprising facts that one may not simply explain away or reject. Causal explanations posit a relationship that is not given in experience as a retroductive hypothesis for an otherwise unexplainable fact.

69 Not to want more than negative philosophy, i.e. not to want freedom, is palpable – albeit shocking and in need of psychological explanation – but that one may not only not want more but also explain away freedom as an impossibility is unacceptable. If philosophy finds itself unable to explain a phenomenon, she has every right to avoid the question but she does not have the right to alter, distort and/or remove the phenomenon.

Positive philosophy explains the facticity of the world through freedom and its deed as opposed to the negativity of thought (*Einleitung*, 13). In positive philosophy the will is decisive and personality, instead of the logical rigidity of the negative, reigns. The example of the person parallels this point. One only knows the will of a person experientially through what has been willed (Buchheim, 141). The meaning of a person – *who* one is – is never known definitively but a person either reproves or disproves one's character through subsequent acts. When the character of a person constantly changes one regards her as two-faced and duplicitous, as lacking character. In the most extreme examples traces of continuity are so thoroughly lacking that the person is not a person at all because the identity of a personality is missing. A person's character is only disclosed in a never-ending proof. Schelling likewise regards any conclusions drawn from his scientific empiricism as open-ended. In any event, positive philosophy views the world as the result of freedom and freedom's actual willing says something about its relation to the *Daß* and *Was*. As mentioned above, positive and negative philosophy do and do not correspond to their objects, namely to the unprethinkable Naked Existent and its *Was*. Positive and negative philosophies proper refer not to their objects but to the directionality of their methods. Positive philosophy does not exclude a *Was* but if it recognizes a *Was*, then it will not have it negatively as an abstraction of thought but positively as actual and subsequent. In other words, if a person wills, then what she wills constitutes her essence and personality. The "thatness" of pure freedom preceded the essential characterization of oneself as *a* free being who has acted. Only once one has willed has one acquired a real and concrete essence, a concrete identity. The unprethinkable *Daß* is without identity because without essence, but if it wills, then what it wills becomes a real essence ascribed to the freedom that enacted it. Positive philosophy does not exclude the *Was* but only has it as real, as the result of the deed. Freedom and act are necessarily temporal. From the view of the will at rest, the act is not-yet, i. e. is futural. From the viewpoint of the completed act, the freedom that willed it appears as past, as a will that was only potency but now *actus*. Schelling contends:

This proof does not at all just go to a determinate point, thus not just to the world for instance, which is the object of our experience, but rather as I myself, concerning human individuals who are important to me, do not find it

sufficient only in general to know that they are but demand perpetual proofs of their existence, so is it also here (II/1, 571, "Darstellung")⁷⁰

Negative philosophy views all things under the species of eternity; positive philosophy is linear, indicating a real progression into the future – this is its direction.

Positive philosophy begins with the absolute *prius* and moves forwards but this beginning commenced purely with a willing and not in knowledge. Knowledge is only at the end; therefore, one must empirically prove the absolute and immediate *prius* as a mediated certainty (*Grundlegung*, 399). This constitutes the scientific aspect of scientific empiricism. The beginning is a *Wollen* and contained in the idea of that wanted (freedom) is that the absolute *prius* should be able to reveal itself. That this *prius* in fact has revealed itself, that it indeed has willed, is shown in the never-closeable and progressive proof.⁷¹ Insofar as positive philosophy's principle is only provable by means of its *Tat* (deed), one should view this proof as operating *per posterius*. The movement is certainly a progression and not a regression; however, that from which one has progressed only acquires its scientific justification *post factum*. The absolute *prius* then appears as the condition of what follows it (though it also appears as more than merely a condition for what follows but also for itself). The *a priori* typically designates the necessary conditions for some-

70 "Es geht dieser Beweis keineswegs bloß bis zu einem bestimmten Punkt, nicht also etwa bloß bis zu der Welt, die Gegenstand unserer Erfahrung ist; sondern, wie ich, selbst bei menschlichen Individuen, die mir wichtig sind, nicht genügend finde, nur überhaupt zu wissen, daß sie sind, sondern fortdauernde Erweise ihrer Existenz verlange, so ist es auch hier..."

The proof is not closed because it concerns freedom and not the development or *φύσις* of something that must simply come to fruition and then, after having shown itself as what it is, come to a standstill. As not to be closed, the proof reaches into an indeterminate past and indeterminate future, similarly as to how one comes to know a person. What is wanted is not simply that a person exists but that they exist as free and true, i.e. with character or, in other words, as principled. Analogically, then, one could argue that the move from nature to spirit, law to gospel or the Old to the New Testament parallels the move from negative to positive philosophy.

71 Schelling's use of the term "proof" is not demonstrative; the absolute *prius* is not demonstrable by a syllogism. Just as trials and tribulations may reprove one's character, such is the sense here. A person either disproves her character or re-proves it by further refining it. Just as fire refines, purifies and reproves, the word "proof" functions in a similar manner here. One's character is perpetually reprovved or disproved, purified or soiled.

thing and so here Schelling also refers to scientific empiricism as an “a priori empiricism” (*ibid.* 402). It is empirical because its scientific justification of the *a priori* condition is only acquired through the posterior and it is *a priori* because it begins from the *absolute prius*, prior to anything with which it would otherwise relate. One does not first question the ontic and empirical verities for their ground with the result that the absolute *prius* only appears as a ground for beings. Should that have been the case, then the *prius* would *de facto* have been a relative one, proven by a regressive method. This also demarcates the essential difference between Schelling’s view and Peirce’s abduction. Abduction posits hypotheses in order to explain and ground what is under question but that is a regressive mode of questioning.⁷² Here the *prius* is absolute because it does not first relate to being as a ground or first cause but appears and is questioned autonomously as *das Wesen, das Ist*, which has revealed itself in its deed. Scientific empiricism is an empirical a priorism.

72 Two distinct, although certainly related, differences can be enumerated between Schelling’s scientific empiricism and Peirce’s abduction. The first difference was given in the text: Schelling does not begin with a hypothesis as that would be regressive. Schelling’s beginning has more to do with the character of grace than an arbitrary hypothesis. A hypothesis can be posited or dropped casually (Schelling, *Initia*, 37) whereas, for Schelling, one posits freedom because freedom and being as meaningful has seized the observer. The observer does not arbitrarily posit a hypothesis of which she is not yet persuaded but she is grasped from without, convinced and convicted prior to the proof. This hypothesis, so-called, is not objectively posited but seizes the participant in her subjectivity. It arrests her rather than being posited by her, hence the character of grace. This indicates the second distinction: One must not convince oneself of the validity of this so-called hypothesis because one is convinced of its truth the moment it grasps one. It is not a hypothesis but a conviction. This truth has not yet been scientifically confirmed to be sure but one does not doubt it in the sense that one may doubt the verity of a hypothesis and nevertheless continue to probe it for its dubious truthfulness. Schelling does not arbitrarily posit a hypothesis among other possible ones but attempts to scientifically and objectively corroborate that for which subjective conviction already exists. Doubt and certainty are not theoretical but practical, and one does not test the practical by means of experimentation, just as one cannot afford to experiment and play with one’s life but must always act with resolve. Abduction searches and hunts while for Schelling the hunting is over as he strives only after that having already seized him; one must only ask if a scientific path leading to the predetermined destination exists.

7 The Prior and the Posterior

Rationalism and positive philosophy are materially antithetical but formally equivalent insofar as both move from a *prius* to a posterior but the *prius* in rationalism is a relative one, related namely to a given concept from which all content can be parsed, while the *prius* of positive philosophy is absolute, beginning completely by itself (*Grundlegung*, 246). Empiricism, in the mundane sense and not in Schelling's technical sense of scientific empiricism, formally differs from both in that it traditionally works *a posteriori*, questioning beings for their ground or first cause. Empiricism is traditionally regressive. The beginning here though is absolutely *a priori*, i.e. prior to all givens and prior to being(s), beginning with a mere *Wollen*. However, knowledge of the absolute *prius* is only accrued *per posterius*. The *Wollen* is *a priori* but the science, the knowledge and justification which only come afterward, is not *a priori* but *per posterius*. Positive philosophy supersedes both rationalism and empiricism insofar as both relate to accidental being, i.e. to being as posterior, instead of progressing from Being itself (*Grundlegung*, 390).

In order to further elaborate the point that positive philosophy is progressive despite the fact that it only acquires its scientific justification through the posterior another look at the so-called arguments for the existence of God will be fruitful. Even if these arguments were valid, proving the existence of a first cause, they could only do this regressively, i.e. given that something is, then there must be a first cause. However, this makes the cause relative to its effect; it is not questioned for itself but only in order to account for the being of beings. Schelling has nothing to do with the so-called cosmological and teleological arguments because they function *a posteriori* and not *per posterius*. They begin from being in an attempt to regress to the origin. Even if the traditional proofs derived the necessary existence of the first being, these proofs do not entail that this first being had to create. *Given* that there is something rather than nothing, they derive this first being, but the very fact that there is the given condition that there is something rather than nothing remains unexplained. Do the arguments show that this God had to create? Do they show that this God had to exist as such or only that given the condition that something is, then and only then He had to exist? From the concept of necessary existence the creation is not entailed (*Einleitung*, 23). *Positive philosophy is not positive because it posits the absolute prius, namely the un-*

*prethinkable; it is positive because it acknowledges that this prius has willed. Das Wesen, das Ist, hat gewest.*⁷³

An analysis of Schelling's methodology has exposed elements of both *a priori* and *a posteriori* methods. Positive philosophy is not pure empiricism understood in its traditional sense and likewise negative philosophy is not opposed to empiricism. Negative philosophy uses the empirical regressively, questioning beings for their ground and positive philosophy uses empiricism progressively, questioning the original clearing or deed and subsequently justifying it abductively through its consequences. In contrast with Jacobi's empiricism based on feeling and Böhme's empirical theosophism, Schelling's empiricism is scientific and methodological. The other two both rely on the immediacy of either feelings or the divine in the self. Schelling does not demand this immediacy – which precludes a method and relies on varying forms of immediate intuition – and allots space for real methodological development. Walter Schulz affirms that were it not for his methodological clarification, Schelling must be numbered with theosophists (Schulz, 113–114). As has already been seen though, Schulz disputes the prominent role of experience in Schelling, reducing his method to the self-mediation of reason (*ibid.* 325). He fails to understand the empirical nature of the deed's denouements. If these really were the offspring of freedom, then they could never be the product of reason's self-mediation. That they exist would be accidental because freedom is free to will *and not* to will. They could just as easily have not been. Schelling argues that the super-sensible becomes sensible in its resulting fruit. Given that Schulz recognizes Schelling's methodology enough to distinguish him from the theosophists,⁷⁴ his reduction of Schelling's

73 Obviously, the grammatically correct rendering is "*ist gewesen*" but the language has been corrupted intentionally in order to emphasize the transitive and transitory nature of the deed, of the primal clearing or, to use Heideggarian terminology, *Lichtung. Wesen west.*

74 Karl Jaspers falsely accuses that "Schelling is an adherent of Gnosticism...because he receives and appropriates the material of Gnosticism from the tradition of theosophy, – because from early to late he see everything in the space of intellectual intuition without finding the context effective between it and factual knowledge of the world and deeds of finitude, or even only to search methodologically... [Schelling ist Gnostiker...weil er das Material der Gnosis aus der Überlieferung der Theosophie aufnimmt und aneignet, – weil er von früh bis spät alles sieht im Raum der intellektuellen Anschauung, ohne den wirksamen Zusammenhang zwischen ihr und dem faktischen Weltwissen und dem Endlichen Handeln zu finden, oder auch nur methodisch zu suchen...]" (*Schelling*, 212). Schelling cer-

methodology to the self-mediation of reason appears all the more baffling.

The unprethinkable is not equivalent to the unthinkable because it is indeed thinkable but only per *posterius* and not *from* the posterior. The unprethinkable (*das Unvordenkliche*) does not preclude that it may be post-thinkable (*nachdenklich*), i. e. never immediately thinkable via pure *Denken* but always only via *Nachdenken über*, through its methodological and historical mediation.

8 Historical Philosophy: Truth and Falsification

There are two possible views of the world. It is either the product of necessity, e. g. logical emanation (or even if one concedes the possibility of chance, the origin is still a blind $\phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$ that merely “bodies forth,” e. g. Nietzsche’s *Wille zur Macht*) or it is the result of will, freedom and deed. The first view is a-historical and the second historical (*Urfassung*, 5). The historical view is certainly the “healthier view” because, as has been repeatedly affirmed, only with this assumption does σοφία exist, i. e. the very assumption internal to φιλο-σοφία itself.⁷⁵ Forget not that the problem directing Schelling’s questioning is nihilism. The former movement, a blind $\phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$ or emanation, may have sense but it is insignificant or meaningless. Schelling, not unlike Heidegger, interrogates Being for its meaning and only with the assumption of the second, historical movement are significance, freedom and wisdom possible. Schelling argues that even if the beginning is rational but still blind, then the most one can do is stoically subjugate oneself to the process’ determined end rather than revolt against it in vein. This allows for prudence (*Klugheit*) as the highest virtue but wisdom is only possible if the movement itself is not blind but results from wisdom (*ibid.* 22). Only with the assumption that the origin is a non-annullable will remaining free even after the deed can one comport oneself as moral and free. One does not make an appeal to an argument from design but one makes an assump-

tainly begins from the facts of the history of the finite world, i. e. with concrete, historical mythology and revelation.

75 “The first assumption of philosophy is that in being – in the world – is wisdom. Philosophy assumes a being, which right at the beginning arises with foresight, with freedom. [Die erste Voraussetzung der Philosophie ist, daß in dem Sein – in der Welt – Weisheit sei. Die Philosophie setzt ein Sein voraus, welches gleich anfangs mit Voraussicht, mit Freiheit, entsteht.]” (*Urfassung*, 23).

tion. The appeal to design is always counterbalanced given that the world seemingly contains as much unreason as reason, *Unsinn* as *Sinn*. This assumption is not a postulate or hypothesis, which one would arbitrarily give oneself in order to be able to act freely, but more accurately this assumption first seizes the one making it. One does not stand at a point of indifference and ask oneself, "What must be assumed in order that being appear as meaningful?" Being appears as meaningful before one questions it.

The view of the world that seriously engages in φιλο-σοφία is historical because the absolute *prius* is only corroborated historically (*Grundlegung*, 406). Positive philosophy employs a historical methodology because where real movement is lacking, real science and real knowledge are lacking with a purely dianoetic *nicht wissendes Wissen* as a poor substitute. Schelling's methodology does not begin with generic universals and then demand their concrete instantiation but it is a contextual methodology, beginning with the local and regional. Historical events, e.g. mythology and revelation, cannot be known prior to their actual historical occurrences (II/4, 4, "Offenbarung, 2ter Teil"). Schelling approaches these phenomena with great attentiveness to their historical particularity and regional context as Jason M. Wirth asserts, "... (L)ecture 7's analysis and reading of the intricate, complex, volatile, and unruly relationship between polytheistic mythology and Jewish monotheism is one of the finest exemplars of comparative study in any era or place" (*Historical-Critical*, xxi). In contrast, Schelling decries that earlier theorists of myth explained it *a priori* prior to the facts, prior to the historical content itself (II/2, 137–138, "Mythologie"). These theories could only view myths as an arbitrary clothing for ontological, psychological or cosmological concepts, namely, as allegories representing a pure meaning in principle separable from its historical manifestation. Schelling regards the historical content as more than an arbitrary, representative dress but as the facts themselves. Myth's truth is not re-presented in the allegorically depicted gods but it tautegorically manifests itself in a time and context. The depictions are not mediums presenting the truth once more but they are inextricably intertwined and essential to the truth and meaning of mythology – they *are* its truth. Consequently, a particular mythological development may have been true in its time but its stagnant remnant operative after its

time has passed is simply fetishism.⁷⁶ Things are only true in their time and outside of their temporal context they betray the rudest idolatry. Truth cannot be extracted from its movement and context. As Heidegger says, “It is not the opinion which a thinker ends up with that is decisive, nor the version in which he gives this opinion. Decisive is rather the movement of questioning that alone lets what is true come into the open” (*Schelling's*, 106).

Schelling's historical approach is not first dialectical, framing categories according to which history must occur as if its actual happenings were only instantiations of a prior, predetermined framework. Schelling begins with the local and regional, taking phenomena at face value without the compulsion to ask what idea the accidental materiality of the historical allegorically represents. Rationalism is a-historical because it excludes everything which would be the result of free deed. Rationalism begins with the essential and only being able to recognize the essential it cannot comprehend the actuality of the actual in all its disarray. Theosophism and rationalism are both a-historical because both only recognize a god that moves itself but not one who acts. Where the free act is absent, likewise is a free relation to the world absent. They could not possibly have an origin that does not blindly emanate and body forth, i.e. an origin that must not presence (*sich vergegenwärtigen*). If positive philosophy speaks of God⁷⁷ – which it has not yet done – then its God would not be a negativity that would first have to realize itself, i.e. cross over into being. As Schelling argues, “It is befitting of God to be indifferent towards His own being but it is not befitting to strive for His own being, to give Himself being, to give birth to Himself...”⁷⁸ (II/3, 125,

76 Totemism, for example, contained truth in its moment but once its moment passes, it cannot appear as genuinely religious and creative but only as an inert fetishism.

77 Giorgio Agamben writes in perhaps perfect correlation to Schelling's distinction between positive and negative philosophy, “It is possible to analyze the notion of God on the ontological level, listing his attributes or negating, one by one – as in apophatic theology – all his predicates to reach the idea of a pure being whose essence coincides with existence. But this will not rigorously say anything about his relation to the world or the way in which he has decided to govern the course of human history” (*Kingdom*, 54). Negative philosophy on ontological while positive philosophy is historical. Negative philosophy is based on (God's) nature and the positive proceeds from praxis.

78 “Es geziemt Gott, gleichgültig gegen sein eignes Seyn zu seyn, nicht geziemt ihm aber, sich um sein eignes Seyn zu bemühen, sich ein Seyn zu geben, sich in ein Seyn zu gebären...”

“Begründung”). Rationalism, theosophism and regressive philosophy, insofar as they only seek the being of beings, i.e. the first cause, are a-historical because none of them acknowledge the deed, with which a real happening and real history is possible. Schelling revels in Plato’s move from the dialectic to a positive, historical explanation in the *Timaeus*.⁷⁹ In this text, says Schelling, Plato attains his summit, suddenly and forcefully reaching the historical. This was not a continuous transition though, exclaims Schelling, but a breach, an *Abbrechen* from the dialectic for the positive, which must begin by itself (II/3, 100, “Begründung”). The historical is not an instantiation and exemplification of the dialectical but a real happening preceding its dialectical possibility. The historical, only explainable by virtue of the deed, can only be examined as it is given, locally and regionally with acute attention to, rather than disdain for, its material signification. There is not a signified without the signifier.

Historical philosophy should not be confused with historiography, i.e. with historical knowledge (*Einleitung*, 9). Historical philosophy makes use of historical knowledge but it cannot be reduced to this, lest it become merely historical positivism.⁸⁰ Historical philosophy is not reducible to historical knowledge because truth is neither simply a collection of facts nor reducible to the encyclopedic nature of knowledge. According to Schelling, truth is in everything that seriously concerns the human being and thus truth is in all systems, even if distorted (*ibid.* 11). Falsity and error are not the absence of truth, i.e. merely untruth/concealment, but they are distortions of the true, implicating the presence of the true, only as perverted and/or anamorphic. Therefore, truth is already present, though not necessarily recognizable, in the history of thought but Schelling warns that one can only utilize the history of philosophy if one already has a notion of eternal philosophy (*ibid.*), lest

79 For a discussion of Schelling’s changing position regarding the authenticity of the *Timaeus* see Beierwaltes, Werner. “Plato’s *Timaeus* in German Idealism. Schelling and Windischmann.” *Plato’s Timaeus as Cultural Icon*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2003. pgs. 267–289.

80 The essences explicated from historical philosophy are not empirical generalizations from historical knowledge but arise immediately from the historical experience itself. In other words, that something is rather than nothing does not require the slightest generalization. What is significant is the efficacy of the historical *experience*, i.e. the formal indication. *What* is given in history is not as important as *how* it is given. If one experiences being as full of grace rather than as a cold law, then this formally indicates freedom rather than mechanism. Generalization plays no role, despite the experiential character of these determinations.

one again succumb to the mistake of merely archiving historical facts – a type of positivism without understanding.⁸¹

Implicit in this view is an inchoate and augural conception of truth in the Heideggarian sense of unconcealment. Presaging Heideggarian truth, this notion of truth precedes truth as propositional, a matching of reality with the statement. Truth can abide even in the false statement but not always “as” truth. For both Heidegger and Schelling, falsity is not the *ad hoc* having nothing to do with truth but it distorts truth in order to conceal her, and truth is not simply correctness but must be a revelatory event. This obviates the possibility that truth and concomitantly Schelling’s historical philosophy be reducible to a sheer eclecticism of historical facts. Truth is indeed eclectic and syncretic – yet never democratic – but it also demands that everything find its proper place in the greater context (*Einleitung*, 13). Again, truth only subsists in the progression of the whole and not in isolated propositions. There must be an “organic idea” placing everything in an appropriate hierarchy just as the foreground of a picture may hierarchically organize the background and periphery. What backbone then transforms the chaotic conglomeration into an organic whole? The answer can only be the positive, freedom, but that freedom has revealed itself in the deed is acknowledged via the historical. Historical philosophy does not busy itself with what has originated but its

81 Nothing particular in experience corroborates the absolute *prius* but rather the whole of experience. Yet, Schelling also wants to say that the Christ is not just another historical appearance but a special one. It as a special case because the Christ-event is a concretion of what has been since the foundation of the world. One could not even recognize the Christ as the Christ if he were not already known and prophesied beforehand, i.e. if the Christ were not older than the historical incarnation. Although Schelling says that nothing particular in experience, only experience as a whole, constitutes the open-ended proof, he also says, “The expression ‘historical,’ which philosophy uses, did not relate to the manner of knowing in philosophy but solely to its content. [Der Ausdruck geschichtlich, von der Philosophie gebraucht, bezog sich also nicht auf die Art des Wissens in ihr, sondern lediglich auf den Inhalt desselben.]” (II/3, 139, “Begründung,” footnote). Schelling recognizes the Christ as being as old as, nay, older than, time itself and as simultaneously disclosing something novel in the revelatory event of the incarnation that would have otherwise remained concealed. Experience as a whole may corroborate that the absolute *prius* has willed but the event of the Christ reveals this will as divine, as the will of God. The deed is not understandable apart from its inner intention and the intention remains unintelligible, i.e. veritably as nothing at all, apart from its manifest execution.

task is to question the origination of the origin.⁸² Heidegger himself partially confirms this interpretation of Schelling's historical philosophy. Although he does not speak here of Schelling's late philosophy of mythology and revelation, he does write, concerning Schelling's *Philosophische Untersuchungen über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit und die damit zusammenhängenden Gegenstände*, "that the historical thinking attempted here is to be situated neither under the philosophical-historical explanation nor the 'systematic' observation nor a mixture of both"⁸³ (*Metaphysik*, 5). What Heidegger means with these headings is not evidently clear but apparently Schelling's historical philosophy is neither a systematic archiving of facts, nor a systematic rendering of history apart from the concrete facts or a rendering merely from the viewpoint of the present, nor a relativizing historicism.

Historical philosophy can either abductively corroborate or it can falsify. There are two roles for falsification, a subjective and an objective one. Although positive philosophy must begin by itself, philosophy's history can show the inadequacy of philosophy as negative before the appearance of positive philosophy. This process of "falsification" is not necessary, only providing a subjective or external justification for positive philosophy (*Grundlegung* 118).⁸⁴ This subjective role attributed to falsifi-

82 A different type of historical philosophy is Foucault's. He denies essences so radically that he denies σοφία to philosophy. He not only denies that something could be known a-historically but also that nothing a-historical or pre-historical is real. Foucault is neither a philosopher nor even a historian in the traditional sense but tells the history of power, a history of systems. By denying the phenomenon he also denies the possibility of asking the questions most important to the human being, e.g. the questions of freedom, meaning and the mystical question of Wittgenstein, who said that *how* the world exists is not mystical but *that* it exists is. Of course, Leibniz first formulated this question explicitly. Jaspers, however, exclaims, "While with Leibniz the thing is quickly processed with logical operation and only occurs incidentally, through Schelling the question has first become the actual question. [Während bei Leibniz die Sache mit der logischen Operation schnell erledigt ist und beiläufig einmal vorkommt, ist die Frage durch Schelling erst zur wirklichen Frage geworden.]" (*Schelling*, 124).

83 "...daß das hier versuchte geschichtliche Denken sich weder in der philosophisch-historischen Erklärung noch in der "systematischen" Betrachtung, noch in einem Gemisch beider unterbringen läßt."

84 Schelling also writes, "Positive philosophy can indeed begin for itself without prior grounding. But it is a large difference between objective and subjective grounding. The great experience of the last centuries may not be passed over. [Die positive Philosophie kann zwar für sich ohne vorausgegangene Begründung anfangen. Aber es ist ein grosser Unterschied zwischen objektiver und subjektiver

cation is genetic or genealogical because it also shows the truth (although as distorted) in all moments. This genealogical process differs from Nietzschean and Foucauldian genealogies because it does not exclude the phenomenon, i.e. ontological truth, from the start. What has here been called “falsification” in Schelling should be sharply distinguished from falsification in Karl Popper. For neither Popper nor Schelling is falsification a method for acquiring truth. For the former truth is a metaphysical and therefore non-scientific idea and for the latter truth is only confirmed in his abductive scientific empiricism. Falsification does not provide truth but merely eradicates error and inadequacy. Schelling, however, as has just been shown, asserts that truth subsists in error, only as distorted. Therefore, progress occurs not by the elimination of error, as with Popper, but in heresy because truth is just as present in falsity as elsewhere. Jason Wirth convincingly argues that for Schelling the error of lifelessness and banality is always worse than misunderstanding a doctrine (*Historical*, xviii). Truth (and relevance) does not consist in correctness. As Alfred North Whitehead once said, “It is more important that a proposition be interesting than that it be true.” (*Process*, 259). True thought or historical philosophy is not concerned with truth and falsity as correctness as much as with interpretation and evaluation. Thought exceeds life’s limits, exceeds the given.⁸⁵

Positive philosophy’s method is an “empirical a priorism” (II/3, 130, “Begründung”). This approach indicates the origin as existent *per posterius* and here is where objective falsification plays its role. The entirety of experience and not simply a part of it indicates the origin. Historical philosophy is then not just a part but equal to the entirety of positive philosophy (II/3, 130–131, “Begründung”). As has been seen though, the proof is a conditioned one. *If* one wants freedom and being as free creation, then one must employ the methodology outlined here but *if* one does not desire to reach beyond the negative, then one can remain

Begründung. Die grosse Erfahrung der letzten Jahrhunderte darf nicht übergangen werden.]” (*Grundlegung*, 179). Positive philosophy can be propaedeutically grounded for didactic reasons but it does not require any prior ontological grounding.

85 Thought does not react but is creative. The art of the genius, for Schelling, does not have a prior model or telos of which it would be the copy. Genial art is never a means to an end, a tool for expression, but an end itself, the expression itself. This is what is called original. Original thinking thinks beyond presence back into the unplumbed depths of the past and forward into the impenetrable contingencies of the future.

with it (II/3, 132, "Begründung"). If one employs the conditional "proof" of positive philosophy, then there are two ways it can be objectively and scientifically falsified: 1) If being would not persist but cease and fall into nullity, then this would falsify a free origin.⁸⁶ 2) If there were never any evidence for novelty and freedom, and/or necessary mechanism or logical emanation could be proved, then that would also falsify the possibility of a free origin (*Grundlegung*, 466). These two options are admittedly very problematic. The first is problematic because it falls outside the realm of possible experience. The fall of the world into oblivion spells the demise of the possible experience of this oblivion. The second option promises a concrete content of experience but the hypothetical proof of necessitarianism, be it logical or mechanical, which would exclude freedom, is itself a metaphysical and non-falsifiable hypothesis. Despite this difficulty one must nevertheless choose between the option of freedom or non-freedom, the origin as act or as blindness. As long as the possibility of *das Wesen* persisting outside of its process as a free and indivisible remainder, which is not equivalent to a first cause or substance already in being, remains unfalsified – which given the foregoing, it must – then one is as equally justified to assume this freedom than not. This is also undisputedly the healthier view and more beautiful story as the alternative precludes that being is meaningful, i. e. the product of wisdom. If falsification in Schelling were reductive, excluding indelibly certain possibilities as false, then the inability to "falsify" the two options would damage the scientific character of his thought. However, Schelling's thought, as neither reductive nor deductive, does not culminate in a necessary or unavoidable conclusion. The phenomenological criterion demands that one explain the phenomenon to its satisfaction, not that one arrive at the last and only possible explanation.

Edward Allen Beach, in his book *The Potencies of God(s): Schelling's Philosophy of Mythology*, asks how and if positive facts can discredit the results of negative philosophy. In other words, he critically examines Schelling's contention that positive philosophy begins by itself without being mediated from negative philosophy. He explicates Schelling's scientific empiricism, what has here been called his abductive approach, as follows. If the origin is free and not blind, then a, b and c will ensue and their confirmation constitutes the *a posteriori* "proof." Beach accurately

86 If the origin were pure freedom, an indivisible remainder never assumed into its own process, then it would provide an untouchable and therefore incorruptible basis for being – albeit as praxis rather than as substance.

identifies this as the fallacy of affirming the consequent (*ibid.* 152). This cannot be denied but as *per posterius* the argument cannot be read as a syllogism but only as a “running” proof. The proof is not a proof in the proper sense of the term but an unclosable, essentially open-ended proof. The customary movement of the *a posteriori* is from the effect to the cause but for positive philosophy it progresses from the so-called cause to the so-called effects (*ibid.* 153).⁸⁷ If the open-ended abductive “proof” were a syllogism, then it would also surely have the status of “if and only if.” Schelling’s argumentation is not “iff” but only a weak “if” is defensible. As Schelling has argued, empiricism seeks and speculates. He does not sketch a closed axio-deductive system but a speculative philosophy. Speculative philosophy is never closed and dogmatic, attempting to give a necessary or apodictic answer, but it is open, attempting to give an answer adequate to the phenomenon.⁸⁸ Adequacy demands a phenomenological method, never giving a definitive conclusion but remaining open and malleable to further interpretation. In response to Beach’s question of whether the positive can demand a revision of the negative, the answer is that the question is poorly framed. The negative, insofar as it functions properly, is not dogmatic anyway but merely expository of the totality of possibility. Negative philosophy excludes the impossible, e.g. a married bachelor or round square, but it does not assert (*behaupt*) anything that could be falsified or confirmed anyway. Negative philosophy cannot be revised because its truths are eternal; she never asserts anything actual or historical. She is not dogmatic but critical philosophy.

The most beneficial, and accurate, reading of Schelling’s positive method is that it is neither a proof proper, because empirical, nor regres-

87 These are not causes and effects proper because when one procures the efficacious condition for an effect one always does this from the viewpoint of the effect, hence the regressive character. If *das Wesen, das Ist*, is questioned for itself and from itself instead of regressively as a cause, then it will not appear as already in being but as anterior to being. Regressive questioning effaces ontological difference, reducing Being to a first cause, i.e. to a being. The attempt here is to question Being for its meaning as such and not simply as a ground regressed to from the questioning of beings, which always entails the reduction of Being to a first being. For this reason, the rhetoric of “cause” and “effect” in their proper sense should be avoided. These are determinations of being, not of Being, of negative philosophy, not of positive philosophy.

88 For a further description of how the term “speculative” is being used here, see the first chapter of Alfred North Whitehead’s *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*.

sive, because it does not actually begin with the empirical. The empirical only abductively confirms its pre-empirical *terminus a quo*. The “proof” of the progressive method is technically not a *posteriori*, i. e. *from the posterior*, as that is always regressive, but *per posteriorius*. The distinction between the *al*/from and the *per*/through is indispensable.⁸⁹ The unprethinkable *Daß, das Wesen das Ist*, cannot be *definitively* proved, i. e. not through its definition. As interminable, the open-ended proof must be interpreted as a non-falsified, i. e. not to be excluded, hope for future confirmation (Beach, 158).⁹⁰ Just as one can think one knows another only to see the other do something out of character, falsifying one’s prior opinion of them, likewise is Schelling’s thinking open to a similar falsification but never to verification. All verification is asymptotic and falsification is not the removal of the false until only the true remains, but the false itself is the true in perverted form. Just as the person who acted out of character did not falsify her prior character in one fell swoop but only weakened it and brought it under suspicion, likewise is falsification in Schelling not exclusionary but always open to future revision. Thinking is never closed and the limit of what is given to be thought is asymptotic.

9 Freedom: Novelty, Difference and Presence

All of the elements of Schelling’s methodology have been disclosed and as promised this has elucidated his fundamental thought, namely that which ante- and post-dates the possibility of systematization. Schelling’s first thought consists in “*the conviction that Being (which is comprehended as jointless identity) cannot be derived from relations of reflection*” (Frank, *Auswege*, 278).⁹¹ To honor a philosopher is to catch him in his axioms before

89 In Schelling’s words, “One may only differentiate between *being a prius* and *being known a posteriori*. The last expression means: to be known from a *prius*... [Man darf nur unterscheiden zwischen *prius sein* und a *posteriori erkannt* werden. Der letzte Ausdruck heißt: von einem *prius* her erkannt werden...]” (*System*, 85). The posterior is not questioned for its hypothetical *prius*/ground but the *prius* is questioned for the meaning of its disclosure. The ground of being is not sought but rather the being of the ground.

90 Similarities abound between Schelling’s open-ended proof and the Levinasian motif of the Good as futural, incapable of complete presence/realization and Derrida’s notion of the Messianic as an asymptotic limit.

91 “...die Überzeugung, dass das Sein (das als fugenlose Identität begriffen wird) nicht aus Verhältnissen der Reflexion abgeleitet werden kann.”

he proceeds to his consequences (II/3, 60, "Begründung"). Consequences are certainly important but they are determined by the fundamental thought. Only by grasping a philosopher's fundamental thought can one procure its consequences for a contemporary question. Should this possibility be denied, then all historical work in philosophy is only archival and not beneficial for genuine philosophical thought.⁹² All thinking of the past in regards to the present would then always be anachronistic.

Schelling's fundamental thought, positively formulated, is Being as freedom, not *a* free being but freedom itself. As Heidegger said concerning Schelling, "Freedom is not a property of the human being, but the other way around: the human being is at best the property of freedom ... the essence of the human being is grounded in freedom" (*Schelling's*, 9). No beings, no self-sames, possess freedom but they are the consequence of freedom's act. Pure freedom (Being) precedes identity, be it $A=A$, $\text{ego}=\text{ego}$, $\text{subject}=\text{object}$ or $\sim\text{non-Being}=\text{pure Being}$. Only if freedom precedes identity can evil, estrangement, singularity and plurality be real (Fackenheim, *God Within*, 96). Evil, for example, can only possibly be more than epi-phenomenal, more than merely privative, if it stems from a positive source and is not just a deviation from the One. How could the One ever leave itself were it not more than its essence, more than its self-identity? The possibility of being a singular individual as opposed to a particular part or of having genuine plurality and not just a disparately composed totality demands that something positive precede identity. Identity, the system, does not have the property of freedom, the capacity to extricate itself from itself, but the system is *from* freedom. Freedom is not simply what escapes the system but the system is what was willed by freedom. If one begins with the One or absolute identity, then

92 Schelling argues that philosophy does not consist of propositions and doctrines but a movement of thought.

"If philosophy can be presented neither by chapter nor by paragraphs at a time, if it is only possible in a continual flow of thinking, then the order of the day is not merely passive or rote memorization. My lecture is a continually progressing investigation, which one must follow with constant attention so that one does not lose the train of thought. I am therefore principally concerned with placing the listener in the proper standpoint. [Wenn die Philosophie weder kapitelweise noch paragraphenweise vorgetragen werden kann, wenn sie nur in einem steten Fluss des Denkens möglich ist, ist bloss passives oder Gedächtnissauffassen nicht an der Stelle. Mein Vortrag ist eine stetig fortschreitende Untersuchung, der man mit immer gleicher Teilnahme folgen muss, um den Faden nicht zu verlieren. Hauptsächlich ist es mir darum zu tun, Sie auf den rechten Standpunkt zu setzen.]" (*Grundlegung*, 120)

one may no longer wonder why there is reason and not unreason.⁹³ Why there is something rather than nothing would remain incomprehensible. If the identity of the system were original, then whence the difference, novelty, supplementation and excess with which being is so undeniably infected?

If evil is not just an alteration or privation of the totality but an excess resulting in dissonance and disjointure, then the recognition of evil highlights the genuine insight into freedom and accordingly positive philosophy's true beginning. This beginning indicates ontological difference because it antecedes being and is not reducible to a ground for beings or a ground for the system. Ontological difference is then the recognition that freedom is not the self-mediation of the system by means of its own self-alienation but rather the recognition that freedom predates the system and is not to be mediated, sublated or assumed into the system. Freedom is the indivisible remainder never mediated back into identity, system or being. In short, freedom is that which can never presence. It, therefore, is also that which possibilizes novelty. If history is only the unfolding of what was enclosed in the One, then real novelty is excluded insofar as only what was always already there, always already im-plicit in the beginning, can presence, show itself or be ex-plicated. Real novelty does not consist in emanation, but in a generative creation.

Being itself, *das Seiende* (not to be confused with *ein Seiendes*), from the view of actuality appears as *das Seinkönnende* (that which can be) (II/4, 338, "Andere Deduktion") but this is its determination when questioned as a ground for the being of beings, i.e. that is an *a posteriori* and not an *a priori* determination (a determination from the absolute *prius*) of Being itself.

If all other sciences, given they themselves seem to take note of Being, in the end busy themselves only with being, or at least not with Being itself, philosophy thus distinguishes itself from all other sciences by asking just

93 Schelling stumbles over himself to place freedom prior to and as the condition of the system, prior to and as the condition of reason. Why is there reason rather than not? On account of unprethinkable freedom! It is for this reason that Schelling does not fulfill or complete the project of German Idealism but rather surpasses it. This is true at least if Jens Halfwassen's estimation of the project of German Idealism is correct. He writes, "German Idealism is since Kant essentially idealism of freedom. ... Freedom is thus actually the pure spontaneity of reason itself. [Der deutsche Idealismus ist seit Kant wesentlich Idealismus der Freiheit. ... Freedom ist so eigentlich die reine Spontaneität der Vernunft selber.]" ("Freiheit", *Pensées*, 461).

about what Is (not about being), by being science of the *Wesen* (because we call "*Wesen*" that which Is or Being itself)...to begin philosophy from being, means to virtually turn it upside down, means to damn itself nevermore to penetrate through to freedom (II/2, 34, "Monotheismus")⁹⁴

Schelling's late philosophy questions Being for its meaning and truth and not as the being of beings. Schelling may do this because he begins with freedom and not a blind will,⁹⁵ blind $\phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$ or identity. The late philosophy does not commence with a self-same acting as *Träger* (the carrier) of being as its consequent. The relation is not one of *antecedens* and *consequens*. Rather two types of difference are radically thought: 1) ontological difference, as Being cannot be mediated and subsumed into being and 2) Difference itself, insofar as freedom is not *a* freedom, a self-same possessing the property of freedom, but is that which has not yet become identical even with itself. More radically spoken, there is not yet a "self" which could become identified with itself.

Freedom, the beginning of positive philosophy, is not an emanation but an acting, not a beginning that *bewegt sich* (moves itself) but one that *handelt* (acts). Not all movement is transitory, e.g. some movements are noetic but not real happenings.⁹⁶ As Schelling argues, "And so if the time

94 "Wenn alle andern Wissenschaften, gesetzt selbst sie scheinen sich mit dem Seyenden abzugeben, am Ende nur mit dem Seyn, oder wenigstens nicht mit dem Seyenden selbst, sich beschäftigen, so unterscheidet sich die Philosophie eben dadurch von allen andern Wissenschaften, daß sie nach dem fragt: was Ist (nicht nach dem Seyn), daß sie Wissenschaft des Wesens (denn Wesen nennen wir das, was Ist, oder das Seyende selbst)...Die Philosophie vom Seyn anfangen, heißt sie geradezu auf den Kopf stellen, heißt sich verdammen, nun und mimmermehr zur Freiheit durchzudringen." Note how Schelling's use of *Seyendes* and *Sein* stands in direct contrast to Heidegger's use and even his own in other places. The meaning of the terms fluctuate in Schelling. One can only grasp the meaning within the context. Also note that *Wesen*, while often meaning essence or *Was*, here actually signifies that prior to this – Being itself.

95 Schelling often uses the rhetoric of will, writing, "That I postulate such a willing – albeit not in the system but before the system – cannot be conspicuous because philosophy itself is already, according to its name, something primally willed. [Dass ich ein solches Wollen postuliere – jedoch nicht im System, sondern vor dem System – kann nicht auffallen, da die Philosophie selbst schon dem Namen nach etwas ursprünglich Gewolltes ist.]" (*Grundlegung*, 99). A sharp distinction should nevertheless be drawn between will, freedom and act/decision.

96 On this point note also Kierkegaard's comment concerning logical movement, so-called: "Every movement, if for the moment one wishes to use this expression, is an immanent movement, which in a profound sense is no movement at all...- Nevertheless precisely in order to make something come about in logic, the neg-

of the world is the whole time, nothing else remains than to regard this world, including the time belonging to it, as a mere emanation of the highest eternal idea" (*Grundlegung*, 88). Consequently, if being results from an act and not emanation, if being results from freedom, then freedom is never sublated into its own process but excluded as an indivisible remainder, then there is a time other than the world's time. In other words there is more than our present time but a Past which never "was" but always "has been" and perhaps a Future that is always to come. The present time is a quantitative passing of "nows" but freedom's act was not a present that fell into the past but is a Past that was never Present. The progressive method of positive philosophy contains all three tensions of time, while the regressive method of negative philosophy operates in a timeless now (*Grounding*, 73). Negative philosophy consists of eternal truths and eternal essences. Positive philosophy has real movement, real progression and real transition, therefore also recognizing the transitory, i.e. real temporality. Only with real temporality are there real change and a real future. Only with a real future is there a hope for real novelty and meaningful existence, i.e. existence which "makes a difference." It makes something different, i.e. something novel, and to be meaningful, to matter, means to make difference. Only real temporality can hope for real meaning, novelty and change instead of the incessant repetition of the same. The Present time is a meaningless, quantitative repetition of nows but if being is the result of a *Handlung*, of a clearing, then this time is not the only one but there is also a qualitative time, a time of real difference and not one of monotonous recurrence. Past, Present and Future would then be qualitatively and not just quantitatively distinct. Only decision and deed though can beget a real happening, a genuinely novel commencement and not just the next phase in a ubiquitous process.

Negative philosophy conceived freedom instead of having it as an indivisible remainder not to be systematically incorporated into the totality and yet inceptive of the totality. Negative philosophy rests not on decision and deed and is thus a system and totality because it comes to a close, but it is also not a system insofar as it does not assert (*behaupt*) anything (II/3, 133, "Begründung"). Positive philosophy is not a system insofar as it is open-ended, but it is insofar as it emphatically asserts something about being. Heidegger, who wrote about Schelling's *Freiheitschrift*

ative becomes something more; it becomes that which brings forth the opposition, not a negation but a contraposition" (*Anxiety*, 13).

but never his late philosophy, intimates that Schelling's failure lay in his inability to come to grips with the relation between system and freedom.⁹⁷ Heidegger gives six characteristics of a system and Schelling's late work fits none of them (*Schelling's*, 34).⁹⁸ There is not a system of freedom but *from* freedom. Actual human freedom and system must necessarily co-exist, lest freedom become the parallelism of free, yet absolute and disparate, singulars. That, however, would be an irrational pluralism (*ibid.* 49, 56) because then every entity would be a parallel universe unto itself, unable to touch other universes. Such parallel universes are of course unthinkable. A free being without a system is an island. Human freedom is somehow a breach from the system but also somehow intimate to the system. Freedom itself is completely prior to the system and to all grounding. Such a radical thinking of freedom was "perhaps philosophy's first attempt at thinking an *Abgrund*..." insofar as the origin is thought "inceptually and not conceptually" (*Epoché*, "Reading in *Ereignis*" Hellmers, 142). The origination of the system from freedom is where God first enters the picture. The relation between God and the system/creation will

97 One could also argue that Kierkegaard, despite his initial exuberance, grew dissatisfied with the late Schelling because he attempted to overturn the system from within (i.e. by understanding it and its limitations) whereas Kierkegaard simply rejected the system as indifferent, i.e. on existential and non-philosophic grounds. This is Heidegger's contention at least (*Schelling's*, 24).

Heidegger proposes that the system failed in Schelling's late philosophy because ground and existence grew farther apart (*ibid.* 161). In place of any possible mediation betwixt the two an unbridgeable breach arose. Should not this particular failure of the system be read as the successful advent of a philosophizing surpassing presence? In referring to Schelling's period of silence, i.e. his work after 1809, he says that Schelling was unable to bring this work to fruition because it was on the cusp of something completely new. Heidegger further remarks that whoever could give reason for this breakdown would become the founder of a new beginning of Western philosophy (*ibid.* 3). That this new dawn did not occur in Schelling himself seems more suspect than Heidegger would have thought or cared to admit.

98 The most relevant are the first four:

1. The predominance of the mathematical as the criterion of knowledge.
2. The self-founding of knowledge in the sense of certainty over truth.
3. The founding of certainty as the self-certainty of the "I think."
4. Thinking, *ratio*, as the court of judgment for the essential determination of Being.

The first and fourth conflict with Schelling's relegation of reason or the *Was* to a subordinate position. The second and third conflict with his insistence that the proof is never to be closed and definitive and that truth is ascribed to Being and not to the "I think."

be the content of the subsequent two chapters. The system is the creation that arises from decision and deed, just as decision and deed are the indispensable conditions for real happenings.

10 Experience: *Aesthesis*

Schelling purports that because only decision and deed can enact a real happening, only these two can ground real experience. This is why Schelling also refers to his positive philosophy as a “metaphysical empiricism” (II/3, 114, “Begründung”), adding one more caveat to scientific or abductive empiricism. Should experience be explained by means of the operation of human faculties, e.g. the understanding, *à la* Kant, then the presence of the ego and its faculties remains unexplained. Such experience is also, insofar as it is mediated through the categories of the understanding, a product of cognition or reflective judgment. What is desired precedes cognition, conceptualization and reflective judgment. Kant enmeshed experience so thoroughly in the faculties designed to ensure its possibility that the ‘x’ of experience, the *Ding-an-sich*, ultimately became excluded from possible experience. One must begin with experience before reflective judgment and cognition. Experience need not be made possible but one must begin with it as actual and efficacious if it is to be there at all. In other words, one must not begin first with a subject whose faculties mediate to itself objects of experience but experience itself must be thought prior to the subject to whom this experience will be attributed.⁹⁹ Perhaps the primary achievement of the First Part of Martin Buber’s *Ich und Du* (*I and Thou*) consists in showing that an encounter/touching precedes “experience,” i.e. there is an *aesthesis* before judg-

99 Žižek lucidly illustrated this point when he wrote:

“Here Schelling is the exact opposite of Kant: Reason is originally ‘ecstatic’, outside itself; it never begins in itself; its activity is never founded in itself, but always triggered by some traumatic encounter, some collision which provides the impulse to the thought – this collision, this encounter with the real, distinguishes an actual experience from the mere possibility of experience. On the contrary, Kant, like a good compulsive neurotic, proceeds in the opposite direction: he sets up the network of the conditions of possible experience in order to make sure that the actual experience of the real, the encounter with the thing, will never take place, so that everything the subject will effectively encounter will be the already gentrified-domesticated reality of representations...” (*Indivisible*, 74–75)

ment, prior to a judging subject. The I-Thou relation is not simply present where there are already fully developed subjects but it is present in the encounter with all of being. It is an affectivity preceding the experience of the properties “of” beings for the experience of beings themselves. There is not yet a genitive; this is only a later development because there is not yet an ego that can possess and use beings and their properties. According to Buber the primordial *Urerlebnis* (primally lived experience) – as opposed to *Erfahrung* (experience)¹⁰⁰ – occurs prior to the actual world, i. e. prior to the experience of a being with a conceptual essence, a *Was*. Originally, receptivity does not occur through the senses; it is not originally a re-cognition of a sensible object, which presupposes a thinking, judging subject. Receptivity, first and foremost, prods thought by dehiscing an opaque density in order that a reflective subject may emerge.

Schelling says, “This experiential is decision and deed, which exceed the world; everything experiential comes only from decision and deed”¹⁰¹ (*System*, 75). Insofar as this is not an experience of an inert fact but of a decision and deed, this experiential is never neutral but always imbued with meaning.¹⁰² To experience freedom, will, decision and/or deed as

100 Schelling retains the rhetoric of *Erfahrung* rather than employing *Erlebnis*.

101 “Dieses Erfahrungsmäßige ist der Entschluß und die That, die sich über die Welt hinaus erstreckt; denn alles Erfahrungsmäßige kommt nur von Entschluß und That.”

102 This suggestion resembles Heidegger’s *formale Anzeige* (formal indication) in *Phänomenologie der Religion*. Phenomenology is not concerned with content/material essences but with relations or enactments. Foucault’s contention then that there are no things themselves, i. e. phenomena, becomes immaterial. A given essence very well may be historically relative and historically determined but one’s relation, i. e. one’s pre-cognitive, aesthetic response, is not. Even Wittgenstein reveals the possibility of an unmediated experience of the horrible without any prior explanation. See *Remarks On Frazer’s Golden Bough*. Ed. Rush Rhees. Transl. by A.C. Miles. England: The Brynmill Press Limited, 1979. pgs. 14–17. “When I see someone being killed-is it simply what I see that makes an impression on me or does this come with the hypothesis that someone is being killed here?” (17). *Bekümmern* (concern), *Sorge* (care) or fundamental concern (Paul Tillich) all have an object, perhaps historically relative ones, but the analysis of this human phenomenon can still be executed irrespective of the content of the concern. The argument here demands a causal efficacy prior to reflective judgment. This causal efficacy lies in an *aesthesis* or *Urerlebnis*. The other alternative separates experience from facts, creating insurmountable difficulties for epistemology and causation.

Also, Schelling’s contention that Christ himself is the revelation is not a reduction of revelation to a historical content alone. The “how” is inherent in the “what.” Without the new relation, without the experience of a move from es-

neutral would be comical. Buchheim elaborates upon what could be seen as Schelling's version of an *Urerlebnis* or fundamental *aesthesis* of the world before the experience of properties, i.e. conceptual determinations (Buchheim, 141). To experience the world as grace or to the contrary as malice is to experience it *per posterius* as the result of a will. Only an empty, neutral, comical, non-aesthetic could avoid experiencing the world qualitatively, i.e. merely analytically rather than as a Thou. If the former experience is even possible – and that is quite dubious – then it would have to be the experience of the world not as the result of a decisive act of freedom but as either the mechanical unfolding of the Idea or the immediate bodying forth of φύσις. In both cases freedom and therewith the possibility of not willing, i.e. of not presencing, are excluded. Schelling's perpetual proof *per posterius* does not therefore simply assert that because there is being and because it continues to subsist without falling into oblivion, then there must be a free cause supporting it. Instead scientific empiricism also considers what has here been called the *aesthesis* of the actuality of the world. *How* something is experienced is as important as *what* is experienced. Experience is never the neutral accumulation of *whats* but always has a character. For instance, the pitch of a voice may be low or high but it is also charming, eloquent or repugnant. Experience is not accumulated and collected by a neutral subjectivity but subjectivity is always affected and reciprocally determined by what is experienced, i.e. by *how* it is experienced. Schelling is not a subject-object thinker insofar as no subject represents its object unaffectedly. The object efficaciously acts upon the subject before the subject can represent it and judge it. The subject is never a pure subject unaffectedly representing an object but it is always a concrete and individual person and never an untouched transcendental ego. Being always relates to human being as concrete individual and never as a vacuously representing subject.

Regressive philosophy experiences things and seeks their ground or cause but never their meaning. Negative philosophy remains always hypothetical without a relation to the actuality of the actual (Buchheim,

transgement (sin) to reunion (justification), revelation becomes null and irrelevant. This is why revelation cannot be a teaching but only the Christ himself, not Jesus of Nazareth but the Christ. "Jesus" refers to a historical personage. The epithet "Christ" indicates a relation of transparency between the historical personage and God. "Christ" indicates relation. It indicates not a "what" but a "how." Concrete experiences are never merely subjective nor naked historical occurrences but mythic experiences. The fact/value distinction cannot be any more strongly repudiated than it is with Schelling.

142).¹⁰³ The sense of something as being good or bad relates not just to its essence but its actuality. *Aesthesis* does not recognize a fact/value distinction. That is only a later, high-end abstraction. The abstract triangle of geometry is neutral but the triangle now seen in the clouds is beautiful, yet their essential properties are the same. The decisiveness of freedom to act is perpetually proved (or disproved) by the experience of its effects but how the effects affect one determines how the will that willed them is experienced and interpreted, i.e. as benevolent or malicious, divine or atheistic. Moreover, how an effect affects one is by no means left to one's own whims. One cannot choose to experience all things as beautiful anymore than one can willingly make one's beloved strike one as ugly. The "how" of experience is not left to human caprice but comes to one from without; it is a transcendence and not solely a mood (though this plays a role) that determines the character of experience.

The unprethinkable Naked Existent, i.e. the *Daß es ist*, is never in doubt for positive philosophy.¹⁰⁴ What stands under question is what this primal means, i.e. has willed. This is concisely expressed in the French expression, "*vouloir-dire*," as this is how one says "to mean," yet it also contains the verb "*vouloir*," translated as "to want" or "to will." The unprethinkable *Daß* is not questioned but its meaning. The meaning of its decision, *die Lichtung* (lighting or clearing), is not closeable but always subject to further revision, hence the open-ended proof in light of

103 Remember that the basic difference between Schelling's scientific empiricism and Peirce's abduction – also called "retroduction" and "hypothetic inference" – was that the latter is hypothetical while the former accounts for both the "how" of experience and its transcendent locus. On a related note, Emile Fackenheim suggests that negative philosophy founds positive philosophy hypothetically while positive philosophy founds negative philosophy (and itself) actually (*God Within*, 117). Positive philosophy, however, cannot begin with a hypothesis in an attempt to regressively, i.e. *retroductively*, ground some fact. The hypothesis is not then questioned for itself but only as an explanation for the posterior. Positive philosophy questions from the absolute *prius* forth. Accordingly, it is assumption/hypothesis free insofar as it does not posit any hypotheses in order to regressively account for the posterior. Being is not questioned in order to explain beings but is probed for its own meaning even if this must be executed *per posterius*. For an application of Peirce's method see his "A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God" in Peirce, C. S., *Peirce on Signs: Writings on Semiotic*, James Hoopes (ed.), University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, NC, (pgs. 260–278), 1994. This argument is clearly regressive, positing God via an inference to the best possible explanation as a ground or first cause of the world.

104 As Schelling rightly observes, the difficulty consists not in justifying this departure point, the *Daß*, but in actually departing from it (I/10, 211, "Vorrede").

further experience of Being, in light of the fact that Being is not given in one fell swoop but has a history. The meaning of Being cannot be known apart from its actuality, i. e. its historicity. One must consider more than the historiographical accounts of recorded history, but the history of the experience of Being, namely *how* Being has been given and not just *what* it has historically given. Just as the character/meaning of a person is deciphered by means of their past, not just what one has done but *how* it has affected others and not just what one does but *how* one does it, likewise with Being. Being must fundamentally be experienced not as It but as Thou, lest one wish to exclude from the start that Being has a meaning. Meaning is always something inner; as Schelling wrote, "Will one say something like: The object of philosophy is the fact of the world? What in the world is this fact?...*The true fact is something inner...*"¹⁰⁵ (*System*, 86).¹⁰⁶ Negative philosophy derives the pure *Daß* by abstracting from and questioning beings irrespective of their actuality. Even if it could know that they are actual, the actuality of the actual would remain unimportant. The question of the meaning of Being is then lost in favor of the search for the necessary conditions of the possibility of the world.

105 "Wird man etwa sagen: der Gegenstand der Philosophie sei die Thatsache der Welt? Was ist denn in der Welt die Thatsache?...*die wahre Thatsache ist etwas Innerliches...*"

106 Schelling elaborates on this point, indicating how the object of a battle is not in the trenches but the mind of the general or how the truth or falsity of a book is not in its letters but its spirit (*System*, 86). The fact of the world is not the object of philosophy but its meaning. "The work of philosophy is to convey the inner sense of that which in the world is the true fact. [Dasjenige was in der Welt die wahre Thatsache ist und ihren inneren Sinn auszumitteln, ist das Werk der Philosophie.]" (87). When Schelling asks why there is something rather than nothing, the emphasis is on the meaning of what is there. This question does not seek an indifferent ground for beings but the meaning of their being. Hans Michael Baumgartner writes:

"The positive philosophy asks therefore not after the facticity of the actual in general but after the determinate reason of this actuality: 'Why is something at all? Why not nothing?'...if that which *is* is the consequence of a will or the mere emanation of a general world reason, if with this a determinate, attached intention can be thought or not. *What* something is is by this means in no way at all touched upon. [Die positive Philosophie fragt also nicht nach der Faktizität des Wirklichen überhaupt, sondern nach dem bestimmten Grund dieser Wirklichkeit: 'Warum ist überhaupt etwas? warum ist nicht nichts?'...ob das, was *ist*, Folge eines Willens oder bloß Emanation einer allgemeinen Weltvernunft ist, ob damit eine bestimmte Absicht verbunden gedacht werden kann oder nicht. *Was* etwas ist, wird dadurch unmittelbar gar nicht tangiert.]" (*Friedrich*, 217)

Negative philosophy asks simply, “*If* the world is, then what are the necessary conditions that must have subsisted?” Positive philosophy asks, “*Given* that the world is, what is its *inner* meaning?” Philosophy as a striving for wisdom, i.e. the inner, must be a historical (not historiographical), positive philosophy. The external is an inert It but the inner is only in indexical reference, i.e. in an intimate I-thou relation or experience as *aesthesis*.¹⁰⁷

Positive philosophy is able to begin by itself independently of negative philosophy because the aesthetic moment is more fundamental than experience as cognitive judgment. If positive philosophy were only possible as a mediation from the negative, then all philosophy would be regressive and Being could never be questioned for its own meaning but only in order to found the being of beings. Schelling, on the contrary, asserts, “...(T)his wholly free philosophy, *truthfully commencing from the beginning*, has nowhere any necessity to consider empirical, unfree being” (*Grundlegung*, 391).¹⁰⁸ Metaphysical empiricism is an autonomous means of apprehending truth for Schelling (Beach, 173), a scientific empiricism because it does not rest on the immediacy of intuition but has a real methodological movement.¹⁰⁹ Metaphysical empiricism is positive philosophy because it is mediated not through concepts but actual history and questions Being for itself and from itself. Positive philosophy is not a philosophy of history but historical philosophy. Positive philosophy is systematic but not bound to the system insofar as it acknowledges that which is never sublated into the system – σοφία or the inner – and its proof is conveyed via the outer – history, particularly mythology and revelation – without being reducible to the outer in its profanity. Only positive philosophy can simultaneously affirm the Absolute as universal and

107 Buchheim, as mentioned, lucidly illustrates the aesthetic character of experience in Schelling but the pitfall of his article is that he seems to allow an unmediated recognition or experience of the *Daß* as completely prior to its effects. Rather, the willed, historical, experiential effects are *simultaneous* with the recognition of the meaning of the deed of the *Daß* of pure freedom, just as one does not mystically sense a person and his will apart from what she has already willed.

108 “...diese völlig freie, *wahrhaft von vorn anfangende Philosophie* hat überall keine Notwendigkeit, auf jenes empirische, unfreie Sein Rücksicht zu nehmen.”

109 One will remember that while Schelling criticizes Böhme for being unscientific because lacking a methodology, he does praise his concrete experience of God. The nature of this experience itself demanded scientific analysis (Beach, 172). The explication of Man as the end of creation and the understanding of Being fully explains this possibility. This is to be found in the following two chapters.

singular without excluding or undermining the legitimacy of the particularity and concreteness of the phenomenon. Only positive philosophy can acknowledge a Past and Future that do not appear simply as book-ends for the Present series of time. Positive philosophy concerns itself not with the pure *Daß* – pure and static freedom – but with its deed – the *Handlung* of *das Unvordenkliche*. Positive philosophy's object is not freedom at rest but rather freedom's act. In the beginning was the deed.

Part II
The Past:
Eternity

Chapter 3

Timelessness: The Potencies at Rest

Being is not a characteristic of identity; identity is a characteristic of Being. Identity is essential and general while Being is something individual. Is individuality a characteristic of or a derivation from the general, or is the general a characteristic/predicate of individuality? Schelling attributes to Aristotle the insight that only the individual exists and that the general is only a property of the individual (II/1, 588, "Quelle"). Moreover, he only attributes understanding to Kant when the latter says that the idea simply does not exist. Nothing general exists, only the individual, and, accordingly, the general essence (reason herself, the totality of possibility, the absolute concept, *der Inbegriff* (embodied concept) only exists if Being is first the absolute individual (*absolutes Einzelwesen*). In response to the retort that the mere Individual destitute of generality yields no science, Schelling asks why there should be science or knowing at all (*ibid.* 586). This, for him, is the same as: "Why is there something rather than nothing, reason rather than unreason?" There is indeed science and knowledge, in short, cognoscibility, but the relation between this as something generic and the individual is synonymous with the relation between thinking and Being.¹

1 Schelling often states the co-belonging of Being and thinking in theological terms as Giorgio Agamben attests, writing of "the distinction between *theologia* and *oikonomia*, between the being of God and his activity, to which Schelling alludes..." (*Kingdom*, 5). Concerning this distinction between being and praxis in God, Schelling clearly grounds God's being in praxis, His nature in His action, theology in His economy. Being is not substance but praxis. Schelling's task is to think the relation between God's transcendent sovereignty with His governance in the world through God's economy, i. e. praxis. Agamben affirms this reading of Schelling when he writes, "It is crucial that Schelling thinks his philosophy of revelation as a theory of divine economy, which introduces personality and action into the being of God, and thus renders him 'Lord of being'" (*ibid.* 6). This next two chapters will serve as a defense of this interpretation insofar as this chapter concludes that Being is commencement or willing,

1 Parmenides' Statement

Schelling explicitly grapples with Parmenides' statement that thinking is what Being is, and he is decisive on this point: Being always occupies the place of primacy over thinking or, in other words, there is not a path from the general to the individual but only from the individual to the general. Reason, the concept, knowledge, science and theory always occupy the subordinate position. To ask how the general could actualize itself and make itself individual and particular is to ask how, why and to what end the One would ever depart from itself. To this question there is no answer. The problematic is instead how the absolute Individual makes itself intelligible, how it becomes thinkable and conceivable, in short, how it manifests itself. The question is not how the general develops but how the individual is unveiled, i.e. revealed. The absolute Individual, the unprethinkable *Daß*, enters the realm of intelligibility and thus thinkability, the realm of reason and possible acknowledgment, by realizing itself *as* an all-encompassing essence (*das alles begreifende Wesen*) (II/1, 588, "Quelle"). *Praxis always holds priority over theory.*

Parmenides' statement indicates that what bears absolutely no relation to thinking truly is nought. Even the pure "Is," the pure *Daß*, must have a relation to cognoscibility. Being itself does not have being outside its cognoscibility, i.e. outside its concept, but this does not at all mean that Being is a product of, development from or reducible to its concept. Being itself is *as* concept and the concept only is *as* something *supervenant* or *accrued* (II/2, 31, "Monotheismus"). The concept and Being are indeed together but priority always remains on the side of Being as anterior and the posterior, as something accrued, indicates simply *how* Being itself is, its *modus operandi*; it is only *as* concept. Being presides as concept but in its anteriority it is not the result of this accrued superveniency. Schelling's version of Parmenides' principle is that where there is Being there is conceptuality, but without being consonant. They are not properly two but bi-une (*zweierlei*) (II/2, 260) while Being itself, in its anteriority, is not yet the One (*das Eine*) but monotonous and irrespective (*einerlei*) (II/2, 260, "Mythologie"). Schelling often employs a very unfortunate rhetoric, asserting that Being is "in" the concept (II/2, 31, "Monotheismus") but what he rather should have said was that the concept insists in Being or is only where Being already is. What Schelling

i.e. praxis, and the following shows how God elevates Himself as sovereign exception, i.e. Lord of Being.

nevertheless means is that Being (*das unvordenkliche Daß*) does not exist outside of its manner of existing, i.e. as some sort of objective reality posited in addition to its concept, as if it would be the consequence of its concept as is customarily understood by the ontological argument. The concept is not yet a concept *of* something but Being exists *as* concept, i.e. conceptually.

Schelling references the infamous quotation in the 6th Book of Plato's *Republic* where Plato says that the highest is not οὐσία, *Wesen* or *Was* but precedes these in worth² (II/1, 588, "Quelle"). Being itself is neither separable from its concept nor reducible to it. It is distinguishable from it, insofar as it is higher than, more valuable than and precedes the latter, but it cannot exist in any other way than *as* concept, even when it may manifest itself by surpassing its own conceptuality. Being itself is therefore always pre-eminent and supereminent insofar as it is exalted in dignity and rank while the concept is always only super-imminent, i.e. immanently residing where Being already is and not vice versa. By existing as concept Being makes itself thinkable but Being never existed differently than as concept and thus never beforehand. Being itself presides and holds sway over itself as concept. This is its essence, *Wesen* or *Was*; this is how it *wes* (holds sway/presides). *Wesen*, thought transitively as a verb, means not yet essence but rather to deploy an essence. This holding sway or deployment, however, was never enacted once upon a time, not even as a happening within eternity, but Being's holding sway over itself as one and the same (*einerlei*) with thinking presides from eternity. It is that which even eternity must presuppose as an indispensable moment. This is the final frontier, the border beyond which one may not transgress, namely the jointure of Being and thinking. This conformity of Being and thinking, however, is neither reciprocal nor dominated by thinking but Being always predominates and is pre-eminent. Not because there is thinking is there Being but because Being is thinking or cognoscibility is. Not because there is thinking is there something rather than nothing but rather on account of unprethinkable Being. The two are inseparable but that does not preclude that Being occupies a place of dignity and priority over and against thinking.

Schelling's interpretation of Parmenides' statement also constitutes the solution to the medieval debate between voluntarists and intellectualists. The conformity between Being and thinking can also be thought as

2 Levinas also relies heavily upon this phrase in Plato's *Republic* in order to argue that the Good is beyond or otherwise than Being.

the conformity between willing and knowing. Knowledge is traditionally characterized as some type of coincidence between subject and object. A resting will, e.g. Being before it has manifested itself, is equivalent with a resting knowing because before the will wills it is as if both subject and object for itself (Schelling, *Initia*, 24). The subjective impetus to will is not yet distinct from the object to be willed. Thinking, in Parmenides' statement, is here replaced with knowing. What has remained unquestioned in this explication of Parmenides' statement as a conformity between willing and knowing is the equivocation of Being with willing. To say that Being and thinking are one and the same, in the monotonous sense, has not yet entailed that they have become *actually* separate and distinguishable. The analysis has still not progressed from Being itself or the unprethinkable *Daß*. Properly speaking the analysis is still before time, history and even eternity. The uniformity of Being and thinking is not a coincidence of opposites but only the determination of the *Daß*, the presupposition of even eternity. What or who then is this *Daß* that will hold sway as a unity of thinking and Being?

2 The Different and the Identical: Duas and Monas

The *Daß* precedes all potency. The unprethinkable *Daß* is not yet an entity with a concept, not yet being and therefore not yet God. The original is the eternally mobile, never a self-same or, as Schelling terms it, "eternal Nature itself [*die ewige Natur selbst*]" (*Grundlegung*, 324). "Nature" in this context has nothing to do with something's essence. Eternal Nature itself may in fact be that without which God could not be God but it is certainly neither God Himself nor an essential determination of God. The pure *Daß* precedes even God whilst remaining that without which God could not be. Schelling, with reference to the Pythagoreans, refers to this as the amphibolic "Duas,"³ "the ambivalent Nature [*die zweideutige Natur (natura anceps)*]" (II/2, 142, "Mythologie"). This Duas is neither number nor dyadic relation but an undefined Duas, an *aoristos duas*, which is not yet a synthetic unity. The Duas is the Same that is never the self-same, unicity that is never *the* determinate One, Difference itself that

3 Schelling employs the term "Duas" in order to relate his discussion to the Pythagoreans; however, something like "the Multiple" or "the Plethora" would be equally appropriate. The point is not two as opposed to one but multiplicity in contradistinction to singular identity.

never bears determinate differences. Schelling himself indicates, the Duas of Pythagoras is not yet anything distinct in which difference, border and the possibility of knowledge are present, but those are in fact what are in need of explanation (*System*, 98). The Duas is the non-uni-form (i.e. not one because formless/uninformed), noncontinuous, erratic, unstable and mobile, “das Unstete” (*ibid.* 132). Furthermore, this is not only nothing sensible but not even something spiritual. As both A and B, B and $\neg B$, as that which never stands still and is never permanent (Schelling, *Initia*, 17), the Duas can best be described as pure Difference. The Duas or duplicity precedes the Monas. In order to grasp it one must abandon everything, including God and being(s) (*ibid.* 18). As duplicitous the Duas is simultaneously God and that which is not God, being and non-being; it is non-nature that once posited as Past, as ground or subject, can become nature. The Duas can always be other; it can even become other than a Duas, namely the Monas.

Difference itself can precede synthetic identification but *radical* separation cannot precede its unicity. Synthetic identification already implies a two, beings rather than Being, something rather than nothing. To begin with Difference is not to begin atomistically with a plurality nor in parallelism. There is an “identity,” so-called, even of Difference itself. Deleuze helpfully writes:

There is no doubt that *there is* an identity belonging to the precursor, and a resemblance between the series which it causes to communicate. This ‘there is’, however, remains perfectly indeterminate. Are identity and resemblance here the preconditions of the functioning of this dark precursor, or are they, on the contrary, its effects? (*Difference*, 119)

Rather than a plurality of differents, Difference, for Deleuze, constitutes a manifold or multiplicity as opposed to a plurality. He writes, “‘Multiplicity’, which replaces the one no less than the multiple, is the pure substantive, substance itself” (*ibid.* 182).⁴ The multiplicity of Difference is not a mixture of abstracted concepts; it is not a chaotic confusion of disparates. Multiplicity, rather than excluding a pre-cursor, demands something that would hold it together rather than consisting in disparateness. Schelling speaks of the ocean as the indeterminate precursor holding all in a multiplicity but not in disparateness. He says the same ocean that is at rest could excite itself into a fury in the future. The still ocean equals the ocean that could raise itself into a frenzy, i.e. even into its opposite,

4 For more on this see pgs. 182–184 in *Difference and Repetition*.

the not-still ocean (*Urfassung*, 46). The ocean is that non-identical that is potentially both A and -A without ceasing to be the precursor of both. The ocean is as if an abyss, neither the composition of drops nor something apart from them. The drops in the ocean are not yet disparate but the ocean, as abyss, is multiplicity. Just because no drops, *as* drops, are in the ocean does not preclude that drops could arise from the ocean. Drops from the ocean are not the showing of what was always already in the ocean but a novelty not precluded by the indeterminate ocean. In like manner, the *Daß*, as prior to all potency, nevertheless does not preclude the possibility of potency, of *das Seinkönnende* (that which can be). *Das Seinkönnende*, however, is not already in *das Unvordenkliche* as something potent by nature just waiting to show itself but it comes to the former as something supervenient or accrued, as something supplemental and novel. If *das Seinkönnende* is, then it can only come to be as something original, not as a copy of a model, not as *simulacra*, but rather as the original model, as *das Urbild* (archetype or prototype). It must come to be not as the instantiation of a prior possibility but rather as the supervenient supplement whose possibility only first appears after its actuality. It must be the first drop distinguished from the abysmal ocean that in and of itself is bereft of any determinate potency. The unprethinkable is akin to the ocean that is always the Same but not yet a One, ground, subject or being. If potency was already in the *Daß*, then it would not be un-*pre*-thinkable because its possibility could be thought in advance of its actuality. The *Daß* is then ironically the potentless (but certainly far from impotent) potency of the first possibility (*Urmöglichkeit*, *Urbild*), of the creation as the future being. Potency is not yet determinately in it but also not yet excluded from it. The first drop is not in the ocean but the ocean does not exclude this drop either. The *Daß* is Difference without distinction. It is not a ground because a ground always bears the potency of what follows as consequent, the seed waiting to blossom. Yet, there is something rather than nullity and so one must affirm the *Daß* as pure *Können*⁵ before it is *das Seinkönnende*. If it were not even pure *Können*, then nullity would reign/hold sway/preside, nothing rather

5 This word does not have an English equivalent. It is the infinitive of “can.” The word “*das Seinkönnende*,” is the nominalization of the present participle of the modal verb “can,” here modifying the infinitive “to be.” It can be and yet is also already in act, i.e. presently efficacious as that which can be. It thus signifies actual potency, unlike pure *Können*, signifying only possible and undetermined potency.

than something. Difference itself “lets difference prevail” (Warnek, “Bas-tard,” 258). If the unprethinkable were not a Duas, not Difference itself, not the Multiple, but simply static nothingness, then actual differences could never be. The *Ungrund* is not static, dense and opaque, but it is “purely *receptive* of difference, yet without determining difference and opposition as such” (*ibid.* 259). The *Ungrund*,⁶ pure *Können*, Duas, is not at all negation or lack (Schelling, II/1, 293–294, “Darstellung”)⁷ but an excess, not as stasis but as life. It is the Multiple. By what means can or did Duas become the Monas, namely a ground or potency?

The positive in positive philosophy, as seen at the end of the preceding chapter, is not the unprethinkable as the absolute *prius* from which one *could* commence but rather the first commencement, the first and *actual* departure from this *prius*. The fact that there is something rather than nothing evidences that something commenced from the absolute *prius*. Freedom consists in commencement. That philosophy begins and ends with freedom is a conviction Schelling never ceased to hold from at least 1809 until his death. The positive object of positive philosophy is freedom. Being itself is eternal and unbounded freedom, freedom that is not *eins* (synthetically one, a self-same) but *einerlei* (consonance or monotony). This freedom, however, only becomes actual, distinct and particular when it acts. Schelling argues that one may only attain the *idea* of eternal freedom in the denial and abandonment of everything, in an act of *Gelassenheit* (letting-be, releasement) similar to Heidegger

6 The exposition of Schelling’s *Ungrund* bears striking similarities with Deleuzian Difference. For now note anticipatorily Deleuze’s remarks on Schelling in relation to Difference and the *Ungrund*.

“Hegel criticized Schelling for having surrounded himself with an indifferent night in which all cows are black. What a presentiment of the differences swarming behind us, however, when in the weariness and despair of our thought without image we murmur “the cows”, “they exaggerate”, etc.; how differentiated and differentiating is this blackness, even though these differences remain unidentified and barely or non-individuated; how many differences and singularities are distributed like so many aggressions, how many simulacra emerge in this night... The ultimate, external illusion of representation is this illusion that results from all its internal illusions – namely, that groundlessness should lack differences, when in fact it swarms with them” (*Difference*, 277)

7 See II/1, 294, “Darstellung” where Schelling laments that he ever conceived of pure *Können* or non-being as a lack or deficiency. Being is rather abundant fullness although it often seems as the greatest poverty or need because it cannot show its abundance as such (Schelling, *Deities*, 18). If Being is active rather than stagnant, then it moves not due to a deficiency that needs tending but rather from its excess and effusiveness.

and Meister Eckhart (Schelling, *Initia*, 71). That, however, only comprises the negative side of freedom, which left to itself would result in the permanence of dead Spinozism, but desired is rather something positive and affirmative. Absolute freedom is not *a* freedom but is liberated even from its own identity, from its own being. In being free from everything, even free against its own being, it is positively free to be anything (*ibid.* 20).⁸ Absolute freedom, though absolved from any fixed determination, is not so indefinable that it could not become definable, not so infinite that it could not become finite, not so negative that it could not become positive. Freedom is free also not to be itself, to be something other, even not to *not* have to be something. Not to have to remain nothing constitutes its positivity. Just as the *Duas* was both A and not-A, A and B, so is freedom, at least before it has *decisively* willed. Difference itself is absolute freedom. Freedom is not the formless but that which can render form, that which can render potency from pure *actus*. Freedom, in fact, is only infinite, inscrutable and ungraspable in a positive, i.e. indicative, sense by first assuming form, limit and definition and then exceeding it (*ibid.* 21). Absolute freedom is not some *thing* free to accept form, as that would presuppose a free subject, but absolute freedom is free to create form, free to become some determinate thing. It is *das Wesen* thought as transitive verb and not as a being with an essence. *Das Wesen* is eternal and absolute freedom. Freedom is not the faculty, property or capability of a *Wesen* understood as a determinate being or nature with this faculty, but freedom is *Wesen* thought as an activity, as a process. *Wesen*, here, does not name an essence but the event of holding sway or presiding over the deployment of an essence. Freedom as not yet *a* free

8 Freedom is more than just its negative determination as liberation from all constraints. Should one think of freedom as nothing other than liberation from or the absence of various forms of necessity, then one thinks it only as a category of reflection (Kierkegaard, *Concept*, 93). As Bowie observes, eternal freedom precedes all reflection, precedes even the possibility to choose. Eternal freedom can only decide but is not yet presented with a multitude of choices. One makes choices on the basis of reason (*Grund*) but thus far the analysis stands in the unground prior to any ground (Schelling, *History*, 21). There is not yet the separation of the will and what it wills so that there are not yet choices before a determinate will. Before freedom can make choices it must first decide for identity, beforehand there is neither the identity of the subject that would will nor the identity of any object to be willed. Choices imply reason(s) but in the unground not even reason is yet. There is not yet a reason/ground for freedom to choose essence over its pure quoddity. Freedom with a ground is already less than absolute or eternal freedom but a determinate freedom.

being or a free subject is, in Schelling's late philosophy, not the possibility of the beginning as it is in Kant (Fuhrmans, *Initia*, note 78, pg. 259) but rather the positing of the beginning. The former would already suppose a pre-given beginning that would only need to start itself up. Freedom is not the beginning but before the beginning. The real beginning is rather in the deed, not in the first ground but in the grounding of a beginning, of an origin. Manfred Durner correctly surmises that eternal freedom as such "does not *eo ipso* pass over into being but 'remains standing relative to itself as *pure Können*' (E75)"⁹ (*Wissen*, 161). Insofar as it is not the past origin but before the origin, able to remain in itself without being dispersed into its so-called "consequences," freedom is a never presencing remainder (*nie aufgehender Rest*).¹⁰ Emphasizing freedom's inability ever actually to be as such, Durner further writes, "Eternal freedom is the unthinkable, that of which nobody can ever think as being but *only eternally as having been*" (*ibid.* 173).¹¹ Unthinkable here actually only means not yet thinkable in advance of its deed, that which may only be revealed and thought *per posterius* and so as Past. As something present or even as something that was present it is unthinkable; its cognoscibility resides only its being *as* Past. Freedom is not the past origin but that which, given that it acts, first posits the origin by positing it as Past. In Schelling's own language, eternal freedom is never accessible via thinking or striving for it but only if it is the absolute *prius* from which one actually departs (*Initia*, 92). Freedom, then, is 1) only something, so to speak, "behind" one or Past and 2) only what it really is in the progressive method of philosophy, only in having actually departed from it.

Heidegger has notoriously said that freedom was not the property of the human being but human being the property of freedom. Here, the discussion has nothing to do with the human being yet but Heidegger's comment is still illuminating in that it places freedom in the subject position. Freedom, for Schelling, does indeed "appear" in the subject position but only as a dissembling subject. Freedom is not an οὐσία receiving predicates but, once it has willed, the act (*Tat*) before the actor (*Täter*). Freedom is not a free being, not an essence, not a subject, not a ground and not a beginning, but, as Jason Wirth implores, "the power otherwise

9 "...nicht eo ipso in sein Sein über, sondern bleibt "relativ auf sich selbst als *reines Können* stehen" (E75)."

10 This term actually occurs in Schelling's freedom essay of 1809.

11 "Die ewige Freiheit ist das Undenkliche, das, dessen sich niemand denken kann als jemals seiend, sondern *ewig nur als gewesen*."

than every beginning and ending...dis-completing every beginning and ending" (*Historical-Critical*, x). Positive freedom is not so much infinite as infinitizing, not so much boundless as that transgressing all boundaries. Freedom is neither a beginning nor an end ideal but dis-completing of every beginning and abortive of all ends as perpetual and anarchical recommencement. The decisiveness of the Absolute would not be a beginning or origin but posits the origin. Negative philosophy regresses to the origin thought terminally, i. e. as *terminus a quo*, the moment from which one *may* progress. Positively, i. e. thought in its decisive act of positing, freedom is not a *terminus* but first posits one, itself remaining as that prior to the terminal origin, not as beginning but only as a "before." Absolute freedom is the *Ungrund* antecedent to all ground, duality, existence and origins. It is not that the trace of the origin disappears or that the efficacy of the cause would feign, but the ground is first laid by the non-origin, by the pre-beginning, the an-archic. The beginning finds itself in the midst of a succession but the non-origin must first posit succession or temporality.¹²

According to Schelling, "Willing is Ursein" (*Offenbarung*, Paulus Nachschrift, 179).¹³ Willing predates the one who wills because willing predates any actual deed of the will insofar as all actual willing requires intent, i. e. some determinate thing to will. Willing as *Ursein* is will without vision, stability and identity. The Duas, Difference itself, the unpre-thinkable, does not then possess a will *as* will because this implies the identity of object and purpose. The Duas is duplicitous; it is completely undecided. It is willing without a will. Actual willing implies decisiveness. Pure willing, before it actually wills something determinate, i. e. before it is a decisive will or a subject with a will, is nothing more than an impetus to subjectivity: a *conatus*, *nisus*, *élan vital* or subjective aim – not yet an actual subject but something pre-subjective. For Schelling, to be a subject means to be the assumption (*Voraussetzung*) of something. The subject cannot therefore be alone, i. e. apart from that which assumes it. In other words the *subjectum* is a *suppositum*, that which has become a suppository by being subjected or cast asunder (*unterworfen*) (II/3, 78, "Be-

12 Even to say that one may only know the will of a person *per posterius* means rather that the origin or will, i. e. the thing revealed, is first constituted in the revelatory event. No pre-given becomes exposed but something novel becomes manifest that beforehand was not at all. Revelation is creation.

13 Here the text reads "Wille ist Ursein" in opposition to the *Urfassung* which, more appropriately, reads, "Wollen ist Ursein."

gründung"). Willing is *Ursein* but not yet a will with an identity, a will with intention, a will willed by a subject. This willing is pre-subjective and concomitantly chaotic, bereft of intention and identity, willing without a will. This Duas, Difference itself or pre-subjective willing does not yet possess the identity of the beginning but it can, however, posit a real beginning. That which can *only* be what it emphatically is cannot posit a real beginning or movement (Schelling, *System*, 163) but the Duas neither is in the indicative sense nor may it even be *as* what it is (or is not); it is not a self-same. It cannot be itself at all but, in fact, must always be other than itself.

One ought not even equate this willing with blind nature. Marcia Schuback, for one, construes nature in Schelling similarly to primal willing. She writes that for Schelling nature shows the inconceivable force of beginning, which is why nature and essence are not equivalent. Nature is admittedly not always equivocal with essence for Schelling but it is also not, as Schuback argues, "the force of a beginning" ("Work," *Schelling Now*, 71). One cannot assert strongly enough that primal willing is not a beginning, even an ever beginning beginning, but rather that positing all beginnings by subjecting them to the Past. That which is subjected is then first the prior, the substance or substratum. Schuback says, however, that "Nature is not the substratum...but rather the force of a beginning" (*ibid.*). Nature is indeed the eternal Past, that which has been subjected by being posited *as* Past. Nature, however, is not the force of the beginning, not that which has subjected *itself* as Past and thereby posited *itself* as substrate. Nature may be this Past and substrate but nature itself is not the means by which this subjection occurred. Only the decisiveness of the will can accomplish that.

Nature only is *as* Past and there is only a Past because of the decisiveness of the will but before advancing to this decisive act, primal willing must be further explicated. As bereft of intention and identity, primal willing is certainly not an ideal will but a material will (Schelling, *Offenbarung*, Paulus Nachschrift, 179), material because void of form. The central question is in fact why there is form rather than chaos. The question is how a form can proceed from the utterly formless. How can understanding proceed from madness, rule and order from the unruly?¹⁴ Willing without understanding is mad, without unity, focus or purpose,

14 The terms "madness" and "mania" will normally be employed in lieu of "the unruly" in order to emphasize the contrast between these terms and the understanding. The antithesis of understanding is madness.

striving against identity and essence. Will with understanding is divisible, the end separable from the means, the intent separable from the actual act of volition. Only willing without understanding is simple and indivisible, whilst a will with understanding always has a concept. Willing as *Ursein* is not willing with identity, form or understanding, but, so to speak, a material will.

The Duas or unprethinkable precursor contains no identity or unity in itself. Schelling refers to this in *Initia Philosophiae Universae* as a “nicht Gezweitheit (non-bifurcated/non-duplication)” (72). This as of yet non-bifurcated is not a being, not even a subject; it simply “Ist.” For Hegel, the not yet bifurcated is a unity and concomitantly a ground but here, in Schelling, it is rather a pre-beginning or unground. This is not an A after which B could follow or, numerically explained, one after which proceeds two. That would be to posit an origin that is in itself the first being that then unfolds or emanates, but here is rather that which must first appropriate an origin. Two, i.e. actual difference, bifurcation/duplication or *Gezweitheit*, and not one is the first number.¹⁵ Before duplication, before differentiation, there is not a dense one, not an inactive ground, but the non-number, the unground. If two is the first number, then one, as the beginning or origin, is the residue visible only after differentiating duplication, i.e. only after two. If one is the origin, then the precondition of the origin is two or better that which permits two, namely the act of bifurcation, dehiscence or differentiation. The Duas is not two but a non-number because a non-entity and non-identity. The Duas first becomes a distinguished division proper, i.e. two, once it can be contrasted with the Monas. “...(T)he Duas first becomes the Duas through participation with the Monas” (Schelling, *System*, 99).¹⁶ The deposited Monas, however, as decisive identity, can only be after the primal act of differentiation, after duplication, after the first repetition. As Difference itself prior to actual differentiation, the Duas is absolute in the literal sense, i.e. as absolved of all relations, without relation to the identical or the Monas, without even internal identity and relation. This, as mentioned above, does not yet possess the identity of an entity which “can,” i.e. it is not das *Seinkönnende* but merely pure *Können*. This correlates to *Ursein* as chaotic willing because the will “can” and mad willing bereft of form and identity, what has here been called a “material will,” is not das *Seinkönnende* but simply *Können*.

¹⁵ This is at least as old as Aristotle.

¹⁶ “...die Dyas erst durch die Theilnahme an der Monas zur Dyas werde.”

3 Copulation

Schelling asserts that in Arabic the “is” or the copula is equivalent to *Können* in German and occurs not with another nominative in the predicate position but an accusative (II/3, 229, “Erster Teil”). This interpretation of the copula as *Können* renders the copula transitive and this thought determines his entire thinking on the copula, predication and the relation between ground/*antecedens* and consequent/*consequens*. The copula does not intransitively link the subject/former to the predicate/latter from without but transitively copulates in order to generate both *termini*: subject and object, ground and consequent, the prior and the posterior, the former and the latter, Past and Future. As Manfred Frank states in complete agreement with the previous chapter’s thesis that Schelling’s fundamental thought is that Being precedes Identity, “One could say the identity present in the judgment is one coming from the joints that had heretofore been jointless. Should one accept this, so does one presume that in the chain of derivation ‘Being’ stands higher than identity” (*Auswege*, 341).¹⁷ “S is P,” for Schelling, is not attributive but transitive and concomitantly not tautological but synthetic (II/3, 228, “Erster Teil”). The subject is never some specific thing for itself, i.e. not a subject or substance in and of itself, but only a subject for the predicate.¹⁸ Outside

17 “Man könnte sagen, die im Urteil vorliegende Identität sei eine aus den Fugen geratene vordem fugenlose. Akzeptiert man dies, so nimmt man an, dass >Sein< im Abseitungszusammenhang höher steht als Identität.”

18 Thomas Leinkauf, although in complete agreement with what has been said here, will still actually relate Schelling’s thinking on the copula to substance in the traditional Aristotelian sense. To quote at length:

“The Aristotelian substance (οὐσία), as Schelling grasps it, is being that comes in advance of thinking as *pure* Being, pure act or as the ‘Is.’ It does not *bear* the determinations that come to it, but it is the *active* ground of the being of being, that which we have disclosed as a *transitive* meaning, for which a dimension set in reserve or a dimension of the will is appropriated. ... The question ‘τι το ὄν’ is...according to Schelling’s interpretation not a question that searches after an attributive determination for an already present, determined subject, but to the contrary – as it were as anticipation of *the* central question of philosophy in general – the question of the subject itself, of substance as pure Being and active ground, which lets being be. [Die aristotelische Substanz (οὐσία), wie Schelling sie faßt, ist also das dem Denken zuvorkommende Sein als *reines* Sein, reiner Akt oder als das ‘Ist.’ Sie *trägt* nicht ihr zukommende Bestimmungen, sondern sie ist der *active* Grund des Seins des Seienden, das was wir als *transitive* Bedeutung erschlossen haben, der eine reservative oder Willens-Dimension eignet. ... Die Frage ‘τι το ὄν’ ist... nach Schellings Interpretation *keine* Frage, die eine at-

of the predicate, outside of the copulating of the copula, the subject in itself is only something mythical. If the predicate were only an attribute of what the subject was in and of itself prior to any attribution, then the copula would only be something tautological and not transitive and synthetic. "A is B" entails that while in some sense the A must be something in itself, lest "A is B" be equivalent to the tautological "A is A," the A is certainly nothing without the predicate. They cannot be tautologically collapsed one into the other. The copula, as transitive, certainly assures that A must be something other than B; yet, the A would also not be at all without B and B would be a merely abstract possibility without A. A, though it be nothing without B, could also be something other than B, e.g. C, hence the synthetic character of the copula. The predicate is contingent but that the subject is nothing without at least some predicate is not contingent. The copula as transitive asserts something, nothing under the species of eternity, but something synthetic and existent. Statements are only transitive when they could be something other, i.e. when they are synthetic. Earlier, primal willing, insofar as it is prior to the understanding, was interpreted as a material will. So here too the subject is prime matter, just as the informed matter of a geranium could still be something other, e.g. a rose or even something other than a flower (*ibid.*). Form fixates identity while matter is that which can be something other, even that having a contradictory form. Subject-being is matter-being, the ability to be something other, not to have form or be predicative in itself but to be receptive of form and predication. The subject is nothing without the predicate but that is not to say that the matter of the flower could not be without the flower, i.e. could not be as something other than a flower. Being truly is nought without its conceptuality but that is not to say that it must be as this or that concept. If, however, it is to be as something, i.e. not be nothing, then it must be informed. Again, this is not to say that matter is as substance, namely something existing through itself alone, something subsisting in and of itself simply waiting to accept a form as a subsequent. The task is to think ontological difference without reducing this difference to a mere polarization, e.g. cause/effect or substance/attribute. One must rather think copulation as such, having substance/attribute and cause/effect as the copulated *relata*.

tributive Bestimmung zu einem schon vorliegenden, bestimmten Subjekt sucht, sondern umgekehrt – gleichsam als Antizipation der zentralen Frage der Philosophie überhaupt – die Frage nach dem Subjekt selbst, nach der Substanz als reinem Sein und aktivem Grund, der Seiendes sein läßt.]” (*Schelling*, 94).

There is nothing already there that would simply clothe itself with form subsequently; the subject is only there with the form, with the predicate. Subject is matter or substrate but not as a self-subsistent entity waiting to clothe itself with a predicate. Both subject and predicate are derivative, *termini* posited by anonymous copulation. What is primal and not derived is the transitive “Is,” namely the act of copulation or the differentiation of repetition or doubling.¹⁹ Matter or the subject can be without that *particular* form or predicate, but it cannot be without one altogether.

Being is not a substance with attributes but transitive. Being is *Können*, always taking the accusative and not the attributive. In no manner is the rigid formality and identity of substance the most original but older still is contingency and materiality. Schelling – at least the late Schelling of the positive philosophy of mythology and revelation – is not an idealist but expounds a type of materialism.²⁰ This materialism is neither a physicalism, atomism nor historical-dialectical materialism. Matter here simply means that something unruly and unformed predates form. Technically, however, matter, i. e. the subject, is not before form but properly speaking only as old as form. This is because both the subject (matter) and predicate (form) are derivative *termini*. More original is the act of copulation. In this regard, both matter and form (and, as shall be seen, efficient and final causation as well) are derivative. Properly speaking, something precedes all these types of instrumental causality. Being is no more one type of these *causes instrumentales* than a substance with attributes. Being is a verb, not the copula but copulation, not a specific difference but differentiation, not one side of a polarity or a dualism but the act of dehiscence or bifurcation. Being is transitive, temporalizing event (*Ereignis*) or clearing (*Lichtung*), to use Heideggarian language, or, to use Schelling’s language, a happening (*Geschehen*). This happening, given the present context of the meaning of the copula, is here called “copulation.” The copula is the relation of a contingent, accidental *subjectum* existing in a certain

19 Baumgartner argues that “Schelling’s deliberations on identity and difference...in the judgment show that he understands identity in a reduplicative manner... [Schellings Überlegungen zu Identität und Differenz...im Urteil zeigen, daß er Identität reduplikativ versteht...]” (*Friedrich*, 116–117). The predicate does not simply restate the subject but doubles it, does not reiterate the subject but is itself a novel iteration.

20 Admittedly, this materialism is not synonymous with Marxist materialism although it may not preclude it and may have influenced its development. See Schulz’s *Der unendliche Mangel an Sein: Schellings Hegelkritik und die Anfänge der Marxschen Dialektik*.

manner (II/3, 230, “Erster Teil”), i.e. with some determinate *modus operandi*.²¹ This *subjectum*, then, is not the subject or substance of modern philosophy and not that of traditional metaphysics, i.e. the philosophy of presence, despite Schelling’s bothersome and persistent use of the term “subject.” What this rhetoric allows Schelling to retain is the idea of the subject as an indivisible remainder, as an inexhaustible reservoir. The predicate is shown and known, but the subject, as matter, as that which could always be otherwise, is never able to presence fully, neither able to exhaust its potentiality in its actuality nor its actuality in its potency. The subject is always either not yet or an already pronounced, but no longer present, past *subjectum*. It never was but only always already has been; it never was a present essence but one always finds only the trace of its absence in the present predicate, attribute or expression.²² In agreement with Heidegger one ought not say that the subject is the “Es” in “Es gibt” (there is) – since it is in fact this very subject which is given – but this structure does at least take the accusative rather than an attributive.

Heidegger says that Schelling’s involvement in the pantheism debate and in particular his analysis of the proposition “God *is* everything” lead to his analysis of the copula. He argues that Schelling conceived of the subject as the ground or carrier (*der Tragende*) of the predicate (*Schelling’s*, 78). This is then a relation of *antecedens/consequens* or *implicitum/explicitum*. Is this true though? Is, for Schelling, the predicate simply the explication of what was always already implicitly contained in the subject? If the subject as matter can always be otherwise, if it is an indivisible remainder that cannot presence, i.e. be fully explicated, then in what sense is the shown merely the explication of what was apparently implicit beforehand? The “is” is not exhausted in sameness but is a generative production yielding an accusative. Under Heidegger’s interpretation of Schelling, however, the subject acts as generator instead of the “is” itself. He wishes to say that for Schelling the copula results from the subject’s generation of what it will carry, rather than viewing the copula as generative of both subject *and* object in its anonymous, i.e. subjectless, copulation. He reads Schelling as saying that there is an active, generative subject – a noun that verbs – rather than viewing the act of copulation itself

21 The *modus/manner* or the “how” is precisely the question of the open-ended proof. Does copulation copulate divinely or graciously or malevolently or indifferently, i.e. atheistically, etc.?

22 Can one find here Derrida’s *différance* as an ontological thesis?

as the active “agency” – a verb that nouns. Schelling’s interpretation of the copula asserts a “verbing verb” and not a “verbing noun.” The question is never one of *what*, of an attribute, but of the *how*, the *modus operandi*. Adverbs, then, are more fundamental than adjectives. Heidegger unfortunately argues that Schelling’s subject and predicate “belong together” because the subject is a generative ground (*ibid.* 87). On the other hand, Schelling can be plausibly read as saying that subject and predicate occur together because copulation grounds, because the unground (*Unground*) grounds (*begründet* and *ergründet*). Copulation, the “is” as transitive, is not a ground but first gives a ground by positing the subject as Past, by positing it as substrate, as matter, as carrier for the form of the predicate, the *modus operandi*. Schulz ironically argues that the breach between Being and beings is necessary for subjectivity to appear insofar as it relates the subject to an object and that this ontological difference overcomes traditional metaphysics (*Vollendung*, 290–294), while still arguing that somehow Heidegger escapes this tradition while Schelling falls prey to it. Andrew Bowie speaks correctly when he affirms that although Schelling’s rhetoric borrows from traditional metaphysics the core argument does not belong in this tradition because “S is P” is transitive and not attributive (*Schelling*, 68). Despite Schelling’s insistence on the use of the term “subject,” contra Heidegger’s interpretation of Schelling, the copula does not express a relation of the subject but the *a priori* of relation, generative of both the subject and the object and holding them in relation. They belong together because they are connascent. They were never conjoined from without nor is one a mere addendum carried by the former.

If no subject enacts this primal happening, then can a “what” or a “who” be identified? In a certain sense, to ask this question misses Schelling’s point (Beach, *Potencies*, 115) because there was no first entity in the beginning that started the chain of causes to which one could regress in order to account for why there is something rather than nothing. This would simply posit a first cause, an un-caused cause. That, according to Heidegger, is onto-theo-logy. More primordial than any beings is primal willing but willing is not a quality supervenient upon a more fundamental stratum of being; it is *Ursein*. There is therefore no willer or subject who wills; the identity of a will comes in the second and not the first place. The living will occupies the place of primacy so that selfhood only

appears after the deed. Why is Schelling then so attached to the rhetoric of a “subject,” even if an absolute subject?²³

Schelling himself remarks that earlier in his career he attempted to show the relation of the ego to Being via a transcendental history of the ego (*Grundlegung*, 181). What was the ego’s past? The ego had apparently suffered something in its pre-individual, i.e. pre-egoistic, being. The pre-individual being of the ego, contra Fichte, was pure freedom. Schelling argued that “if one imagines beyond [Fichte’s individual ego], he has already pronounced that everything is through freedom” (*ibid.* 182).²⁴ Before the act of the will no subject was there (*ibid.* 187). For Fichte, the empirical world, that there is something rather than nothing, resulted from the first act of the ego (Schelling, *Einleitung*, 40). The ego was self-positing and always already full self-presence; it did not have a true past, namely something before itself. The ego, for Fichte, never became and had no genesis. The ego was its own deed with nothing to be thought, i.e. the ego itself becomes its only object. Everything becomes caught in the presence of self-reflection; nothing escapes egoity. Everything is either the ego and its deed or the empirical world as merely the non-ego permitting reflection of the ego. Nothing preceded egoity. There was, for Fichte, no real Past. Fichte never explained the history of the ego’s becoming present to itself. The original deed did not precede the ego, the perpetrator enacting the deed, but the deed was already in the ego’s full possession. The identity of the ego was already the ground and not consequent from the deed – at least according to Schelling’s interpretation of Fichte.

Just as above in the discussion of Parmenides’ statement that Being and thinking are the same, Schelling always asserts that only with this unity is actual reality possible. He writes, “...(O)nly on the one and the sameness between knowing and being rests the reality of all objective

23 Note that Schelling’s absolute subject cannot have predicates insofar as the predicate demarcates an essence. The subject stands in relation with an object but the Absolute stands outside all relation. The *absolute* subject, according to Schelling, is “absolute predicatelessness [*absolute Prädikatlosigkeit*]”...“infinite deployment of essence, infinite non-Being [*unendliches Wesen, unendliches Nichtsein*]” (*Grundlegung*, 426). Even if it is sensible to speak of the absolute subject, one only designates what does not exist, what veritably is nought.

24 “Denkt man sich diese hinweg, so hat er schon verkündet, dass alles durch Freiheit sei.”

knowledge. If this is not, no reality is possible" (*Einleitung*, 42).²⁵ Schelling, however, asks more penetratingly than Fichte how and in what way thinking (a subjective) and Being (the objective) are the same. Schelling does not merely assume the self-presence of the ego and therewith its potency to posit itself and reflect upon itself. In other words, if he, just as Fichte, begins with the unity of the subjective and the objective, he thinks this subject-object not subjectively as an ego but rather objectively, an objective subject-object preceding actual reflection and cognition. Schelling writes, "... (T)he ego out of that higher potency of human consciousness must be denuded of all potency until the point where it stands there no longer as a subjective but only as an objective subject-object" (*ibid.*).²⁶ As has been affirmed, Schelling, in thinking freedom radically, does not attempt to explain how a prior potency can be instantiated or actualized but rather how potentiality first arises from freedom. Freedom is that capable of bringing forth something original and original is that whose possibility is first given and made possible through its actuality (Schelling, *Urfassung*, 82). Original may never be that of which one previously had a concept. True freedom and true geniality bring forth originality via repetition and not via replication, i. e. not as a *simulacra*, copy or instantiation of a preceding concept (*ibid.* 83). If the unity of thinking and Being is thought subjectively, i. e. if priority is given to thinking rather than Being, then conceptuality and potency precede actuality. Negative philosophy regresses from actual being to its conditions whereas positive philosophy progresses from the absolute *prius*, i. e. from a *prius* without potency, to the posterior. For genuine freedom potency always succeeds but never precedes actuality. The ego as having come to itself stands in possession of itself and accordingly in full potentiality. How, however, did the ego come to itself?²⁷ Schelling writes that the ego that has come to

25 "... (N)ur auf dieser Einerleiheit zwischen Wissen und Sein die Realität aller objektiven Erkenntnis beruhe. Wenn dieses nicht ist, so ist keine Realität möglich."

26 "... (D)as Ich aus jener höhern Potenz des menschlichen Bewußtseins muß nämlich aller Potenz entkleidet werden, bis dahin, wo es nicht mehr als Subjektives, sondern nur als objectives Subjekt=Objekt dasteht."

27 Roughly corresponding to the three potencies of all of being in Schelling's latest philosophy, he explicated already in 1830 in his *Einleitung in die Philosophie* three moments of the genesis of the ego: 1) in and before itself (*an und vor sich*); 2) exodus from itself (*Heraustreten aus sich*); and 3) the product of the act (*Erzeugnis dieses Aktes*) (45). This genesis does not happen in an instant but in a historical progression with Past, Present and Future. The act of the absolute ego does not stand as the first link in the succession but indivisibly remains, not to be caught up into the succession. Schelling states, "The ego is infinite not in the negative

itself, to its full potentiality, is itself “not possible without presupposing having been outside itself; for only that can come to itself which was outside itself...” (Schelling, *Einleitung*, 42).²⁸ The ego has a Past in which it was outside of itself and had not yet come to itself, i. e. a Past prior to its self-presence. The original deed (*Tathandlung*) was not an act (*Akt*) of the ego/subject, not even an unconscious one, but an original relinquishing or dispensing (*Entäußerung*). This relinquishment is in fact a positing of something external (*außer*), something is uttered (*geäußert*) and bestowed, namely the ego/subject itself is bestowed, uttered and brought out of emptiness into externality. The subject did not act but was brought from internality into externality, was manifested (*sich äußern*).

That the subject having come to full potency could arise from that prior to all potency is not to be excluded. The unprethinkable *Daß* does not yet decisively include potency as something actual and effica-

sense that it could not become finite, as then it would have to just remain still, but instead in the positive sense that it can even make itself finite, but victoriously emerging from every finitude... [Das absolute Ich ist nicht nur das sich selbst Setzende, sondern auch das unendlich sich selbst Setzende. Das Ich ist unendlich nicht im negativen Sinn, daß es nicht endlich werden könnte, denn da müßte es gerade stehenbleiben, sondern in dem Positiven, daß es sich allerdings verendlichen kann, aber aus jeder Endlichkeit siegreich hervortritt...] (*ibid.*). The genesis does not stand *at* or *in* the beginning but the act itself is only *as* beginning, as that first positing a beginning and therefore succession, a history of the ego. The first moment is in and *before* itself. It is not the beginning of itself but before itself, before its own proper beginning. This moment is infinite “but not as infinite [aber es ist nicht als Unendliches]” (*ibid.*). The ego may only be itself if it has first left itself, but certainly not beforehand. “...(F)irst after the ego has become disproportionate to itself can it, in opposition with this form, posit [itself] in its deployment as self-same. [...erst nachdem das Ich sich selbst ungleich geworden ist, kann es im Gegensatze mit dieser Gestalt in seiner Wesenheit [sich] als das sich selbst Gleiche setzen.]” (*ibid.* 49). Beforehand, i. e. before itself, it was without identity and so was nothing. “...(I)t is not as a, i. e. not such that it could not be equal to b. We express this not-being-as-a in the potency 0. [...es ist nicht als a, d. h. nicht so, daß es nicht gleich b sein könnte. Dieses nicht als a sein drücken wir aus, als...0.]” (*ibid.*). Before itself it is not yet a, not even a⁰, but only 0, i. e. nothing at all. The identity of the ego as something rather than nothing, as a self-identical a, occurs through uni-formation (*Ineinsbildung*). This genesis of the ego already stands as a pre-cursor to Schelling’s later doctrine of the potencies not only because of the homologous structure but also because this genesis of the ego of consciousness repeats what happens in nature, “is the truthful end of nature [der wahrhafte Schluß der Natur ist]” (*ibid.* 53).

28 “...nicht möglich, ohne ein außer sich vorauszusetzen; denn nur das kann zu sich kommen, was außer sich war...”

cious but neither has it yet excluded it. It may have potency *post factum* just never in advance of itself. Exclusion (*Ausschließung*) results from decisiveness (*Ent-schiedenheit*). Indecisiveness (*das Unentschiedene*) corresponds to absolute *Indifferenz* but the world law, the law of decisiveness, precludes that this may subsist. Not only is one not actually free without sacrificing possibilities in the decision but freedom does not have any content proper without this exclusion (Jaspers, *Ursprung*, 152). Even God could not change His irrevocably excluded Past. Only freedom can decide no longer to be the whole and exclude the indeterminate totality that it was (Schelling, *Initia*, 143). Identity/the Monas only arises from the Duas because of the decisive deed; only with decisive exclusion does identity become simultaneously actual *and* possible. After the deed, the indeterminate infinite becomes a type of finitude, infinitude in contrast with finitude. This decisive infinite would not be infinity as arid, barren desert but determinate (Schelling, *Grundlegung*, 189). Before the *Entäußerung* nothing has yet been decided and therefore nothing is to be excluded.²⁹ Before the *Entäußerung* everything is still ensconced in the darkness of pure innerness. Remember from the prior chapter that primal remembrance (*Erinnerung*) of the Past had to do with making something inner. *Er-inner-ung* and *Ent-äusser-ung* are complementary notions. The latter, externalization or the relinquishing bestowal of something rather than nothing, first posits the pure innerness prior to all externalization and self-presence. The ego's Past was the objective, i. e. completely inner, subject-object. This is where thinking and Being are the same only in concealment, only in complete, unexpressed intimacy. Presence is externalization and disclosure. Only then are thinking and Being the same in *actu* and not just according to nature;³⁰ then thinking and Being, subject and object, are as subjective. Remembrance of the Past immemorial is remembrance of that which was pure intimacy and never present, when the subjective had not yet been given priority over the ob-

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- 29 This is not at the level not of *das Seinkönnende* but at the level of pure *Können*. As *Können* it certainly does not preclude future possibilities but it is also not yet any specific possibility, not even the totality of possibility. If one will, it is the possibility of potency or the potency of potency but not yet anything actually potent. Pure freedom precedes actual freedom, pure freedom is actuality prior to potency, yet, notwithstanding, pure freedom cannot exclude anything futural.
- 30 "The opposite of deed is nature. [...der Gegensatz der Tat ist eben die Natur...]" (Schelling, I/10, 259, "philosophischen Empirismus").

jective.³¹ The movement from Past to Present, from intimacy to the ex-
timate, from the primacy of the objective over the subjective to the sub-
jective over the objective, is rendered by the decisiveness of the deed of
copulation whereby the subjective and the objective were bestowed as ac-
tually dissonant, bifurcated from each other.³²

Though Schelling's thought surpasses the self, consciousness and sub-
jectivity proper, he nevertheless remains attached to this rhetoric. One
reason for this may be that the predicate is what supplies the concept
and yet the self or subject – at least the absolute subject – antedates
the concept. Another reason is that Schelling does not simply abandon
thinking on subjectivity; he merely relegates it to a subordinate position.
Subjects are there and real but they are not grounds carrying consequents
or substances with attributes but themselves a product of the primal act of
copulation. One is not first a subject who then proceeds to will out of
one's character as if one's attributes were only predicates expressing the
essence of the subject but rather one is the subject *who* one is on account
of what has been willed. One is not first a *what* that would appear as what
it is but one is a *who*, who must first make oneself into the subject who
one is. One does not act out of their identity but one first attains an iden-
tity by virtue of their acts. Existence precedes essence.

That preceding subjectivity, willing as *Ursein*, is pure *Können*. Schel-
ling reads the "is" as a transitive *Können*. He then asserts, the selfless being
of pure potency, "it *can* God" (*System*, 109),³³ placing God into the ac-
cusative and not the subject position. The original clearing – copulation
– was not enacted *by* God proper but was more specifically *for* God. That
not just the human being's but that also God's existence precedes His es-
sence means that God too has a Past. If God's essence or identity signifies
God proper, then even God contains something within Himself older

31 Although freedom's effects become exterior freedom as such is never something
researchable *in* the world, *in* the present and external, but freedom consists in
becoming inner, even if by means of inversion.

32 The immediately foregoing has drawn upon Schelling's 1830 lecture series, *Ein-
leitung in die Philosophie*. His rhetoric in this text revolves around the ego and its
transcendental history. While Schelling will eventually lose the rhetoric of the
"ego" and its "transcendental history," he unfortunately is never able to fully ex-
tricate himself from the rhetoric of a primal or absolute "subject." That, however,
this term cannot be equivocated with a *cogito* or a *Grund/ratio* rather than an *Un-
grund* should be evident. His rhetoric may be unfortunate but the insight is not
lacking.

33 "...es *kann* Gott."

than Himself. God proper is not the unprethinkable *Daß*, not Difference itself, not Multiplicity, not the Duas, not *Wahnsinn* (mania), but freedom. Freedom is *Können*; freedom is futural; it is that which it *can* be. Schelling never tires of remarking that the name of God in Exodus 3:14 is "I am, who I will be" (*Einleitung*, 104).³⁴ "Yahweh," grammatically explicated, is the future of the verb "to be." God is not a substance and not the first instrumental cause producing effects that follow of necessity from Him. Regarding the name of God as the future tense of the verb "to be," Schelling remarks, "What else does this mean but I am what I am, not substantially but through will and deed"... "God is therefore the will not to be He who He is but He who He will be" (*ibid.*).³⁵ God is not a static essence and identity because existence, i. e. deed or act, precedes essence in Him. Schelling comments further "that God is not the will to be in general but to be [the will] as God" (*ibid.*).³⁶ God is not a present subject but only the will, decision and deed to be *as* God or to be *as* divine, to have that *modus operandi*. God does not give Himself being – unprethinkable Being is already secure – but God is the will that this unprethinkable Being be *as* divine. God is the will that the subject to be called God proper come to identity, that the Duas become decisive and thereby become the Monas. God's first and true concept is futural; God is not a being but the will that this unprethinkable be and be in a certain way. God is freedom and freedom can make itself incongruous and heterogeneous only later to make itself congruent and homogeneous again. That in God prior to God is freedom that has not yet come to itself, that has not yet come to self-position and potency (just like the Past of the ego, see above), while God proper, God in His consequent nature, is no longer chaotic freedom as pure *Können* but self-possessed freedom as *das Seinkönnende*. Pure, potency-free *Können* "can" *das Seinkönnende*.

34 "Ich bin, der ich sein werde." Schelling argues that the application of the word "God," as with all words, to a concept depends upon the use (*Sprachgebrauch*) of the word and that there is no more original document or no more original use than in Exodus 3:14 (Schelling, *Urfassung*, 88). In the *Urfassung* Schelling renders the name with even more emphasis upon futurition as: "I will be who I will be. [Ich werde sein, der ich sein werde.]" (*ibid.*).

35 "Was heißt dieses anders, als ich bin, was ich bin, nicht substantiellerweise, sondern durch Willen und Tat"... "Gott is also der Wille, nicht der zu sein, der er ist, sondern der er sein wird."

36 "...daß Gott nicht der Wille überhaupt zu sein, sondern als Gott zu sein."

4 The Potencies³⁷

That positive philosophy does not regress to a *relative prius*, a *prius* that would simply account for the necessary conditions without which something could not be,³⁸ and that any surpassing of the traditional philosophy of presence demand that God not merely account for the being of beings means the question of God must be asked for its own sake if asked at all.³⁹ In other words, the question is not, “How does God constitute the being of beings?” but rather “What is the being of God? How does God be?” One cannot begin with God as the first something but God’s being must somehow illuminate the very movement *nihil ad aliquid*, from nothing to something.

Unprethinkable *Daß* before it has become cognoscible *per posterius* (i.e. *nachdenklich*) is pure consonance prior to the supplementation of voice or aspiration, i.e. prior to the introduction of a vowel. Without this prior moment – that is actually nothing – actual differences and identity would be impossible. Without this *Duas* the *Monas* could never be. To begin with plurality (instead of Difference itself) is to begin atomistically. This is the philosophy of presence. Each atom in the plurality, without this dark precursor holding the atomistic plurality into a manifold multiplicity, would be trapped in self-presence, a world unto itself; each would be parallel to the other.⁴⁰

37 An adaptation of the following doctrine of the potencies for negative philosophy as well as the positive account in the following chapter can also be found in a forthcoming 2012 edition of *Philosophy and Theology* entitled “Schelling’s Doctrine of the Potencies: The Unity of Thinking and Being.”

38 Schelling deems the potencies or figure of the being “that without which something could not be, but not that [Being] through which anything is at all” (I/10, 214, “Vorrede”).

39 “*God must also be something for Himself, without relation to that by which He is creator...* [Gott muss auch etwas für sich sein, noch ohne Beziehung darauf, dass er Schöpfer ist...] (Schelling, *Grundlegung*, 379).

40 Even in Levinas the Other is arguably vacuous and never concrete. Every Other is like any other. The Other is never gay or straight, black or white, male or female, but always a vacuous face. In this respect, the face of the Other is always a-historical, a displacement of the transcendental subject of modernity from an interior and intimate position into an anterior and alterior locus. Schelling provides a better description of the Other than Levinas, for whom the Other perhaps becomes an empty X without any real content. Levinas exclaims that Being is exteriority, but for Schelling alterity is nothing exterior. Instead, as Deleuze writes, “It is not the other which is an other I, but the I which is an other, a fractured I” (*Difference*, 261). The alterity of the ego is not some other *cogito* but its own an-

Approaching this dynamic from another angle, Frank argues that for Schelling the *An-sich* (the In-Itself, consonance, the dark precursor, the Duas, the unprethinkable *Daß*, Difference itself, pure *Können*) can only become a *Für-sich* (For-Itself, self-identical, *das Gleiche* that is not merely *das Selbe*, the Monas, *das Seinkönnende*) if the *Für-sich* already is at the level of the *An-sich* (*unendliche Mangel*, 75). In other words, if where there is Being there is thinking, then at no time was there simply Being itself – which is only a moment for thought and in itself nothing more than sheer nullity – and then at a later date thinking came to it. Being and thinking had to belong together already in the unknown Past of eternity. Being, since Past immemorial, has always already been the unity of the potencies. The whole, the unity of the potencies, is there as a full concrescence not just at the end but as already fully developed from the beginning forth, since there was something rather than nothing. If there is something rather than nothing, i.e. if something has begun, then Being and thinking already belong together. One must think this belonging together not as a ground for subsequent beings but one must think the being of this belonging, which precedes all reflection. Just as any reflexive acknowledgment of an Other or even of oneself as other is only possible on the basis of the dark, abysmal ocean as the same abyss and the same chaos for all, so the belonging together of Being and thinking expressed in copulation arises only from this dark “acquaintanceship with itself *before* all reflection” (*ibid.* 97).⁴¹ This co-belonging is irreducible to self-reflection. Schelling’s doctrine of the potencies addresses just such a unity.

The potencies or determinations of God comprise “the figure of Being, not It itself [but] the stuff of the actual idea, not it itself in actuality” (II/1, 313, “Darstellung”).⁴² At this juncture calling these determinations potencies or possibilities is a bit misleading because one is still speaking of that Naked Existent prior to potency. These potencies are not possibilities for a future world, not yet anyway, but only possibilities for God, for the one who is or, better, who *will* be the being (*das*

terior, pre-reflexive moment. To recognize that the ego only arises in being obsessed by alterity is good, but to relegate this alterity simply to the Face of a different ego only displaces the Cartesian problem.

41 “Bekanntschaft mit sich *vor* aller Reflexion”

42 “...die Figur des Seyenden, nicht Es selbst, der Stoff der wirklichen Idee, nicht sie selbst, sie wirklich...”

Seiende).⁴³ That the being *is*, is still not given. Thus far one only speaks of the figure of the being as *noemata*, as potencies for the being if only one would be it. This is negative philosophy. Once the one who *is* the being shows this by positing the potencies as causes, i.e. by creating, then one finds oneself in positive philosophy's domain. Here, no pronouncement is made that these potencies or possibilities *are*, only that if they would be, then they would be in the following way. The potencies are determinations of the being, its figure, but they do not show that the being is. On the contrary, Being is not because the potencies are but the potencies are (or rather will be) only because Being is. The potencies are therefore not an assumption proper because nothing has actually been posited and assumed as actual and efficacious. The potencies are not assumptions because not known as something real but as that which could be if the being would *be*.

4.1 The First Potency

Primal Being (*Ursein*) is willing (*Wollen*); therefore, every potency is in some manner or another will. The first potency, A¹,⁴⁴ is a will that can will, that can pass into being simply with volition, which according to Schelling is equivalent to *Seinkönnendes*. *Seinkönnendes* as explicative of the first potency differs both from *das Seinkönnende* as the whole of what the being will be, which is not just one of its potencies, and from pure *Können* as the designation of that preceding all thinking of potencies and determinations. Pure *Können* "can" *das Seinkönnende* and the first po-

43 The problem of how to translate terms like, "(das) Sein," "das Seiende" and "das Seiende das Ist" rears its ugly head at this point. The choice of "Being" or "the being" will not be determined by the German construction but rather the intent. In other words, when the emphasis is on *what das Seiende* is but not on the fact *that das Seiende* is, then "the being" will be employed. On the contrary, when Schelling emphasizes the one who *is* the being, then "Being" or "the Being" will be employed. This means that when the conversation concerns negative philosophy "the being" will be employed and when it concerns positive philosophy and the creation (*die Spannung* (tension) of the potencies) "Being" will be employed.

44 Technically one cannot at this point say "A" because the A is the identical, the one who will *be* these potencies. However, one can hardly write "1," "2" and "3" as determinations of the one that may be without already anticipating the one who will be. Remember, the first determination of God Himself is that He is futural. He is who He will be.

tency or determination of *das Seinkönnende* is *Seinkönnendes*, namely a will that, although the first possibility of willing, has of yet not willed. A will that can will is not yet a willing will but a will at rest. *Das Seinkönnende*, as the entire figure of the being, is mediated and self-possessing but the first potency as merely *Seinkönnendes* is unmediated and not in possession of itself. The latter is the dark first, not a second or third, i. e. something reached by some means of mediation, but the immediately first. This first, however, is nevertheless only there in order to be overcome by the second, i. e. to be subjected by and therefore become a subject for the second potency. This first, as not willing, is negative, not yet the positive negation of something, but negative as simply lack or deficiency of “external being [*äußeres Sein*]” (Schelling, II/3, 231, “Erster Teil”). This lack differs from Hegel’s starting point because his negation is a negation mediated into the totality of the concept. His negation was not a lack unto itself but as a mediated double-negation. In short, Hegel’s lack or negation, his first immediacy, could never be a principle capable of starting a process because it was in fact already something mediated. Schelling’s first is a lack only insofar as the will has not yet willed but, nevertheless, it is a will that *can* will, that *can* become positive. To be a potency is to be a form of will, to be able to bring something into being, i. e. to will something is to “can” something. The potencies are all modalities of the will as *Ursein*, what the will can, cannot, must, must not, should and should not.

The first potency is not the totality; it is not the entirety of the general substance or the infinite substance, but it is “allness” (*Allheit*) without being an all-encompassing collectivity (*das All*) (*ibid.* 238). As mentioned, the first shall become subject for the following potency; it will be the subject of the figure of Being, the subject in its allness but not as a material disparateness and collective totality, not as summation (*ibid.* 238–239). *A*¹ is the allness of what can be but not *das Seinkönnende*, not the total collection of everything that can be; it is not equal to God’s whatness, concept or essence, i. e. it is not the figure of the being but only the first determination of the tripartite nature of the figure. The first is the power of the will to will but not its actual willing; it is the non-willing will, pure potency to will.

This potency that is the power to will does not, however, possess its own power; it is a chaotic, unwieldy power. To say that the first potency does not possess itself is to say, as Schelling did in 1830, that it is blind and without understanding, in short, a mania (*Einleitung*, 86). This will is not yet freedom because it can not will anything in particular but only

itself, namely its own effusiveness, which should it run amuck would tear itself from the not yet existent center point and become dissipated into the periphery. It cannot even properly decide for or against itself though. As a pure potency and not as the first cause of the creation it has not yet willed but remains at rest. That it will either remain at rest or raise itself to willing is not something within its grasp. Only freedom wields its own volition and this is not volition proper but only mania (*Sucht*).

4.2 The Second Potency

The second potency is sheer being (*das reine Seiende*).⁴⁵ This means that it is not something that can be, not a will that can will, but that which must be, that which has no other role but to will and to be. The second potency's role is to subject the first potency. *If* the first potency wills (which has not yet occurred), then the second potency must will in order to return the first to a state of potency, i. e. to a state of not willing. If the first potency wills, then when the second potency counteracts this will, the first becomes subject for it. This, however, means that the second becomes object. To be a subject means to be potent, to be matter, to be capable of being something other and to be an object means to have to be and to be what it is. The second potency, therefore, also does not have a will of its own; its will is determined; it can only be what counteracts the first.

As sheer being, i. e. as pure object-being, the second potency is "the non-willing, resting, ambitionless will [*der nicht wollende, ruhende, begierdelose Wille*]" (*Urfassung*, 36). Ambitionless (*begierdlos*) means that it does not have a will of its own but that its willing is determined by the first and directed toward the third. It is pure act/*actus* (*ibid.* 37) but only as re-action. Although that which must will, it nevertheless is without will because it does not have any volition of its own. Albeit for differing reasons, in this regard it resembles the first in that neither possesses its own volition, neither is free and by itself able to decide for or against willing. A^2 must execute its function and consequently Schelling calls it "that which must be" (*das Seinmüssende*). It is that which has only the function of excluding all *Können*. As bereft of *Können*, subjectivity or potency, it is that which must be and therefore purely is. A^2 is a potency because it too must be a determination of *das Seinkönnende* but as something potential it is never impotent but always potent, i. e. always in *actus*. A^2 is, in fact,

45 See Schelling, II/3, "Erster Teil," pgs. 226–227 and *Urfassung*, pg. 36.

also a *Können*. It is “that which can *only* be” (*das nur sein Könnende*) (II/2, 57). It is still *Können* but not one that is potentially active but one that must be active, a *Können* that annuls its own *Können*.

A^2 , *das Seinmüssende*, is not free to work or not, but must work (that is, it is this *only* after the first steps forth). If A^1 wills and thereby moves from potency to *actus*, then A^2 must negate it and thereby bring A^1 back into potency, i.e. into a subject-position. The first is not a subject in and of itself but only acquires this *position* if *positively posited* as such by A^2 . A^2 does not and cannot raise itself to will – because, as ambitionless, it has no will of its own – but it simply holds, in a manner of speaking, the first in pure potency, i.e. in non-being. The second potency is always the counter-reaction to the first and the second is pure being because its function is to posit the first as non-being. To be posited as non-being, means nothing more than to be posited as subject and matter. Because it must work, A^2 is a pure willing, a pure *actus*, but according to the deed it is without a will. Every *actual* willing moves from potency to actuality, *a potentia ad actum*, assuming a prior state of having not willed. A^2 does not admit of this prior state. From the moment that it is it is *actus*, never having even a hypothetical past as *potentia*. The first potency is as if pure potency and the second potency is as if pure actuality. Neither can raise themselves to will. In and of themselves both are 0, not A^1 and A^2 , but nothing.

4.3 The Third Potency

Wanted is neither pure potency nor pure actuality but actual potency, potency in act. This cannot be had except by positive philosophy and that means with actual creation. For pure thought, however, i.e. for negative philosophy, the third potency designates that which is simultaneously potency and actuality, being while not being. That which would be – if in fact it would be – actual potentiality must be an object or pure being/pure actuality without losing its subjectivity or potentiality. To retain potentiality is to retain subjectivity and to be actual is to be objective. That, therefore, which would be actual potentiality must be both subject and object, the subject-object. Inversely, the potencies are determinations of *das Seinkönnende* or that which can be, that which is potentially actual. The potentially actual must be able to be actual whilst retaining its potentiality, able to be whilst simultaneously not being. Logically, the third potency, A^3 , is a contradiction but contradictions not only exist

but this one at least must exist – though only as the impetus toward futuration. It must exist, at least, *if* something rather than nothing would be.

A³ represents the possibility of permanence in becoming (II/2, 396, “Darstellung”). Only with the third can something come to a stand and endure rather than being immediately engulfed in the mania of A¹ or negated by A². Only with all three potencies is everything there necessary for emergence if in fact something should emerge.⁴⁶ Only the subject-object first secures the possibility of a future being. The three potencies together comprise universal matter, the *Urstoff* needed should something come to be. A³ completes the potencies insofar as they are a *material* whole.

The third is an inseparable subject-object. That which is logically contradictory cannot be conjoined but this cannot be disjoined. If the subject-object crosses over into being, then it becomes an object that does not lose its subjectivity. Likewise, when it is a subject, i.e. when it is still before being or not yet in being, it does not forego its objectivity or actuality, i.e. its being. A³ cannot lose itself (*das sich selbst nicht verlieren Könnende*) and remains with itself (*das bei sich Bleibende*) (II/3, 235, “Erster Teil”). It is “that first actually free to be and not to be [*das zu seyn und nicht zu seyn erst wirklich Freie*]” (*ibid.*). This means that it too is will or, what is synonymous, *Können*. It is *das Seinkönnende* as such in its proper being as *das Seinkönnende* (*ibid.*). It is the self-possessing will or *Können*, that which has come to itself. Willing is *Ursein* and all three determinations of *Ursein* have shown themselves as a type of willing. Will is *Können* and the figure of the being is *das Seinkönnende*. All three potencies have shown themselves as modes of *Können*. *Können* is a modality and all three potencies have shown themselves as modalities. A¹ is simply *Seinkönnendes* (the allness of what can be), A² *das Seinmüssende* (that which must be) or *das nur Seinkönnende* (that which can do nothing other than be) and A³ *das Seinsollende* (that which should be)⁴⁷ or *das sich selbst nicht verlieren Könnende* (that which cannot lose itself).

46 See Schelling, II/1, “Darstellung” pgs. 409–411 for his defense of the three potencies as the stuff or matter necessary for all future being. He also relates this to Aristotle’s four causes. This work, however, has not yet discussed A⁴ nor has it reached the point where these potencies are actually posited as causes and therefore something cosmological rather than something still prior to being, even the being of the creation.

47 The third’s determination as that which should be really only arises once the potencies have been incited from rest to act because only when the first, which as

4.4 The Concatenation and Simplicity of the Three

The three potencies are not parts of a whole but each is itself the whole. The third is the as such existent *Seinkönnende*, namely that which the first can will. The first, as devoid of understanding and identity was a mania incapable of willing anything determinate but only itself, its own unbounded, undetermined effusiveness. It was nothing more than the unmediated *Seinkönnen*. The third is simply this as mediated, as having come to itself. The third will be what the first is except as being, as actual potency and not potential potency. In order to move from A^1 to A^3 the first would have to lose itself and, so to speak, disappear by being negated by A^2 . If A^1 wills, then it becomes its opposite, not a will at rest but one in *actus*. A^2 clears the way for A^3 only by again making A^1 potent, i. e. a *Können*. If A^2 would not do this, then the *Können* that A^3 is would be excluded. A^2 returns the first to *Können* in order to mediate *Können* to the third ironically, i. e. only by excluding all *Können* from itself. The three are not added one to the other but exist as an insoluble chain. The chain was never linked together but each link is in its turn each of the other two. Without any of the links the entirety dissolves and without the entirety none of them are there.

The three are not only all forms of *Können*/potency but also all are forms of *Sein/actus*. The first is pure *Seinkönnen* but as not being, the second is pure *Sein* and the third will again be *Seinkönnen* but no longer as non-being but as being and potent, as *das seinkönnende Seiende* (*Einleitung*, 87). A^3 is the repetition of A^1 . A^1 , at rest, is a will that does not will and A^3 , after the will has set everything in motion, will be a willing will or the telic. A^3 will again be A^1 but as self-possessing, the self-possessing will, power (*Macht*) and *Können*. It is not a will to power (*Wille zur*

potent is not, has raised itself from potency to act, i. e. become that which should not be but nevertheless is, does the third actually become that which should be. At rest, none of the potencies are in act but all are at rest and so in this state there is no difference between what is the case and what ought to be the case. Only once the first creates a breach between the “is” and the “ought” does the third actually become that which ought to be. Before the tension of the creative process the first was not the first because not yet part of a succession or tension of the potencies. In its state at rest it is as if a “pre-beginning (der Voranfang)” and “un-principle (das Unprincip)” (Schelling, II/4, 55, “Zweiter Teil”). In this state it is *Unwesen* without identity. It acquires identification as that which ought not have been only *post factum*, i. e. only simultaneously with the determination of the third as what ought to be.

Macht), i.e. a φύσις⁴⁸ that would necessarily presence or body forth.⁴⁹ Schelling wants rather the power to will, the self-possessed free to will or not to will, instead of having to will. He wants not just that which can be but that which can be *and*, if it so decides, can also *not* be. That which would only be a will to power would not possess its own will; it would pass immediately over into its effect. It could not not will but would pass immediately over into willing. Schelling wants that which even when outside itself (as object) remains inside itself (as subject) and also in being outside itself does not become something and cease to be an in itself (*an sich*) (II/2, 57, “Monotheismus”). That capable of leaving itself and being outside itself without losing itself always reserves for itself an indivisible remainder. A³ comprises, therefore, the inexhaustible potential for future being. It is inexhaustible because even if it should bring forth this future possibility it would also remain indivisibly as the Past of this future being, never to be sublated into the Present epoch as a past that was, a past that would be part of the succession of linear time.

A³ is Spirit but it is only Spirit as one of the three potencies. A³ is not the free Spirit; as simply one of the potencies it is only the Spirit that *must* be what it is, the Spirit that is not free to tear itself from its own being in the way that God could. Just as neither the first nor the second potency may wield its own volition neither can the third. This does not mean that it is not the potency determined as the subject-object, as that potency which is with itself and therefore does not lose itself. A¹ was a

48 Heidegger argues for Nietzsche's ideas of will to power and the eternal return of the same as manifestations of Being thought as φύσις. Heidegger inquires, “Now, what does the word φύσις mean? It means that which presences from out of itself (e.g. the blooming/presencing of a rose), the unfolding that opens up, the stepping into appearance in such unfolding and holding and enduring in it, in short, the presencing, tarrying prevailing. [Was sagt nun das Wort φύσις? Es sagt das von sich aus Aufgehende (z. B. das Aufgehen einer Rose), das sich eröffnende Entfalten, das in solcher Entfaltung in die Erscheinung-Treten und in ihr sich Halten und Verbleiben, kurz, das aufgehend-verweilende Walten.]” (*Einführung*, 16). Being as φύσις excludes the possibility of not willing or remaining in concealment. “φύσις is standing-out, bringing itself out of the concealed and thus first coming to a stand. [φύσις ist das *Ent-stehen*, aus dem Verborgenen sich heraus- und dieses so erst in den Stand bringen.]” (*ibid.* 17). Being as φύσις means Being as presence.

49 The body, in opposition to soul or spirit, cannot refrain but must occupy a position. It must fill space or body forth unlike the spirit that could choose not to speak and so remain silent.

non-willing will or non-being, but if it should will, then it passes over into its opposite. A^2 is either passive or active dependent upon the status of the first. So too must the third be what it is dependent upon the first two with the caveat that it never passes over into its opposite. It never ceases being subject in order to be object or vice versa but it is this insoluble unity not by volition but only by nature. A^3 , as Spirit, is the highest of the potencies but still one of the potencies comprising the figure of the being but not the one who *Is* the being. It is the highest potency but not Being itself, not the effusive itself, not God Himself. Schelling writes:

This *Seynkönnende* of the third potency, which we call the inseparable subject-object, is the Spirit that *must* (emphasis mine) remain with itself, the *necessary* (emphasis mine) Spirit, which, however, even as such is always only one of the potencies, albeit the highest one, [and] not the effusive itself, not God (II/2, 89, "Monotheismus")⁵⁰

A^3 is not the free and effusive Spirit but Spirit only as potency and therefore that which can *only* be as Spirit and nothing more. God would be free of each of His potencies or modalities, i.e. of His being-as, even of the highest one. If the potencies determined God, then God would have to be *what* He is but if He precedes His potencies and determines them, then He would exceed them and be free to be *whoever* He wants. If God would be and would be the effusive condition of the potencies rather than the consequence of the potencies, then He would be free from each and every one of His potencies. He would be free even towards His own being, towards His own matter or figure. He would also be free not to be Spirit if He so decreed. That Schelling says this should not be surprising because if this were not the case, then thinking/essence/conceptuality would precede Being. Thinking and Being belong together but, for Schelling, Being always has priority and this means that the potencies as the essence of Being, as its figure, are not Being itself but only its essence, its cognoscibility. Where there is Being there is thinking and thus the potencies only are where Being is and not vice versa. If the determinations of thought determined Being itself, then God – as the one who *Is* Being – would be bound to His essence or to His potencies and could then only act as a result of His own ground, i.e. out of His own pre-given identity. Such a god would not be effusive and, as therefore

50 "Dieses Seynkönnende der dritten Potenz, das wir also das unzertrennliche Subjekt-Objekt nennen, ist der bei sich bleiben müssende, der nothwendige Geist, der aber auch als solcher immer nur eine der Potenzen, obwohl die höchste, ist, nicht das Überschwengliche selbst, nicht Gott."

nothing more than the whole of its essence, i.e. its potencies or body, would itself be sublated into its potencies. This god would not just be its body but it would be nothing more than its body; it would not be effusive; it would be merely a what and not a who. In other words, if these potencies would be brought into a new tension such that A^1 wills rather than remains at rest and thus A^2 is brought into potency rather than being, then this god would not stand outside and anterior to this process as a free and indivisible remainder but would always be assumed into this process as first cause and first being, not something behind being or not yet being but something always already present. That would be too Hegelian, in that no moment escapes sublation and assumption into the dialectic, and it would also spell onto-theo-logy.

Das Seinkönnende in general or the mediated *Seinkönnendes* is only there once all three potencies are there in their mutual inter-determination. *Das Seinkönnende* first provides what “A” properly signifies. A^1 , A^2 and A^3 are all only potencies of the whole, namely A. First with A is there an identity and not just the dark Difference of the unprethinkable. First with A is cognoscibility. Up to this point, however, A is only there in thought, not yet as something actual, i.e. not yet as something that has willed, as something in *actus* or in being. Schelling says, “*Das Seynkönnende* in general = A *posited* (emphasis mine); the immediate *Seynkönnendes* had to be denominated by A^1 , but as such it appears first at the end, *in process* (emphasis mine)” (II/1, 391, “Darstellung”).⁵¹ Schelling affirms that the first possibility or first potency as a whole is only there if all the particular potencies are there in their insolubility, but what does he mean when he says that it is only there “in process” and as actually “posited?” If *das Seinkönnende* in general is only there if the potencies are there and if the potencies are not the conditions of the being but are only there if the one who *Is* the being is there, then the actual positing of *das Seinkönnende* in process can only be if the one who would be the being would be. *Das Seinkönnende* in general is not Being but only its figure, *how* it would be. What is desired is not Spirit as the highest of the three potencies – as this only completes that which is the power to be – but rather Spirit free to will or not to will, i.e. Spirit that can do more than just complete but can also begin something novel.

51 “Das Seynkönnende überhaupt = A gesetzt, müßte das unmittelbar Seynkönnende durch A^1 bezeichnet werden, aber als solches erscheint es erst am Ende, im Proceß.”

The figure of the being can only be what it is. It may be the potency of a future being but not because it brought something novel into being itself. The three potencies demarcate, thus far only for thought, the necessary determinations of “that which will be,” which was the first description of God as futural. The meaning of copulation is transitive. Copulation “can” God. If the potencies are first there as figure of the being because the one who *Is* the being is first there, then only primal copulation brought about that which can be. Thought has brought the analysis this far:

The task is...to have the principle free from the being, for itself, in seclusion...In order to arrive at science in general we had searched for the being and that which the being *Is* in pure thinking preceding all science. It provided for us chiefly the modes of the being in the inner necessity of thought; but from these elements of the being as from a merely abstract allness of possibilities, which only are if the one is that *Is* them... (II/1, 488, “Darstellung”)⁵²

The negative science arrives at the concept of the *prius* or A^0 only in the abstraction of the potential (Schelling, *Initia*, 87) but to actually commence from the *prius* is to begin with a free deed precedent and constitutive of the potencies. Negative philosophy’s object is the concept of A^0 “free from the being” (Schelling, II/2, 560, “Darstellung”)⁵³ and its figure, which it arrives at “only through exclusion, thus negatively (*ibid.* 562).⁵⁴ Positive philosophy reverses the direction, moving from A^0 to the potential so that A^0 appears not as that excluded at the end of the science but as the absolute *prius*. This commencement from the *prius*, however, can only occur through the deed and that which occurs by deed signifies not *something* but *someone*. The question is: “*Who* actually *Is* the being – the one who is the potencies – who is *as* this figure?”

52 “Die Aufgabe ist...das Princip frei vom Seyenden, für sich, in seiner Abgeschiedenheit, zu haben...Um zur Wissenschaft überhaupt zu kommen, hatten wir das Seyende und das was das Seyende Ist im reinen, aller Wissenschaft vorangehenden Denken gesucht; es erzeugten sich uns nämlich zuvörderst die Arten des Seyenden in innerer Nothwendigkeit des Denkens; von diesen Elementen des Seyenden aber, als einer bloß abstracten Allheit von Möglichkeiten, die nur sind, wenn eines ist das sie Ist...”

53 “...frei vom Seienden...”

54 “...nur durch Ausscheidung, also negativ...”

5 Who Is *das Seinkönnende*, the Effusive One?

Schelling unmistakably affirms that the three determinations comprising the figure of the free and effusive Spirit are not principles of this Spirit but to the contrary, “not because they are He is, but to the contrary, because He is they are” (II/3, 243, “Erster Teil”).⁵⁵ Spirit as a whole and not just as one of its moments is absolute actuality prior to all potency, even prior to its own figure, to its own *modus operandi* (*ibid.* 262). Remaining with the standard notation, A^1 , A^2 and A^3 only are because A^0 Is *but* this Is never is without being the being (II/1, 570, “Darstellung”), i. e. never as Being before it would already belong together with thinking, conceptuality or cognoscibility. Being may only be *as* original potency but Being apart from even “possible potency” – in order to speak paradoxically – is nought. To assert A^0 , however, is to commence by first positing a beginning at all, to commence from that which one wants. Schelling phrases it forcefully enough:

That wanting...with which positive philosophy itself begins is A^0 dissolved from its assumption [and] explained as *prius*, as that wholly free of the Idea it is pure *Daß* (‘Ev τ), as it remained in the previous science, only now it is made into a beginning...I want what is above the being (II/1, 570, “Darstellung”)⁵⁶

This does not mean that “ A^0 is without the being” because “without something on which it could prove to be existing it would be as good as non-existent; there would be no science of it” (thus not even positive philosophy). “For, there is no science where [there is] nothing general” (*ibid.*).⁵⁷ A^0 is free, effusive Spirit existing not as highest potency but as *prius* of the potencies, as absolute *prius*, capable of commencement, of setting something into motion, even a novel configuration of its own manner of being, of the potencies.⁵⁸ To want A^0 outside the Idea, as a be-

55 “...nicht weil sie sind, ist Er, sondern umgekehrt, weil Er ist, sind sie...”

56 “Jenes Wollen...Womit die positive Philosophie selbst beginnt, ist das von seiner Voraussetzung abgelöste, zum *prius* erklärte A^0 ; als das ganz Idee=Freie ist es reines *Daß* (‘Ev τ), wie es in der vorigen Wissenschaft zurückblieb, nur ist es jetzt zum Anfang gemacht”...“Ich will, was über dem Seyenden ist.”

57 “Nun ist aber A^0 nicht ohne das Seyende. Ohne etwas, woran es sich als existierend erweist, wäre es so gut als nicht vorhanden, es gäbe keine Wissenschaft wo nichts Allgemeines.”

58 Spirit now refers to the *prius* of the potencies and not to its body figured *as* Spirit, i. e. the third potency. The Spirit of the depth, the one existing in itself (der an-sich-seiender Geist), is not yet God because, as shall be seen, God is relation and

ginning, is to want not the being but Being itself anterior to the being as a figure. The *Daß* is nothing without the *Was* but the *Was* is only there because the *Daß* is and not vice versa.

The three configurations (*Gestalten*) enable a future being. These configurations, to repeat, are not Being itself but its figure, the primal possibility enabling future being. Why, though, would A⁰ as free Spirit actually decide in favor of this first possibility? The three configurations show themselves to free Spirit as a whole as the multitude of potencies of a future being. This possibility of a future and novel being – the creation – is not there before Spirit, i. e. before Being has a figure. The first possibility appears as “the unprovided, (unforeseen), unexpected, [*das Unversehene (Unvorhergesehene), gleichsam Unerwartete*]” (II/3, 267, “Erster Teil”) and sudden – something unwilled.⁵⁹ The first possibility is novel or original, that in which the possibility only first arises through its actualization. This possibility is not even God Himself and is therefore something supervenient, the possibility of something novel that was not there before. God did not come to this possibility but the first possibility for potentialization in general only is because God *is* this as sheer act. *Potentia* only is because *actus* or God is and not vice versa. This is why God as free Spirit is not sublated into the potencies, even if the potencies become rearranged. In the arrangement described above the potencies are simultaneous but if they would be separated, then they would be brought apart from one another into a succession, not yet into the lineal but brought apart by expanding the absolute density of a point into a circle. In the circle, each potency is still every other potency, none are for themselves, each point is every other and beginning and end still coincide, but they are brought out of indistinguishable chaos into the distinguishable, out of the chaos of Difference itself into determinate difference.⁶⁰ Every

here one speaks only of the Spirit in the depths prior to its being drawn into relations, even the inner relations of the supervenient potencies. This Spirit is still not yet God because only a moment. Spirit remains utterly bound within its own density while God is outside Himself as pure relation and as something decided. God is act and not point of departure.

- 59 Pseudo-Dionysius proves helpful as he wrote, “What comes into view, contrary to hope, from previous obscurity, is described as ‘sudden.’” (*Complete Works*, 264). The sudden appears as a non-explicable flash of light into inscrutable darkness. Nothing can be expected from the darkness except more darkness.
- 60 That God, again, is not any point along the distinguishable periphery or the periphery itself, that God is not any identity at all Schelling almost belabors. He plastically refers to God as the “non-unity (Nichteinheit)” that cannot be numbered as a fourth outside of the three potencies (*Einleitung*, 115–116).

part is equal to the whole (Schelling, *Urfassung*, 81); the center exists in every part of the periphery. The periphery is but expanded center. The parts of the periphery cannot be dismantled because the whole is not a collection of parts but only the *modus* of the one whole. By means of the circle the original possibility shows itself to God. As soon as eternity is, so is the original possibility. This possibility only is because God is, yet it is just as old as God. God antecedent to the unity of His three forms, prior even to their being broadened into a circle, is the moment from which positive philosophy commences. The as such existent and free Spirit is *das Seinkönnende* but that this primal possibility of a future being is there and tripartite as *Seinkönnen*, *Seinmüssen* and *Seinsollen* is only due God's will.

6 Who is God?

God is neither the figure of the being, nature, potency, ground nor *das Seinkönnende*, but the one transitively holding the potencies together in their nature and configuration through His will. God is not the nature held together but as He who holds this configuration He is personality. Potency equals matter and to be matter is to be a subject but God is not the figure, matter or body, but free and presiding will and thus personal.⁶¹ God is certainly not a subject who wills but primal copulation holds sway "Godly" as the identity or Person who God *Is*.⁶² God is

61 Only the individual and singular can be personal. God only proves Himself as a person in proving Himself singular and individual. Note that according to classical rationalism the name of God indicated indifference. For Schelling, God is not the indifferent point of departure but the decisive deed that first institutes difference. The copula is not an indifferent link between two parts but the transitive event of differentiation.

Also, that positive philosophy begins with God as real instead of just having Him at the end as in negative philosophy does not mean that His revelation is complete at the beginning, just as a human person is real but her personality is never fully mediated. A person never reveals oneself in an instant but piecemeal, which means that there is always an indivisible remainder. One may never, so to speak, exhaust their personhood in their personality. The full revelation of the person remains for a future time. Likewise, God's potencies reveal Him without Him, in turn, being reduced to them. This incommensurability preserves His singularity from the general and constitutes His personhood.

62 God as A^0 and not A^1 , as He who institutes the differences between the potencies, is not a being at all and so certainly not a subject. A^1 is subject because subjected (unterthan) by A^2 , but A^0 is subject to nothing else and instead presides over all

first the Lord or God of His own prior divinity. God seizes possession of that which preceded Him proper. The material configuration of the potencies can be altered or temporarily sublated but the sublation of the will by which God holds sway as person over this material configuration would be a sublation of the unity of the configuration. God's material nature can be sublated and altered but His super-natural will presiding over His material nature cannot be.⁶³ The potencies are the arrangeable material at hand for the configuration of the being, for its modalities, its *modus operandi*, its essence, but God is the *person* behind these masks, these personas.

Said differently, although the personas construct the identity or essence of the person and the person, God, never exists without some persona, God is nevertheless the precondition of His modes of being. God creates not just the potencies themselves as principles or causes of the future creation but He posits them even as potencies of His own being. God does not give Himself being but He is the God (God=Lord) of His own pre-given being. Being has precedence over cognoscibility, thus God has no need to bring Himself *into* being but He does have need to reign *over* His own unprethinkable being. To be godly is to be Lord of one's own being and, thus, above being, to be *überseiend*. In this regard, then, is God prior to His determinations. If God would not be the Lord of his own manner of being, then He would not be *above* being and *supernatural* but, in fact, nothing more than nature, a mere organism naturing or presencing forth in accord with its innate tele-

the potencies (Schelling, II/2, 319, "Darstellung"). A¹ stands in the subject position but A⁰ first brings all positions into being, itself the transitive copulation presiding above both subject and object position. Only in a verbal sense and not in an ontological sense is A⁰ a subject.

Walter Schulz never grasps the full import of A⁰, only able to see in it a "bearer (Tragender)" of the potencies ("Macht" in Hasler, 26–27). He fails to note that there is no bearer, no subject, until A¹. Schelling does not begin with something in itself that wills itself, but he begins from that which is prior to itself.

- 63 God may break the form of His being, arranging it into the figure of the potencies, but He cannot sublate His being. His *Ursein* is an indivisible remainder, "the not to be sublated fact [das nicht Aufzuhebende]" (Frank, *Mangel*, 153). This cannot be suspended, because it is the condition of His being, not *how* He is but *that* He is at all. Yet, God is also not just this unprethinkable Being; God is not what He *is* but only He who He *will* be. He is free against his own Nature, against His own unprethinkable Being. His quoddity does not determine His quiddity (just as, contra the ontological argument, the reverse is also not true).

ology.⁶⁴ God, however, is not an organism presencing until its fulfillment but a supernatural will anterior to His own figure that constitutes Him as God proper. The potencies are potent because they enable the vision of a future possibility – the creation – but God, as prior to all potency, as pure act, predates even this possibility (Schelling, *Grundlegung*, 383). God enacts the original and what is original is not a copy of a model, of something already possible, but originality is the enactment of that first made possible in its actuality (Schelling, *Urfassung*, 82). Should the potencies not admit of a *prius*, nothing would forbid each potency from being a parallel universe⁶⁵ completely unrelated to the other two potencies. Only the potencies as a whole constitute the figure and matter of the being because they are bound by A^0 , the immaterial will *who* God Is. Manfred Durner correctly observes:

(T)heosophism's wealth of thought henceforth [i.e. in the late philosophy of mythology and revelation] unequivocally loses its influence. Not only the actuality but also the possibility of the world since 1827 arises not simply *out of* (emphasis mine) the concept of Spirit but is *in* (emphasis mine) [the Spirit] only as one 'posited and willed *by* (emphasis mine) [the Spirit] itself' (X, 282). (*Wissen*, 221–222)⁶⁶

Unity as form, i. e. as synthetic figure, is *what* God as Spirit is, namely *das Seinkönnende*. The so-called unity, however, as *actual* is the true principle undergirding and permitting the subsequent synthetic unity. Durner writes, "The actual unity is as the true principle simply Being itself,

64 God is neither the subject nor object but as transitive copulation above both. To think God as subject would be theological and to think Him as object ontological, i. e. this thinking would only have God as a ground for grounded beings. Schelling's latest philosophy, particularly through his analysis of the copula, thinks both subject and object as *relata* ensuing from the primal clearing, the event that appropriates each to the other. The ground is not a pre-given entity that natures forth unto its consequent, the grounded, but the primal act of ground-ing first gives a ground. God is not the first being but reigns as Lord over everything that could be, even the becoming ground of His own pre-given, unprethinkable being.

65 A multiverse is possible, but a plurality of universes is not. The multiverse still admits of a dark pre-cursor acting as Same. It is indeed *a* multiverse and not a plurality of multiverses. A multiverse is the dark night where no possible worlds have been excluded because no decision had been made for a uniform universe yet.

66 "... (Das) Gedankengut der Theosophie verliert nunmehr eindeutig an Einfluß. Nicht nur die Wirklichkeit, sondern auch die Möglichkeit von Welt ergibt sich für Schelling ab 1827 nicht einfach aus dem Begriff des Geistes, sondern ist in ihm nur als eine "von ihm selbst gesetzte und gewollte" (X, 282)."

which holds sway and implements itself in the factual being one and co-operatively arranged potencies" (*ibid.* 249).⁶⁷ In A^0 the potencies, since not yet related to a future being and therefore completely intransitive are absolute, i.e. without relation and without being. Here is only the absolutely Alone. The Alone is not yet God as such but only the Absolute. God, so-called, as the simply Alone precedes truth, i.e. the clearing of the potencies and therefore also the possibility of beings or possible verities. This god, the Absolute or Alone, does not simply deny a place for other gods but for anything at all; it is solitary rather than unitary, simple theism equivalent to atheism rather than monotheism. Theism asserts god as solitary or alone, monotheism says that God is One or unitary rather than Multiplicity. The name God only properly applies not to *that* which is in solitude because synonymous *with* Being but rather to Him *who* reigns as Lord *over* Being and His own essence as that which can be (*das Seinkönnende*). The *Daß* marks the (a)theistic moment of the solitary Alone prior to the possibility of a future being, the creation that would result from a tension of the potencies. This moment that is nothing but a point of departure is the Absolute, that without relation. The naked *Daß* artificially thought as prior to cognoscibility, Being artificially thought in isolation from thinking, does not yet relate to a future possibility. God must not be equated with the Absolute.⁶⁸ The concept of God implies that of Lordship, which does not entail the absence of relation but rather a relation *over*. To be God is to be Lord over being, i.e. to have the power not only to posit it but also *not* to posit it, hence freedom as *das Sein- and Nichtseinkönnende*. To possess the power to posit or not posit a possibly future being, namely the creation, means to possess the power to be more than a principle presencing unto its culmination but to be a transitive and transitory Cause.⁶⁹ God is only Person insofar as He is also Cause.

67 "Die aktuelle Einheit ist als das wahre Prinzip das Seiende selbst schlechthin, das in den faktischen einseienden und miteinander vermittelten Potenzen west und sich realisiert."

68 Werner Marx correctly observes yet more fluidity in Schelling's terminology, noting that he does not always employ the terms "the Absolute" and "God" univocally. Sometimes either of the two can refer to that prior to the (separation of the) potencies, the "nonground," or to the consequent, existent identity that is "God" or "Spirit" proper (*Philosophy*, 83–84).

69 Until now the point has been belabored that God is not a first cause. In such assertions "cause" functioned instrumentally, i.e. as either an efficient, formal, material or final cause. The Cause, however, brings forth even instrumental cau-

Eternal freedom at rest is not the positive but the positive is the deed. Freedom is not just nature necessarily bodying forth but also that which can remain at rest. The actual deed of that which could have also not been does not emanate, does not necessarily move from antecedent to implicit consequent, but accidentally, yet factually, and transitively acts as Cause. Eternal freedom as the Absolute bears no relation to this future possibility but God, as Cause, necessarily relates to that which He can effectuate. God can only be God in Lordship but Lordship entails relation and not absoluteness. God is only God once the possibility of another, future being is there. Should the other being merely be the necessary consequent or emanation from the antecedent ground, then the other being would not be futural because all movement, so-called, would occur *sub specie aeternitae*, i.e. without real transition. The possibility of future being would not be for another being if the future being would only be the necessary predicate or that carried by an eternally present subject. The future being is another being because if it would be, then it would be the creation of something that was not already implicit in the subject. It would be something novel, something different. God's essence consists not just in the potency of a future possibility, namely *das Seinkönnende*, but in being Lord over future possibility, namely *das Sein- and Nichtseinkönnende*. If He would be the former merely, then he would only be nature, only an organism, only *natura naturans* necessarily passing over into *natura naturata*, only substance necessarily passing over into its attributes. God, however, as free Cause, can effectuate transitively, can act without losing freedom, can act without presencing, can act and indivisibly remain free Cause. God can "do the deed" without being consumed/consummated. Although the effects of this deed may be eternal and everlasting, the deed itself is temporal, i.e. the deed first creates temporal distinctions and it itself becomes Past as always already "having been."

To assert that God is only Cause without also accepting something anterior to God in His propriety amounts to the assertion that God is the *solitary* thing without any anterior, the Alone. This does not even admit the existence of that foreign unground within God Himself. This is the assertion of mere theism. On the other hand, to say that God would only be ground and not Cause proposes materialism. If

sality itself. The Cause is the cause of temporal determinations, of the subjection of the Past and the projection (*Entwurf*) of the Future. The four causes already fall within time, e.g. an efficient cause is a past cause, a final cause from the future and material and formal causes occur as co-present.

God were only ground or substance, namely that thought to underlie and bear that which would follow it, then He would be nothing more than φύσις naturing forth unto its effect, unto fruition. Schelling proposes, however, that God is only Cause insofar as He is ground and vice versa (*Grundlegung*, 332). In other words, substance only even is as a ground for its consequent or as a bearer for predicates once its enduring substantiality has been posited. Unprethinkable *Daß* consumes rather than bears concreteness, namely attributes and predicates. Unprethinkable Being must first be transfigured into substance or ground by God as Cause. Nothing functions as ground by itself, i. e. as Alone, but a ground presupposes the Cause that posits it as non-being, as that which is not in act but only is in potentiality.⁷⁰ To be potent, however, is to be matter and matter-being and subject-being are synonymous. Matter and subject are that which can potentially be other than they are. They accept form but in and of themselves they are nothing. To be potent is not to be but only the capacity to be. On the flip side, God is only Cause once He *actually* posits the unground as ground – a point which this work will not reach until the following chapter. Cause and ground, deed and effect, are inseparable just as subject and object are inseparable only because bound by the deed of copulation that first brings each into being. The Cause is only Cause in the act of volition. God is thus not a substance, not even a substance that wills, but nothing but will and deed. God does not relate but is nothing but relation. Pure relation means pure Cause in opposition to instrumental causality. God is first and foremost not the Cause of beings but of Himself as non-being, i. e. as ground. God is not ground but the ground-in-deed.

The *Daß* is an abstract and artificial moment from which positive philosophy departs. The departure as such actually precedes the moment departed from. As was seen in copulation, the subject does precede the object or predicate, but both *relata* are derivative. Likewise, the Cause does not introduce determination into the undetermined *Daß* but even the undetermined *as* something indeterminate proceeds from the deed of the Cause. The Cause is neither determined nor undetermined but

70 In this context, Manfred Durner helpfully writes, “The concept of potency simultaneously also implies the meaning of ‘ground’ and accordingly ‘substructure’, which does not have any being in itself but as basis and assumption of an actual being is subordinated to the same. [Zugleich impliziert der Begriff der Potenz auch die Bedeutung von “Grund” bzw. “Grundlage”, die kein Sein in sich selbst hat, sondern als Basis und Voraussetzung eines aktuell Seienden diesem untergeordnet ist.]” (*Wissen*, 157).

posits both (*ibid.* 300). The Cause presides as Lord of the clearing, Lord of copulation. All three of the potencies result from the deed and not from Nature. Nothing ensues from Nature because eternal Nature consumes rather than posits. That Nature would become a determinate nature, even as the decisively determined indeterminacy, can only be thought in conjunction with Cause. If this were not so, then the Multiplicity of Difference itself would never permit itself to be subject to that giving propriety and decisiveness (*das Maßgebende*), which can only be from the Cause. The Cause, then, proves itself as Cause only insofar as it stands above Nature. The Cause is neither *natura naturans* nor *natura naturata* but deed. The first deed was the positing of the unlimited *as* unlimited, *as* non-being and ground.

Insofar as God is Cause, which means the same as Lord over Being or pure relation, He proves Himself as more than Being (τὸ ὄν) but *überseiend* (ὁ ὄντως ὄν), beyond and above being (*ibid.* 305–306). He proves Himself as the one *who Is* Being. God stands embossed above alterior Being and appropriates it as His own substance. He is not simply substance or nature but, unlike substance, deals with that outside Himself. God is Lord because He is Cause. Without Lordship God would be nothing but Nature, nothing but fate. God stands embossed not just prior to, as the Naked Existent does, but *above* everything essential. The essential is always in being but God is not essential because not in being; He is “*ex se*” (*ibid.* 310). God is act or deed and not nature or essence; He stands outside Himself and not within Himself. He is not natural but supernatural. As Cause He is not a principle of nature, which functions by necessity according to its nature, hence its fatal character. God is not the Real merely but the Cause lending predominance to the Ideal over the Real. By granting this predominance God holds the two together. They are not conjoined from without but they belong together because the Cause first posited them as distinct. God is the unity of the Ideal and Real as Lord, i.e. not as substance but as Cause. In bringing about their division He also enacts their unity, their belonging together. The unity is not substantial because it is not the result of their prior opposition but God unites them by first bringing them each into being as something distinct. They first come into being by being posited in opposition. Here lays the belonging together of thinking and Being and why one cannot be reduced to the other. If the unity were substantial or natural, there would not be an indivisible remainder standing above the opposition as that holding the contradiction together. The contradiction exists because

it is not brought into contradiction from without but has its being in first being posited *as* contradiction.

God is neither Cause alone nor ground alone, neither nature alone nor supernatural alone, but He is only the one insofar as He also posits the other. God is not ground as such but set *as* ground by the Cause; however, “if there were nothing [the unground] that could become ground, then Cause could also not be” (Schelling, *System*, 126).⁷¹ Likewise, Nature in God is not that *through which* He is God – which He is as Cause – but that *without which* He could not be God, because otherwise He would have nothing over which He could raise Himself and prove Himself as Lord. In one sense God gives Himself the matter of His work insofar as He sets his unprethinkable Being *as* matter, but in another sense Being must precede Him as Cause, but in that moment Being truly is as nought.⁷² In that moment Being is not even decisively indeterminate and unbounded. God is not Nature, not an impersonal It, some essence or substance, but He is supernatural Cause and Lord, i.e. He is Person. Personal unity is never substantial unity but decisive unity. Substantial unities indicate only the necessary movement from Nature to natured. The positive is Causal, indicating the freedom of the Cause to preside over its own decisiveness as Person.⁷³

71 “...ist nichts was Grund werden kann, so kann auch keine Ursache sein.”

72 In a very real sense God does create out of nothing. Only with creation out of nothing can substantiality be overcome and its naturing forth as an organism with a pre-given teleological principle. All becoming is free becoming because the result of deed and not the naturing forth of φύσις.

73 Werner Beierwaltes astutely shows that God is Person rather than Nature because of the pains Schelling takes to distance His God from Aristotle’s Unmoved Mover, which, in Schelling’s opinion, is passive and impotent rather than the impassive, but active, Lord of Being.

“The Aristotelian God, as the ‘un-moved’ end that does not again become a truly productive beginning that goes forth from itself, is, despite the Aristotelian discourse of *energeia* ‘On, not the ‘personal’ and accordingly ‘efficacious’ or ‘actual’, but rather the merely ‘ideal’; as a concept trapped in itself [it is] therefore [a] ‘passive’ God... This God could also not, primarily as the [God] of Schelling, be thought identical with absolute freedom and so as ‘Lord of Being’, who is or will be what He *wants* to be. [Der aristotelische Gott, als das ‘un-bewegte’ Ende, welches nicht wieder zu einem wahren, aus sich selbst herausgehenden, produktiven Anfang wird 9XIII 105), ist trotz der aristotelischen Rede vom *energeia* ‘On (XIII 104) nicht der ‘persönliche’ (XI 564) und gerade dadurch ‘wirkliche’ oder ‘actuelle’, sondern der bloß ‘ideelle’, als Begriff in sich befangene und daher ‘passive’ Gott (XI 559 f)... Dieser Gott könnte auch nicht, wie der schel-

By asserting the freedom of God to create or not to create, to enact or not enact the first possibility, one must assume that God already stands in a relation to this possibility. In other words, if the Cause is of the type that it does not necessarily presence, i.e. pass over into its effect, then something must stand between the two. The creation, in fact, even the possibility of the creation, cannot follow from God's nature but results simply from God's *fiat*. The peculiarity of Schelling's latest philosophy lies therein, that not even God's own nature, the configuration of the potencies, ensues from nature but even that results only from the deed. Manfred Durner confirms:

The demand to take 'the absolute freedom of God in the creation' (XIII, 310; see also X, 281) as the point of departure of philosophical reflection, is first sufficiently realized with the new methodical approach in the actual *late philosophy*, according to which the inversion of the immanent determinations of Spirit to transitive potencies no longer takes place 'naturally'... First in this conception is God truly free not only to posit the world – as this deed of activation of a possibility does not change His own selfhood – but also just as free not to posit the world, since He does not need the world in order to be Himself. (*Wissen*, 226)⁷⁴

A¹, A² and A³ constitute the "matter" of God but He Himself is A⁰, the *prius* of the formation of His material determinations into either a godly or ungodly configuration. God proper is only there once the primal possibility of the creation is there. Only then is God Lord to posit or not posit the creation. That the potencies have become arranged into a configuration, i.e. have been brought into existence by being broadened into a circle and have not remained ensconced in the sheer darkness of the pre-eternal point, only resulted from the primal copulation of A⁰ prior even to God proper. The ensuing essence, however, is the *Was* of the *Daß*. Thinking and Being belong together but are not reducible to each other. The *Was* is the image of the imageless; it is the repetition of the

lingsche primär, mit absoluter Freiheit identisch und so als 'Herr des Seyns' gedacht werden, der ist oder sein wird, was er sein *will*.]" ("Aristoteles", 61–62).

74 "Die Forderung, "die absolute Freiheit Gottes in der Welterschöpfung" (XIII, 310; vgl. X, 281) zum Ausgangspunkt philosophischer Reflexion zu nehmen, wird erst mit dem neuen methodischen Ansatz in der eigentlichen *Spätphilosophie* zureichend realisiert, gemäß dem die Umwendung der immanenten Bestimmungen des Geistes zu transitiven Potenzen sich nicht mehr "natürlicher"-weise vollzieht... Erst in dieser Konzeption ist Gott wahrhaft frei, nicht nur Welt zu setzen – da diese Tat der Akтуierung einer Möglichkeit ihn in seinem Selbstsein nicht verändert –, sondern auch ebenso frei, Welt nicht zu setzen, da er ihrer nicht bedarf, um er selbst zu sein."

faceless, identity come to the Same that beforehand was not a self-same but Difference. The interstice between A^0 and the actual creation, i.e. the possibility of potency, what Schelling calls “wisdom,” binds the ensuing *Was* to the *Daß* and by drawing this *relation* also permits A^0 to be *as* God. God is pure relation⁷⁵ and A^0 thought bereft of relation is the Absolute, but it is God if thought already in relation to a possible, future being as its Lord. This interstice, wisdom, draws the relation constituting the jointure between God and that over which He is Lord.

7 The Law of Decisiveness and the Interstice

The foregoing has explicated the pure *Daß* as will. Will is that able to bring forth possibility; will is *Können*. Each of the potencies was explicated as a form of will or *Können* and the potencies as a whole in their essential configuration constitute a self-possessing, circular will. This, however, is all before something has actually been willed, before the potencies have *actually* been arranged into a temporal configuration and thereby become *potent*. This is the blind, rotary, libidinal motion (rather fixture) of drives before something is actually desired. This is before even eternity. Drive is pure, blind libido. Only with desire is there *actual* will because only then is there actually something to be willed other than just masturbatory circulation and the perpetuation of blind drive or pure force. The world law (*Weltgesetz*) breaks the monotony of blind will, i.e. drive.

Schelling explicates world law as a law of decisiveness. This law, “which tolerates nothing accidental”⁷⁶ (II/2, 143, “Mythologie”), demands that the possibility of something other than itself be shown to the self-enclosed will. Only when this possibility is shown to it is its willing or not willing decisive. The world law is a law of decisiveness but not one of coercion. The law does not demand any willing of the will, it does not demand that it presence; it only demands that it either will or not will and that it not remain indecisively and therefore accidentally what it is. It should not be what or who it is, e.g. God, accidentally but

⁷⁵ To be pure relation is to be pure personality. God is not a what, not His substance/nature but only a who. God's being consists not in His nature but only in His Lordship over His nature, i.e. only in His personal relation even to Himself. God does not *have* personality but *is* nothing other than personality, a pure who unconditioned even by his own whatness.

⁷⁶ “...das nichts Zufälliges duldet...”

only resolutely. The accidental both could and could not be. It is that which is undecided.⁷⁷ That which is decided severs its accidentality from itself in the act and thus assumes responsibility for its being. As decided, it is no longer anything accidentally, but through its own deed. The world law demands that one, even God, whose unprethinkable being is given in advance of Himself, be who one is decisively through deed and not just accidentally. The decisive deed is the move from accidental to essential being, to responsibility, from accidental Nature to Person. It is the move from unmerited accidentality (*Zufall*) to destiny⁷⁸ (*Schicksal*), destiny, because the deed severs the accidental and contingent from itself. Deeds are written in ink. They are indelible and therefore constitute the transition from the accidental to what can no longer be otherwise, what cannot be effaced, i.e. destiny. The law of decisiveness cannot tolerate anything undecided and the undecided is the accidental.

The world law says that the potencies (i.e. not yet the potency for the creation but only that which is potentially God or the point before it has been broadened into the divine circle) cannot stand as mere conditions of God's essence but that this must either be decisively willed or rejected. To be decisive always means to *transitively* be something or not. To be something as mere accident is fence straddling. The law shows the dark will prior even to God proper to itself; it shows it to itself *as* will, i.e. as freedom. Pure eternal freedom is akin to the one-year old who, though she is free, does not yet know herself as free and *in actuality* then she is not really free at all. True freedom only appears with the awareness of this freedom. The will is nothing more than a blind drive until an interstice hollows a breach in drive in which desire can appear, a breach in the dense will in which "space" for freedom is allotted. Only when the primal pos-

77 "Normally we call accidental what was able to be and not able to be, but even that merely able or unable to be is something accidental because that which it is, namely that which can be, is and is not, namely it is not such that it could not be the opposite. Further, an accident is also what it is independent from itself, thus accidental in respect to itself, -without its willing. [Zufällig nennen wir insgemein das, was seyn konnte und nicht seyn konnte; aber auch das bloß seyn und nicht seyn kann, ist ein Zufälliges, weil es das, was es ist, nämlich Seynkönnendes, ist und nicht ist, nämlich nicht so ist, daß es nicht das Gegenteil seyn könnte. Ein Zufälliges ist ferner auch, was unabhängig von sich selbst, also in Ansehung seiner selbst zufällig -ohne sein Wollen -ist, was es ist.]" (II/2, 152, "Mythologie").

78 Destiny relates to the word "destination," unlike fate, which relates to the word "fatality." Freedom and destiny are complementary concepts while freedom and fate are contradictory.

sibility shows itself to the resting will does the will at rest first become that which can will *or* not will, i.e. only then does it become a will at all. Before it could really do neither, not decisively anyway. Beforehand, if it willed, its willing was not a deed but the mere blossoming and presenting of φύσις. If it did not will, then it was because it was still impotent to tear itself from itself. The reason why this primal possibility is shown to the will is nothing other than the world law itself.

The world law demands decisiveness even for the Nothing, i.e. for unprethinkable Being which thought prior to possibility and cognoscibility truly is nought. It demands that it cease being nullity accidentally and that it decide for itself as what it is. The *Daß* is the first accident so God must choose to be it decisively. In appropriating the *Daß* as His own God resolutely decides to be Nothing, i.e. to be as no thing. As decisive, He is the Nothing or non-being in an indicative rather than in a subjunctive sense. He cuts away the possibility of ever being something that is in being. God's decisive inessentiality is His essence; He is the first decision, the first repetition. He repeats nullity in order to be it as No-thing, but in so doing He supplements it with something novel. The Nothing is not that which does not allot space for anything and so is simply Alone but, as decided, the Nothing decisively and actually refuses everything which could be. It deposits the totality of the possible as its refuse. God's unprethinkable Being is not necessary but the first accident. God is not a necessary being and so atheism is possible because God's decisiveness manifests itself indicatively, i.e. in an affirmative and exclamatory sense. "God exists" or, more exactly, "God does not presence" is a real assertion and not just tautology, because it results from a decisive deed that could just as easily have not been willed. Blind will or drive indicates only the blind chance of (a)theism and not the purposefulness of decisiveness. Even willing as *Ursein*, i.e. pure freedom, must become decisive freedom, freedom liberated from its own accidental fate (ανάγκη) or law (*Gesetz*) (Schelling, *Initia*, 106). Eternal freedom is accidentally and blindly free. To be decisive it must either abstain from willing or decide for temporal dispersion in order to become actual, i.e. historical, will. The law of decisiveness does not demand that all possibilities be willed. It is not a law of presence. It demands that all possibilities arrive, that they become actually possible, i.e. potent. Abstinence is also decisive. God could have remained forever ensconced in darkness.

The ambivalence of the Duas or Difference itself cannot persist but must be decided. The world law is synonymous with Parmenides' statement. To say that where there is Being there is thinking is more than de-

scriptive but, prescriptive: Being must become cognoscible, the unessential must become essential and the undecided decided. Even the undetermined must become decisively indeterminate. The world law as the law of decisiveness, as with Parmenides' principle, is the final frontier, beyond which thought cannot trespass. Aristotle, too, correlated the demand for decisiveness to the notion that thinking and being belong together. This correlation is implied in his notion of the principle of non-contradiction. Albert Franz writes, "If this would be possible" –that one could assert both X and not-X at the same time and in the same respect – "then τὸ αὐτό would no longer be identifiable as such, as inner contradiction it would have lost its identity and nothing more could be said of it with the standard of truth. For this reason the principle of contradiction is for Aristotle also shown as a law of being" (*Philosophische*, 164).⁷⁹ The law of decisiveness is the principle of non-contradiction in prescriptive form, which itself is nothing other than the prescriptive form of Parmenides' statement. Should there be truth, something rather than nothing, revelation rather than concealment, ἀλήθεια rather than λήθη,⁸⁰ recollection/repetition rather than forgetfulness/oblivion (*Vergessenheit*), then that which is must be what it is and even that which is not must be as nought. Everything must become a self-same and expunge duplicity. That where there is Being there also does thinking or intelligibility belong is a law of truth, the law demanding that the self-same arise by severing itself from duplicity or the Multiplicity of Difference. Τὸ αὐτό is only τὸ αὐτό with decisiveness. The world law corresponds to Parmenides' statement.

Spirit, as third potency, is self-enclosed will. It is self-possessing will but only by necessity or by nature. The *free* Spirit, however, is more than just one of the potencies and effusively has the power to begin something novel, not just the end of natural and self-enclosed organism. Once the primal possibility has been shown to the necessary Spirit it is God because God is pure relation. God is only there once He relates to that being over which He is Lord. He is Lord over this being only because He is free to posit it or not posit it. This relation first liberates God from His own holy ἀνάγκη (Schelling, *Urfassung*, 87). This relation

79 "Wäre dies möglich, dann wäre das τὸ αὐτό nicht mehr als solches identifizierbar, es hätte als innerlich Widersprüchliches seine Identität verloren, und es könnte nichts mehr mit Wahrheitsanspruch von ihm gesagt werden. Damit ist für Aristoteles das Widerspruchsprinzip auch als Seinsgesetz erwiesen."

80 Note that λήθη does not actually mean "concealment" but rather "forgetfulness" or "oblivion."

shows something futural, i.e. something outside the rotary motion of drives, the perpetual return of the same, something beyond ἀνάγκη or fatality (*Verhängnis*). In relation the will may will something outside its own necessary *modus operandi*,⁸¹ i.e. its own nature. The possibility of actually willing and not remaining at rest is first there with the possibility of something to be willed. Beforehand, there was only monotony or blind, neutral fatality (ἀνάγκη). First with the relation to an outside is the possibility of a temporalization given – even if only the temporality of eternity. Spirit is first God with the possibility of temporalization.

This possibility of the time of eternity is synonymous with the possibility of the creation. Schulz accurately portrays Schelling's position when he affirms that for Schelling this original possibility of the creation is welcome (*Will-kommen*) (*Vollendung*, 218). The German "Willkommen" is a composition of two words, "Wille," meaning "will," and "Kommen," meaning "to come." Schelling emphasizes "Wille" because he says this possibility of the creation allows the Spirit to discover itself as will, i.e. as Lord or as God. Also noteworthy, however, should be that "Kommen" means "to come." *Kommen* is inherently futural and temporal and not the nauseous ubiquity of drives. By nature will is libido or drive but that which is willed as futural, as something particular that is wanted but not yet had, is desired. The primal possibility gives the will a will; it transforms what is will by nature into a freedom that may desire something not yet present, not yet contained in its own nature. Even God, then, is not auto-affective but affected from without. God does not will arbitrarily out of thin air, so to speak, but real possibility affects Him. This cannot be otherwise because God is not yet there without this affection. This affection posits (*setzt*) God as God, i.e. it dephases or deposits (*entsetzt*)⁸² Him. Schulz also interprets Schelling correctly when he writes that this affection is where God is neither active nor passive but is the "unity of activity and passivity: the self-affection" (*Vollendung*, 227).⁸³ Creation is a deed but the deed can only be accomplished by the affection of God's own nature. In other words, the potencies must be brought into tension and, even more strongly (and accurately) spoken,

81 Actually, the three modalities – can, must and should – only first exist as a tension of the potencies and those do not properly exist at all prior to their tension. Yet, here one may speak of the modality of necessity as opposed to possibility, all of the three modalities proper signifying various modes of possibility.

82 "Entsetzung" stems from pg. 40 of Schelling's *Initia Philosophiae Universae*.

83 "...die Einheit von Tun und Erleiden: die Selbst-Affektion..."

they are first brought into being at all only in their affection. Before this affection, the potencies were nought. The pure *Daß* before the primal affection was nought. It is that prior even to the time of eternity and prior to all potency.

As late as the 1820s, (see *Das System der Weltalter*), Schelling thought the creation as synonymous with the becoming of the Absolute. The deed had no place in the intransitive system. There creation arose immediately without breach from the nature of the Absolute. Time is rupture, but the becoming of the Absolute is seamless. Its becoming was synonymous with the creation. Horst Fuhrmans affirms this reading, arguing that Schelling's philosophy had previously revolved around the becoming of God as a "turning wheel," the rotary motion of drives immediately and necessarily presencing, i.e. naturing, forth as the creation (*Initia*, XVIII). By the lectures on mythology and revelation, God occupies a place prior to the becoming of the creation. In these latest lectures, while one may say that God's essence – the potencies – becomes, God Himself (A⁰) remains impassive as the indivisible, never presencing remainder.⁸⁴ God's impassivity, however, does not mean He is without affectivity. God only is at all because dephased or deposited (*entsetzt*), i.e. affected by the primal possibility (*Urmöglichkeit*). The primal possibility is neither the creation nor the potencies as its pre-condition, but the possibility of the potencies themselves, namely that they could be brought into temporal relation and thus exist. This primal possibility functions as interstice, drawing God into relation with the possibility of the creation insofar as it tears open a fissure or breach between God and this possibility. The creation does not flow from God's nature. God Himself, though He does not become, does not yet exist until affected by and related to this possibility. Prior to this possibility God is not in relation and so not yet God, but the Absolute. Neither the creation nor the potencies constitute the predicate representing and/or completing God as God. The becoming of the predicate or consequent does not effect God, who is impassive, but

84 Jens Halfwassen has written, "Being is, on account of the ground, not free to unfold itself or not to unfold [itself]. [Das Seiende ist aufgrund des Grundes nicht frei, sich zu Entfalten oder nicht zu Entfalten.]" ("Freiheit", *Pensées*, 472). This is only true of the period preceding Schelling's latest philosophy, the period of the *Weltalter*. In Schelling's latest lectures, as seen in Chapter Two, positive philosophy can begin by itself, i.e. without negative philosophy. That is to say, it can begin prior to the doctrine of the potencies. God's Lordship, i.e. sovereignty, over being, as emphasized in his latest lectures, emphasizes the real transcendence of God's freedom over His powers/potencies.

it does *affect* Him, because God only exists with this possibility. Affectivity brings God into being *as* Lord, i. e. as God. Neither subject nor predicate effects the other, but the decisive, eventual deed of copulation affects the inscrutable Nature of the Absolute, drawing it into a relation of Lordship. God is God as Lord of being prior to the creative act. Whether the creation is actually willed does not *effect* God in the least, because by virtue of its possibility God is already *affected*.

The primal possibility exists from eternity, not posited *by* but shown *to Ursein*. Otherwise the primal possibility could not be an alterity that exercises an affectivity upon the Absolute, but God would still posit His own condition, still trapped by the inner motion of drives, still under the dominion of auto-affection. God could not possibly do this to Himself, however, because prior to this moment, i. e. as Absolute or Alone merely, potency does not exist. That before God is impotent. To be subject is to be potent (Schelling, *Urfassung*, 51–52); therefore, there is *stricto sensu* only a subject once the primal potency exercises an affectivity upon it. Neither the subject affected nor the primal possibility exercising the affectivity precedes the other. Even eternity is nought if both would not be there. There is only a subject for being, i. e. a Lord of being, once the possibility of another being presents itself. Even in *das System der Weltalter* Schelling seems to allow that the primal possibility must precede any potency on God's part. He there writes that the primal potency is not what "can be" but only what "could be," namely if something were only there to be it (pg. 154) – of course, this would be God. That this possibility would come to fruition requires the decisive deed of the will. The possibility is not an already potent potency within the nature of the being as the plant is somehow already in the seed, but even the potency for the creation may only emerge through God's Causality and not His nature. A principle or the instrumental causality of teleology simply shows what was already there in the seed, in the beginning, but the Cause makes novelty, that which was not waiting for its time to presence already from the very beginning. The Cause is pure, meaning that it does not have *potency* within itself but feels itself as will, i. e. as Cause, only because the primal *possibility* has affected it. Principle, personality and divine essence are not already in pure willing but are the consequences to be proved should willing as *Ursein* actually will something determinate.

The primal possibility, the possibility even of potency, presents the Cause with the possibility of the first "substrate [*Substrat*]" (Schelling, *System*, 159), the potencies of the creation. The potencies are first the

substrate or ground for the still futural creation. The primal possibility shows willing to itself as Cause by presenting it with the possibility of the ground. The Cause is not Cause, i.e. the possibility to will or not to will, instead of self-consuming, objectless, chaotic willing that can do nothing other than its own willing, apart from being the freedom to bring about the ground, to ground the ground. The Cause is only Cause with the ground and the ground indicates only the crudest materialism should it not have been grounded and brought into its substantiality by the Cause. The primal possibility draws and binds the two into this eternal and inseparable relation. God is not a substrate – for, He is not *das Seinkönnende* (*that* which can be) but a *He* – God Causes it. God is pure relation, the effusiveness beyond all potency, distinguishing and binding Being and thinking, Nature and Identity. God is transitive Cause, not *a* beginning in nature but sheer commencement, personal because free to give Himself His own principle.

God's deed creates the temporality of eternity, not a transition from antecedent to consequent under the operation of the principle of His nature, but a true transition to novelty. God may truly commence and not just flow forth from His nature. If God wills the creation, then He wills it freely and not as a necessary result of His nature. The primal possibility draws a breach between nature and God, God and the creation. Schelling does not endorse pantheism. Pantheism only resides in the theistic moment in which the *Daß* is solitary and Alone. Only then is *it* the All but not the one *who* is the All in All – monotheism as panentheism. God's Nature is only the potency of the non-divine within or rather anterior to Himself, the stuff or matter of His divinity. Two things are known of nature: 1) In the late philosophy proper, the primal possibility is not a result of God's nature. 2) The actual willing of the creation does not flow from nature but is enacted through the affection of nature. Something alterior and supplemental affects nature. The supplement or enculturation does not just cultivate nature but adds something to it that does not come from nature itself. Should one equate "nature" with "essence," then one could enumerate a third determination of nature: Nature only exists after the deed has brought essence/nature forth from chaos or non-essence. God's nature is both antecedent and subsequent to Himself. Nature is prior in that it is assumed as already given only in order that it may be excreted from God in the act of creation, but it is posterior in that it is first actually posited *as* nature, essence or substrate by virtue of this excretion. For now, the focus is upon how the primal

possibility is not resultant *from* nature but something supervenient that comes *to* nature.

That which comes to nature not only supplements it with something supervenient but it also first posits nature as nature. Nature is not yet as wild prior to enculturation. The non-conscious is not yet the unconscious prior to the caesura separating the two.⁸⁵ For Schelling nature is timeless and temporalization is the supplement. Nature stands in contraposition to time and freedom. Remember again that the positive in positive philosophy is not the moment departed from, naked *Daß*, but the actual, free deed of departure, actual commencement. The positive concerns commencement and rupture – the problem of time. Creation results from a decisive deed and not the fruition or presencing of eternal nature.

Neither the creation nor its possibility ensues from God's nature but an interstice comes between God and the creation, between the absolutely a-temporal and eternal time. If the creation ensued immediately from God's nature, God Himself would enter the process of creation.⁸⁶ Under Schelling's conception, the creation is something that could have not been, something willed and not the product of nature. This separates the creation from God's being such that the creative process does not touch, i. e. desecrate, desacralize or secularize God. God does not become alongside the creation, but He remains as He is. God is effusive, He is more than His nature.

The ontological proof demonstrated "God" as the substance of being but not as the Lord of Being (Schelling, *Grundlegung*, 163). Substantiality, however, is nature *in* God but not God as such. Substance, at least in the Spinozistic sense, is bereft of subjectivity, as if mere objectivity.⁸⁷ Since

85 Derrida reinforces this image in writing, "The supplement is the image and the representation of Nature. The image is neither in nor out of Nature" (*Grammatology*, 149).

86 "The concept of the creation is opposed to the account according to which the world would only be a consequence of the divine nature (and not the consequence of a divine will)... Indeed the world arises also according to our portrayal through a divinely posited process, but through a process into which God Himself does not enter... [Der Begriff der Schöpfung ist ebensowohl entgegengesetzt der Annahme, nach welcher die Welt nur eine Folge der göttlichen Natur (nicht die Folge eines göttlichen Willens wäre)... Zwar auch nach unserer Darstellung entsteht die Welt durch einen göttlich gestetzten Proceß, aber durch einen Proceß, in den Gott selbst nicht eingeht...]" (II/3, 292 "Erster Teil").

87 Schelling contends that Spinoza's God is only a cause essentially and not transitively with the result that it could not have not created (I/10, 222, "Vorrede"). Mere substance necessarily natures forth unto its result.

not subjective and certainly also not free, it immediately passes over into being (*ibid.* 137). This cannot refrain from being and cannot extricate itself from being; it passes immediately into its consequent.⁸⁸ Substantial being, for Schelling, is nothing more than *das Seinkönnende*. That is to say, it is simply *das Seinkönnende* from nature without having yet come to understand itself as such. Should it come to know itself as such and thereby be itself not according to nature but freely and decisively, something must come to it that severs it from nature, from what it is blindly. God is more than mere substance. God is Lord over substance and that over which one is Lord is appropriated and possessed by its Lord. God appropriates blind nature or substance precisely insofar as He reigns as Lord. If He would not have dominion over it, then it would not be His substance but alien to Him. God is God only by virtue of His relation to that attributed to Him *post factum* as His being. God is only God by virtue of that which draws Him into relation, retrieving Him from the ab-soluteness of irrelative substantiality. God is this substance only insofar as He is more than and above this substance. "It is only that without which He would not be God but not that by which He is [*as*] God" (Schelling, *Grundlegung*, 330).⁸⁹

The primal possibility is of the creation. This is the possibility of the totality of everything possible (*die Allmöglichkeit*)⁹⁰ – Wisdom (II/3, 302,

88 Axel Hutter reminds one that if a cause or ground would immediately presence (*aufgehen*) unto its consequence, as in logical analysis, then the temporal and historical is lost (*Geschichtliche*, 158). The latter requires a never presencing remainder (*nie aufgehender Rest*). Manfred Durner adds, "If the Absolute would now be nothing more than the potency of immediate 'Seinkönnens,' then it could not retain itself as principle but would rather immediately become the principled [*Wäre das Absolute nun nichts weiter als jene Potenz des unmittelbaren 'Seinkönnens', dann könnte es sich nicht als Prinzip erhalten, sondern würde sofort zum Prinzipiierten.*]" (*Wissen*, 161). This would be nothing other than a will to presence, not a will that could and also could not be, but a nature that could only be. In losing itself as principle by being assumed into its own becoming, it proves itself less than effusive, as bereft of remainder.

89 "...ist nur das, ohne welches er nicht Gott wäre, aber nicht das, wodurch er Gott ist."

90 The potencies of the creation comprise the primordial accident. Creation is unnecessary and thus the the first *a posteriori* fact, not to be thought *a priori* in advance of its actuality. As actually willed the tension of the potencies in the creative act starts a dialectical movement that is a real rather than a pseudo-movement. The actual dialectic of the potencies comprehends the totality of what can be as all-encompassing reason. Reason, though, only has accidental necessity. It is the primordial accident or first fact with only conditional necessity, namely,

“Erster Teil”). Wisdom is not God but the *Urpotenz* of what *could* (not yet “can”) be. It is not yet what *can* be, but only the possibility of potency, what *could* be.⁹¹ While potency is not yet in the naked *Daß*, its possibility is not excluded. The *Daß* is the chaotic, undecided *Duas* from which nothing has been excluded. Exclusion results from decisiveness. Wisdom is neither God’s nature nor His work; it is *with* Him from eternity (*ibid.* 301). Manfred Durner states, “‘Wisdom’ as spiritual prototype of the creation is that which through formation makes possible order and loans its inner meaning to all of being” (*Wissen*, 220).⁹² By acting as interstice, wisdom first draws the division between inner and outer, possible and actual willing. What or who is this interstice opening pre-eternity into eternity by drawing God as the relation between blind substance and a future being, between blind drive or libido and desire?

The interstice is nothing other than the wisdom moment or not yet expressed Λόγος. The event of the creation will have as aim the expression of the inexpressible but even before the creation, as the creation’s possi-

if something would be, then reason must necessarily be able to comprehend it. The creation – the totality of what is possible – ensues from the tension of the all-comprehending potencies and so God’s creation is a real production and not ideal (Schelling, II/4, 354, “Andere Deduktion”). It is nevertheless also logical insofar as it is the whole of all *a priori* possibles, the realm of the Forms.

- 91 Possibility designates not yet actual, but future, potency. Potency=power. Potency designates possibility as efficacious, as that currently within one’s power. See e.g. John D. Caputo’s “Postcards From Paul: Subtraction Versus Grafting” in *St. Paul Among the Philosophers*, pg. 21. In this anthology Richard Kearney writes in “Paul’s Notion of *Dunamis*” (pgs. 142–159) that in Aristotle’s *De Anima dunamis* is either generic or effective. Generic *dunamis* is the potentiality of a child to someday become a mathematician or musician, while the effective variety is that of an adult who currently possesses the skills/power to exercise this potency (Kearney, 145). The subjunctive “could” corresponds to the generic type while “can” corresponds to effective *dunamis*. Barack Obama *can* be a good President while Arnold Schwarzenegger cannot because he is not American-born and thus legally without power to become President, although one might say that he *could* be a good President, if only it were within his power. *Urpotenz* or primal potency designates not potency but the possibility of potency. Yet, this possibility is real and if effective nonetheless potent, so one could call it the potency of potency. Possibility, become efficacious, is potency or power. Note also Jason M. Wirth, who writes that for Schelling *Potenz*=actual potentiality, that which is already in being (*Historical-Critical*, 200), while *Möglichkeit* would indicate that which *could* come into being.
- 92 “Die ‘Weisheit’ als geistiges Urbild der Schöpfung ist dasjenige, was durch Gliederung Ordnung ermöglicht und allem Sein seinen inneren Sinn verleiht.”

bility, the Λόγος is the *sine qua non* of possible expression. It makes expression possible because it first comes to nature and draws God as pure relation, as He who is only an outside, who is *ex se*. In Schelling's words, "God as such is nothing at all in Himself; He is only pure, pristine relation. ... He is *only there* to be a Lord of being" (*System*, 105).⁹³ The substantial is only concerned with itself but God is wholly outside. Said otherwise, the Λόγος is not the possibility of the expression of the inexpressible God because God spoke it, since the Λόγος was not *spoken* in the beginning but already *is* in the beginning. Λόγος or Wisdom, the possibility of possibility, is before God speaks it. God is only first a subject, i.e. with identity and not just abysmal substance, once it is there. Schelling explicitly states, Λόγος means "subject of God" (II/4, 96, "Zweiter Teil"). The Λόγος, as that which draws God as pure relation, provides the possibility of difference as relatedness. God is "there" only once He is posited, i.e. finds Himself in a position, namely the subject-position. The Λόγος is the possibility of potency (potency=subjectivity) because it first makes possible relation and difference. Peter Warnek says, "Schelling thinks the creation of the world as an event of the word which establishes difference as relatedness" ("Bastard" in *Epoché*, 253). God's Word enacts difference by excluding beings from the ground, first dividing that which grounds from that which is grounded (see Chapter 4).

Wisdom makes possible the Son as Λόγος, as God's actually expressed Word and power. God as Father means God as Lord, sovereignty being the sole virtue by which God is God. God is only God with the Son, i.e. as Father. God is only Lord, i.e. only potent instead of impotent, with the Son. "... (A)ctual Father is He first in and with the actualized Son..." (II/3, 335–6, "Erster Teil").⁹⁴ "Father" and "Son" are mutually defining. While one would give precedence to the Father as if He preceded the Son, the Godhead is without the Father except by virtue of the Son. The Father and Son come to actualization in unison. "Before the Son is, the Father is invisible,"⁹⁵ nay, *is nought*. No will prior to temporal determination could generate the Son; otherwise the Son would be the atemporal consequence of God's essence and not the effect of His decisive

93 "Gott als solcher ist gar nichts in sich; er ist nur reine, lautere Beziehung." "Er ist nur da, ein Herr des Seins zu sein."

94 "...wirklicher Vater ist er erst in und mit dem verwirklichten Sohn..."

95 "...ehe der Sohn da ist, ist nur der Vater der unsichtbare..." (II/3, 336, "Erster Teil")

and transitive deed. Only as temporal is the possibility of the Son as begotten and independent of the begetter viable. With a transitive will, that which is willed determines the identity of the willer just as much as the willer determines the identity of the thing willed. Just as one's character and relation do not exist by nature but through deed, so God is only Father, Lord and potent with the actual Son. The Λόγος, which once actualized is the person of the Son, first makes possible the transition from *Daß* to *Was*. In other words, the pure density of the *Daß* is unknowable because prior to cognoscibility but God is only God as pure relation, but relation or difference is cognoscibility. Lordship consists in relatedness but to be Lord is also to be Father; therefore, to be Lord or God is to have already entered the light of cognoscibility. God is not darkness but light. God would not be who He is, i.e. pure relation, without that making relation possible. With the interstice a space is opened or a light shed in darkness in order that God may be free against his own *Ursein* (II/4, 112, "Zweiter Teil"). Light, remarks Schelling, is nothing except in opposition to the pure and blind something of the Real (Schelling, *System*, 48). Now the terms have traded places so that the Real is no longer nothing, but the dense and dark something through which the light of the Ideal shines. The Ideal is not the Real; it is not a thing at all. Light is not something but only the concept of the Thing, the Real. Light conceptualizes the Real, transfiguring it into matter, that which can accept form and be grasped conceptually. Light is then the soul of matter. The lighting opens the interval or interstice; it is a clearing and truthing. Heidegger, of course, employs the same images, asserting that creation as light does not make, produce or constitute objects and subjects. The truthing that brings into the clear has nothing to do with a transcendental constitution of objects by means of the logical hegemony of categories (*On Time*, 46). Truthing, lighting, grounding, clearing – all signify originary temporalization. Being does not presence but it is commencement, temporal and historical breach from the Past, its own *Ursein*. *Ursein* is willing and distance from one's will is freedom. The lighting of truth liberates God from His own nature, His natural will, in order that He be free to will something other than Himself – a future being, creation. Dark nature predominates until the "pre-beginning (*Vor Anfang*)" is brought into light and potency. When something is potent rather than active it submits to the greater. Potency is to be subject(ed). The Son is not essential for God's substance but for His *Wesen*, for His subjectivity and holding sway, i.e. for His providence and sovereignty. The Son brings *Ursein*/substance into potency, into God's subjection and possession in

order that He may be Lord over it. The Son is the proof that God is not impotent.

The Son is the Word incarnate because in him the will is pronounced. Just as one's words manifest one's invisible spirit, likewise the Son is the Word of the untouchable Father, His Understanding (*Verstand*) (Schelling, *Urfassung*, 466). In bringing understanding to the Father he marks the first pronouncement and image of the imageless, the definition of the *definitum*. Schelling remarks that the Understanding is the *prius* of all things. The absolute *prius* is the Real and, as Horst Fuhrmans elucidates, the Understanding is *prius* insofar as it is "the Real of God become Understanding" (*Initia*, 219, note 24).⁹⁶ Primal willing lacks understanding and *Ursein* becomes transfigured into Understanding only when posited as subject. The Word is the subject of God because as His Understanding it first brings Him into power, into potency, i.e. subjectivity. The greatest mania (*Wahnsinn*), chaotic willing, lies in the depths of the highest understanding; it is the energy of the understanding (Schelling, *Einleitung*, 126). Willing is generative and understanding is the commanding element (*das Beherrschende*). God is only God as Lord (*Herr*) and Lordship (*Herrschaft*) only accrues where the Word, as God's Understanding, dominates (*beherrscht*) the chaotic element – primal willing (*Ursein/Daß*). Understanding sets an end to chaotic willing just as willing marks the beginning of understanding. Here lies Schelling's response to the Scholastic question of will and intellect. Transitive copulation is the unity of voluntarism and intellectualism. Even Walter Schulz concedes that Schelling accounts for this unity insofar as *Können=Wissen* (*Vollendung*, 317), i.e. willing=understanding. God's willing=His knowing. Primal willing originates as Understanding. Where there is Being, thinking accrues as its supplement.

By virtue of the Son, i.e. the spoken Word, God is Lord and Father. God does not presence forth from His nature in order to have as expository attribute the Son but the Son is the condition of the Father. God is not substance but pure relation or pure Lordship. God's essence is His existence because He is not who He is on account of His substance or nature but only on account of His action (*Tun*) (Schelling, *System*, 105). God is pure action, i.e. pure act, because He is pure *ek-sistence*. He is unconcerned with Himself but He is *ex se*, finding His sustenance only outside Himself despite the fact that His own unprethinkable being is always secure. God is not this unground, indifference or even Differ-

96 "das Verstand-gewordene 'Reale' Gottes"

ence itself but pure relation – the first doubling or repetition of Difference. The wisdom moment enables this primal relation, copulation or difference. Λόγος is Word insofar as it enables speech and expiration. Ex-piration allots space for relation. The Word enables God to be the original difference, “the difference of all difference” (Warnek, “Bastard,” *Epoché*, 259). The Word transitively draws in-divisible/in-dividual Being – Difference itself – and thinking into synthetic relation by gathering Being into a cognoscible identity.

Being does not exhaust itself in self-consummation but commences and re-commences. Being is not just willing (*Wollen*) but decisiveness, a will (*Wille*) capable of bringing forth novel repetition and not just the recurrence of the same.

Chapter 4

The Time of Eternity: The Potencies in Act

Being does not preside outside of its relation to thinking or cognoscibility, i. e. it has never not already copulated as synthetic (ontological) difference. This reduplicative differencing consists in a temporal dispersion, in the severance of before and after, what has been and what will be. This temporalizing event, as synthetic rather than simply analytic or tautological, generates and creates. In other words, this results not in the presencing of the same but the visibility (revelation) of novelty, of something completely original. Only freedom possesses the possibility of originality and so the primal repetition that is generation and creation is nothing other than the repetition of freedom, the imaging or potentiation of the possibility of genuine novelty and original (re)commencement in Man as posterior custodian rather than *prius* of the temporalizing event.

1 Generation and Creation

The *Daß*, pure *actus*, cannot will anything other than its own consumption without co-eternal *potentia* because all actual willing has an as of yet unattained good. Where there is a good there is more than timeless nature because where the good is there exists also a separation between beginning and end, between what is the case, which ought not be, and what is not yet the case but ought to be. Where beginning and end do not simultaneously coincide in an eternal present but are separated from one another is time. That which does not follow from nature as necessary consequent is temporal. The temporal is rooted in generation (*Zeugung*) and creation (*Schöpfung*). Both acts are from eternity and in this respect they are not *in* time but themselves are acts of temporalization, the acts that bring forth

the possibility of the Better¹ only by separating nature or ground from end. These acts sever beginning from end.

Wisdom, the primal possibility or, perhaps said better, the not to be excluded possibility of potency (because in the chaotic *Ungrund* that is the naked *Daß* nothing has been excluded because nothing has yet been decided), is as soon as time is, i.e. the fullness of time or the time of eternity. Wisdom is from eternity (Schelling, *System*, 204). The pre-eternal is the *Daß* that bereft of cognoscibility truly is nought, a merely hypothetical moment of departure. The positive consists in actual departure. The first transitive movement is the generation of wisdom, the primal possibility of the creation. Both the possibility of the creation and the creation are from eternity, i.e. both the generation of the Son and the creation are eternal acts. Note again how only that is original whose possibility coincides with its actuality, just as here the actual creation coincides with the generation of its possibility. The question of a time “before” time eternal is repelled. In other words, the primal deed is not a *terminus*, not a beginning, but the positing of a beginning/*terminus* by the pre-beginning (*Voranfang*) or the positing of a ground by the unground (*Ungrund*). The first deed was not enacted by an origin or ground but the primal deed itself is origination or grounding. Verbing takes precedence over nouns that would verb.

If the primal possibility of the creation (creation=the totality of what is potential and primal possibility=the possibility of potency) were a mere possibility *in* God, then it would be an effect of His nature, a necessary attribute, and God would be nothing more than substance. Wisdom as the primal possibility, however, does not stem from God’s nature but came to God as an extraneous supplementation of His nature. The possibility of a being apart from God did not lie in God’s own nature but supervened upon His nature. God does not have this affectation by nature but it affected Him so that He would not be Lord, i.e. God, at all without this supervenient affection. To be Father means to be Lord but the Father would never have been Lord and God without the Son showing himself as the possibility of a futural being. Time only is in the creation, the separation of beginning from end; therefore, there was no time “before” the creation when God would have allegedly had

1 Schelling repeatedly contends that Plato actually speaks not of the Good, but the Better. The latter implies a real overcoming of the worse and if God were the Good merely, then He would not have anything to do (*Grundlegung*, 300). Yet, God is the Good as such because also Cause of the Better.

this possibility *in* Him before He had posited it, i. e. set it outside Himself in order that it would then be as a creation *outside* Him. This is why one speaks of an unground or pre-beginning because “before” in this context means only “before the beginning,” “before the first deed.” This “before” was the nought that never has been and never will be present but simply is nought, null and void. This pre-beginning only is as a moment from which to depart, but in itself it is nullity. There was not an actual time before God knows Himself as Lord over being, i. e. over the creation, because before the creation time is not. The time of eternity is timelessly posited.

Manfred Durner, on the other hand, asserts:

Should God be shown as free Creator, then the ‘wisdom’-phase is to be necessarily thought as an integrating moment of the absolute process antedating the act of creation. If this phase is negated, then nothing remains except to postulate an ‘eternal creation’ in the Spinozistic sense, which means that the real world is then God’s Other and posited simultaneously with Him. [The real world] ultimately appears in such a conception as a necessary emanation of God (see VII, 347; VIII, 308). (*Wissen*, 223)²

Is this compatible with the foregoing? If the wisdom-phase is a necessary moment that acts as interstice, severing God’s nature/substance from His deed, then one must seemingly assert a “time” before the actual positing of the creation, a between “time” in which the wisdom-phase would have been a mere possibility and not immediately actual in God. If actuality does not flow as necessary result from possibility, then must one not align oneself with Durner and affirm some type of duration in which wisdom existed merely as possibility in God before the actual creation? Yes and No. This interstice does have priority over the creation but only as that positing time, which does not itself fall into time. The wisdom-moment has priority over the act of creation but not according to the actual deed. The “duration” in which this would have been as mere possibility in God before the creation has no extension; the duration is timeless and not a breadth divisible into smaller and larger segments. The deed of creation (like the generation of the Son) is not a terminal point that is part

2 “Soll Gott als freier Schöpfer erwiesen werden, so ist die “Weisheits”-Phase notwendig als integrierendes, dem Schöpfungsakt vorausgehendes Moment des absoluten Prozesses zu denken. Wird diese Phase negiert, so bleibt nichts anderes übrig, als eine “ewige Schöpfung” im spinozistischen Sinne zu postulieren. D.h. die reale Welt ist dann das Andere Gottes und mit ihm zugleich gesetzt. Sie erscheint in einer solchen Konzeption letztlich als notwendige Emanation Gottes (E 152; vgl. VII, 347; VIII, 308).”

of the temporal chain as its first link, but an eternal act (Schelling, *Urfassung*, 163).³ The creation and generation of the Son are both from eternity and so co-eternal, but the latter is the possibility of the former and, as anarchical event, this possibility is only given in conjunction with its actualization. It gives the will something to will – the creation. Just as one may immediately, i. e. without prolongation, will something desired, so is the act of willing what one desires simultaneous with the desiring of the desired. The thing desired is surely an interstice transforming blind libido into determinate desire but that does not necessitate that any temporal prolongation endure betwixt the desiring and the act of volition. Just because no interval elapsed between the two does not mean that the willing was not free or that it was unconscious. If one pushes an old lady out of the path of a vehicle without hesitation no one will say that this immediate deed was not free or incognizant, at least in the sense that it would have been willed arbitrarily, having garnered its moral character simply from nature rather than through the deed itself. So here does the interstice take precedence by making actual willing possible insofar as it, as interstice, transforms drive or libido into desire by giving the blind will something concrete that it may actually will in order for it to break free of its own necessity, its own blind, futile, rotary motion, the circulation of the same. Wisdom, as interstice, liberates the will from its fatality by showing the Same something other, the possibility of an alterior, future being. It liberates blind will by showing it the possibility of a future instead of monotonous self-presence; it temporalizes the will in order that it may act transitively.

God is first God in His Fatherhood, i. e. in His Lordship. He is only Lord in that He is Lord of being, i. e. once He *freely* possesses the possibility of an extraneous being.

3 “Now, that *actus*, that willing, whereby the creation begins, is not something fleeting, but something permanent and eternal. [Nun ist jener *actus*, jenes Wollen, womit die Schöpfung anfängt, nicht vorübergehend, sondern ein Bleibendes, ewiges.]” (*Urfassung*, 163). Also note “since it is a willing that separates time and eternity as such, it must therefore be *above* time as that which posits time [da es das Zeit und Ewigkeit als solche scheidende Wollen ist, so muß es als Setzendes der Zeit *über* der Zeit sein].” (*ibid.*). Time first arises already with past, present and future and not first as a past that flows into an eventual present and future. “If the past would have had to have first elapsed, so a time would never have been able to begin. [Wenn diese Vergangenheit hätte erst verfließen müssen, so hätte nie eine Zeit beginnen können.]” (*ibid.*).

From eternity, from then on, that the accomplished Spirit Is or is in existence, from then on the second [moment] follows in which the possibility of a being outside Him presents itself, which, however, is only possible through Him – not through His transient act but His everlasting act... In that the possibility of this being presents itself to Him, He becomes already internal as Lord of this being or as already possessing of this being, indeed not possessing it as actuality but as possibility. Here the concept of God passes immediately over into the concept of the Father as the original Lord... In this moment, where God is not already determined as Father... is that which the Son will be still in the Father, concealed in Him as a necessary likeness of His being – but already recognized by Him as the coming Son and loved by Him as such because the Father recognizes that in him through which He is free to posit a being outside Himself. Thus the Lordship, i. e. the divinity of the Father consists only in this freedom and so one must acknowledge and pronounce that even here the Son already has a share in or is necessary to divinity, i. e. to the Lordship of the Father, or that even here already divinity, i. e. the freedom of the Father... would not be possible without the Son, i. e. without him whom He already sees and loves as Son (II/3, 320, “Erster Teil”)⁴

In this moment who the Son will be – “will be” because the Son signifies the possibility of the future – is already concealed in Him. The Lordship of God, i. e. the godliness of God, is not possible without the now only futural Son. The creation is the arrangement of the potencies into a processive and progressive tension (*Spannung*). Like the generation of the Son, this process is not a stroke but an eternal act (*ibid.* 323). This act does not fall into the eternal process; it lies between pre-eternity and eternity as

4 “Also von Ewigkeit, von da an, daß jener vollkommene Geist Ist oder besteht, von da an folgt der zweite, in welchem sich ihm die Möglichkeit eines Seyns außer ihm darstellt, das jedoch nur durch ihn – durch sein nicht vorübergehendes, sondern immerwährendes Wirken – möglich ist... Indem sich ihm die Möglichkeit dieses Seyns darstellt, wird er sich auch schon inne als Herrn dieses Seyns, oder er wird sich inne als bereits besitzend dieses Seyn, zwar nicht es besitzend als Wirklichkeit, aber doch es besitzend als Möglichkeit. Hier geht also der Begriff Gott gleich über in den Begriff des Vaters, als des ursprünglichen Herrn... In diesem Moment, wo Gott nun schon als Vater (in dem angegebenen Sinn) bestimmt ist, in diesem Moment ist das, was der Sohn seyn wird, noch in dem Vater, verborgen in ihm, als eine nothwendige Gestalt seines Seyns – aber von ihm schon erkannt als der künftige Sohn und von ihm geliebt als solcher, weil der Vater in ihm eben das erkennt, wodurch er frei ist, ein Seyn außer sich zu setzen, und da die Herrlichkeit, d. h. die Gottheit des Vaters, nur eben in dieser Freiheit besteht, so muß man erkennen und aussprechen, daß auch hier schon der Sohn beiträgt oder nothwendig ist zu der Gottheit, d. h. zu der Herrlichkeit des Vaters, oder daß auch hier schon die Gottheit, d. h. die Freiheit des Vaters... ohne den Sohn, d. h. ohne den, den er schon als Sohn sieht und liebt, nicht möglich wäre.”

that constitutive of that very breach. As a transitive act it is temporal but insofar as it falls outside of the eternal process, i.e. the creation, it is not temporal. It is the timeless positing of temporal determinations. The first deed never appears as the first link in the temporal chain, never as the first cause or the first being. The first deed is always something Past, something always already having been completed, something that never was, is not and cannot be present. This deed separates the timeless from the temporal (temporal in the sense of the time of eternity). This deed is not to be understood *from* time, i.e. as an event occurring at the beginning of time, but nevertheless *in* time. It is a timeless positing. One cannot ask *when* this deed occurred. It has not a “when.” This deed posits time, remaining always over it and never assumed into it (*ibid.* 323–324).⁵ Although a timeless positing, this deed is not completely without temporal determination. As an eternal generation of the Son, i.e. of the futural, it is an eternal joy of overcoming the Past and an eternal striving for futurity. The Future is perpetually to come (*Zu-kunft, a-venir*). This Future falls outside of being; it will never *be* but only *comes*. God is Lord of being but His complete Lordship is something futural. God is only Lord as a futural God, as “He who will be who He will be” (Exodus 3:14). If the creation and the generation of the Son were timeless in an absolute sense, then there would be no true Future; everything would be the necessary and immediate consequence of nature. Temporality only occurs because nature has been supplemented. The generation and the creation must result from God as freedom and not from His nature/essence. This is why Durner affirmed some sort of duration, even if without extension, for the wisdom-moment. The only reason one can even sensibly speak of a “before” eternity or a “pre”-beginning is because the timeless positing is still determined by what it has posited, namely temporality. The positing is not first a *terminus*, i.e. the beginning, but only a relative “before.” The positive is always transitive and transitory (though not transient); negative philosophy only knows necessary emanation, i.e. the immediate naturing of nature, the immediate and seamless passage from ground to consequent, the seamless passage from *natura naturans* to *natura naturata*. God is only God in that He is tran-

5 “...a willing that insofar as it cannot itself be apprehended by time, but as the positing of time is above time and always remains above it. [...Wollen, das insofern selbst nicht von der Zeit ergriffen seyn kann, sondern als das Setzende der Zeit über der Zeit ist und immer über ihr bleibt.]” (II/3, 323–24, “Erster Teil”).

sitively Lord over His being, in that He is above and something more than nature and the seamless passage from ground to consequent. He has it within His grasp not to have to be Himself, to be against His own being, not to have to presence immediately forth from His own nature. God is Lord of His own nature/substance. God is futural because Lord of His Past.

The Λόγος makes possible the willing of God's own free expression (a^0),⁶ which is equal to God (A^0). The wisdom phase consisted in the Λόγος as the *prefiguration* showing the possibility of heteromorphism and heterogeneity, A^0 to a^0 . The Λόγος, as Son, is equal to but other than God. He is equal to God because the image of God, not as a representation resembling God but as that first bringing an image – and therefore the possibility of resemblance and dissemblance – to naked divinity. Copulation is transitive, rendering not the tautological " $A^0=A^0$ " but the synthetic " A^0 is a^0 ." The "is," transitively understood, is *Können*. A^0 cannot *be* as nought but only with an image (*Ebenbild*), only with form and figuration, conceptuality or cognoscibility. The Λόγος is the possibility of future figuration, the possibility of express difference, i.e. of A^0 differing from its own *ανάγκη*. God is the copulating relation between what are now His *own* naked substance and His *own* expression; God Is. One can now say that copulation is God and the offspring of copulation are the subject as God's substance and the predicate as His attribute/expression. Only with these as His own is He properly Himself. God is the relation both scattering and re-gathering these two *relata*. God is copulation, the Is. He can posit substance/nature *as* substance/nature only by concomitantly positing them as His *own* substance/nature. He generates the Son as His *own*, His *own* expression, His *own Ebenbild*. Yet, each of these *relata* in turn appears as God's own precondition. God cannot be the Father without the Son and He cannot be Lord without His own substance or nature over which He is Lord. Copulation or pure, albeit transitive, relation only acquires the signification of God in its being towards its *relata*. God has no being outside of relation. God does not relate to an outside; God is outside. He is nothing more than relation, the Is.

God is nothing viewed absolutely, i.e. apart from His essential relativity. The expression is the Said but, in turn, the expression is the *sine*

6 The genitive here indicates both how God's full expression, Man, as the end of creation, is restored freedom and that God's pronouncing of His expression is not necessitated by nature but free.

qua non of that which speaks, the Sayer. Both Sayer, substance/nature, and Said, the expression, determine the mode of copulation binding them, i.e. whether the copulative Saying is godly or not. Copulation is the Saying and the Saying posits both the Sayer as *that* Sayer with *that* particular identity and the Said. The identity of the Sayer is only determined by what is Said. Saying precedes the Said, which, in turn, determines the identity of the Sayer.⁷ God is not the Sayer but Saying, not a *relata* but *relating*. God is copulating, prior to both the subject and object. Being is first subjectivity on account of the Λόγος because no subject is assumed but only the subjectless, identity-less *Daß*. There is only a subject first with that which draws the relation between that which *will be* subject and that which *will be* its expression or image. The image, i.e. the signifier, however, first draws the relation allowing God to be Lord, i.e. God. The signifier is the condition of the signified and not vice versa. The subject was not assumed first but only appears *after* the predicate shows itself.

Being and its cognoscible figure as Spirit are separable from God Himself. God has a being apart or rather before this. The being He has before He is the figure of Being, however, is before God has come into His own, prior to God in His propriety. The Λόγος, however, cannot be separated from the material configuration of the potencies. The Λόγος, not as the possibility of expression but as the already spoken or expressed word, is the soul and the soul cannot be separated from its body. The soul does not have its own being but can only be as the soul of the being, i.e. only as the soul of that body. That body (the figure of the being as the whole of the material potencies comprised of A^1 , A^2 and A^3), however, only is with the creation. This, then, is why the generation of the Son, i.e. God's repetition or perfect image, and the creation are one and the same eternal act. The former is the inner meaning or intent of the latter and neither is separable from the other. The creation brings forth the potencies in process, i.e. as actually potent, and the future image, the image to be expressed, is the immaterial unity unifying the material whole that is the potencies. The potencies work reciprocally and towards one goal because united by this pre-material aim. Neither A^0 nor a^0 are material

7 The fact that the Said escapes the Sayer, contra Derrida, is not the dying of the Sayer but, in fact, the maintenance of the Saying. The Said does not escape the Saying as much as Saying liberates itself from the Said in order that it may free itself of its objectivity and sustain its life. Death resides rather where one cannot extricate oneself from one's acts and manifestations.

as such but the latter, as (the) soul (of Man), necessarily relates to the material whereas the former can be without potency, i.e. without matter, even if only as nought. A^0 is above being and above matter as *a*-material. The possibility of the coming Son as the image of the Father, however, i.e. that to be willed, is only *im*-material in relation to future material; it is the meaning of the possibly future body, though strictly speaking neither is temporally before or after the other because both the generation and the creation are eternal acts, God's one eternal act.⁸ Without the soul the body would be an uninformed, chaotic matter and certainly not an organic whole. A^0 is above and before the organism, while a^0 is what is willed as the end of creation. The latter, soul, makes the organism possible; it is the inner meaning of the possible and material body. It makes this body a subject and gives it meaning, i.e. gives it signification. This body is then not a corpse but flesh. The body is the whole of potency and this is why the body is a subject because, as has been repeatedly affirmed, to be potency is to be matter and to be matter is to be subject. Matter and subject both signify what can be other than it is.

Has the rhetoric become too organic? What was wanted was not the homogeneous bodying forth of nature unto the fulfillment of its teleological principle but rather a heterogeneous copulation, doubling or repetition preceding any specific being, any specific organism with a form and teleology. In this vein, Patrick Burke attempts to relate Schelling and Merleau-Ponty in regards to creativity and the unconscious. He argues that for Merleau-Ponty "the 'savage logos' – the *logos endiathetos* rather than *logos prophorikos* – is the *barbaric* principle of creativity." For Merleau-Ponty the space opened in order that God may take distance from His will and be free towards His own being would be "dehiscence." While his savage λόγος is indeed barbaric, is not the term "dehiscence" yet still too organic and therefore too teleological?⁹ As organic as "dehis-

8 God could not will the generation differently than the creation. They are both accomplished in the same volition because God is not duplicitous. God's purity of heart demands He only will one thing.

9 The Oxford English Dictionary defines "dehiscence" as: Gaping, opening by divergence of parts, *esp.* as a natural process...and also as: *Anim. Physiol.* Applied to the bursting open of mucous follicles, and of the Graafian follicles, for the expulsion of their contents.

The first definition refers to dehiscence as a *natural* process, which is by no means the case in the late Schelling. The Λόγος is not natural but supplements nature. The second definition refers to dehiscence as "the expulsion of contents." For Schelling, the opening or fissure does not simply expel the pre-existing con-

cence” may or may not be, Burke draws a comparison between Merleau-Ponty and Schelling because the concepts are similar in other respects. For both, λόγος is, as Merleau-Ponty borrows the term from Stoicism, a “logos endiathetos.” For both, this λόγος is internal and not an objective or teleological λόγος, but the soul before the body. This λόγος does not preside over the conformity of event and concept (“Creativity,” Schelling, 199), i. e. *over* the body. It is not teleological but the possibility of teleology. It is teleology *pre*-formatively, i. e. barbarically or internally and not yet objectively, namely as that giving an objective to a physical, organic event. An objective λόγος would be part, even if end part, of a mechanism and would not make possible radical freedom but rather only serve as the objective for natural production. The λόγος serving that function for Schelling, at least once it has been unnaturally generated, is λόγος as A^4 .

A^4 is the soul which only is and only can be in relation to the first three potencies as a material whole. This, then, is properly the soul informing and guiding the material configuration. The wisdom moment, which is prior to the material potencies as opposed to A^4 , which is numbered amongst them as their immaterial soul, is the not yet pronounced word or *logos endiathetos* making form possible and thereby the information of matter. It opens the fissure in the will, i. e. in the natural wanting¹⁰ of pure drive, so that this wanting can become a will, so that this blind wanting or drive may actually have something to will or desire. This interstice makes possible the transition from drive/libido to desire, from wanting to a will that is free towards its own libidinous wanting. A^4 is actually what is willed once this transition has occurred. A^4 or *logos pro-phorikos* is the form of configuration that is actually willed for the material potencies once the possibility of freely willing as opposed to blindly wanting has been expressed. Just as A^1 , A^2 and A^3 could not have been without A^0 , in like manner A^4 could not have been without that which severs A^0 from the blind and rotary motion of drives without understanding. The interstice separating the effusive from its nature is the *possibility* of expression; A^4 is *actual* expression. The primal possibility is not yet a power, not yet a “can,” i. e. *das Seinkönnende* or the potent, but merely a

tents but generates or creates content from nothing. Content is not simply expelled but rather generated and created such that they appear as something novel, something that was not there before.

- 10 Note that in German “Wollen” can mean “to want” or “to will.” *Wollen* is blind and natural. *Wollen* alone is without a *Wille*. The three material potencies were all forms of wanting/*Wollen* or *Können* but A^4 is *Wille*, that which wanting wants or that which wanting wills.

“could,” the possibility of what later maybe *can* be. The law student *can* become a lawyer; it is within her power/potency. The newborn, on the other hand, does not possess this potency but *could* only *possibly* become a lawyer if she at a later date would choose to arm herself with the necessary tools, i.e. with the potency. She *could* choose to empower herself, though beforehand it does not stand within her power. This, unlike A^4 , is not posterior to, but rather the *prius* of the potencies.

A^4 is not the primal *possibility* but the fourth *potency* or power that is equal to the whole of the material potencies. A^4 , unlike A^0 , is not prior to eternity. It is the guiding principle of the acting of the material potencies in the creation. A^4 is equal to the material whole but it can only function as the aim of this whole, i.e. as “soul,” if it has a material whole to which it can relate and to which it is equivalent. As Schelling said, “Let us ask when it will most completely become soul...when the material has become wholly equal to the being, i.e. to the actually intelligible, to the original νοητὸν” (II/1, 446, “Darstellung”).¹¹ In other words, matter is only equal to the being once it has been formed into the figure of the being but that can only occur under the direction of A^4 . The inorganic conforms less to the willed image than the organic and the organic less than the soul. Only A^4 is wholly soul because only it conforms to the intent of the will, only it is the adequate image of the body, the adequate expression or repetition of the imageless. A^4 is the intelligible, guiding chaotic matter into a figure or a body, i.e. permitting them to be posited as potencies. A^4 , as soul, is pure act in contrast to the first three potencies (*ibid.* 451), although in contrast to the effusive A^0 , which is never potency, it is itself one of the potencies, namely the final one. A^4 , though in certain respects then an *actus* preceding its potencies, is the fourth and not the first because, as soul, it is inseparable from the being, i.e. from the material figuration as its inborn content (*ibid.* 452). “Matter,” so-called, ceases to be bereft of potentiality once it has been configured, i.e. posited as the body (*Körper*) of a soul. The soul is always embodied. Matter, however, never was actually posited as matter until formed as a body. To be matter is to be subject or to be potent but something is only subject on account of that for which it is subject; potentiality is only potent for that which follows it, for that which has subjected and thereby returned it to potency and posited it as its own matter. Subjectiv-

11 “Fragen wir, wann sie am meisten Seele seyn wird. Nach allem Vorhergegangenen offenbar, wenn das Materielle ganz dem Seyenden, d.h. dem eigentlich Intelligibeln, dem Ursprünglichen νοητὸν gleich geworden...”

ity, potency and matter are all synonymous terms. The soul cannot be without the body and vice versa. Here Schelling speaks of an intellectual and not, e.g. an animal soul. The intellectual soul is only bound to the sensible. It is the understandability (*Verständigung* and not *Verstand*) of the sensible (*ibid.* 453). It organizes chaos into an understandable concatenation. This is entelechy (Aristotle)¹² or in a more modern dress and more broadly understood, *conatus* (Spinoza), *élan vital* (Bergson) or subjective aim (Whitehead). This, however, would not be just any entelechy but the original one (*ibid.* 454).¹³

Once all four potencies are there, is there then nothing other than φύσις, nothing other than an organic totality, i.e. nothing outside the necessary and natural presencing of substance or will to power? Yes and No. Once this whole is there, it functions according to nature but *that* it is there is the result of the primal deed of A⁰, which is never subsumed into the subsequent natural process. That deed was above nature, above and before being. That deed does not fall into the being of the whole. That deed, i.e. the positive in positive philosophy, never presences. That deed separated willing or pure wanting (*Wollen*) from what was wanted or willed (*das Gewollte*). Willing and willed are the same yet distinguishable. The whole, what was willed, functions naturally while yet only the expression of the *super*-natural. Only φύσις, only the natural, presences but A⁰ never presences; it is always the never presencing remainder.

The deed first severing the natural from that prior to all natural operations in order that it would subsequently be the Lord of the natural or the super-natural is the decision for creation. The creation is not a potency first given by the figuration of the potencies but the decision for creation was also the decision to posit the potencies themselves by bringing them apart from one another, by expanded the point into a circle. The positing of the potencies could only be done by positing them in reciprocal determination, i.e. in tension (*Spannung*). A⁰ or the pure *Daß* provides unity as the point but that this point may have a consequent, synthetic unity as some figure or another, e.g. as circle, is provided by Λόγος or Wisdom and once the material potencies are there so is soul or A⁴, as this lattermost can only be in conjunction with a body. A⁴ is the εἶδος (not ἰδέα) of the whole. It is the image of what is willed, that first imag-

12 Soul is entelechy and the effusive *prius* or A⁰ is pure ἐνέργεια.

13 Schelling compares this to Leibniz's "dominating monad" (II/1, 454, "Darstellung").

ined by will. It is not God but the will of God, not Him but His willed εἶδος (*ibid.* 403). Schelling laments that this term has come to be translated as “concept (*Begriff*)” because εἶδος is actual and the term “concept” customarily only denotes something’s essence (οὐσία) and not its actuality. Concept only denotes essence, that which something could possibly be if in fact it would be, but only will denotes actuality. Concept denotes generality but only will denotes singularity. Nothing general but only the singular individual is actual. The will is not a general common to many but something proper only to the singular. The notion of concept is not excluded in εἶδος but εἶδος is certainly not reducible to it. Schelling states, “As efficacious force the soul is the *Daß* even of this determinate body [the figure of the being] but not a *Daß* separable from it. In this respect the *Was* is contained and comprehended in the *Daß*. Only in this sense is the concept also in the εἶδος” (*ibid.* 407).¹⁴ As stated above, A⁴ relates itself to the prior three as pure act insofar as it is the agency setting the potencies as prior, i. e. as subjected and brought into potency. They constitute the *Was* proper because they constitute what can be, i. e. potency for being, but not the *actus* of being, not even of their own configuration. A⁴ is the ideal expression and neither the unexpressed possibility of expression, i. e. the wisdom moment, nor A⁰ because the immateriality of A⁴ only is in relation to materiality, to a body. A⁰ and the wisdom moment can be in isolation from a body – even if only as nought. They are utterly unnatural or rather supernatural while A⁴ directs the natural body.

If the first three potencies are the *Stoff* or matter necessary if something is to arise and if these first three are all modes of *Können* or *Wollen*, then A⁴ must be the *Wille* that the blind *Wollen* can will. A⁴, although one of the potencies, relates to the other three as act because it first gives blind wanting a will. It first makes possible actual transition, which always moves *a potentia ad actum*, by first determining the prior three as potencies insofar as it relates to them as act. This *actus* permits the former three to be more than blind but *begrifflich* (conceptual) (II/1, 411, “Darstellung”). The potent is always there for the sake of the subsequent and in order to be subjected by it. A⁴ is *actus* because it is not for the sake of a subsequent that will surpass it but it is still one of the potencies insofar as it is not for its own sake. As Schelling says, what is wanted is “not entelechy,” which is there only in relation to the body and its potentiality,

14 “Als Energie nun ist die Seele das Daß eben dieses bestimmten Körpers, aber nicht das von ihm trennbare Daß. Insofern ist das Was in dem Daß enthalten und begriffen. Nur in diesem Sinn ist im Eidos auch der Begriff...”

“but rather pure energy [*Energie*] and no longer just the immaterial like the soul but the over-material [*das Übermaterielle*]” (*ibid.* 412).¹⁵ A⁴ is Lord of the body but it is not Lord of Being; it is not Lord to posit or not posit the body/potential but only its “for the sake of which.” A⁴ is immaterial in *relation* to the body but it is not *over* the body. It is not effusive. A⁴ is not A⁰; A⁴ is not God. A⁴ is not free to posit or not to posit but must fulfill its natural function of directing the body. Said differently, without A⁴ as soul the body is not a body but a corpse. *Wollen* without *Wille* is blind and corpse-like, putrefaction or decomposition (*Verwesen*) and not a holding sway (*Wesen*). A⁴ first makes matter or pure corporeality, so to speak, into a body by giving it something to will in order that it does not decompose.

2 The Act of Creation¹⁶

The act of creation separates past from future, before and after. It posits the first eon, the time of eternity. This separation of times is the expansion of the chaotic point into the cognoscible circle, the transition from *Wahnsinn* to *Sinn*. That all must move from *Wahnsinn* to *Sinn* is demanded by the world law, the law of decisiveness. The reign of *Wahnsinn* prior to sense or cognoscibility was not a “time” before God and eternity but an a-temporal *moment*. Blind being in God, that within Him, His anterior, without which He could not be, but not that *by* which He exists, is only a *momentum* and nothing according to actual time. Divine essence, then, is from eternity just like the creation. There was not a time when blind, selfless being subsisted. From the very beginning and that means from eternity forth God is Lord over His own Being and thus free to suspend it. This suspension, the act of creation, is a temporalization, a temporal production of new principles rather than the conceptual clarification of what is already at hand, e.g. the parsing of the already present concept by means of the dialectic. Edward Allen Beach even radically suggests, “...(T)emporality is both epistemically and ontologically prior to essence, prior to eternity, and even prior to dialectical logic itself” (“Later,” 41).

15 “...nicht Entelechie, sondern reine Energie, und nicht mehr bloß das Immaterielle wie die Seele, sondern das Übermaterielle.”

16 An adaptation of this section will also be published by a forthcoming edition of *Epoché* with the title “A Will Free to Presence... Or Not: Schelling on the Originality of the Will.”

The temporalizing act does not occur “in” eternity but posits even that eon. This act draws out time by raising the potencies from something essential to actual causes. Beach also writes that in this process of creation “the next succeeding level or principle of being is not just logically entailed, but is actually caused (*verursacht*), by the preceding potencies of the system” (*ibid.*). In fact, the system itself is something caused, something novel.¹⁷ The domain of cognoscibility, sensibility or understanding is something novel, a supervenience supplementing nonsense, supplementing Being with its cognoscibility.

This move from non-sense to sense corresponds to the origination of the understanding. When the so-called *Urpotenz* in the wisdom-moment shows itself to the “unprecognoscible” or A° , cognoscibility originates and the latter becomes understanding (*Verstand*). The law of decisiveness demanded that this primal possibility be shown to that bereft of potency in order that even that, even the *Duas*, be what it is decisively and not accidentally.¹⁸ The *Duas*, however, cannot be itself decisively as it is by definition the undecided and thus from eternity forth has already always been *Verstand*. *Wahnsinn* or the pure *Daß* was that moment before the time of eternity but from eternity forth understanding has held sway. By being shown the primal possibility – and that must be so, given the world law – A° feels itself as understanding. As understanding, however, it is not simply prior to the potencies but also already Lord over the potencies. From eternity it presides over potency. From eternity, then, it al-

17 Beach distinguishes Hegel’s dialectic of sublation (*Aufhebungsdiagnostik*) from Schelling’s “generative dialectic (*Erzeugungsdiagnostik*)” insofar as the latter accrues something more at every phase rather than canceling the preceding moments (*Potencies*, 85). With Schelling, the preceding is subordinated, i. e. brought into subjection or made subject, but not canceled or invalidated. Schelling presents an ontology with genetic principles, a veritable genealogy by introducing a veritable prototype of temporality even into eternity itself (*ibid.* 112). Schelling stands in stark contrast to Hegel, for whom, he himself wrote regarding essential forms, “temporal difference has no interest for thought (“Philosophy of Nature” Chap. 5, pg. 89–90) (*ibid.* 275).

18 Schelling pronounces, “The power of the understanding shows itself in the dominance of *Wahnsinn* [chaos/mania]. That principle, which obtrudes as *Wahnsinn*, is that which dispenses with matter [to be understood]. ... Idiocy emerges through the complete absence of all *Wahnsinn*. [Die Kraft des Verstandes zeigt sich in der Beherrschung des Wahnsinns. Jenes Princip, das als Wahnsinn hervortritt, ist das Stoffgebende. ... der Blödsinn entsteht durch die gänzliche Abwesenheit alles Wahnsinns.]” (*Grundlegung*, 452). This stems from the Stuttgart Seminars in which he similarly deems understanding coordinated madness and understanding without madness empty.

ready always has been *das Seinkönnende*, the possibility not just of itself as Spirit but of a future being, of the creation. This is *das Seinkönnende* that knows and feels itself as such. This is not just the first of the potencies, A¹ as *Seinkönnendes*, but this is the entirety of the potentiality for the creation. As seen above, the possibility of this future being arrived as something supervenient or accrued, i.e. as supplemental, via the dehiscence of the *Daß* as the primal, chaotic point by a foreign interstice. This foreign interstice severed blind willing from its willing so that it would no longer be blind but now with understanding (II/1, 463, “Darstellung”). Only now that willing is with understanding, feels itself as such and has acquired a distance from its own willing, is it now free. It is not *das Seinkönnende* by nature but excised from its own nature it freely holds sway above it as the supernatural Lord of the natural. This is God’s circumcision, granting Him freedom against the law of nature.

Freedom not yet knowing itself as free is not freedom (Schelling, *Initia*, 77), thus the dephasing activity of the interstice. *Das Seinkönnende per se* does not equal eternal freedom but only it *in potentia*; alterity, i.e. something *ex se*, must show it its essential freedom; the essential must be made actual, once again to repeat the refrain of the world law. Essential freedom is not actual freedom. Before *das Seinkönnende* was shown its own freedom each of its determinations was only by nature or by necessity. Each determination could do nothing else than perform its own respective function. In that moment *das Seinkönnende* was itself blindly and not with understanding and freedom. It did not yet possess its own possibility. Willing as *Ursein* is an addiction or mania (*Sucht*)¹⁹

19 David Clark has conducted interesting research on Schelling’s notion of addiction, mania or craving. He completely affirms the derivative character of the subject when he writes:

“(A)n originary craving or addiction [*die Sucht*]. ... A realized philosophy of flesh and blood could then be said to characterize the embodied subject as a form of addiction to oneself – that is, if the priority and integrity of the ‘self’ were not precisely what is put into question by Schelling’s notion of a longing and a craving for which subjectivity is in fact a kind of (side-)effect” (“Mourning,” §12, www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/schelling/clark/clark.html)

In another article he explains how willing is the life of understanding and the formless the life of form with the result that the creature, even Man, does not posit himself but is deposited by a willing anterior to his own.

“(O)riginary appetite in-forms (Schelling: “*Ein-bildung*” [4, 254]) the creature, commanding it with a deeply ambiguous imperative to come into its own: Live life (as an addict)! The command, as a command from elsewhere – elsewhere even than God – dispossesses the creature in the same gesture that

not yet having its will within its own power (power=potency). Only where freedom and not just a blind and necessarily efficacious will to power presides can some interstice between the will and being, i.e. between the will and the execution of the will, be found. The interstice dephased the will from its immediate effect. Positing (*Setzen*) is a direct mediation into being unless an alterity has dephased (*ent-setzt*) the two. Emanation occurs by nature but creation results only from the factual, positive and supernatural deed. The primal possibility (*potentia ultima*) shows the unprethinkable its freedom (Schelling, *Grundlegung*, 443) and now with the positive possibility of a *future* creation is the name "God" first appropriate (*ibid.* 444).

Only creation as opposed to emanation can avoid the philosophy of presence. According to the blind willing (*Wollen*) A° equals the whole but according to the deed it severs itself from the whole (Schelling, *Initia*, 143). A^4 is the unity of one will (*Wille*) equal to the whole. Nietzsche's will to power must be blind, i.e. lack A^4 , because he also lacks the effusive A° . He only knows the body;²⁰ everything, for him, is caught within the wheel of nature, the eternal return of the same, even if it should return differently in each repetition. Everything is $\phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$ without freedom, not the leap of the will, but the necessary return of nature, an emanatory bodying/naturing forth.

Schelling, however remotely, had to have exercised some influence upon Nietzsche. Arthur Schopenhauer²¹ attended Schelling's lectures in

'awakens' it into life. ... Which comes 'first,' then, the lust for creatureliness or the creature, the declaration of independence or the independence 'itself'? A fantastic logic...structures desirous life: primal longing excites in 'man' and 'animal' a craving for that which they already need to be in order to respond to its call: namely, creatures. ... The creature surges up, stirs into life, but this upsurge and stirring must always, in some minimal way, have *already* happened and thus is *always* happening..." ("Heidegger's," in *Diacritics*, pg. 19)

20 Nietzsche knows only the body in the same sense that Spinoza only knew substance. Although Nietzsche may have added life, that is, made into a living body what was mere corporeality in Spinoza, he nevertheless does not distance himself from fate. Just as Spinoza's substance could do nothing other than pass over into being, into its attributes, *natura naturans* into *natura naturata*, so Nietzsche too, although replacing fatality with life, still affirmed *amor fati*. Fatality has been replaced with life but fate has not been replaced with freedom. Also in this vein, Andrew Bowie argues, however dubiously, that mechanistic force in Nietzsche makes his force something comparable to Spinozistic substance (*Schelling*, 68).

21 Karl-Heinz Volkmann-Schluck levels a condemnation upon Schopenhauer similar to the one here leveled against Nietzsche. He states,

1842 and Jakob Burckhardt, who also attended, would tell Nietzsche of Schelling's discourse concerning Dionysius.²² The thesis here is that Nietzsche only accounts for repetition as the bodying forth of φύσις, i.e. he too succumbs to the metaphysics of presence. Derrida once commented that Hegel represents absolute subjectivity as knowledge, the absolute subjectivity of the spirit, but that in Nietzsche one finds an "absolute subjectivity of the body," i.e. "of impulses and affects" (*Of Spirit*, 73). Judith Norman lists Nietzsche's own grievances against traditional philosophy: 1) It rejects history because it hates becoming; 2) it distrusts the senses and devalues the body; 3) it confuses first things with the last things, deducing the lower from the higher because the highest must be *causa sui*; and 4) it divides the true world from appearances ("Schelling," *New*, 90). Yet, she argues that as early as the period from 1809–1815 Schelling should be acquitted of these charges. Certainly the late Schelling emphasizes rather than deemphasizes history. Schelling's philosophy is based on experience *per posterius* and it grants valiative priority to the highest though only ontological priority to the base. One will see in the following two chapters how the thing itself and its appearance or signifier cannot be radically separated. The highest ideal and the most universal knowledge and consciousness shall never completely comprehend the will as though nothing novel could ever appear that could not be known in advance. Schelling's will closely relates to what one could call the unconscious body; for, the three material potencies are the body and each potency is a form of *Können* or will. Schelling acknowledges a structural incongruity, though not a duality, between consciousness

"As is well known, Schopenhauer has made the blindly willing and in general only willing will into the principle of a construction of the actual. From the view of Schelling that would mean: Schopenhauer determines the unspirit or the ungod as the metaphysical ground of all being... Schopenhauer determines, not unlike Schelling, Being as will, but the will appears to him no longer as Spirit or God, but instead in a reversal of the theistic metaphysics of Spirit consequently as unspirit and ungod. [Bekanntlich hat Schopenhauer den blindlings wollen- den und überhaupt nur wollenen Willen zum Prinzip einer Auslegung des Wirklichen gemacht. Aus der Sicht Schellings würde das bedeuten: Schopenhauer setzt den Ungeist oder den Ungott als den metaphysischen Grund alles Seienden an... Schopenhauer bestimmt nicht anders als Schelling das Sein als Wille, aber der Wille erscheint ihm nicht mehr als Geist oder Gott, sondern in einer Umkehrung der theistischen Metaphysik des Geistes folgerichtig als der Ungeist und Ungott.]" (*Mythos*, 62).

- 22 See *Epoché* Vol. 8 Number 2 Spring 2004. pg. 183 in David Farrell Krell's "Nietzschean Reminiscences of Schelling's *Philosophy of Mythology* (1842)."

and will. He even affirms that beyond good and evil, because the first potency, *Seinkönnen*, does not acquire its determination as *das nicht Seinsollende* (that which ought not to be) until the third is already there as *das Seinsollende*. Prior to the tension of the three the first is not evil, simply that which could become what ought not to be only if it incites itself from rest to act. Both good and evil find their life in the ambivalent first. Nietzsche, argues Judith Norman, does not bemoan the affirmation of the higher as long as it grants its origin in the lower and sensual (*ibid.* 95). Schelling not only rejects the difference as such between good and evil in the ambivalent first, but this is not even yet a basis proper until the deed that would sever the basis and consequent, the lower and the higher. Schelling affirms that beyond the lower and the higher. His God does not play the decadent role of which Nietzsche is so critical (*ibid.* 98). God does not devalorize life and the body, does not create by nullifying life and nature but by first positing the former as the bearer of life rather than a fire consuming of all concreteness; God first posits Nature as substantial nature. God is not *causa sui*. Judith Norman further argues that Nietzsche's redemptive idea affirms the past by willing its eternal return so that the preterit "It was" becomes the perfect "Thus I willed it" (*ibid.* 99). As already seen, Schelling views the determinations of time not as the continuous flowing of what "was" into the present but the difference between past, present and future first arises through breach-positing ruptures. The Past never was, for Schelling, but only always already has been. Nietzsche's "Thus I have willed it" transforms into the futural "Thus I shall will it" and also with Schelling the "has been" arose from the decisiveness demanded by the world law. The law of decisiveness is not just a law of non-contradiction but also a prescriptive law, "Thus it shall be" or "Thus it shall come again." Nietzsche's notion of eternal return, at least given the Heideggarian ontological interpretation, operates under the will of $\phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$ but with Schelling the future shall come as a supplement to the Same by means of decisiveness, a free, albeit unconscious, deed and not just the bodying forth of nature.

Walter Schulz too analyzes Schelling in comparison with Nietzsche, as well as Heidegger, and exactly concerning the issues of the metaphysics of presence. Schulz contends that Nietzsche's notion of eternal return never lessens nor greatens itself but cyclically repeats as the same (*Vollendung*, 282). The will to power cannot will future purposes but only its own recurrence. It can never will something external to itself but always only its own masturbatory gratification, constantly overcoming itself without advance or the slightest release from libidinous drive. Nietzschean repeti-

tion, given the Schulzian and Heideggarian readings, is not future oriented acting but pointless φύσις. Nietzsche does not know of a past that, though efficacious as the ground of the present, can never be recalled and a future for which one will always await its arrival. For him, there is no real future and the past is never fully devalued, never really decided against as no longer viable, cut off as no longer possible. For Schelling, on the other hand, something greater supervenes with each repetition but only by decisively breaking with the past.

Schulz follows Heidegger in reading Nietzsche's doctrines of will to power, the eternal return of the same and *amor fati* as doctrines of self-positing, subjectivity naturing forth unto its own, "as the *identity of itself*" (*ibid.* 283).²³ Schulz, however, distances Nietzsche from both Schelling and Kierkegaard by arguing that Nietzsche, contra the other two, recognizes absolutely no transcendence. On the other hand, he accuses Schelling and Kierkegaard of viewing the clearing of Being as making Being into a self-mediating subject. The transcendence of Being, under Schulz's erroneous interpretation, would not recognize any alterity within the heart of Being; Being would have no interstice. The transcendence of Being would itself be nothing but immanence and God would not be exteriority or pure relation, but pure interiority. This interpretation does not stray far from what Deleuze occasionally suggests of Heidegger, namely that by speaking only of the clearing of Being one dangerously risks reducing Being to the Same. In other words, Heidegger's ontological difference – the difference between Being and beings – does not necessarily account for Deleuzian Difference – the difference within the heart of Being itself. The question is whether Being – even recognizing ontological difference – is a self-same identical to itself or not. Schulz, however, will not level this criticism against Heidegger himself. In response to Schulz, one must interject on Schelling's behalf that the Multiplicity of the *Daß* anterior to reason keeps Being from falling into the self-reflective, self-positing machinations of reason, namely the dialectical process. The *Daß* truly is nought, a veritable Nothing holding Being, that bereft of its own self-identity, apart from beings. A⁰ is subject-less, whereas, at least if one follows Deleuze, this is more dubious in Heidegger, although on Heidegger's behalf in *Identität und Differenz* he erects Difference as the possibility of Identity and not vice versa. At any rate, the primary opposition between Schelling and Heidegger, says Schulz, is that Heidegger understands Being from existence while Schelling, given the directionality

23 "...als die *Identität seiner selbst*."

of positive philosophy as moving from the *prius* forth, seemingly understands existence from Being. Schulz argues that only by moving from existence to Being does one have Being as something other than a self-presencing subject (*ibid.* 295). This work has inversely argued, however, that by moving from beings to Being one operates regressively, reducing Being to nothing more than a ground for the consequent to be explained – beings. Although Schelling does argue from Being to beings or from Being to existence, this does not render Being an identical subject and certainly not a self-presencing one because Being does not possess an internal identity of its own that simply needs mediation. It is not governed by reason, the concept or any form of Identity or the One. It is not an organism that must fulfill its end but pure Difference that, according to the world law, must decisively eject beings in order that it may reign as the decisively sovereign never presencing remainder. Apart from the decisive event, the clearing of Being, there is no identity to Being. One may speak of Being apart from beings because Being decisively posits itself as Nothing only insofar as it rejects for itself everything that is. For Schelling, Being is neither forgotten nor does it go into default or withdrawal, but it rather refuses beings, i. e. sets beings as its refuse in order that it may remain as pure, virginal and holy.

Even Deleuze, who gives a more flattering interpretation of Nietzsche than Heidegger, says that for Nietzsche force is what can and that the will (to power) executes volition as the synthesis of forces (*Nietzsche*, 50). Now, if one equates Nietzschean force with potency in Schelling and the execution of the will with A^0 , then for Schelling will precedes force (the potencies). For Nietzsche, will is never free and indivisible but always a synthesis of force, its posterior and not its anterior or *prius*. For Nietzsche, at least according to Deleuze, will is “added” to force (*ibid.* 51), but force or power is not free to manifest its nature or to refrain but it is mere φύσις and, therefore, must presence or body forth. Nietzsche’s will to power is not properly a power to will or not to will but nothing but will to power; it cannot do otherwise. In sum, Judith Norman is helpful when she speaks of “reverse causality” (“Schelling,” *New*, 100). Being, for Schelling, only has identity after the decisive deed, i. e. after the clearing. Only after the clearing, after the *verbum*, is the past a natural and potent ground. Decisiveness precedes nature as

blind will to power because the deed first sets it as nature, as a body with its proper drives and impulsions.²⁴

Being as will to power can plausibly avoid Deleuze's critique of the return of the Same in the name of Difference because it is a blind will without understanding and so also without being a self-same, but it does not satisfy Heidegger's demand for ontological difference. Such a will is *only* a ground for being; it is not free to ground or not to ground a possible consequent. It is not free to be or not to be, but it can *only* be; it is nothing more than *das Seinkönnende*. Ontological difference demands a real separation, a real interstice, between Being and beings. The one may not pass immediately over into the other, lest the difference become ephemeral and collapse. Only if beings are really distinct from and not just the necessary emanation of Being can Being be more than a ground for a consequent simply. Only then is emanation and necessary presencing surpassed in order that Being (as well as beings) may be independent, able to be questioned for its own meaning and not just as a complementary pole stabilizing its reciprocal pole. Heidegger condemned the Schelling of 1809 as a philosopher of presence.²⁵ The Schelling of 1809 affirmed Being as willing. The late Schelling, however, without losing the insight that *Wollen* is *Ursein*, asserts that Being is freedom, not the will to power but the power to will...or not to will.

The act of creation is a free and decisive deed, forevermore excluding as possible that which was not chosen. This decision is the response of the as of yet undecided *Seinkönnendes* to alterity. This alterity, be it nemesis,²⁶

24 She also writes that Schelling is critical of sameness while approving of identity and that Nietzsche approves of sameness while criticizing identity (Norman, "Schelling," *New Schelling*, 104, note 11).

25 As has been mentioned, for Heidegger the philosophy of presence is onto-theology. This, however, cannot mean that Heidegger denies grounds, deities, reason or λόγος, but he only wishes to show that they do not constitute the most primordial thinking. These are all things in being, concealing Being and the difference between Being and beings. There is indeed a ground but is the ground simply that or is there something more than the ground, perhaps an abyss (*Abgrund*)? Indeed there may be gods, but these gods do not explain why there is something rather than nothing, why in fact they themselves are rather than not. There is indeed reason but reason too is not self-grounding, unable to explain its own facticity as well as the facticity of all that appears to be less than or more than reason. The task, again, is not the destruction (*Zerstörung* as opposed to *Destruktion*) of onto-theo-logy but its surpassing, a more primordial questioning.

26 Schelling etymologically relates nemesis to "nomos" (law), particularly the world law. The nemesis tempts one, demanding that one either fall and show oneself as

face, primal possibility, Λόγος or Law,²⁷ dephases, demanding the response of free decisiveness. The demand is simply: Be free! This demand is pronounced by showing the respondent its freedom, liberating it from its ἀνάγκη (fate/fatality/*Verhängnis*) for personhood. The divine ἀνάγκη is not God because, as seen above, God is pure relation but the divine ἀνάγκη is Ab-solute,²⁸ completely absolved of all relation to alterity. Only alterity could alleviate the frustration of blind, libidinal will to power, transforming it into a power to will, i. e. freedom. Ἀνάγκη signifies the return of the Same, the frustrated striving of the point unable to break free of itself – nihilism, indifference (*Gleich-gültigkeit*) and *amor fati*. If the creation was meaningful, in order that the supervening accrual of sense (*Sinn*) by non-sense (*Wahnsinn*) may have occurred, then the original possibility had to be really other, an alterity not to be annexed by the natural emanation and subsequent self-consummation of the natural body. A⁰ only indicates pure naturalness until it decisively refuses being for itself in order to become supernatural. The supernatural consists not in willing, not in passing seamlessly from potency to act, but rather in not willing, in refrain, restraint and abstinence, as opposed to a Nietzschean will as mere φύσις, which never acts and decides but blindly bodies forth. To be God is to be Lord but to be Lord is to relate to that over which one is Lord. God could not be God without that alterior and co-eternal possibility of the creation. God did not have to create and He certainly never emanates. God is not the theosophistic god of Böhme *that* moves into being but the one *who* acts. The act of creation

evil or that one decisively abstain and reprove oneself as decisively good. Temptation – the function of Satan – fits within the divine economy as perhaps the primary instrument of the law of decisiveness. This presents the primary aspect of Schelling's satanology.

- 27 Ironically, one could even say that it is the Law that grants freedom. The world law or law of decisiveness first shows the will itself as will, i. e. as freedom. If the Law had not said "Do not eat!" then one would never have known that one could have eaten. Here, in God's case, if the Law had not said "Do not be amphibolic, do not be a Duas!" then the unprethinkable ἀνάγκη never could have felt itself as the freedom to possibly and, therefore, decisively be the Monas.
- 28 In order to avoid naming that primary ambivalence, which is no more and no less life than death, "divinity," since it is not God and so not divine, one may name it "the sacred" or "sacrality." The sacred avoids the relation to the word "deity" or "divinity," while retaining the notion of ultimacy. One must remember, however, that this would be the unconsecrated sacred, not what is sacrilegious, i. e. not what is contrary to the religious or divine, but the substance of divinity before it is *as* deity, prior to its sanctification.

is an accidental, superfluous fact that has as its consequence an equally independent fact. As Jason Wirth indicates, the idea of godliness and freedom are synonymous as both consist in the notion of sovereignty. To be free is to be able to bring forth, provide and be provident over an *ideatum* that remains free of its idea (Wirth, *Conspiracy*, 8). God could not have been God without being free to create or not to create from eternity. Although this possibility for the creation is *from* eternity, the act of creation sets the time *of* eternity.

All time, the cyclical time of eternity or the linear one of history, consists in the distinction of beginning from end. Beginning, middle and end must become disparate and heterogeneous (*ungleich*) (II/3, 274, "Erster Teil"). In eternity beginning and end are distinct but not separate. In the chaotic point prior even to eternity beginning and end are homogeneous, not even distinct, but in eternity the point gives way to the circle. Every point upon the periphery is distinguishable without any point being distinguishable as the beginning point as opposed to the end point. The circle is interminable, i.e. without *terminus*, yet without being utterly pointless. The beginning is without beginning and the end without end. In eternity, beginning and end are not external to one another but belong essentially together. The possibility of this essential unity keeping the point from centrifugally expanding unto its disintegration is the chaotic point, A^0 , unsublatable unity (*ibid.* 280), the unity of unity. Again, there is not first the succession of the potencies and then their subsequent, synthetic unity in Spirit, not pure force and then will as its subsequent and synthetic unification. This would imply a God that must first undergo an accouchement process, a God that must first come into being, but God's being is secure. He is God because He is Lord over His unprethinkable being, free to suspend and thereby determine his *modus operandi* as He sees fit.

In the act of creation the potencies become cosmological, i.e. they become *causes instrumentales*. More exactly, the potencies or determinations do not *become* something different but their creation as causes coincides with their creation pure and simple. If it were not their creation but simply their alteration, then they would have preceded God. Beforehand, they simply were not, not as anything more than a moment for thought. God's sovereignty over His own unprethinkable being is exhibited in the suspension (*Spannung*) of His own nature (which, again, prior to this suspension simply was nought) by positing His determinations in order that He has a manner of being. God is never sublated or annihilated in this contraction (*Spannung*) of the potencies but only His form of being is al-

tered, His *Was*. The act of creation is not the birth of God Himself but the setting of the potencies into a synthetic multiplicity,²⁹ which is the condition of the *affirmation* of His unsublatable unity (*ibid.* 282).³⁰ Set as causes in the act of creation, the potencies are not categories (*ibid.* 244) but modalities, again, expressing God's *modus operandi*, His singular manner of existing, and not the general strictures under which He is permitted to exist and be thought. The three modal verbs are "can," "must" and "should." In Schelling's terminology they become that which can be (*das Seinkönnende*), that which must be (*das Seinmüssende*) and that which ought to be (*das Seinsollende*)³¹ respectively.³² In the act of creation, these are modalities of now actual being and not just categories of how being must be thought, if only it would be. The first is not the general concept of possibility, the second (also known as pure being) not a Kantian category of actuality and the third not the understanding's general concept of necessity (*ibid.*). The modalities are the modes of being of the absolute individual. Only the individual exists and not the general. As modalities of the absolute individual none of them are anything general but rather the most special or particular. They are not general yet nevertheless universal and accordingly also the modalities not just of God but of all of being, not because they are all-encompassing genera

29 Multiplicity or manifold (*Mehrheit*) designates an indissoluble plural, the Same that is not a self-same, while plurality (*Vielheit*) indicates disparateness, parts outside of parts, parallelism.

30 To affirm that God is One makes no sense if a manifold would not precede Him. Monotheism, then, only truly is with idea of the creation as that which purifies God from the multiplicity and plurality that He is not.

31 The third as that which ought to be only first comes into being as such once the first, that in itself is beyond good and evil, has been actually set as that which ought not to be. All beginnings consist in that which ought not to be, lest movement towards the end be pointless and absurd. Only that can truly begin something novel which can posit that which ought not to be (*System*, 163).

32 In English there is not a non-subjunctive form directly equivalent to the German *sollen*. The philosophical tradition uses "ought" as the proper ethical term. In fact *lassen* (to let) and *mögen* (to may/to might) can also be modal verbs. The former is not necessarily modal and the latter is in fact used by Schelling to express the primal possibility or magic that designates what the "is" as transitive copula means. The "is" thought transitively as taking the accusative case (in Hebrew) means *können* or *mögen*. Schelling argues that the latter word is related to the word for magic (*die Magie*). To be able to create from nothing, to bring something about prior to its possibility, is magic. Magic makes possible what was otherwise impossible. Magic is that prior to all potency nevertheless able to bring about potency. Pure *Können* is pure *Mögen*.

but because they are the singular instrumental causes of being. With actual creation these singularities are not just potencies for a future being but, in act, they are principles of being – causes.

3 The Causes

The creation is an eternal act because before creation would mean before eternity, when time was not. The co-primordiality of the Word or Wisdom drew God into express relation to a future being. God is not God outside this relation; for, God is pure relation. With pure relation arises the possibility of *relata*. *Relata* have positions. Only with the primal possibility drawing God as pure relation arises the possibility of the subject-position. A^1 , then, only becomes subject by actually being posited, i. e. by being set into a position, the subject-position. A^1 is set into the subject-position by being subjected by A^2 but this only after it has raised itself to act. One can here see the indissoluble unity of the three. Each may only be itself by virtue of its relation to the others. A^1 is subjected by the second but to be subject is to be matter for the subsequent, the possible receptacle for the next predicate. The first is matter or material because it has been returned to its proper boundary by the second. This is its positing as matter; this is its positing as the first. Having raised itself to act and having transgressed its boundary by raising itself into being it is not A^1 but B. It is only the first cause, i. e. the material cause, when it is there for the second. In this, its proper state, it is an active will without its own will (*ein willenloses Wollen*) (II/1, 388, “Darstellung”). It is active because it has first incited itself to will, lest it would not have to be subjected, and it is a pure wanting or pure willing because that capable of beginning, capable of raising itself to will merely of itself.³³ Again subjected, though,

33 Karl-Heinz Volkman-Schluck writes,

“This capability to be is not the being in the passive understanding according to the possibility, it is not of the type that it requires, in order to become actual, another actuality through which it is brought into actuality. The scholastic doctrine of actus and potentia has here no field of application. [Dieses Seinkönnende ist nicht das der Möglichkeit nach Seiende im passiven Verstande, es ist nicht von der Art, daß es, um wirklich zu werden, eines anderen Wirklichen bedarf, durch welches es in die Wirklichkeit gebracht wird. Die scholastische Lehre von actus und potentia hat hier kein Feld ihrer Anwendung.]” (*Mythos*, 60–61)

and thus posited as matter, it is neither willing nor for the sake of itself because it is then not for its own will but has become fodder/matter for the will of that which will follow it. As B it is an all-consuming and unbounded fire, the *ἄπειρον*. Only stripped of its self-will and subjected to the will of the second is it matter, i.e. not a consuming fire destructive of form but just the opposite, namely that capable of receiving form. It is not the material cause at rest as it was in the prior chapter where only conceived as a moment for thought, but only once raised into being and then returned to a state of potency by the now active A^2 is it a cause. It only really first is at all as cause without existing beforehand as potency merely. It only first is at all in the act of creation. Beforehand it truly was not. Beforehand was not even eternity. If this were not so, then the creation would not be a creation from nothing. If this were not so, then the deed of creation would not have been unprethinkable because potency would have preceded actuality. If this were not so, then the first actual inciting of the will would have been necessary and thinkable in advance rather than the first accident.³⁴ Potencies constitute the ground of possible being and raised to act they are the principles or causes of actual being. Before the first is set as matter, however, it could not ground being but was only destructive and consuming of being. There was not first a ground that by nature yields its consequent but the act of creation creates even the potencies of that creation. The act of creation is unprethinkable, the original clearing (*Lichtung*), event (*Geschehen*) or “truthing” (*ἀληθεύειν*) that first grounds and establishes potency.

The first is ambivalent. It only truly is once it incites itself to will but once incited it can either yield to the second, which will follow, and thereby become matter or it can continue to assert its own will and be destructive of all form. When this ambivalent first becomes matter and receptive

God is efficacious through His will and not through His being, a being which would have contained the potency for willing prior to actual willing. Act precedes potency and so action precedes being in God.

³⁴ In the same vein Schelling declares in *Einleitung in die Philosophie* in 1830, although here he is still discussing the transcendental history of the ego, that “the first beginning of the pure ego for its own self is expressly thought as accidental; the first being, *primum existens*, is the first accident, the primal accident... [Der erste Anfang des reinen Ichs auf sich selbst wird ausdrücklich als ein zufälliger gedacht; das erste Seiende, *primum existens*, ist das erste Zufällige, das Urzufällige...]” (45).

of form, Schelling deems it A, while the destructive fire is B.³⁵ The indeterminate, then, really only becomes ambivalent or dyadic proper, once it wills. As a will at rest it is undetermined but once incited it is determinately A¹ or B, i.e. matter/the receptacle or the consuming. This newly found determination is, however, dyadic and interminable, i.e. although being determinate, even if only dyadically so, it is both as matter or fire still unbounded, τὸ ἄπειρον, without *terminus*. The first, as has been seen, is pure *Seinkönnen* and “the actuated ‘Seinkönnen,’ the willing will, is, in comparison to its original status” – which was the non-willing will or will at rest, which really is not but was only given as a moment for thought alone – “that having stepped forth out of its boundary – *Können* – and thereby that posited outside all boundaries, ‘that contained by nothing else, the borderless, the Platonic ‘ἄπειρον’ (II/3, 226; see also I/10, 243; II/1, 388)” (Durner, *Wissen*, 160).³⁶ As essential the capacity to be is preserved but in act, raised beyond its essential state, it is dispersed or disintegrated and loses its *Können* or essential freedom; it is τὸ ἄπειρον. Actual freedom is, at minimum, the loss of the freedom not to have acted, to have remained at rest within its essential boundary, not to have existed. The past is always indelible. Having willed, this potency lost its freedom. “It is a blind, libidinal, senseless and conceptless, unformed and only selfish will that can be, which requires determination, formation and composition” (*ibid*).³⁷ Without the second, the cause of determination, it is simply undetermined or nothing, not ambiguous but utterly without sense and without being.³⁸ (Remember that what has absolutely no rela-

35 As B, it stands opposed to the will of the whole and so is *Unwillen*, i.e. God’s wrath, the fires of hell.

36 “Das aktuierte “Seinkönnen”, der wollende Wille ist, im Vergleich zu seinem ursprünglichen Status, das aus seiner Grenze – dem Können – Herausgetretene und damit das außer alle Grenzen Gestzte, “von nichts mehr Gehaltene, Schrankenlose, das platonische “ἄπειρον” (XIII, 226; vg. X, 243; XI, 388).”

37 “Sie ist blinder, triebhafter, besinnungs- und begriffsloser, ungestalteter und nur selbstisch sein könnender Wille, der der Bestimmung, Formung und Gestaltung bedarf.”

38 Schelling writes that “given that it is A, it can however be its opposite (B), but having become this opposite it is B, which can again be A, so that it never emerges from duplicity and Plato rightfully says of it that it is that which never properly is but only always becomes. On account of this ambiguity it is nothing without the determining cause. [...da es nämlich zwar A ist, aber das sein Gegentheil (B) seyn kann, dieses Gegentheil geworden aber B ist, das wieder A seyn kann, so daß es aus der Zweiheit nie herauskommt, und mit Recht Platon von ihm sagt, es sey das nie eigentlich seyende, sondern immer nur werdende. Dieser Zweideutig-

tion to thinking/cognoscibility truly is not!). Without the second the first is neither the first nor A nor substance or subject nor matter nor a cause. B does not subject itself to the second and third, thus not permitting itself to become the first or matter and substance for that which would follow. Only when the first allows itself to become the first by “making space” for something else (hence its nature as receptacle) is it a cause, only then is there number,³⁹ only then is ambivalence and ambiguity overcome for the sake of the second, which brings determination, oneness and character.

Once the first has ceased being a will at rest by inciting itself, so then the second too must cease being potency and become efficacious, i. e. actual, by becoming cause. This cause posits the first by setting it as foundation or substance. It does this not by transforming B into A¹ because B always remains potentially efficacious. B can always rear its head and consume what has been created. What has been created, however, is created in that “space” opened up by the activity of the second. The second does not transform B into A but it posits A as substance by expelling B unto the periphery. If the image of the circle is used, A² posits A⁽¹⁾ and B both, such that neither would be at all without its activity. A, as that subjected in order to be the substantial support for the circle, is returned to its state of potency, i. e. to the point around which the active drives circulate. B is the will after it has incited itself and left its boundary. The point was formerly the boundary. In the point it was a will at rest. Once incited, however, it leaves its border and strives towards the peripheries. This, of course, is a false manner of speaking because before the process of creation there is not yet periphery, i. e. circumference, but only a disintegrating point expanding unto its own demise.⁴⁰ With the demiurgic activity

keit wegen ist es nichts ohne die bestimmende Ursache...]” (II/1, 396 “Darstellung”).

39 The first is only the first by virtue of the second, so two and not one is the first number, as Aristotle said. In like manner, A is only really posited *as* A by virtue of the fact that the second returns from its incited state as B to A and so the undetermined must have first been *as* B before it could ever have been determined *as* A.

40 Manfred Durner reminds the reader of an important difference between Schelling's *Ages of the World* and his lectures on mythology and revelation. “If in the *Ages of the World* the act of self-willing is portrayed primarily as ‘contraction,’ ‘self-attraction’ and ‘constriction,’ so in the later drafts under a new perspective as ‘expansion,’ ‘a forward surge’ and ‘egression from itself’ [Wird in den “Weltalter”-Schriften der Akt des Sichselbstwollens primär als “Kontraktion”, “Selbstanziehung”, “Einschränkung” dargestellt, so in den späteren Entwürfen unter einer

of the second, the return to the center is the creation of a focal point serving as ground for the newly created circumference or periphery. B is the expelled. B is marginalized. A¹ is centralized, set within a closed space. The second's positing of the first as center by means of the expelling of B is the creation of space (Schelling, *Einleitung*, 128). The whole of the creation arises within this newly consecrated space.

B set on the periphery in order that A¹ become pure center constitutes original spacing. With spacing light breaks into chaos. Just as God only is because drawn as pure relation, so here, there is no understanding until spacing, until a distance can be taken from that to be understood. B, which bears no mark of understanding or cognoscibility, is nevertheless that which is to be brought to understanding. B is transformed into understanding by the work of the second (Schelling, *Urfassung*, 466). The expelling of B unto the periphery in order that A may be set as that with understanding corresponds to Parmenides' unity of Being and thinking. Being, that without understanding, occupies the place of primacy but this does not exclude the arrival of understanding. Being and understanding belong together without becoming synonymous with each other. Willing – which is *Ursein* – is after the entire process of creation returned to a state of peace, only having been transformed by the process from blind willing to understanding. The process of creation is a process of subjectification. To be a subject, however, is to be that which has been sub-jected (*unter-worfen*), that which takes its stance under what is to be understood. It supports the whole. It is its substance. To become subject then is to become under-standing. B is not understanding but neither does B exclude it. There is no contrast between the will and the understanding as the latter is nothing other than subdued will and the will nothing other than understanding in waiting.

To be subject is to become potent again, to cease activity in order to make room for another, to become material in relation to what will follow. To become matter is to allow oneself to be overcome by the subsequent, to become passive to the higher (I/10, 310, "Naturprocesses"), to

neuen Perspektive als "Expansion", "Vorwärtsdrängen", "Heraustreten aus sich selbst"]" (*Wissen*, 160). What can be definitively stated is that as B, the principle of disintegration, the will expands or tears apart, whereas A¹ characterizes integration (in the *Ages of the World*, contraction). Only with the latter, i.e. with integration, is the self possible. The former merely is destructive of the permanence necessary for anything to come to fruition, to a standstill. A minimum of permanence is necessary for identity, for something to be a self-same and not be torn apart at the seams, an absolute disintegration.

become the nurturing ground, to be mother. For Schelling *materies*=*mater* (Einleitung, 131). This becomes the foundation (καταβολή) that grounds what follows. That which founding founds is the *ὑποκείμενον*. The primal is the ambivalent abyss or unground, which via a process of grounding, i.e. the act of creation, grounds the ground. The ground is not a pre-given but the ground/beginning/substrate must itself be grounded. The ground/*ὑποκείμενον* is only there with the yielding to and appearance of the second. One is only one after two has arrived. Without its appearing the first is not subjected, not made passive, not materialized, not returned to potency and not grounded. Just as one cannot arise without two, in like manner the ground can never be without yielding to the consequent. The consequent is supervenient. The ground/antecedent does not produce but simply yields or makes space for the advent of the subsequent. One does not pass over into two just as the ground does not pass immediately over into the consequent but more primordial is the act of bifurcation, the act of *grounding* that has the One or the ground as the result and not as the origin. The return to the center corresponds to the dying (*Ersinken*) of the first, i.e. to its potentialization or materialization (*ibid.* 146, 148). It sinks to the depths in order to make space for the higher. It is now a mere stuff, malleable to the will of the higher.

The first is only what it is *in process*, in being returned to potency by the second. In this manner, therefore, the first is only subject by virtue of the second as predicate. The first is not what it is in and of itself but only first existing at all once the predicate has *actually* arrived. The subject is only subjected by the predicate or object that it *will* carry. The advent of the signifier must precede the signified in its propriety. The predicate or signifier is that which subjects the subject. Two conditions one, the predicate conditions the subject and material difference conditions substantial unity. To condition always means to impose a condition upon or bring condition or limit to what beforehand lacked condition, limitation or position. How could position or border exist before spacing had occurred? There is not yet tri-unity, i.e. synthetic and explicit unity, before three wills have been separated because prior to this spacing there is not a place for them yet (Tillich, *Construction*, 70). This is also why it was shown above that the generation and the creation are contemporaneous acts, both from eternity, nay, the act productive of eternity. The Son may only exercise his will if the Father's is exercised but, again, the Father is not the Father without the Son. Just as the subject does not pre-exist the predicate but only is at all with the *actual* advent of the predicate,

so is the Father only first existent as such once His expression has *actually* arrived. The generation finds completion only with the completion and end of the creation. The creative act is the expression of the unexpressed, the imaging of the imageless, but prior to the expression and image the unexpressed and imageless is nought. The generation of the Son *actualizes*, i. e. *generates*, the will of the Father, the will masked *behind* the potencies (now causes).

That absolutely hidden before the inciting of B truly is nought. The end of creation is that which ought to be (*das Seinsollende*) but that does not mean that the pure *Daß*, which in and of itself truly is nought, is that which ought not to be (*das nicht Seinsollende*); for, it already is what is not and would therefore already be what it ought to be, namely nullity. It only becomes that which is but which ought not to be, i. e. that which is there to be overcome, once it raises itself into being as B. A³ or *das Seinsollende* can only be by virtue of an ironic act, i. e. by first raising to active will what already was not but, nevertheless, once raised becomes that which ought not to be any longer. That which ought to be can only be if that which ought not to be actually presides as that to be overcome, to be returned to non-being. B, as an expansive, disintegrating will, left space as its end-trail or residue, and once excluded to the periphery this space became receptive of form, i. e. it became the receptacle. If B, as that which ought not to be, had not first been only in order to be overcome, then the space making possible creation and its end, which ought to be, could never have been. That the will in the act of creation is ironic should not be surprising because primal will is duplicitous and ambivalent anyway. That the will of B is contrary to the will of A does not exclude the will of A. Again, one must view all as an indissoluble whole. The will of each is determined only in relation and by virtue of the whole. The will behind all three works towards a common effect. This hidden will is the *causa causarum*, the Cause of even the three instrumental causes (II/2, 113, "Monotheismus"). The series is not random but an organized arrangement, whose instruments function according to one will.

The instrumental will of the second is always to return the first into potency (Schelling, *Urfassung*, 436). Its will⁴¹ is always directed towards

41 The will of the second is not free to will or not, but its will is determined by the prior so that if the first wills, then the second *must* will and can will nothing other than to return the first to a state of rest. Its will is not free but that which can only will according to its nature or function; it is *das Seinmüssende*.

the fulfillment of the divine essence. The second, unlike the ambivalent first, can only will the divine will (*ibid.* 437). It can only will the will of the Father, i.e. the will hidden behind the causes. While this second cause – the demiurgic – is that through which everything comes to be, the third grants permanence and consummation, allowing what has arisen to take a stand and persist in being instead of being immediately consumed by B.⁴² The third is that which ought to be, the counterpart to B, that which ought not to be. Obviously, this third could only acquire that modality, that *modus operandi*, in process, i.e. in consequence of the deed of creation. That which ought to be obviously is not, not yet anyway, as that would conflate what is the case with what ought to be. Before real movement, before real transition and temporal dispersion, i.e. in the absence of a genuine future, the third could not be. Said differently, its essence is futural. Its essence is not to be but to be on the way, just as the first, in its proper and essential state of potency, is not supposed to be but only supposed to be the substrate/ground or past of what is. None of the potencies are what they are until the decisive deed posits them in dispersion. In other words, as potencies they are only determinations of thought, but as causes they are actual. The first yields as that which ought not to be but is in order to be overcome by the second that can only be itself by necessarily willing against the first so that the third may be on the way. Said differently, the first returns within its borders, i.e. within *Können*, so that pure *Sein* may subdue it in order that *Seinkönnen* may be decisively restored as *das Seinkönnende*. The entire process restores lost *Können* but after the process the *Können* is *actual* potency or potency in act. The restoration is actually the generation of divine essence.

That *Können* is restored, now as actual or *Können* in being, *das Seinkönnende*, does not mean that *potentia* and *actus* are mixed. Prior to the generation only “mere Being (*das bloße Seiende*)” or pure act is, but the generated is “Being itself (*das Seiende selbst*)” or pure act having accrued potency, no longer that passing immediately over into being (*das nicht mehr in das Seyn Übergehende*) but that possessing the power of being by standing over being (*das über dem Seyn Stehende*) (II/3, 148–149, “Begründung”). As pure *Können* or pure potency the generated image repeats the imageless but now as “actual potency (*die seiende Potenz*)” (*ibid.* 155). *Das Seinkönnende*, in act and not just as a moment for thought, signifies the actual belonging together of pure act and pure potency, the belonging

42 Note the double meaning of consume. Everything is either consumed, i.e. engulfed, or it is consummated, i.e. completed as permanent and stable.

together of Being and cognoscibility. Repetition generates the origin, generates the very thing that was repeated. Potency arises from pure act. The German "*Potenz*," says Schelling, corresponds to the *ύλη* of the Greeks (Offenbarung Paulus, 142). Through the process of creation pure Being or *actus purus* becomes *das Seinkönnende*, pure act as potent rather than impotent. From this view, then, only the indissoluble chain of individual potencies, once raised to causes, constitute potency as a whole. The whole of the potencies is *ύλη*.

Every determination of the material whole or the body is only understandable through its consequence. The first only is with the second and the second only with the third. As the Kabbalah reads, which was influential on Schelling, "...2 is like two straight lines which can never enclose a space and therefore it is powerless till the number 3 forms the triangle" (*Kabbalah*, 32). God is not a present being but only He who *will* be who He *will* be. It lies in the nature of philosophizing over "that which will be" (Schelling, *Urfassung*, 41)⁴³ that every determination is only explainable through its consequence. In other words this is the nature of philosophizing when one does not view the whole in an instant or attempt to explain the given by regression, as negative philosophy does, but rather moves from the absolute *prius* forwards as in positive, historical philosophy. This is also why one may not fixate terms stipulating a static meaning for each. Thought essentially, the first is non-being (-A) but in act, as in positive philosophy, it is +A. In like manner, the second is act in relation to the first but potency in relation to the third. "Being" or "Being itself"⁴⁴ sometimes designates what is in being and sometimes what is before or above being. Terms are not static in Schelling but malleable; one must rather follow the movement of thought. This is, moreover, why Schelling's use of terms like "subject," "ground" and "being" do not *de facto* demarcate his philosophy as Cartesian, logocentric or, in general, the philosophy of presence.

If, in positive philosophy, each is only itself by virtue of its consequent, then one must ask what determines the arrangement of the three. The material whole is not the aggregation of three disparate, material parts but each of the three is the whole (II/3, 239, "Erster Teil"). This constitutes the doctrine of simplicity. Not just the third is that which will be but since each only is what it is with the others so is each of the three only something that *will* be. What will be is the

43 "das, was sein wird"

44 (*Das*) *Sein* or *das Seiende* respectively.

whole arranged as Spirit, as the subject of being. As the subject of being it is nothing general or generic but a singular universal. The question concerns not something generic but something genetic or, as Edward Allen Beach confirms, ontology must have genetic principles (*Potencies*, 112). The three determinations are not categories but universally valid singularities. This whole, as *Geist*, is the subject, i.e. potency of all that can be, and in this sense it is the whole of being but not as the totality of all particularities, i.e. it is not a pantheistic whole.

The whole is Spirit but Spirit is the subject=potency of being. The creation is thus something other than Spirit. The three are the potencies of a future being, in fact, the potency for everything which could be. Now, reason (*Vernunft*) comprehends the totality of what is possible; it is “nothing other than *the infinite potency of recognition*” (Schelling, *Offenbarung Paulus*, 100).⁴⁵ What is in being, the creation, is caught in the nets of reason because the divine creation constitutes the totality of what can be, the creation and possibility of sense and so also experience. Reason is not the completed Spirit but rather because the three are in the form of Spirit, so is creation possible, so is reason as the totality of what could be. It is not because reason is that Spirit is but because there is the Spirit there is reason.⁴⁶ Reason can move to any content in being but cannot move itself to its own actualization. Reason is not *a se*. Reason neither asserts nor excludes anything but is only “perceiving” of what can be, “*das Alles vernehmende*” (*ibid.* 115). The creation lies within the nets of reason but God is the *prius* of reason.

Reason is now not something negative but something positive, not just that comprehending what something *could* be if only it would be, but actually knowing what actually *can* be, i.e. that which is actually potent. In other words, it comprehends the totality of possibility as something actually potent. For negative philosophy the potencies were the relative *prius* enabling the comprehension, i.e. the inverted idea, of the absolute *prius*, but for positive philosophy they are the *posterius* (Schelling, *Urfassung*, 64) and the absolute *prius* can thus truly function as *prius*.

45 “...nichts Anderes als *die unendliche Potenz des Erkennens*”

46 “Reason is not the cause of the accomplished Spirit but only because that is there reason. Therefore the foundation of all philosophical rationalism, i.e. every system, which raises reason to a principle, is destroyed. [Nicht die Vernunft ist die Ursache des vollkommenen Geistes, sondern nur, weil dieser ist, gibt es eine Vernunft. Damit ist allem philosophischen Rationalismus, d.h. jedem System, was die Vernunft zum Princip erhebt, das Fundament zerstört.]” (II/3, 248, “Erster Teil”).

Being is not because reason was first but reason rather than unreason, sense and sensibility rather than nonsense, is because Being *Is*. Schelling poignantly states, "Reason is there only because Spirit is" (here not as third potency) "and Spirit is not in order that there would be rational being" (*ibid.* 69).⁴⁷ "Reason is not the cause of the completed Spirit but the Spirit is the cause of reason. Thereby is the foundation of all philosophical rationalism destroyed" (*ibid.* 71).⁴⁸ God's *raison d'être* is not in order that reason may be, i. e. God is not just in order to be a ground, but the question of God is to be asked for itself, not just as a ground for being, not as something ontotheological.⁴⁹ Reason's function in negative philosophy was conditioned. *If* something would be, then reason would comprehend it. Now reason *actually* comprehends the creation. One moves progressively rather than regressively. Reason no longer comprehends essence pure and simple but the essence of that which *Is* this essence. Reason, no longer as *prius*, comprehends what is (as actual potency) and not just what could be. Reason (*Vernunft*) now has something it can actually examine (*vernehmen*). Not because thinking, reason or perception presides is Being but because Being is providential the former is there. Being provides⁵⁰ in this manner. The question of Being may

47 "Die Vernunft ist da, nur weil jener Geist ist, und der Geist ist nicht, damit es ein vernünftiges Sein gäbe."

48 "Nicht die Vernunft ist die Ursache des vollkommenen Geistes, sondern der Geist ist die Ursache der Vernunft. Dadurch ist allem philosophischen Rationalismus das Fundament zerstört."

49 Werner Beierwaltes has done more work than perhaps any other at drawing the similarities between Schelling and Neo-Platonism, particularly Plotinus. Yet, one must always remember to highlight the differences as well. Schelling would accuse the Neo-Platonists of espousing a theory of emanation rather than creation precisely because they too, at least according to Schelling, wish to draw everything into the mediation of reason. Beierwaltes believes he sees a union of the "One beyond Being with that of the reflexive self-presence of *nous*, so that this Absolute can be understood as an All-Unity which grounds and embraces all actuality – *because* it is in itself the most unifying *self-affirmation* or *self-mediation*" (*Legacy*, 393). While it is true that Schelling also argues for this All-Unity, one must remember that for Schelling this is a *subsequent* unity that cannot be accomplished without an indivisible, never presencing remainder. For Schelling, the subsequent All-Unity does not follow from *self-affirmation* and *mediation*. The identity of the *self* only exists *post factum* and the mediation is never complete, i. e. never sublates that beyond being.

50 Being is divine if it is Lord but Lordship consists in providence. Providence presides or holds sway by providing. Where there is Being there is thinking, but Being provides for the latter and not vice versa. Providence and providing

be asked for its own sake and not just as a ground for beings, i. e. not just as an instrumental cause.

4 The Holy or God's Withdrawal from the Created

The question of Being inquires not into that which is part and parcel of being or even that which grounds being(s) – the potencies or instrumental causes – but into the unprethinkable deed or the unprethinkable clearing – ἀληθεύειν.⁵¹ This illuminates the meaning of Being. The reciprocal tension (*Spannung*) of the potencies in the actual act of creation, setting one as act while the other as potency, constitutes them as actual causes rather than simply potencies. The potencies as such are mythical. The three determinations only first actually are once set into this tension. They were never mere potencies before they were set as causes. These causes, however, are only instrumental causes and the reciprocal tension works according to each one's mutual benefit. In other words, the question of Being asks not about this as ground but about the Cause or that which is not a cause in a Kantian, categorial, spatio-temporal sense. The tension of powers in the act of creation assumes the Cause that remains silent and still rather than entangled within the reciprocal play of the instrumental causes. The Cause Causes the causes and remains outside of them, initially as their *prius* and eventually as that withdrawn from them. Schelling writes, "But in order to comprehend the co-activation of the same [instrumental causes] and thus something composed [or posited together in mutual and reciprocal determination], we had to silently (*stillschweigend*) assume a unity through which the three causes are held together and are united toward a common effect" (II/1, 399, "Darstel-

mean provision, i. e. to see in advance. Being is irreducible to reason, irreducible to the potencies, irreducible to beings, but it sees these in advance. Being holds sway Godly but God's being is futural, He who will be who He will be. The potencies constitute His *posterius*, that through which He makes Himself manifest, but unprethinkable Being is His *prius*. God is not this unprethinkable Being proper but the anonymous event holds sway Godly. It appropriates itself or is itself in propriety only by appropriating future being as its posterior, only as Lord of future being, only as God. God is neither the first being or *prius* nor the seal or end of being, the posterior, but God is pure relation. God is neither *relata* but copulation.

51 The tension of the potencies into causes is the "extrication of previously concealed truth [das Herauswinden der zuvor verborgenen Wahrheit]" (Schelling, *System*, 141).

lung").⁵² The Cause is not ensnared into the play of mutual efficacy but rather permits it. It is A^0 as more than just an a-temporal moment from which thought may depart, as in negative philosophy, but positively explicated as temporalizing Cause. It is not synthetic unity but the unity of unity and difference. It is not *a* cause but simply Cause, not *a* being but the clearing of Being. It is not the *Daß* thought simply as a point of departure but its clearing, the actual departure from it. God is not the *Daß* but rather how it presides, provides, clears or holds sway. The *Daß* is without relation, even cause/effect relation; God is pure relation. God is the Cause or the copulation that brings *relata* into being and binds them together in mutual efficacy. The unity of the Cause is not one of essence but the deed or clearing for reciprocal tension. The Cause, however, is not assumed into this reciprocity but indivisibly remains in stillness even when in act. The three powers, in their proper arrangement, constitute Spirit or the being in its propriety. The question concerns not Spirit, not God as *a* being, not the first being, but rather the anonymous clearing which (and one can only say this *post factum* or via a method *per posterius*) holds sway Godly. Spirit, as the being, i.e. Spirit in its propriety, is the proper and divine arrangement or mode of being, that which ought to be, *das Seinsollende*. The modalities, as *posterius*, are its visibility. The *prius*, on the other hand, is invisible. This is ontological difference. The doctrine of the potencies/causes reveals that which conceals itself in their tension. The manifestation of the totality corresponds to the concealing of the deed that brought the totality into being. This hints towards Heidegger's forgetting or oblivion of Being (*Seinsvergessenheit*). Being, even when recognizable via the posterior, still remains hidden, still remains in withdrawal, still remains as more than a mere ground for the consequent beings. A^0 or, better, its deed can never become visible although its effects can. Arguably, even as late as the early 1820s God's becoming, for Schelling, corresponded to the genesis of the visible world but in the latest lectures God is complete and does not need to become. God, in Schelling's latest lectures, no longer bodies forth; God is impassive,⁵³ meaning that His being and the be-

52 "Aber um eine Zusammenwirkung derselben und also ein Zusammengesetztes zu begreifen, mußten wir stillschweigend eine Einheit voraussetzen, durch welche die drei Ursachen zusammengehalten und zu gemeinschaftlicher Wirkung vereinigt werden."

53 God is impassive precisely on account of what He does *not* do, but could have done. His *not* doing so then, displays the greatest potency rather than impotence.

coming of the world are not coincidental. Revelation, rather than emanatory becoming, indicates that which remains concealed or withdrawn even in its becoming cognoscible in its effects, i.e. *per posterius*. This is nothing mystical but occurs daily with every free act of the human individual.⁵⁴ The question of Being asks not about some meaning, e.g. the first truth, but about the origination of meaning from nothing, about truth's clearing.

That the causes operate in mutual efficacy demands not only that the *prius* be a unity but also that it direct the process of consequent imagination, the imaging of the imageless *prius*. The means by which this directive may be achieved has been denoted above as "Soul," which assures that the primal clearing is, at least in the end, no longer anonymous, that blind willing has something to will, even if only the imaging of that without image. The Soul is not the same as the being or Spirit but is equal to it, while God, the departing from A⁰ as absolute *prius*, is He who *Is* the being, but not yet as a self-same, not as equivalent with it. God is free against His own being but the Soul is necessarily fixed to the body or the being. God is Cause but the Soul ordines the being-so of the being, i.e. its proper *modus*. Soul directs the mutual

Or, if one persists in speaking of God's impotence in the way that Giorgio Agamben does, then it must be read as im-potence. This is that which God is capable of not-doing, His power not-to-do. Agamben argues, "The theological model of the separation of power from its exercise" – God's withdrawal from His own created potencies – "is found in the distinction between absolute and ordered power [*potenza*] in God – that is, in the doctrine of divine impotence, of what God, in spite of his omnipotence, cannot do (or cannot not do)" (*Kingdom*, 104). For more on this see Agamben's *Potentialities* and *Nudities*. God's impotence, if one will, is His greatest potency, that which he can not-do. This not-doing separates His praxis from His power/potency, Holiness from divine essence, pure praxis from being/nature.

- 54 Just as one knows a person's words and deeds but never the person *per se*, who is not *in* being, so does the revelation of God too distinguish between the anterior that can never become visible but can only be revealed and the result of the revelatory deed that appears in being, i.e. as a visibility. Revelation does not mean sensibillism. One must understand statements like the following from Pseudo-Dionysius in this manner: "Someone beholding God and understanding what he saw has not actually seen God himself but rather something of his which has being and which is knowable" (*Complete Works*, 263). See also the Kabbalah, which influenced Schelling: "He is known, and He is not known; He is concealed and He is manifest" (*Kabbalah*, 209) and "...the Ancient of Days, the Holy of the Holy Ones, the Withdrawn of the Withdrawn ones, the Concealed one of All" (*ibid.* 215).

efficacy and exclusion of the causes, i. e. of the figure of the being as actual and efficacious Spirit. Thomas Leinkauf correctly states that "the Soul stands only in 'essential' equality with this principle; it is only 'what God is', not 'as' God..."⁵⁵ (*Schelling*, 116).⁵⁶ Soul, as equal to the figure of the potencies but not their *prius* accounts for the proper re-unification of the powers once they have been set in tension. Without Soul the unity of the potencies would be dissolved, each of the three would enter its own world, each being a parallel universe. As Schelling phrases it, "... (If this connection ceases, then each principle steps into its own world and thus we would have three *Seinkönnen*" – i. e. three of the first without the possibility of a second and third – "from which each would be immediate *Seinkönnen*" (*Schelling*, *Einleitung*, 90).⁵⁷ The possibility of a world, of a creation, rests on the Soul. Even if other worlds could, so to speak, be "out there," then that would have to remain something unknowable and assuredly *ad hoc*. Soul directs Spirit to its proper image or mode, which finds its proper expression in the third power, which ought to be. This third, however, cannot be something that has become but it too rests in the eternal act of the primal clearing. In other words, the third as representative of proper re-unification could not be without the unity of God as the willing/Causing of A⁰. Again, each of the three powers adheres to the doctrine of simplicity. The

55 "...denn die Seele steht nur in 'wesentlicher' Gleichheit zu diesem Prinzip, sie ist nur 'was Gott ist', nicht 'wie' Gott..."

56 Thomas Leinkauf provides the best and most comprehensive account of the difference between God, Spirit and Soul. He clarifies their relation as follows:

"Spirit in the sense of Schelling is thus *not likeness* of God as Soul [is] – for; likeness in this sense only means that something comports itself in like manner to the being 'in a derivative way' (417) as God comports Himself to the being. The Soul as cause stands only in the same relation as God to the being... [Der Geist im Sinne Schellings ist also *nicht Abbild* Gottes wie die Seele – denn Abbild in diesem Sinne heißt nur, daß etwas 'in abgeleiteter Weise' (417) sich ebenso zum Seienden verhält, wie sich Gott zum Seienden verhält, die Seele als Ursache steht nur im selben Verhältnis wie Gott zum Seienden...] (*Leinkauf*, *Schelling*, 123–124).

Soul is likeness or effigy (*Abbild*), Spirit is simply counter-image (*Gegenbild*), while God is utterly imageless. God is the antecedent, Soul the middle (*Mittleres*) and Spirit the counter-image that is separated (*das Abgeschiedene*) from God as A⁰. Spirit reigns over the counter-image, i. e. the figure of the being, the material potencies, while Soul is equal to the material whole. Spirit is "over-material [*das Übermaterielle*]" and Soul "immaterial [*das Immaterielle*]" (*ibid* 129).

57 "...hört jene Verbindung auf, so tritt jedes Prinzip in eine eigene Welt, und wir hätten also drei *Seinkönnen*, von denen jedes unmittelbares *Seinkönnen* wäre."

third cannot be a synthetic unity that has only become after and as a result of the prior two. All three are there simultaneously in mutual determination. The third grants permanence in light of the incessant exchange of potency and act between the first two. The third is potency in act and actual potency. The third may only fulfill this function, however, because decreed by the fourth or Soul. Soul is not simply equal to the whole but it directs or decrees this equivalency.

God is pure act but in order for pure act to be efficacious, to be active, nothing must become *in* God but only *outside* Him (Schelling, *Initia*, 150). God is never assumed into the process enacted by His deed. God's deed or, better, the deed prior to God proper does not posit God as a being or something in being but only excretes, expels, purges or shifts refuse from itself. The refuse resides in being but God becomes actual by not becoming, by remaining as the Nothing, as the indivisible, insoluble, never presencing remainder. God could not be this without that which becomes by being expelled from Himself but, nevertheless, God proper is not part of that process but the refined remainder. What remains, however, is Nothing. God's fire is all-consuming. What remains is then only freedom from the refuse, the freedom not to have to be it. Freedom never presences; freedom is nothing, but now no longer as undecided freedom, but as decided. Here is no longer that subjunctive which is not yet but could be, but that which indicatively is not, that which has decisively and freely abstained from being. God's refuse has been made unequal to Him. In the act of exclusion (*Absonderung* from God's perspective and *Ausscheidung* from the perspective of what is) what was equal to God manifests God only by becoming unequal to Him. In this act the undecided becomes decided such that God is set as A and His refuse as an expurgated B and the creation as well as its potency reside in the space between.⁵⁸

B is expurgated and the three determinations constituting the potency of that other, futural being – the creation – are expositated and then deposited as modes of A. All the while decisive freedom withdraws and recedes into nothing. The same act that is the vanquishing of B is also the bestowal/dispensing of the three modes of A and the withdrawal of A itself into the indicative, emphatic nothing. The three modes constitute matter

58 Note that this may be found in Schelling's *Initia Philosophiae Universae* even though this text aligns itself more easily with the *System der Weltalter* in which Schelling seems to endorse a becoming God and not one, like in the latest philosophy, that only requires a becoming *outside* Him.

as a whole or the body of that which has withdrawn. A^0 , as the withdrawn, is only first A at all and more particularly A^0 with the ex-position (not vanquishing or banishing; for, that is B) of matter. God is not His body yet could not be without His body. The three determinations are only first there after they have been set into tension (*Spannung*) and deposited by the withdrawal. The withdrawn too, A^0 , is only first indicatively, emphatically and affirmatively there (or rather not *there* but nowhere as it vacates all positions) with this expurgation and refinement. The inner never is without the outer and vice versa, but the cleavage or the act of copulation first posits the *termini* related by the transitive copula. God, who is *ex se*, causes His own immanence by positing it as the decided and indicative non-being. He first posits Being, which is no-thing in particular without even an internal identity, *as* the Nothing, now with identity. God is neither His refuse, matter, body nor any of His three determinations, yet He is determined by the being of all that is expurged. Only if that is can God be revealed (though never come to appearance as such) as that which indicatively, i.e. decisively and freely, is nought. Although God is the Nothing, i.e. the remainder that may not presence, that may not be, He may still be said to exist. Heidegger correctly remarks, "In the existence expression – God exists; A is there – lies also and directly a synthesis, i.e. positing (position) of a relation, only it has an essentially different character than the synthesis of predication: A is B" (*Grundprobleme*, 54).⁵⁹

God is not a subject carrying His predicate but He expropriates Himself of it. God is not a ground carrying and grounding His consequent but He too emerges from the ground-laying and anonymous act, the clearing, truthing or lighting. Schelling's God is not the God of onto-theo-logy. The creation was *ex nihilo*, yet God only first is *as* Himself proper in simultaneity with the excrescence of matter, of the *ὑποκείμενον* from nullity. Matter instantiates the first difference of nothing and something (Schelling, *Grundlegung*, 191), of freedom's exclusion from being – ontological difference. One might usefully employ the rhetoric of Alain Badiou here and distinguish two senses of nothing, as vacuous void and as the devoiced set.⁶⁰ The latter is a localizable set – not just an

59 "In der Existenz-Aussage, Gott existiert, A ist vorhanden, liegt auch und gerade eine Synthesis, d.h. Setzung (Position) einer Beziehung, nur hat sie einen wesentlich anderen Charakter als die Synthesis der Prädikation: A ist B."

60 God's decease and desistance from being does not mean that He has deceased, but rather that He has preserved His life from all possible corruption.

empty set or sheer nullity – the emptied or hollowed set that consequently presides as the hallowed that stands as set apart. The naked *Daß* is indiscernible as that which simply is nought, but that does not mean that as the decisive Nothing it is non-denominable. The devoided is not ineffable mysticism but truth without object-being.⁶¹ God is not a discernible concept but a name and Person. One might also say that by decisively rejecting being in order to indivisibly remain as the never presencing remainder, God de-substantializes. The *Daß* preceded substantiality, but God in His decisiveness explicitly refuses all substantivity. God de-voids in order to remain as the void. This void is neither sheer and vacuous nullity nor the subjunctive $\mu\eta\ \text{ov}$, which can be but is not yet, but the indicative $\text{o}\ddot{\upsilon}\kappa\ \text{ov}$ – the Nothing. God, therefore, properly and decisively exists and yet not at all as a substance or subject. God is neither substance – the material foundation – nor subject – the bearer of predicates. God does not carry predicates and attributes but rejects and ejects them. God's body, the figuration of the being, is not His representation or objectification, not His coming to presence, but rather something other than Him. God is His body only in a differential sense, in the sense of "A is B" and not "A is A."

Matter is the first substrate, only sensible once imprinted with determination. It yields in order to be the malleable receptacle capable of receiving form. Understanding only appears at the same moment that the three are set into a determinate relation, only at the moment that they are first expelled and expunged as chaos and exposit as cosmos. This distinction between inside and outside first arises with the distinction between chaos and cosmos (Schelling, *Initia*, 250, note 51), unintelligibility and understanding. God does not become but only something outside of Him; yet, this becoming outside Him is necessary for God's Understanding. God's nature does not become but understanding does come to Him. God comes to understanding only by the expropriation of matter. This expropriation inverts the roles of the *prius* and *posterius* as posterior matter becomes the *ὑποκείμενον* and the *prius* emerges as pure and virginal only at the end of the expropriating expurgation. This inversion of roles is the *inversio* by which the *uni-versio* arises. Not that the inner is turned out towards plurality but more precisely does merely external Multiplicity undergo an *inversion* hollowing out a space of inner unity. *Expurgation is inversion, which*

61 Badiou presents a similar position that he calls "subtractive ontology," which also, insofar as it is not theistic and does not say what something is not but rather indicatively states what it is, even if it only is *as* nothing, has nothing to do with negative theology.

*consists in the holiness of setting A⁰ apart (Aussonderung). The act of setting apart occurs through the infinity (rather than totalization) of A⁰ over and against the three causes, the material body. Just as the face of the person always suggests more than the superficiality of its image, so here is the body or face of God the condition of His infinitizing ipseity. What simply is, without passing over into being is ipseity (Schelling, Grounding, 138). The face never represents or objectifies infinity but the material face is yet necessary for the infinitizing event.*⁶² A⁰ precedes the three that comprise his material body but they still condition His ipseity, i.e. His Holiness and Understanding.⁶³

The three determinations comprise the actual potency of the creation but they only first are at all once set into tension. The potency and act of creation, then, are one and the same; the potency for the creation did precede its actuality. The creation exhibits novelty because it did not follow and could not resemble a model. Potency did not endure before the tension of the potencies enacting the actual creation occurred. The potencies in tension are already causes. The three are united in an indissoluble and successive, i.e. temporal, chain. Once posited, then, Spirit can never again (or really even once) be a totality (Schelling, *Initia*, 171). Each of the three pronounces the same essence in three different times. Time, even the fullness of time in eternity, disperses and scatters any homogeneity into heterogeneous succession.⁶⁴ None of the times may stake a claim to totality. None may claim permanence but each is only there to overcome the prior and to be overcome by the subsequent. The expression of A (A⁰ actually) does not occur in any of the three determinations of A and so not in a form of identity, A=A, but, rather, in *différance*, in A=B (*ibid.* 172). A defers, differs, retreats from and expropriates B. There is therefore no pure subject outside of expression or rather no pure expression outside of a contingent and accidental material signifier, namely B. There is not a pure subject that presences identically but subject and object are only copulated via transitive *différance*. God does not

62 One might ask whether this is so for Levinas, for whom the Other is never any particular face but arguably an empty Other, never the gay, female or beloved Other, but only the Other as nothing but alterity.

63 Note that ipseity is not the same as aseity. The distinction of "self" in terms of *idem* (sameness) and *ipse* (self) stems from Paul Ricoeur. This work levels a criticism against self as *idem* without renouncing it as *ipse*. It criticizes most metaphysical notions of sameness, whilst retaining a domain of ipseity.

64 Nevertheless, the Present time of history is a false time based only in the recurrence of the same and not a true succession of differents. This time promises nothing new, only the recurrence of what has already been.

become and so did not need creation to become but He did need that becoming outside of Himself, that other and different than Himself, in order to find a position, in order to become manifest, even as the never presencing remainder who only is by excluding B from Himself, by refusing the predicate, by being unequal to His expression. Nevertheless, heterogeneity, disparity and inequality are the conditions of His finding a position, of “not being” in an indicative sense. God, as decided freedom, is without being because He rejected and ejected being.

A⁰ only is in its indicative propriety and not just the *Daß* as abstract point of departure once it has excreted from itself everything which could be. Only then is it decisively 0. The law of either/or, the world law, applies even to God. God does not become visible, fractured into the various parts of the totality, but by ejecting from Himself all that is in being He remains as the whole and Holy, the integral integer that cannot be touched because without tangent. After rejecting the totality of what could be as what He is not, God remains as He who cannot be profaned, the essentially and actually virginal. God does not become visible, represented or tangential but the tangent is excluded or expropriated. The touchable parts do not belong to God proper.⁶⁵ In the period of the *Weltalter* God actually became, i.e. underwent an accouchement process, such that what was in being was as if God’s mediated body, i.e. the being of the world and God’s being coincided. By the latest lectures that is no longer the case. God does not presence but reveals Himself by letting everything else presence. God reveals His existence not by identifying with and appropriating what is in being, $A=A$, but by becoming disproportionate to it, $A=B$. God reveals Himself not in identity but difference, not by presencing but by concealment.

65 Fyodor Dostoyevsky shows an adequate understanding of this relationship when in *The Brothers Karamazov* he writes, “...though you’re [Alexei Fyodorovich or Alyosha] like an angel, nothing touches you.” “He [Fyodor Pavlovich Karamazov] even began to snivel. He was sentimental. He was wicked and sentimental” (pg. 25). The word sentimentality derives from *sentir*, meaning “to touch.” Fyodor, contra the angelic Alyosha is wicked because he could be touched, i.e. he was always likely to “fly off on a tangent.” Alyosha was self-composed, not unaffected but nevertheless safe from the tangent. He was holy and virginal.

One should also note Schelling’s theodicy here. The perfect can only reveal itself with the shitting out of the imperfect. The perfect is not unaffected by the imperfect, quite the contrary, but affection does not coincide with passivity. God is impassive and good because he overcomes the worse for the better. He proves Himself perfect, a deed for which real evil plays a role in the divine economy.

That God never becomes visible does not imply that the created, visible world is without significance. While not God's mediated body, it should become His throne, that above which He rises as Lord. God's excluding from Himself everything that is not Him corresponds to His life as personality. God is Lord only insofar as He is Person. God is Person because He separates the divine from the non-divine, wheat and chaff, just as human persons should reprove themselves by distancing themselves from their own impropriety, their own chaff. One's acts reveal one without one becoming synonymous with the act and its product. The person indivisibly remains behind all possible actions as the one enacting the deeds cannot presence though she reveals herself in the deed. Distancing oneself from what one is not constitutes the moral act by which one stands as Lord over their own being and proves oneself as sovereign person. The plant is not free against its own being, while human being shares with God a certain freedom, providence, Lordship or sovereignty over her own being. Make no mistake, however, this distancing, be it withdrawal on the side of the person or refuse on the side of the ejected, asymptotically approaches but never actually arrives at completion. Completion means full presence and complete presence spells the loss of (moral) life. The transition from nothing to something does not correspond to a presencing but rather that which is nought manifests itself as 0, i. e. as Nothing indicatively and decisively. One might make sense of the Heideggarian phrase, "The Nothing nothings." The movement from nothing to something corresponds to the movement by which that which is nought positively erects itself as Nothing by excreting everything it is not so that it may preserve its effusiveness as the never-presencing remainder. Nullifying negation lets Being deploy (*wesen*), giving the groundless a ground. There is not first a ground that deploys but deployment (=providence) nothings.

The ejection of being corresponds to its rejection on the side of God. That which God refuses for Himself is the tension of His determinations and its concomitant product – the creation. These determinations are not God's representation; for, they are set outside their essential determination into a *distorted* tension. They are not in an eternal now but appear in a mutual succession. This constitutes the first differencing. The first differencing of non-synthetic identity or Difference itself is not the sublation of identity (as that would have presupposed a One from which all content would emanate) but a doubling (I/7, 424–5, "Stuttgarter"). This corresponds to repetition (in the Deleuzian sense) and not the dialectical mediation of the Same. As Beach phrases it, this constitutes the difference

between an *Erzeugungs-* (generative) and *Aufhebungsdiagnostik* (sublation dialectic). In a generative dialectic nothing pre-existent is unveiled but novelty arises *ex nihilo*. The creation is the new being arising between A^1 and A^2 and secured as permanent and integral by A^3 . The third keeps what has come to the light of day from being consumed again by the annihilating, disintegrating fire of B. What has come to light is nothing other than B returned to A. The history of the creation corresponds to the return of the three set into a successive tension into a state of peace. The end is again A but only A that has been delivered from B. That the three function harmoniously towards a common goal indicates providence. The tension brought the three apart but they do not continue indefinitely towards an indefinite periphery, towards perpetual disintegration, but they are only set apart in order to draw a space in which something novel may come to light. They are only set apart in order that light may find a crevice by which it may break into the darkness of chaos. This lighting or clearing in which the three are essentially “spaced” is anarchically based in the willing/Causing of A^0 . Being designates not beings’ ground but the clearing, lighting or truth-event that first sets a ground. Here the talk is not of that first being or the beginning, but of the act of commencement, the copulating-event generative of beings. Both the ground and what is grounded result from the grounding event. The event is simultaneously the generation of the Son and the creation. As one and the same, this event both demarcates God as Father, i.e. as Lord and God, and the creation, both possible and actual, as God’s alterior.

Heidegger’s event parallels Schelling’s historical understanding of the creation as grounded not in logic or dialectical emanation but in temporalization, in temporal ages (Lawrence, “Philosophical,” *Schelling Now*, 16). The end of the process, then, is guided neither teleologically nor blindly but ensues from the decisiveness of freedom, from the wisdom-moment. Above, one saw that the fourth or the Soul was what was determinately willed. The image of the imageless is willed. The creation history, then, ensues successively until the point is reached at which imageless freedom finds a position for itself. The fourth is the formal cause (insofar as it is the form equal to the material whole) that willed ironically, i.e. through its opposite, the false tension of the material potencies. This fourth is $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ (Schelling, *Grundlegung*, 298), i.e. a willing understanding or an understandable will. $\Sigma\phi\iota\alpha$ or the wisdom-moment, as that behind or prior to Being, shows the primal possibility to willing as *Ursein*. That which the will willed, having been shown something that it may will, is

νοῦς or cognoscibility, which arises from the in-cognoscible and incognito. It is the first arising of something from nothing, the first actuality that is simultaneous with its possibility (because no time elapsed between the wisdom-moment and the actual deed).

5 The Ideas as Visions

The irony of absolute freedom consists in its ability to remain itself even when other than itself, an opposite (Schelling, *Urfassung*, 421). *Seinkönnendes* may be other than itself and even is other insofar as it becomes *das Seinkönnende*. The creative deed was wrought in irony. The creation creates the image of the imageless; therefore, no less ironically is this executed via its opposite, the improper tension (*Spannung*) of the potencies. Again, this tension of the potencies is synonymous with the very coming into being of these same potencies. They were not there before being set into tension. This ironic willing of the opposite of the divine formation is nevertheless God's willing because God is the effusive *prius* of the potencies, never to be assumed into their concatenation. God may will a tension and still indivisibly remain as the will (and therefore Lord) above it. God, who is prior to the Idea and ideality, accepts image or form via a process of ideation without losing Himself. God is neither the *Wahnsinn* prior to the creation of sense (*Sinn*), as *Wahnsinn* bereft of sense is truly nought, nor is He the created sense, but rather the infinity of both or the *decisiveness* constitutive of the move from *Wahnsinn* to *Sinn*.

Wahnsinn produces *Sinn* by ideation or imaging. Where there is Being there is thinking because unprethinkable Being ironically creates sensible cognoscibility. Every created sense is an idea of the unprethinkable. As Jason M. Wirth once expressed in a Leibnizian fashion, "Each monad expresses the absolute uniquely. Each is a different perspective on the Whole from within the Whole" (*Conspiracy*, 136). Each idea is a monad insofar as each is a particular that is also an absolute repetition, i.e. a repetition expressing the absolute in its own unique way. Not every idea, however, is *the* Idea. Sense is created in the creation but not instantaneously or a-temporally, but with a gradation. Certainly there is not an interval of time *in* which the creation occurred. The temporality of the creation is not quantitative but qualitative.⁶⁶ Each idea is a gradual forma-

66 Nothing comes into being already in time but time comes into being in each being.

tion of sense attaining ever greater appropriateness. Each idea stands in relation to other ideas just as each Leibnizian monad related to all others. The time of creation consists in a “spacing” between the ideas, not the space of extension but rather that of essential differencing or in-tension. Contra Kant, space, correctly conceived, is just as fundamental as time. One can only say this if one begins not with consciousness as that substrate possessing the faculties requisite for the construction of experience but rather with the experience of the construction of sense.

Both Schelling and Deleuze share in common the insight that the production of (qualitative and not yet extensive) space and (differentiated) senses go hand in hand. Deleuze explains, “...(T)he nature of difference lies neither in the quality by which it is covered nor in the extensity by which it is explicated. Difference is intensive, indistinguishable from depth in the form of an non-extensive and non-qualified spatium, the matrix of the unequal and the different. Intensity is not the sensible but the being of the sensible, where different relates to different” (*Difference*, 266). The fullest ramifications of what that may mean would require a study of Deleuze, but thankfully Deleuze himself relates this insight to that of Schelling’s, writing,

The most important aspect of Schelling’s philosophy is his consideration of powers. How unjust in this respect, is Hegel’s critical remark about the black cows! Of these two philosophers, it is Schelling who brings difference out of the night of the Identical, and with finer, more varied and more terrifying flashes of lightning than those of contradiction: with *progressivity*. Anger and love are powers of the Idea which develop on the basis of a *mē on* – in other words, not from a negative or a non-being [*ouk on*] but from a problematic being or non-existent, a being implicit in those existences beyond the ground. The God of love and the God of anger are required in order to have an Idea. A^1 , A^2 , A^3 form the play of pure depotentialisation and potentiality, testifying to the presence in Schelling’s philosophy of a differential calculus adequate to the dialectic. ... It is here that division finds its scope, which is not in breadth in the differentiation of species within the same genus, but in depth in derivation and potentialisation, already a kind of differentiation (*ibid.* 190–191)

For Schelling, there is not a production of Platonic essences, i.e. static verities subsisting in another world, but rather the production of sense, the production of that which has sense or is sensible. This is the production of cognoscibility, of that which can be cognized and recognized, and not reified entities in another realm. Unlike the traditional interpretation of Plato, in Schelling chaos precedes the ideas as models, which are al-

ways only derivative for Schelling. Nothing participates in the ideas but the ideas inhere within the greater context of generative chaos.

If sense or ideas are not models but themselves generated from a chaos older than any origin, then intelligibility is not static but each sense arises through all others. This is again the parallel with Leibniz's monads. Nothing occupies its own space but each idea is determined by its position in regard to all others and its being inhabited by all others. This space is qualitative and not merely quantitative extension. The ideas indicate a spatum but they are not *res extensa*. Every locus in the space of extension is just like every other but in the sensible space of the creation each position possesses its own unique, intensive quality demarcating it from all other spaces. Space as simply indifferent *loci* existing outside of but next to one another in an infinite monotony is the space of senselessness (Schelling, II/1, 428, "Darstellung") (just as time as only the succession of indifferent and monotonous points is nihilistic time in which nothing novel, i.e. the future, can ever arrive).⁶⁷ In the sensible (as opposed to senseless) space (and time) of the creation, no ideas exist side by side and apart from another as parts outside of parts but organically, each constituted in and through the other. This space is not extensive but intensive.

This, again, is not dissimilar to Deleuze, who speaks of the intensive differentialization of ideas in contrast to the external differences attributed to mere concepts (*Difference*, 26). He argues that externality or extension is the domain of representation but that this must be preceded by a sensible space of internal genesis of intensive quantity. Albert Toscano has explicitly drawn this link between Schelling and Deleuze, correctly asserting that for Schelling the construction (generation) is not the subsumption (participation and/or mediation) of something under a universal as model but is rather the differentiation of the Absolute ("Philosophy," *New*, 123). Again, the differentiation of the Absolute may not be thought as an emanation of the Absolute, as the production of copies under the

67 Sensible space, unlike pure extension, is not the locus or empty receptacle in which ideas subsist but sensible space also bears a necessary relation to time. Something's essential "where" may not be separated from its proper "when." Opposed to extension, the space of intension is more than a locus for but rather the generation of sensible ideas. Just as the past yields to that which arrives so, spatially considered, the yielding of one sense makes room for another idea (Schelling, II/1, 429, "Darstellung"). Space and time are inextricably intertwined, each being productive of that which subsists and not just the spatial or temporal apparatus in which ideas may reside.

Absolute as model. The Absolute is nothing; it is chaos. The creation does not generate replicas or *simulacra*; it is not the presencing of what was already always there as model, even if concealed, but the novel arrives. This “differencing” of the Absolute, of the *Duas* or Difference itself, is construction as reconstruction or repetition of the Absolute brought to concatenation. This has nothing to do with a copy, but only with novelty or originality. Repetition is redoubling and not recurrence or replication. Toscana argues that for Deleuze the image of thought as a plane of immanence is itself a construction (*ibid.*). Immanence or the concealed does not express itself, does not bring to light what was already there only in darkness, but is itself a product, generated from chaos⁶⁸ or nothing. Toscana argues that Schelling and Deleuze both practiced a generative ontology in contrast to transcendental philosophy, arguing that French spiritualism mediated this link between the two thinkers through Maine de Biran, Victor Cousin, Félix Ravaisson and Henri Bergson (*ibid.* 118). With the move away from transcendental philosophy one abandons subjectivity as the locus where the construction of experience occurs to the experience of construction (*ibid.* 115). Intelligibility arises not from the subject who experiences but the subject may only experience because something is sensible, i.e. has sense. Kant assured that the subject could never experience the thing-in-itself because the thing was nothing apart from the intelligibility the subject of experience brought to it with its categories of the understanding. Here the subject itself is something posited by experience. One either begins with experience or one may never have it as it will then always remain veiled behind the operations of the subject that domesticates and annexes this experience. The creation of sensible ideas, generative ontology, first makes experience possible prior to any finite subject by bringing cognoscibility into the world, i.e. by bringing a sensible world into being at all.

On the other hand, Toscana argues that Schelling and Deleuze differ insofar as for the former everything happens under the direction of a teleological principle. If Schelling’s unground is an indivisible, never presencing remainder, preceding principles or grounds, teleological or otherwise, then how can that be? Being precedes cognoscibility even if the latter is an organizing and, therefore, telic principle. Why cannot Schelling’s

68 “Chaos” always signifies Being “prior” to cognoscibility, i.e. prior to sensibility, intelligibility or image. Intelligibility, i.e. the creation of sense from non-sense, always arrives as something unforeseen and sudden, as something original and novel, something contingent that just as easily could have not been.

philosophy too portray a construction of immanence? Toscana argues that if something does not heteronomously direct an organism from without and certainly not from within, as this very same within or immanence is to be constructed, then the following must hold: 1) construction itself is not an expression of productivity but itself an instance of production and 2) construction must arise as an unclamping or dephasing in the face of a non-reflexive (non-philosophical) outside (*ibid.* 124). He says Deleuze achieves this by tracing a plane of immanence upon savage multiplicity as a non-philosophical outside (chaos/*Wahnsinn*?), breaking the reflexivity of the organic or telic. Does not the creation in Schelling rupture the chaotic rotation of drives, i.e. the potencies at rest? Is this rupture not synonymous with the very creation of the potencies that were only presupposed beforehand as *momenta* for thought? Is this not the creation of something organic from that without any ground or principle, namely the inorganic? Is not Schelling's fundamental thought that Being is anterior to the sameness or identity of immanence? Is this not the in-versio and uni-versio of Schelling?

The creation is the creation of *a* world, of a self-same, an identical uni-verse by means of in-versio or inversion. Is not inversion a form of intension and intensive generation? God or A^0 creates His essence, the three potencies, whose ironic in-versio or tension into something that is not divine, i.e. something other or something inverse, founds the created uni-versio. The creation of the sensible world of ideas and their ground, the potencies, is one and the same act. God, as *prius* of the potencies and that which they can potentially render, generates (the Son) and creates in one and the same act. God did not have to create but He could not have generated the Son without also creating. God reveals Himself, i.e. A^0 becomes revealed, with the inversion of the three potencies. The potencies cannot be ironically inverted or set into tension without the ideas resulting therefrom, but the potencies themselves only actually are with this tension. God's creating is His revelation; however, that made visible is ironically only that which God is *not*. God excretes from Himself as refuse that which He is not. The excreted refuse, the inversion whereby the inner becomes outer in order that internality become "visible" as that which *is not* visible, is the created universe or, more properly, the creation lies in the space between. Once the three potencies have been excreted, they become the foundation (*Unterlage*) or ὑποκείμενον. This excreted (*ausgeschieden*) matter is God's unmediated and non-mediating body, a body that is not a sign. Just as one's own refuse is not one's body, not a representation of one and not a sign of one, but that which

the body has rejected as a property, as part of one's self in one's propriety, so is God's body (the three potencies and not the created ideas resultant therefrom) perhaps a sacramental *mark* but not a representative *sign*. Freedom only becomes visible as invisible, as a plane of immanence concealed by an externality that it has refused by having ironically decided for it. Matter is not freedom's sign because, even though freedom ironically decided for its inverse, what presences is only externalized in order that a plane of immanence may be drawn. This plane is neither signifier nor signified, neither Sayer nor expression/Said. The plane is a repetition from chaos, not of being similar or equal – a reproduction – but the construction of novelty – revelation. This act does not correspond to the relation of model/copy or sign/signified, but intensive inversion makes the *posterius* (matter as foundation/*Unterlage*) into a ground or support for the revelation of the invisible *prius*. The inversion consists in making the *posterius* into the *prius* and vice versa. Difference itself or the *Duas* differentiates by generating identity or the *Monas*. The indeterminate whole created a plane of immanence, an inner unity, by disseminating everything as a plurality of ideas. Each is an image of the imageless in a more or less perfect form.

Schelling and Deleuze both agree that the generation/creation is not just a reproduction of the past, a mediation by which the Same comes to itself, but something futural and novel. It is real novelty and real difference without the mediation of conceptual differentiation. The concept is not parsed but ideas arise as sensibles. The ideas arise as repetitions because they emerge not from the generic generality of a concept but vertically. They arise in a mutual play of yielding and exclusion, i. e. dynamically and not statically, intensively and not extensively, vertically and not horizontally, heterogeneously and not homogeneously. In-versio is the trace or mark of Causal efficacy but not as a representation of the Cause, i. e. not by sharing or participating in something general that could be common to others as well. Causal efficacy is always singular and not the emanation or imitation of a general; it is repetition. This movement is transitive, transition fueled not by negativities but the affirmation of a decisive will. What Schelling calls redoubling and originality, Deleuze names repetition.

The creation results from God ironically setting the potencies into a non-divine formation. God suspends His own what-being – His that-being is never in doubt – and assures its eventual regeneration. The creation (the ideas) are everything lying between (II/4, 352, “Andere Deduktion”), everything produced in the process of the (re)construction of the

potencies into a divine arrangement. God's sublation of His ground – which again is ironically first the positing of a ground in groundlessness – makes *space* (*Raum*) for the creation (*ibid.* 353). “Space (is) the a priori form of all finite being”⁶⁹ (*ibid.*). God's suspension of His divinity does not, however, suspend Himself but elevates Himself as a redoubling. Schelling expresses it this way: “God does not divest Himself into the world, as one now tends to say, he rather elevates Himself into Himself, into His divinity; by being Creator He enters therefore into His divinity”⁷⁰ (*ibid.*). The more God excretes or shits out, the purer, holier and more virginal He becomes. All the more so does He become Lord, even of His own being. God did not have to create, but in doing so he elevates himself to divinity. Repetition is necessarily creative; repetition necessarily breeds novelty. The meaning of Being is not vain production but production in order to become a person, one who is raised above every production. One cannot capture the person with the signification of the concept but only with the sacramentality of the Name. To be a person is to become holy, to become separated from the external and profane by entering into the sanctuary of immanence and ipseity.

6 The Idea

The creation is a gradual *history* of overcoming and yielding such that the *terminus* is not reached in an instant. Its history is not a senseless succession, however, but does have a true future. Joseph Lawrence comments that “a series of *different* creations emerge until at last (in Man) the concealed form in the most inner part of nature, the principle of its incipency, becomes free” (*Schellings*, 143). Each idea is an image of imageless freedom – the principle of incipency. The process of creation proceeds toward a more and more adequate image of imageless freedom. The first ideas are of the inorganic and astral, followed by the organic, animal or creaturely and earthly, which lastly is followed by the anthropomorphic or spiritual. Man, as the restored unity of what God initially suspended by setting the potencies into tension, is the Idea (*Schelling*, I/10, 388, “Naturprocesses”). All created ideas, i.e. all creatures, are images of the imageless insofar as

69 “...ist der Raum die apriorische Form alles endlichen Seyns.”

70 “Gott entäußert nicht sich zur Welt, wie man jetzt zu sagen pflegt, er erhebt sich Vielmehr in sich selbst, in seine Gottheit, dadurch, daß er Schöpfer ist, er tritt eben damit in seine Gottheit.”

they are all partially an overcoming of B and thereby a restoral of A. The creature as such is neither A nor B ($B=A^1$ raised from rest to act and accordingly incited from out of its proper boundary as resting support) but that returned to A from B (Schelling, *Urfassung*, 632). Only in Man is this complete. All creatures arise between A^2 and A^1 as the former has transformed the latter again into A from B. A^3 seals this mutation allowing each creature to come to a standstill, to a permanence between these without being again consumed by the uprising of B. Man, creation's end, is the equilibrium or equipoise enclosed within all three of the material causes. Man is a veritably new creature that was not there before the creative tension of the potencies, before their actual positing as causes. Man is again A but now with the potency of B within his custody. This constitutes Man's freedom or better Man *as* freedom. The second has overcome the first completely in Man, but not unalterably, lest static un-freedom. Man stands freely within the causes as their custodian, a veritable fourth amongst the three material potencies. Although created from the causes, Man has attained a certain independence and freedom from them. He did not create them; he is not their *prius* but their *posterius*, though he stands embossed above them as their custodian. Man completes the gradual play of yielding and overcoming effective in the creative process. He completes the creation as its center, the perfect balance between the causes so that they again are no longer active but returned to a state of potency – of possible freedom and incipency. They are again free to remain at rest, i.e. in potentiality, or to be incited and raised to causal efficacy. Man has become their Lord. His fiat now reigns sovereign over their arrangement.

As Lord of the potencies (for, they are now again potential and not in act as causes), although as their *posterius*, Man is the outer-divine divine (Außergöttlich-Göttliches), “the externally generated, the formed, accomplished God” (II/2, 124, “Monotheismus”).⁷¹ Godliness consists in Lordship. Man's Lordship, however, as *posterius*, is acquired and not inalienable and inviolable. Man is neither the wisdom-moment, as this first shows the unprethinkable possibility of potentialization, nor A^4 or the Soul, insofar as Soul equals the three as a simple, but Man is what is willed as the aim of the creation. He stands not as a simple but as a created composite of the three, not that directing their arrangement in order that something may arise instead of nothing, but the last creation, the last emergence. In another sense, Man is indeed Soul because he too is equal to the material whole – in its proper arrangement. He, however, is the Soul that *understands*, that

71 “der äußerlich hervorgebrachte, der geschaffene, gewordene Gott”

has actually undergone the entire process. Man is, to speak Heideggarian, the Understanding of Being, but he does not know himself as such. He does not understand himself; he is the consciousness of the whole but not *self*-consciousness (Schulz, *Vollendung*, 256). He is consciousness without knowledge or volition, the consonance of the will and what it wills, the knowing and that which is known. Man is the consciousness of Being, consciousness/understanding/cognoscibility/sensibility come to the unpre-thinkable *Daß*; for, the *Daß* is not *un*thinkable but only unprethinkable. It may be thought via its *posterius*, namely Man as the arrived, accrued Understanding of Being. Man is the outer-divinely posited God but he does not know himself as this. He is also not John's Λόγος because as created, composite, although certainly pure and virginal, *posterius* his freedom may be lost. Should Man set the potencies again as cosmic causes he will become subject to them. As composite unity, he is a dissolvable unity, a fragile unity.⁷² Man is not God by necessity but only by virtue of the creative deed. He is not the inner God, not the Λόγος of God, but the external God. The Λόγος is a co-eternal simple with God as beginning, that making created composition and created images of the unimaginable possible, akin to the wisdom-moment.

Man is the created Idea of God, i.e. the Understanding (*Verstand*) of God. One may not think this in a Hegelian manner. This Idea does not presence, does not function as the aim of history. In fact, this Idea only remains as the essential consciousness or Understanding of God if and only if Man does *not* act, does *not* presence and unfurl himself into historical space and time. For Hegel, the Idea is the mediation of the presencing of the world but for Schelling all this occurs in darkness, in eternity. For Schelling the Idea proceeds from rather than preceding Being.

Man is the image/doubling (*Ebenbild*) of God, not the copy of a prior image, but the first image (*Bild*). This image is not a representation but a repetition. Man is God's actuality, His propriety (*das Eigentliche*) (Fuhrmans in Schelling, *Initia*, note 32, pg. 243). Man too, as God's propriety, stands embossed above the natural, as nature is what God refused – “the impropriety of God (*das Uneigentliche Gottes*)”⁷³ – and subjected to Him-

72 Schelling argues, contra Plato, that the soul is not a simple, but a composite, namely an indissoluble unity of various states and functions (*Grundlegung*, 485). The boundless power of production stands under both God and Man's Lordship but the forces *constitute* and *enclose* Man but are *in* God.

73 Horst Fuhrmans uses this phrase in the “Erläuterungen” of *Initia Philosophiae Universae*, note 61, pg. 252.

self. Man *is* God in that he is the divine, pure consciousness (of) God and none of the excrement or refuse, so to speak. The expelled creation consists of effigies (*Abbilder*) and possible idols (*Abgötter*) but Man is *the* image (*Urbild*), icon or double (*Ebenbild*) of God. God expropriated nature but Man is appropriated. Man is the completed (*voll-endetes*) event (*Ereignis*) where “event” means “event of appropriation” in the Heideggerian sense. Man seals the completion of the (first) clearing.⁷⁴ Although not consciously so because he only comes to consciousness at the creation’s completion, Man has undergone the entire history of the creation. Man does not have a purpose but is the purpose. Joseph Lawrence writes, “With the discovery of this presiding independent of Man is the view raised to that higher history in which Man ceases to be the creator and aim of history and finds his determination in being the place of a divine revelation”⁷⁵ (Schellings, 204–205). Man occupies the center *topos* cleared in original spacing. He is not a being but the position of Lordship. He is not a subject because not subjected, but he holds sway over his conditions. He is neither *a se*, *per se* nor *ad se*, neither creator (from himself), through himself or for himself. He is not for himself but for Being. Being holds sway Godly and therefore Man, as the Understanding of Being, is God’s Understanding. Man is not a subject *with* consciousness but *is* consciousness, not an animal with understanding, not Aristotle’s rational animal, but Understanding as such (Heidegger, *Metaphysik*, 41). Man is not a thing, being or subject. As Heidegger asserted, “A ‘subjectivism’ is clearly only possible where man is generally thought beforehand as subject and the ‘understanding’ is taken as a type of ‘subjective’ representation” (*ibid.* 68).⁷⁶

Man is the will of the creation, the (re)constitution or return of the causes into potency. This return is achieved with the *placement* of Man

74 There are three clearings in Schelling, the creation as the clearing of Truth, the clearing of the Good in the event of Jesus as the Christ in the Revelation and the clearing of Beauty/Glorification in the eschatological second coming. The first clearing is pre-historical or Past, the second historical or Present and the third post-historical or Future. Α-λήθεια clears God and God’s freedom. Note that the clearings of Truth, the Good and the Beautiful correspond also to the progression of Kant’s three critiques.

75 “Mit der Entdeckung dieses vom Menschen unabhängigen Wesens wurde der Blick auf jene höhere Geschichte erhoben, in der der Mensch aufhört, Schöpfer und Zweck der Geschichte zu sein, und seine Bestimmung darin findet, Ort einer göttlichen Offenbarung zu sein.”

76 “Ein ‘Subjektivismus’ ist offenbar nur dort möglich, wo überhaupt zuvor der Mensch als Subjekt gedacht und das ‘Verstehen’ als eine Art des ‘subjektiven’ Vorstellens genommen wird.”

in the center of the potencies. Man does not abide in an indifferent receptacle but only is who he is due to his topology. He is truly himself only at the center of fostered space (*gehegter Raum*) where he holds sway as completely unswayed by the tangential periphery, the structures securing his enclosure. As unswayed Man stands at the point of indifference – (re)constituted freedom. God is freedom, free even from His own being. As free of His own being He is Lord of His own Being. Lordship constitutes Godliness; therefore, to be God is to be free and sovereign. In willing Man as end of the creation God wills nothing other than Himself, the image of freedom. The image of imageless freedom is its Understanding (*Verstand*). Man is the *Verstand*, the essential (not yet thematic) consciousness (of) *das Verstandlose* – Man is the *Verstand* of Being, the primordial consciousness (of) God. In the Erlangen lectures of 1820–21 Schelling expresses this idea of Man as the Understanding of Being and God nearly theosophically. There, in calling Man nothing but consciousness, he plays with the literal meaning of the word as “co-science [*Mitwissenschaft/Conscientia*].” One must remove the potentially mystic understanding. Man, in this paradisiacal state, is nothing but consciousness/understanding; however, that does not mean he is sentient. In other words, Man *is* Understanding (*Verstand*) but he does not *have* understanding (*Verständnis*). The entire history of the creation and, therefore, the entire science of the creation is *with* him but that does not entail his awareness of it. Man is consciousness but not yet self-consciousness. Man does not yet know himself, neither who he is nor that he is. Man, though “born” with knowledge of everything, does not in fact possess an innate knowledge because this knowledge can only become thematic for him as historically revealed, not innately. His actual knowledge is always a *re*-cognition. Recollection does not remember something once present but now passed away, but (re-)collects or gathers for the first time. *Ανάμνησις* is repetition. Repetition is not recurrence but novel and original occurrence. Horst Fuhrmans, commenting upon the Erlangen lectures, elucidates this relation between inborn consciousness and actual, historical knowledge. He explains that Man, as the Understanding of God, contra theosophy, does not have *knowledge* of all being (*Initia*, 219). Should he come to self-consciousness or knowledge of self as well as of anything else, then he must still learn historically via sentient experience. Yet, Man is only capable of this action because it is a *re*-cognition. Man only has the capability of actual cognition because he is essentially the Understanding of Being. He does not *have* this as a reflective capacity but he *is* it. As Fuhrmans states it, because not just fallen man but because even the first Man does not innately possess the

knowledge of the process of being (but *is* it), so “*Dasein* is from the ground up historical” (*ibid.* 220).⁷⁷ The philosopher and artist are in the same predicament as the historian. Historical knowledge surpasses immediate knowledge or the insight of intellectual intuition.

Man is the image of the imageless God. Before he actually acts or is even considered in respect to his capacity to act and again incite B, he is the Soul that has as its first object, which conveys to it all other possible objects, God (II/1, 516, “Darstellung”). The Soul is equivalent to the whole. “The Soul does not know but is the science”⁷⁸ (*ibid.* 519). The Soul does not know but, nevertheless, that nothing can be in the actual understanding of the fallen human being that was not already in the Soul means that Man did not understand things but *is* Understanding. The actually fallen spirit of the human being is knowing but only in relation to unfallen Soul. The fallen spirit is, so to speak, a *tabula rasa* on which the writing of any actual knowing may only be accidental (*ibid.* 520). The Soul *is* the science essentially but without actually knowing itself.⁷⁹ The Soul is the seat of the ideas as potential and not yet as objective.

Soul is A⁴ but Man is more than that – a⁰. “Man lies as possibility, i. e. as Idea in the Soul, from which we said that it is equal to the whole being”⁸⁰ (*ibid.* 528). The Soul has God as its object. Man is the Idea of the ideas, the Idea equal to the whole, the visibility or Idea (*visage*) of God. Man is the end of the creation but not a static one; he is one with an excess, one capable of effusion. Man is more than A⁴ but a⁰, the one who may again begin what God completed.

Man is again the absolute possibility of commencement because he lacks a pre-determined end insofar as he himself is the end. He is consciousness (of)⁸¹ God, in a genitive and attributive sense, and so he himself is without purpose because he is the purpose (I/10, 389 “Naturprocesses”).

77 “...Dasein von Grund auf geschichtlich ist...”

78 “Die Seele weiß nicht, sondern sie ist die Wissenschaft.”

79 Thomas Leinkauf helpfully points out, “Soul *is* knowing, so Spirit is *that which* knows and indeed mediated through its relation to Soul. [*Ist* die Seele Wissen, so ist der Geist *das* Wissende und zwar vermittelt durch sein Verhältnis zur Seele.]” (*Schelling*, 144). Soul, like Man as consciousness (of) God *is* knowing, yet without knowing that it is *the one* that is knowing. Only with Spirit, so to speak, is consciousness brought to thetic self-consciousness.

80 “Der Mensch liegt als Möglichkeit, d.h. als Idee, in der Seele, von welcher wir sagten, daß sie dem ganzen Seyenden gleich ist.”

81 The use of parentheses follows the Sartrean practice of showing that this consciousness is not yet thetic.

Man is not self-consciousness, nothing that asks about its own meaning, because his being is to be the meaning of Being, the for the sake of which. The meaning of Being, one could say, is to be God-positing and that is Man as essential consciousness. As Understanding, God-positing consciousness or custodian of the potencies Man sits upon the throne of Being, just as expropriated nature was not God's image or body but His seat, over which He proved His Lordship. All consciousness is pre-determined as God-positing, not by itself but from sensibility, i.e. affectivity. Original consciousness is not determined by thinking⁸² and so is not a subject but closer to a superject. Man is not a being (unto himself) but only Being repeated. Man is Being's trajectory, the result of Being as transitive copula. Note that the end is wisdom in a two-fold sense: 1) φιλία-σοφία is a striving for wisdom as its end, not as beginning but as that for which one strove. 2) The wisdom-moment showed God the possibility of future being, of futurity in general, prior to all *actual* possibility, i.e. prior to potency. Man, as end, is this futurity come to fruition. The whole process of the creation sought wisdom (Schelling, *Initia*, 31) and the end is Man as a fourth between the three potencies, A⁴ actualized. Man is the εἶδος of the whole, the repetition of the whole. As repetition, however, Man is not just A⁴ but that possessing the possibility of re-commencement, the repetition of A⁰ as a⁰. As the end Man is the repeated or restored beginning – incipience repeated (*ibid.* 33). Being is commencement. Man is commencement but as an arrived futurity – Man is adventitious advent. This means that Man may choose commencement once again, setting the potencies again into motion and losing his place of freedom. This is the beginning of human φιλία-σοφία, humanity's striving after wisdom, freedom and meaning (*ibid.* 34).

The end of the creation is indeed the culmination of the formation⁸³ of sense but the end nevertheless consists in the advent of a novel beginning,

82 Consciousness, for Schelling, is fundamentally not "I think" but "I can."

83 God brings form to chaos and the perfection of this formation of sense from chaos lies in the form of Man. The Kabbalah, for example, reads: "...Adam, Man, which is the Form which comprehendeth all things" (*Kabbalah*, 260). The name of God or Tetragrammaton, written vertically rather than horizontally, allegedly gives the figure of Man.

I
H
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namely the possible Fall into time as meaningless and absurd. God is A, but Man is B transformed into A, B posited into freedom and Lord over the originally ambivalent B (Schelling, *Einleitung*, 135). The ambivalent B is subject to Man but not annihilated. Man may again incite it to act instead of using his freedom to retain this Sabbath in which essential and eternal consciousness or Understanding of Being would remain. Unlike God Himself who may ironically become other whilst remaining Himself as indivisible remainder as absolute *prius*, Man cannot become other and retain propriety (Schelling, *Urfassung*, 421). Unlike God, if Man acts he falls and becomes subject to the very potencies over which he should be Lord. Remember that the world law or law of decisiveness demanded that all move from *Wahnsinn* to *Sinn*. This process occurred in the creation but if Man falls he falls into senselessness, reversing the process and transgressing the Law.⁸⁴ Both the creation and the Fall are genial, i. e. instances of originality unforeseeable by reason alone, adventitious acts productive of novelty. Neither is to be seen in advance but the possibility of both is only to be seen after their actuality.

In Hebraic each letter has a meaning. *Yod*=head, *He*=arms, *Vau*=body and the final *He*=the legs, such that the Tetragrammaton, graphically expressed, gives the figure of Man/Adam (*ibid.* 260). Being's meaning is not conceptual but consists in the Name.

- 84 The Fall is not necessary but the world law demands this possibility be shown to Man. The world law does not demand that all be actualized, i. e. come to presence, only that all be decided so that if something is not actualized, it is abstained from decisively. The world law levels the imperative of either/or to Man in the form of temptation or nemesis (Schelling, II/2, 142, "Mythologie"). Man cannot remain accidentally blissful but must undergo the temptations of the nemesis – which etymologically relates to *νομός* – in order to merit this blissfulness decisively. Schelling relates the story of Adam and Eve to the world law insofar as God's forbidding them to eat the fruit is the very imperative (*Gebot*) that shows them the possibility of doing otherwise such that they first become cognizant of their own freedom under the law. As the Apostle Paul relays, if one had not said "Do not eat!" then I would not know to or want to eat. One does not know sin, lust or desire prior to the law. The command (*Gebot*) says what is forbidden (*Verbot*) and thereby awakens sin and then stands above it as Law (*Gesetz*). The Law first shows the one under the Law her freedom by showing her the freedom to break the Law. The Law is the law of freedom because it actualizes freedom by demanding decisiveness; the Law forces response and concomitantly responsibility. The Law demands that one be what one is decisively: Show yourself! Be straight and stop being duplicitous! The Law ironically conditions human freedom and tortures it. *Νομός* is Nemesis. The Nemesis aids the divine Law.

Paradisiacal Man is the guardian of or Lord over being but fallen man (=humanity) is divinity displaced from its godly position(=lordship over being) (*ibid.* 537). Man's sovereignty was not his right but an unmerited gift, meaning he could lose his lordship by becoming subject to the potencies. God is Lord as *prius* of the *potencies* of a future being while Man, the posterior Lord, let the potencies become cosmic, spatio-temporal *causes*. In Paradise Man is free of the force of the causes in their isolation or difference, i.e. in their reciprocal exclusion and tension, as he stands perfectly equidistant and indifferent. The curse, however, is that Man could only remain custodian of the potencies as indifferent. He could not set them into difference and keep them within his power. That only lies within God's power. The unity over which Man resides is the external and not internal unity of the potencies. With the Fall the world loses its point of unity and falls into absurdity and senselessness. Man, who enacted this Fall, is one and the same with the one residing in all humans – interior Man. Every person is as responsible for the Fall as every other. In this regard, Schelling contends that Fichte correctly argued that the human subject posits the (spatio-temporal) world – but not its being as such, only its being outside of God. Man changes the locus by first positing exteriority. Prior to the Fall everything was *in* God.⁸⁵ With the Fall the world falls outside of His Lordship and, thus, outside His guidance toward wisdom and into senselessness.

The Fall of Man distorts who he is without annihilating him. His quiddity or quintessentiality is altered although his quoddity remains. Original Man is “essentially only consciousness” (II/2, 118, “Monotheismus”), consciousness (of) God in both the subjective and objective sense. Fallen man remains consciousness of God, but God as externally dispersed. B was that through which God's being was suspended and Man was this returned to A, that which posits God. Man's essential consciousness is God-positing. All conscious has an object but this does not mean Man is intentional in the Husserlian sense. To say Man's consciousness is God-positing does not mean he intends God with knowledge or volition because Man is not yet reflective. Man posits God insofar as he is the Idea without reflection, the visibility of God without himself having sight, the Understanding of God without knowledge. Fallen man remains God-positing, but now positing God as polytheistically dispersed. B is indeed always the substance or content of consciousness, but in Man B has been expelled to the periphery, the refuse constituting the perimeter enclosing the center point. In fallen man B again occupies the center, again needing to undergo

85 This is panentheistic and not pantheistic.

the process of expulsion; for, holiness consists in being set apart and B is that which must be cast asunder in order that A remain as that untouched, unsoiled and undefiled by B. B should be nothing more than the tangential, the hymen enclosing an *empty* space, a nothingness, albeit not a vacuous nullity. Man's consciousness is God-positing. In Paradise this positing occurs by hollowing itself outwards in order that Man may reside inside the sacred enclosure. In this state Man *is* the virginal, *is* the divine and holy. As fallen, the human being is a factory of idols. Fallen man's consciousness is not empty because B, the content of consciousness, has not yet been expelled, but it is rather filled with the gods. In other words, fallen man ceases to be the consciousness *of* the God-positing process and becomes seized by the gods himself.

Man is not, then, originally atheistic. Schelling remarks, "Human consciousness is rather originally, as it were, connate with God (for, it is itself only the production of the monotheism spoken in the creation, of the actualized all-unity.) Consciousness has God in Himself, not as an object before itself"⁸⁶ (*ibid.* 120). Apologetics and natural theology err in assuming that the burden of proof does not rather lie on the side of atheism and irreligion. If one began with original atheism, Schelling argues convincingly, one could never explain human being's tendency to mythology. If one begins only with the concept of God, one could not explain the intellectual error that would be the belief in the mythological gods. Original Man is not atheistic but is God's Understanding, while fallen man understands God(s). Man never comes to or invents God or gods, i.e. intends God (s) of his own volition, but is from the ground up god-positing. Man's first movement is not for God or gods but a departure from God. Ironically, this very departure becomes the very condition of his becoming aware of gods and himself as god-positing. Only through thinking and knowing may man become detached from that with which he is connate. In short, man is religious, be it natural, mythological, revealed or any other type of religion, because his relation to God is not external and accidental but deeper than consciousness itself (Beach, *Potencies*, 44). Man is not man apart from his god-relation. He is not an essence that posits gods but relation himself. God is pure relation or the absolute copula and so man too is a copulative relation, transitively binding the subject (the potencies) *as*

86 "Das menschlichen Bewußtseyn ist Vielmehr ursprünglich mit dem Gott gleichsam verwachsen –(denn es ist selbst nur das Erzeugniß des in der Schöpfung ausgesprochenen Monotheismus, der verwirklichten All-Einheit). Das Bewußtseyn hat den Gott an sich, nicht als Gegenstand vor sich."

some predicate or another, namely *as* God(s). God copulated in order to enable synthesis; man, distorted or otherwise, is the synthesis actually drawn.⁸⁷

Because even fallen man's consciousness is connate with God, god-positing before it can think and know of God or gods, so can one attribute to man an experience before an awareness of an object, an experience prior to sensation, consciousness *of* or perception. Consciousness is not assumed in order that a process may be experienced but rather consciousness is the end point, that in need of generation and explanation. Man is not the intentional source point but the compositely constituted end. Before the Fall Man experienced his unity with God and things (i. e. with the other, albeit imperfect, images of the imageless God) prior to their historical occurrences. Man's consciousness, although distorted and forgetful through the Fall, shares a sym-pathos with everything that is. Consciousness does not gather what would have originally been disjunct and exterior but it re-gathers, re-integrates and re-collects what has become distorted. Even in Paradise, where Man is at the point of indifference, he is sym-pathetic rather than a-pathetic. Just as consciousness is not originally atheistic, so is it not originally apathetic but affective, open to *aesthesis*, not at all a neutral and disinterested *tabula rasa*. Man's fundamental comportment is indeed care (Heidegger). Everything begins with ultimate concern (Tillich) or *Glaube* (Schelling).

Man is not a constant presence enduring through the process of creation but the creation's future, its end. Man does not posit God(s) from nowhere but is determined as the being whose reality consists in its god-positing. Being is never neutral but *de facto* religiously colored. Being is from the ground up already experienced as theophany. This is just as the ocean is not Poseidon but Poseidon is or becomes manifest as the ocean. Pantheism is excluded because of the transitive nature of the copula. In the statement "S is P" the reverse, "P is S" does not hold. "Being is God(ly)" does not mean that God is being – rather God cannot be! – but that Being holds sway *as* Godly.⁸⁸ The subject irreducibly remains, unable ever to be caught

87 David Clark writes in contrast to the accusation of anthropomorphism, "Far from humanizing God, Schelling 'divinizes' the human, raising it to the importance that it properly and uniquely possesses: as the there of the occurrence of being, as the place where the human stands in being and reveals the decision in being" ("Heidegger's" in *Diacritics*, Vol. 27, No. 3, pg. 27).

88 Note that in this statement the term "God(ly)" is not superfluous. Admittedly, the meaning of godliness is Lordship and to be Lord and to hold sway are one and the same. Admittedly, if Being holds sways or presides, then it does so by

up into its predicate. The predicate is the show, manifestation or revelation of being, while the subject not only is not but cannot be. "God is Man" means that Man is the perfect image (not representation!) of God but not that "Man is God." If Man acts like God he falls into the domain of mythological representation.

giving primacy to something rather than nothing. The simple fact, however, that something presides rather than nothing does not demonstratively culminate in the conclusion "Therefore God." If that would be so, then the argument would be nothing more than the argument from contingency to necessity; however, that Being presides, that something is rather than nothing, is better than if nothing had held sway is far from certain. That may be so, but cannot be flatly assumed. God is God because His Lordship consists in giving primacy to the Better over the Worse. This is why the "proof" is *per posterius* and not an empirical generalization but given in the *quality* of experience. Lastly, note that one may also not say that if nullity had held sway, then nullity would have been Lord and therefore God, because that is hardly presiding or holding sway (*Wesen*) but rather putrefaction (*Verwesen*).

Chapter 5

Intermittence¹

Man in Paradise acquired his place through no deed of his own but, from his perspective, occupies it accidentally. Man holds this place without reflection and knowledge of himself. If he acts, then he falls from the center and toward the periphery. This centrifugal movement – contra the centripetal movement enacted by God’s creative deed – cannot occur “without an alteration of [Man’s religious] consciousness” (Schelling, *Mythologie*, 113).² This alteration affects not only Man but God’s figure or image, as Man is nothing but the image of the imageless God. God, in turn, is Lord of Being; Being holds sway Godly. While the anthropomorphic constitutes God’s image, the theomorphic – if such a thing exists – constitutes Being’s *modus operandi*, how it presides, configures, integrates or composes (*wesen*) itself rather than disarranging, disfiguring, disintegrating or decomposing (*verwesen*). Being is composed rather than chaotic because it holds sway Godly. The theomorphic delineates the ontomorphic. The prior chapter traced the actual movement of creation to its end in Man as the centripetal movement from the ontomorphic to the theomorphic to the anthropomorphic. The following chapter re-traces this movement within the consciousness of historical, mythical man, a re-constitution necessitated by Man’s deed – the Fall – which enacts a centrifugal movement that disjoints time, a movement not only toward the periphery but also one that straightens it into a linear time in which beginning and end can never again coincide.

1 Intermittence does not mean mediation. The intermittent does not extend continuity but draws a breach in the continuous. It does not link before and after but first posits before and after by drawing the cleft between them.

2 “...ohne Alteration des religiösen Bewußtseins...”

1 The Separation of Times

As beginning – the beginning of history and time as chronological – is the deed. This deed is the “original deed of history” (Schelling, II/3, 360, “Erster Teil”),³ only to be known *per posterius*. One may only affirm that the deed has been committed and then enumerate its effects, the traces of this lost event. Chief amongst these is historical time. The event of the Fall does not subject eternity into an irrecoverable Past as a pre-given point of presence but the deed is an accrued, unforeseeable novelty that comes upon eternity. This deed first posits the rupture between Past and Present but not as a Present already present. This Present time too is something futural from the perspective of eternity, something novel. The Past neither flows into the Present, nor does the Present as a pre-given source point posit its own Past and Future nor does a futural Present simply arrive upon eternity as something novel that would posit eternity as an essential Past. To the contrary, all three times come into being at once, none of the three able to be presupposed as the cause of the other two. Should one think the event or deed of the Fall as arising from something already present, then this deed would become the first point in the ray of time, the first occurrence in history. This, however, is not the case. The deed of the Fall does not itself fall into the chain of history; it is not part of linear time. Yet, it is also something other than eternity. It stands between the two not as a link but as chasm, as intermittence. The division of Past, Present and Future is neither a mediation nor the flowing of a point through time, but the rupture supplementing consonance with dissonance, homogeneity with heterogeneity. If the deed would fall into time, then one would remain stuck in the traditional metaphysics of presence, asking about the first point, the uncaused cause, a *terminus*. The time of history is lineal, not a segment or even a ray. One cannot speak of *termini*, neither beginning nor end, but only of before and after. The original deed/event of history is not itself a part of history, not its *beginning*, but that by which history was set as *posterior* and eternity as *prior*. The deed is not *in* the beginning but *as* beginning, i.e. not as terminal origin but as a decisive, yet interminable, event of commencement. The chasm is chiasmal because it commences by convening, intersects by dissecting.

The division of times is the origin of time itself; there is no time apart from its dissonance. No flow constitutes time but an event in the

3 “Urthatsache der Geschichte”

Heideggarian sense of *Ereignis*. Even eternity as a whole, though containing its own perfect temporality, is itself subjected as the Past age with the advent of history, the Present age. The eternal acquires its temporal determination only with the temporality of the Present time (Schelling, II/3, 307, “Erster Teil”). Let Hans-Joachim Friedrich be quoted at length:

The “pre-worldly eternity,” which is *posited* with the beginning of world time as “first time” or as “Past,” is accordingly neither an infinitely long time that has already somehow expired *before* the beginning of world time, nor is it – as Augustine says – a perpetual present (*semper praesens aeternitas, nunc stans*)... Rather it is the nothing in which, as dehiscing abyss of that which is still nothing, all the coming times lie *potentially* (not actually) decided. Eternity is therefore in its relation to time not only the departed [Past] but rather, as the departed, *simultaneously* the Adventitious [Future] of all possible times (*Ungrund*, 198)⁴

The time-constituting event is immanent differentiation, not an external form or a structure of consciousness, but a real happening. Vladimir Jan-kélévitch writes, “*The universe is not a system but a history*. That is why there is a philosophy of Mythology and Revelation. The philosopher would not have anything to say about the religious history of consciousness if the exploration of becoming human would not imply the discovery of a becoming more profound in the center itself of the Absolute...” (*L’Odyssée*, 3).⁵ Given the relation between the ontomorphic, theomorphic and anthropomorphic, the being of the human relates to that of the Absolute and God. In paradise Man is the image of God as the seal of His figure, the center point of enclosed space. The Fall throws time out of joint, making the circle into a line. This disjointure, as the event neither in eternity nor in historical time but the rupture between the two, disjoins the cyclical into the lineal without sublating the rotary

4 “Die ‘vorweltliche Ewigkeit,’ die mit dem Anfang der Weltzeit als “erste Zeit” oder als ‘Vergangenheit’ *gesetzt* wird, ist demnach weder eine unendlich lange Zeit, die *vor* dem Anfang der Weltzeit schon irgendwie abgelaufen ist, noch ist sie – wie Augustinus sagt – eine immerwährende Gegenwart (*semper praesens aeternitas, nunc stans*)... Vielmehr ist sie das Nichts, in dem als aufbrechender Abgrund des Noch-Nichts alle kommenden Zeiten *potentiell* (nicht aktuell) beschlossen liegen. Die Ewigkeit ist also in ihrem Bezug auf die Zeit nicht nur das Vergangene, sondern als das Vergangene *zugleich* das Zukünftige aller möglichen Zeiten.”

5 “*L’univers n’est pas un système ; mais une histoire*. Voilà pourquoi il existe une philosophie de la Mythologie et de la Révélation. Le philosophe n’aurait rien à dire sur l’histoire religieuse de la conscience si l’exploration du devenir humain n’impliquait la découverte d’un devenir plus profond au centre même de l’Absolu...”

motion of drives in eternity. Just as the event does not fall into history itself as its first occurrence, so also is the event not a happening in eternity that would obliterate the divine figure. This deed, as an attempt to be like God and set the potencies into tension, is akin to trying to murder God. God, however, is the unsublatable unity, the absolute *prius*. Man, on the other hand, murders himself with this deed. Man's deed is both an eternal happening and *the* historical event, yet neither an event within eternity nor one standing at the beginning of history. The deed first brings about all beginnings by distinguishing before and after. As Friedrich helpfully illustrates, "Heidegger's interpretation of the Schellingian doctrine of time ties in immediately with this *pre*-beginning. *Before* His own beginning God is neither existent nor ground. He first *becomes* ground by deciding and thereby positing His own pre-originary not-yet-being as Past" (*Ungrund*, 201).⁶ The prior stands as the *prius* without which the deed could not be thought and the posterior as the trace indicating that the deed in fact took place. The deed itself is lost and only the trace remains. The deed is purely evental but ironically, although an attempt to assassinate God, it allows God to come to light, though only at first as Past or repressed, as wrath and judgment. Should one speak of a coming revelation, then God also comes to light as Future or messianic, as hope and salvation, but never as something present.

The Fall alters time, precluding the presence of God and allotting Him Past and Future. Man murders himself as God's image but not as God-positing. The Fall consumes neither Man nor God but alters both. The Fall distorts God's image, i. e. His quiddity, but His quoddity remains efficacious. God, in His anteriority, is nothing other than That. Paradisiacal Man too is the image of the pure That, the center of the potencies, untainted by any of their concatenations, the hollowed out and, therefore, hallowed center. The effect of the Fall relegates God to Past and Future. That the Fall occurred is not sufficiently explained by any reason but only narrated; one may only say *that* it occurred. That one may not say why, however, does not preclude an account of *how* it occurred.

6 "Heideggers Auslegung der Schellingschen Zeitlehre knüpft unmittelbar an diesen *Vor*-Anfang an. *Vor* seinem eigenen Anfang ist Gott weder existierend noch Grund. Er *wird* erst zum Grund, indem er sich dazu entscheidet und dadurch sein eigenes vor-anfängliches Noch-nicht-Sein als Vergangenheit setzt."

2 *Aesthesis*, Memory and History

In the second chapter an account was given of experience that differs from simply empirical experience. Schelling's method accounts for an *aesthesis* prior to judgment. In Martin Buber's terms this is an *Urerlebnis*, a primally lived experience. Empiricism rests upon the experience of objects and their possible repetition in order that one may make generalizations from them. Paradisiacal Man experiences God but not as object. He neither wills nor knows God or himself. Paradisiacal Man is God-positing by essence. He is the localized image of imageless quoddity. What Man experiences is not any present being but pure Presence, pure Thatness. Paradisiacal Man stands at the There where Presence presides; God is Present There. Man in Paradise is not a *cogito* but instead nothing other and nothing more than sensibility, a sensibility open to the temptation to be instead of remaining ensconced in darkness, to act instead of remaining abstinent, to act and suffer the alterations of the periphery rather than retain all potency, i.e. remain omni-potent. Paradisiacal Man's primal possibility becomes possible for him because he is nothing other than receptivity for temptation. Man is open to trial because he stands at the hallowed center point through no deed of his own, i.e. accidentally and not decisively, not with merit. Adam is essentially God-positing sentience, sentience in its relation to *sentir*. He is nothing but understanding, i.e. nothing but *aesthesis*, not of himself but of God, of pure quoddity. Original consciousness is not a subject that could act on the basis of ideomotivity but only by sensory-motivity,⁷ i.e. from sentiment. Man's Fall is not the enactment of some choice, not based upon an ideal or concept, but is rather the response to the Naked Existent. Man does not respond to anything in particular, only to the fact that Being is There rather than nothing. Man's experience of the fact *that* there is Being rather than non-Being explains *how* he is able to act and fall. This does not explain *why*, as that would presuppose some specific reason, some ground, which did not yet exist. Grounds/reasons are not original but arise subsequently. In other words, the origin is not first but second, just as two is the first number. First is the Naked, the Nothing, the pure That. This constitutes Man's temptation and Fall. Jankélévitch, discussing Schelling's doctrine of the Fall, wrote, "... (T)he doctrine of the Fall is nothing other than an attempt to explain this subordinated 'affectivity' of which the creature as-

7 This use of these terms comes from Deleuze. See page 23 of *Difference and Repetition*.

sumes the initiative" (*L'Odyssée*, 197).⁸ The affectivity of Jankélévitch corresponds to Buber's *Urerlebnis*, *aesthesis* prior to cognitive, reflective experience. Even post-Fall historical man does not cease to be determined by this *aesthesis*. If nothing else than this, Heidegger argues in *Being and Time* that *Dasein* (i.e. quoddity determined by the fact that it is there rather than by any determination of its nature) is not an ego *with* representations but *is* its formative experience and concern. It does not pose its own concern but the concern imposes sufferance upon it first. Is this not the doctrine of *Sorge* (care)? Before *Being and Time* in *Phenomenology of a Religious Life* this primal experience was not yet care (*Sorge*) but concern (*Bekümmern*). Tillich expands this thought for theology and argues that man's identity is determined by his ultimate concern, i.e. by faith. Man does not have concern(s) but *is* concern, *is* the formative experience of concern and the concomitant fidelity. What concerns him is his being, *that* he even is. Historical man fell from being God-positing by essence to portraying gods mythologically but he does not possess mythical contents but *is* the mythological experience itself. Man is *aesthesis*, pure sensibility or receptivity in the face of the *Il y a*, to speak like Levinas. Schelling certainly does not account for experience on the basis of faculties.

Even if one does not explain why Man fell by positing him as receptivity, affectivity or *aesthesis* and only explains *how* the Fall is possible, one still must ask by what method narration is possible. The method has already been indicated as *per posterius*, a philosophy of the trace that begins from the latter in order to know the anterior. The primary effect or trace is the division of times, the exclusion of Past and Future from presence. How one may know this event that severed the Past time from the Present time remains dubious. Either one knows the Past in intellectual intuition or intuitively in art (see the younger Schelling) by *anamnesis*/recollection (see the Schelling of the *Ages of the World* and *Initia Philosophiae Universae*) or historically. The first option, *per* Jankélévitch, presupposes a system and not a history, as if one could see the whole in an instant such that the whole were not fundamentally and inexorably temporally dissonant. The second option fully acknowledges a temporal aspect but remains trapped within self-presence, assuming that the deed of the Fall would remain in consciousness rather than falling into forgetfulness/oblivion (*Vergessenheit*). True temporality does not allow for this continuity that would permit remembrance of the deed. The deed precedes the self-

8 " ...la doctrine de la chute n'est autre chose qu'un essai pour expliquer cette "affectivité" subalterne dont la créature assume l'initiative. "

consciousness and identity of the agent who would enact and remember it. The subject only appropriates or assumes the identity between deed and actor *post factum*. To memory belongs the identity of the one who remembers and what is remembered, but Schelling's doctrine of time rejects exactly this continuity. Time is not continuous flow with its retentions and protentions, but rupture and dissonance. Schelling incisively states:

Only the consequence of the deed remains in consciousness. No memory reaches back to the incident itself. The presently arising consciousness after the deed is the first actual consciousness (before it is only consciousness in its pure substantiality): this first actual consciousness cannot itself, however, be again aware of the act through which it has arisen because it became something wholly other through this act and is cut off from its former condition. To memory belongs the identity (consonance) of the present being (the one remembering) and that which is the object of the memory. Where this identity is disintegrated, no memory occurs...(II/2, 154, "Mythologie")⁹

The philosophy of presence retains the whole within consciousness, even if only through retention and protention. If the deed may be known or narrated, then it may only come to light historically. All immediate insight and all memory are dead ends. Either history eventually reveals its beginnings (even if only at the end) or they remain forever in darkness. Deeds are not repressed only possibly to be recovered by the same consciousness that apparently hid the memory from itself, but the deed was never present for the consciousness that could have remembered it. Historical revelation is the only remaining option.¹⁰

9 "Nur die Folge der That bleibt im Bewußtseyn. Bis zu dem Vorgang selbst reicht keine Erinnerung zurück. Denn das jetzt – nach der That – entstehende Bewußtseyn ist das erste wirkliche Bewußtseyn (vor ihm ist nur das Bewußtseyn in seiner reinen Substantialität): dieses erste wirkliche Bewußtseyn kann aber des Acts, durch den es entstanden ist, nicht sich selbst wieder bewußt seyn, weil es durch diesen Act ein völlig anderes geworden und von seinem früheren Zustand abgeschnitten ist. Zur Erinnerung gehört Identität (Einerleiheit) des jetzt Seyenden (sich Erinnernden) und dessen, welches Gegenstand der Erinnerung ist. Wo diese Identität aufgehoben ist, findet keine Erinnerung statt..."

10 Frank's treatment of memory in Schelling's latest philosophy differs from that presented here. He begins by correctly reconstructing how consciousness cannot attribute its fall into time as self-positing and yet how it must also posthumously accept this supra-historical act as its own, i.e. assume responsibility for it (*Mangel*, 248). He then, however, attempts to argue how this mythical, i.e. non-historical, act is contained in memory. His reason for doing this is in order for memory, as a thetic thought, to affirm and validate the being of the object remem-

3 Historical Time as Contemporaneity or Simultaneity

With the Fall everything falls into the quantitative time of simultaneity, which presupposes disparate plurality (as opposed to multiplicity or the unified plethora of the eternal ideas). Unlike in the creation, each is no longer immediately efficacious on others. In the Paradise of space, everything has its essential space and is what it is due to its proximity to any and every other form while with homogenous time each is an island. With the fall into disparate plurality and simultaneity arises contemporaneity. Contemporaries are not mutually efficacious. Alfred North Whitehead has correctly observed that only the past and future are causally efficacious, that the contemporaries given in presentational immediacy – if somehow viewed apart from their causal relations – would be as if absolutes. Efficient causation is from the past and teleology from the future and due to the Fall formal efficacy has become null and void as each form is no longer implicated by the others. One might say in a Deleuzian manner that the ideas of creation have become spatio-temporal actualities and the actual, in opposition to the idea, has lost its constituting differential relations. Actualities are brute, discrete and absurd in their isolation, an obscene facticity. Difference itself and the differential relations at play in the act of creation implied the lack of identity characteristic of multiplicity, but now there is not just a multitude of possible modalities but numerical distinction, plurality and parallelism – not multiplicity. Deleuze stands in complete agreement with Whitehead concerning the ineffectuality of contemporaries upon one another due to their isolation. No single center exists but many absolutes. The Fall is a fall into plurality or, to maintain the Deleuzian rhetoric, each absolutely repeats the Absolute in order that a plurality of absolutes arise corresponding to each repetition respectively. Every repetition is absolute because it affirms its absolute difference from its contemporaries, not to be subsumed under a unifying head or concept. True plurality consists in diversity and diversity cannot be mediated or represented by means of negating itself from an over-arching concept but it repeats the whole absolutely. Paradisiacal Man is the image of the whole and in the Fall repeats this with the effect that diversity arises, the simultaneity of a plurality of absolutes. The Fall did not occur by means of negation, by means of exacting parts from a whole, but by positively repeating the whole. These repetitions are not

bered as true and real (*ibid.* 249). So long as “myth” never becomes synonymous with “fictitious” this validation is superfluous.

dialectically derived but known through experience – *per posterius*. Dialectics is inadequate to the phenomenon at hand. The origin of history and historical time finds its ground not in dialectical descent but in Difference, accidentality and contingency. History begins not in unity but pluralistically. One will eventually see, then, that this precludes the possibility of a first language and first people. As Deleuze affirms, “The essential point is the simultaneity and contemporaneity of all the divergent series, the fact that all coexist” (*Difference*, 124). The differents are absolutes in themselves, not reciprocally determined and determinative of its neighbor and eventually the world as a whole.

Contemporaries are not causally efficacious but the divergent series begun by each individual repetition are not unthinkable parallel universes either. Difference itself, the Naked Existent that is pure *Daß*, does not permit that disparate series may run parallel to one another without at least this non-conceptual but inceptive commonality; each of them *is*. In the Fall God has, so to speak, permitted distortion of the image without permitting its oblivion. The naked That preserves their quoddity whilst permitting the freedom of repetition. Man’s Fall was both as response to and repetition of the *Il y a*, the *daß es ist*. While on the one hand man falls from essence to existence, from the qualitative or quintessential to the quantitative and numerically distinct, on the other hand he falls from the inessential purity of simply being to essence, to being this or that man with this or that nature as his essence. In the creation Man occupies the center point as cardinal point, as fallen men, languages and peoples become ordinal. This ordinalism, however, does not arise without content. Man only appears as ordinal, i. e. as numerically distinct, because he has contracted a contingent essence. Man was not first an essence, nature or substance that clothed himself with some attributes. He is not first a subject that gives himself predicates but “essentially” Man is inessential, not even becoming an ordinal point, a numerically distinct subject, until he has already been tinged with contingency, with attributes and predicates. His material determinations condition his appearance as the substance bearing this contingent materiality determining his historical identity and essence. This factual contingency results from Man’s fall from his essential inessentiality, his naked quoddity, from the only thing preventing the deed of the Fall from resulting in his annihilation. This inessential quoddity is the “single and same voice for the whole thousand-voiced multiple, a single and same Ocean for all the drops, a single clamour of Being for all beings: on condition that each being, each drop and each voice has reached the state of excess...” (*ibid.* 304). The Ocean cor-

responds to the inessential not even equal to itself, Difference itself. The Fall is the positive repetition of each drop, each drop attaining a state of superfluous, thus unjustified and perhaps obscene, independence. Independence is freedom and so freedom is not really free, not really independent, until it acts. Tragically, this acting corresponds as well to its loss of freedom and potency.

Part III
The Present:
Historical Time

Chapter 6

The Philosophy of Mythology

Post-lapsarian consciousness no longer guards the divine essence but becomes subject to it. God's essence no longer encloses Man but cosmic causes draw him unto the peripheries, disintegrating and distorting him as the image of God. God too suffers this distortion of His essence. His explicit unity becomes scattered into a plurality.

1 From Lordship to Divine Sufferance

By attaining his freedom man loses it and so was never really able to acquire it. Before the Fall he was not yet actually free and in the Fall he loses a freedom he did not yet have in actuality. His only alternative would have been to actualize himself by decisively abstaining from actual freedom. This, too, would have been an ironic act in which one only acquires freedom by rejecting it. Instead, man lost his freedom by apprehending it. Vladimir Jankélévitch has written in regards to the consequences of this loss of freedom, "The consciousness, which has fallen for having wanted to become like God, is now condemned to die of the divine sufferance" (*L'Odyssée*, 281).¹ Man stood in the position of Lordship but in acting as though he were the Lord Himself he falls prey to that over which he stood as Lord and guardian – the potencies. In Paradise Man only possessed the potencies as potent but not as actual (Schelling, II/3, 358, "Erster Teil"). Likewise, when one speaks one loses some of one's potency and freedom. In the move from the potent to the actual a quotient of freedom is always lost; potentiality once actualized is no longer potent. Man's fall occurred through the inciting of the first principle, i.e. by inciting it from potency (or the non-existent) into an existing principle or cause, and having done so this first potency then takes man into its custody. Now seized by the power of the first, man is returned to a state

1 "La conscience, qui est tombée pour avoir voulu faire comme Dieu, est condamnée maintenant à mourir des souffrances divines."

prior to nature (*ibid.* 386) insofar as the first, in and of itself and outside of its proper concatenation with the subsequent two, is contrary to nature, concreteness and permanence; it is the opposite of all nature, “that which annuls all nature” (*ibid.*).² Only when overcome by the subsequent two does the first set nature as ground rather than nullify it. In the Fall Man transforms the first potency into the phoenix, raising it from the ashes of its subjected state with the consequence that it again becomes the fire consuming everything concrete. As subjected, this became God’s ground, i. e. the ground of God-positing consciousness – Man. As resurrected, this remains the ground of fallen consciousness and so also the ground of that in all gods, the real god in general (*ibid.* 408). The fall into historical time is a fall into mythology and polytheism. The plurality of material gods are manifestations of the first in its various stages of being once again overcome and set as a ground for God as true.

Man’s inciting of the first corresponds to the de-actualization of the subsequent two (*ibid.* 368). In their proper arrangement the lattermost is actual and efficacious while the oldest, the first, constitutes the ground as mere potency. Man’s deed reversed this relation, but not without a counteraction. Due to the will of God, the three must be returned to their proper figure, but this does not happen in an instant but only by repeating the history of the creation. The process repeats itself historically within man’s mythological consciousness. Again in process, the three act according to law, i. e. they have become cosmic causes. In God they are principles of personality; outside of God they are anonymous causes. In God they are the effects of a personal will; outside of God they function impersonally as the presencing of a natural process. The three correspond to efficient, formal and final causation³ respectively with the three

2 “das Aufhebende aller Natur”

3 In the prior two chapters the three corresponded to material, efficient and final causation. The difference is that there the first was viewed as such in its state prior to becoming ground, in its chaotic, formless state as uninformed matter. Now the first is regarded as that which is in act with the subsequent regarded as potent. For this reason, then, does the first now become efficient and the second formal, as that which will execute the task of the will for restitution (as the formal cause is that which is efficacious and this is always the will, hence why the fourth or the soul and A⁰ are regarded as pure act). The third remains what it was and also just as before do the three as a whole constitute the matter of the immaterial will or formal cause. Form and matter are, so to speak, co-eternal and do not need temporal determination, but when the three are at play efficient and final causation must appear although their order may vary dependent upon which of the three is in act and which in potency.

as a whole constituting the material side in opposition to the deed or will, which provides the efficacious formal cause. This material side, i.e. the cosmic causes or the external, outer-divine, material world, arises once man has fled the center, i.e. fallen, because there is nothing material in Man insofar as Man stands free of the potencies and matter exists only in the things that arise through the *conflict* of the potencies (Schelling, *Offenbarung Paulus*, 200).

Man's deed did not culminate in his disappearance but in the distortion of his, God's and Being's image. Man does not become completely isolated from God – which would be not to exist – but the relation is altered. Man remains God-positing but he now falls under the auspices of the indifferent, impersonal causes. In positing the gods of mythology man does not relate to representations of his own imagination but to the actually distorted figure of God (Schelling, *Mythologie*, 151) (though God Himself, A⁰, in His unapproachable virginity remains impassive). Man posits the gods of mythology without knowledge and volition but from cosmological necessity (*ibid.* 152). His positing is not an act of art, poetry, reason or philosophy, but it derives from a real relation to God, even if a distorted one. Mythology is religious relation preceding all thought and representation (*ibid.* 191). One may not ask how historical consciousness comes to God but only how it leaves God (*ibid.* 147). Religiosity and a real relation to God is the *terminus a quo*; Man posits God in His essence but not as actual and historical. Mythological man posits Him as actual but not in His proper essence. In both cases, however, in paradise and in mythological man, he posits God without reflection and volition. Man loses his essence (who he ought to be) at the expense of becoming aware of himself as actual and historical. Man departs from God and acquires himself as an object. Reflection permits his own objectification but at the expense of self-alienation; he is no longer who he ought to have remained. He also, despite the fact that he does not posit gods with reflection, becomes aware of the gods that populate his consciousness whereas in paradise he did not *have* consciousness of God(s) but simply *is* this consciousness. In both cases, however, man does not relate to the idea of God(s) but to the reality of God(s). Real religious relation to a real God and not atheism is the starting point.

Paradisical Man holds open the clearing/lighting/truthing of creation but with the Fall this holding open deteriorates into a cognition of beings, even gods. Schelling's notion of the Fall corresponds to the move from holding open from above, from "having the world (*Welt-haben*)," (Heidegger, *Metaphysik*, 43) to innerworldliness. Man falls

from a position of Lordship to one of slavery and sufferance. He moved from guardian of the potencies to prisoner and play-thing of the cosmic causes. This transition occurs insofar as man becomes a being in the midst of other beings instead of remaining the purely eventual holding-open of Being. Man now cognizes beings rather than remaining a purely affective consciousness that would aesthetically experience Being. Man becomes subject to the rule of ontonomy,⁴ which means intentionality but that what is precedes the intending subject. Consciousness does not intend some object but the figure of Being intends consciousness. As a consequence, beings take precedence over man who should instead be the guardian of their clearing. Note, however, that mythological man does not posit the gods as a wholly autonomous agent and nor are the gods assumed as prior to the people's consciousness of them. There are not first beings, even gods, and then the cognition of them but, as Xavier Tilliette argues, God-positing consciousness has "*undergone* and *experienced* [erlebt *und* erfahren]" ("Geschichte" in Hasler, 201) non-thetically and therefore also non-cognitively what posthumously finds mythological manifestation. Beings and man as innerworldly, gods and their peoples, come to formation simultaneously in one and the same affective act. The *durée* or density of this act comprises the intermittence between eternity and historical time. The act does not properly occur within either one but demarcates the breach between the two times and not just the organizing division within one overarching and unifying time.

2 What are Myths?

Historical time begins not with science, theory and explanation but with man's mythic consciousness. Schelling delivered his lectures on mythology for the last times in Munich in 1841 and then in Berlin in 1842 and 1846. These lectures provide the most substantial documentation for his views on mythology. In order to argue for what myth is Schelling begins by repudiating what it cannot be. This method of reducing possible views of myths must not be viewed as the method of falsification in which one eliminates false views until only one possible view remains, as if one began with the totality of all possible and actual explanations. One

4 This term comes from Markus Gabriel's *Der Mensch im Mythos: Untersuchungen über Ontotheologie, Anthropologie und Selbstbewußtseinsgeschichte in Schellings Philosophie der Mythologie* published by Walter de Gruyter: Berlin, 2006, pg. 6.

must reject this interpretation because of Schelling's emphasis on the phenomenon, that the object must determine the view and not vice versa. He does, however, use a variant of what could be called falsification as a propaedeutic means. Schelling's method is nevertheless more complex than any mere falsification or verification. His *per posterius*, abductive/reductive approach encompasses both without reduction to either.

Schelling poses three questions: 1) How should one take myths, as truth or non-truth?⁵ 2) How are they meant/intended? 3) How did they emerge? The first question asks for the viewpoint of the questioner, the second for the original intention and the third for the origin. The three inquire after the same insofar as the meaning of myth desired in the first two questions refers to its origin.⁶ The questions are really one. Answering the first of these three interrelated queries Schelling argues that should one not accept them as truth, then the first possible stance is to view them as poetic creations. Should one be able to show that the poetic explanation contradicts the factuality of mythology, then it has been "falsified." If one can show that myths are not meant as poetry, then one must also deny their origin as poetry. Now, poetry certainly must view myths as something false because if one hears a narrative in a detailed manner this in itself never leads the listener to question its verity. One assumes its truthfulness. Moreover, one does even question the meaning of the narrative, as if it were an allegory or parable, but one accepts the meaning as nothing other than the fact of the narrative; it means what it says. The natural antithesis of narrated, intended truth, proposes Schelling, is poetry, poetry broadly construed as any sort of narrative construction, e.g. fables, fairy tales, bedtime stories, science fiction etc. Poetry would accordingly not be doctrinal. It neither asserts nor

5 Already, Schelling simplifies the matter – although he will recognize its proper complexity later – by presuming that the myth is either flatly true or false. Schelling, nevertheless, may justifiably begin this way because as he states the matter, "Do I have to take [mythology] as truth or not as truth? – As truth? If I could do that, then I would not have asked. [Habe ich es zu nehmen als Wahrheit oder nicht als Wahrheit? – Als Wahrheit? Könnte ich das, so hätte ich nicht gefragt.] (II/1, 10, "Einleitung"). Schelling speaks to those who take it as false and so he raises a question that must have been sensible for his listeners otherwise they would not have even posed it.

6 Schelling correctly surmises that that one even asks what a myth could mean shows that he stands outside of its grasp. From inside the mythological experience there is no place to ask whether the facts would be true or not (*Mythologie*, 30). Facts are not stories with meanings but their meaning is simply their facticity.

teaches anything but satisfies a poetic drive for invention. Yet, on the other hand, even poetry requires a basis independent from its own inventiveness; “nothing can be merely poeticized, purely pulled out of thin air (II/1, 10, “Einleitung”)”⁷ Even utterly fictitious fabrications have their basis in actual reality and ordinary human affairs. Homer and Hesiod, even should they have poeticized all their stories about the gods, began with the gods as given, available and accepted verities. In this respect even the poetic view of myth recognizes truth in it, just not one placed in it intentionally but only as assumed content. This would be just as fairy tales and parables mirror real meanings and truths though not historical narratives.

Under the present view, one must not only explain myth as poetry but must also answer why it is poetry about the gods. As poetic invention, one assumes the poets to have been free of religious terror and thus free also to poeticize about that which posed no real threat to them, but then one must explain why exactly the religious drive seized them, the drive to poeticize about gods rather than something else. Schelling argues that first with the Greeks did the gods loosen their solemn and dark grip upon consciousness. If the Homeric gods were poetic, then only because a distance had been attained between the gods and the consciousness of the gods, because the gods no longer weighed upon consciousness as a burden. Poetry requires a distance from its object; even dark poetry must have an air of lightness about it.⁸ Poetry arises only in the overcoming of a prior state, i. e. in acquiring a distance from its dark past. The more poetry liberates itself from its heavy, non-poetic past, the more poetic it becomes. The lightness in poetry does not preclude that the people believed its content, that the gods and their histories would no longer be something given and taken as real. Poetry certainly played a role in mythology’s history, but not by accounting for its genesis. Homer and Hesiod poeticize about the given and narrate the history, the theogony, of the given, but they do not invent the gods, they find them. Herodotus even speaks of “*the time of the dumb, unpronounced history of the gods*

7 “...nichts kann bloß erdichtet, rein aus der Luft gegriffen seyn.”

8 Hans Blumenberg fails to recognize the seriousness preponderant at the root of myth that finds its alleviation in poetry. He writes, “There is a measure of unseriousness in myth, of frivolity” (*Work*, 31). This only holds for Greek mythology. Blumenberg does not err, however, when he affirms that “myth, as the earliest way of processing the terrors of the unknown and of overwhelming power, is itself a mode of action that contributes to the humanization of the world” (*ibid.* 388).

[die Zeit der stummen unausgesprochenen Göttergeschichte]" (Schelling, *Mythologie*, 36) when poetry would have been impossible. The origin of the gods and their history cannot be poetic. Poetry cannot account for the gods' existence but it can signify the end of the mythological process, i. e. the time in which consciousness extricated itself from the heavy religion and began to poeticize about its own history and its own gods. This, Schelling argues, occurs in the Greeks, not at the beginning of the history of mythology, not in Persia or in Egypt, but in Greece, at the end of the time of mythology.

To better understand the distance taken from the gods of mythology in Greece without also having excised themselves from them as something real and given one must view the relation between gods, myths and peoples. The common account is that there were first peoples, be they Indian, Egyptian, Teutonic, Greek etc., and then the gods in which those people believed along with the concomitant stories of the gods and the attached rites and rituals. Schelling, however, reverses the direction. There cannot, he contends, first be a people that would not be religious and have no gods that would then spontaneously decide to invent for itself, through poetry, an entire mythology in which the people would, in turn, believe by somehow magically forgetting that they themselves had invented these gods and myths. Not only does this view fail to account for why this inventive poeticizing was about gods rather than something else, it also involves the implausible notion that these apparently stupid peoples would in a very short time forget their own fabrications and begin to accept them as a reality as unquestionable as the hands in front of their faces. Quite to the contrary, Schelling forcefully and justifiably states that there cannot be any people without the accompanying mythology or rather the peoples are the accompaniment, the accrued effect of the history of the gods, i. e. the theogony. At minimum, neither the god(s) nor the people precede the other but both arise at the same time in an organic concrescence. Using the Greeks again as the concrete example, Schelling notes that Herodotus says that Homer and Hesiod only produced the history of the gods for the Hellenic people, i. e. their genealogy. Nowhere, or at least seldom, does he occupy himself with the genesis of the gods, i. e. with their archaeology, but only with the narration of their history for the Hellenic people. Schelling asks,

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 after their grounds and primary origin...all is treated as a given and mentioned as something already always present" (II/1, 17, "Einleitung")⁹

Schelling must nevertheless admit that this is less true for Hesiod, who does discuss the genesis of the gods but insists that genesis accounts for the actual arising, i. e. the theogony, and not for the generative emergence, the coming into being, of the gods. In short, for both authors genealogy and not archaeology is predominant. They do not attempt to explain origins but simply tell stories about that simply given and accepted as such. Moreover, Schelling also highlights that Herodotus never says that Homer and Hesiod even invented the genealogy of the gods, only that they made it *known*. This, obviously, does not preclude that even the histories could be taken as something already there prior to the poets. The poets only cast light upon what was already there; they only made the people cognizant of it. The poetry of the Hellenes was not then the original relation to the gods. It was only the *Hellenic* relation. The Hellenes did not give themselves the theogony, genealogy or history of the gods, but they concresced and coalesced with this history. The history of the gods – the myths – determined the Hellenes as that people and not vice versa.

If the gods and their histories became known in the Hellenes, then who preceded the Hellenes? Schelling again follows Herodotus and proposes that it was the Pelasgians, who "sacrificed everything to the gods but without differentiating them through names or titles. Thus, here we have the time of that mute, still enveloped history of the gods" (*ibid.* 18).¹⁰ The Hellenes made what was already there known in poetry. Obviously, in the mute, enveloped state prevalent in the Pelasgian people poetry is impossible. Poetry, again, cannot account for the origin of myths because it can only arise at the end of the mythological process. Poetry assumes a free relation to the content of consciousness, not a state in which the con-

9 "Denn wo sehen wir den Homeros je eigentlich mit der Entstehung der Götter beschäftigt? Höchst selten, und auch da nur gelegentlich 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."

10 "...den Göttern alles opferten, aber ohne sie durch Namen oder Beinamen zu unterscheiden. Hier haben wir also die Zeit jener stummen, noch eingewickelten Göttergeschichte."

tents of consciousness hold it captive. Just as in the creation, Man in Paradise was the consciousness of the whole but Man also only first appeared at the end and not the beginning of creation. Knowledge, poetry, theory etc. must always come after and never before ignorance and deeds unre-membered and wrought in darkness. In this prior state, i. e. with the Pelasgians, consciousness did not stand in a free relation to the gods who, as a result of the Fall, have seized consciousness. Remember that consciousness, fallen or otherwise, is god-positing. In Paradise Man posited God as Lord of his conditions. Now the conditions take hold of man with the result that insofar as consciousness can still be said to posit the gods it is, in fact, the gods and their histories that condition and constitute peoples and their consciousness. The Pelasgians depict the historical manifestation of this dark state, the ancestors of the Hellenes who simply made known what was only felt, i. e. blindly lived, under the heavy religion of the Pelasgians. Hellenic poetry was the symptom, not the cause, of the alleviation of this heaviness.

From the theogonic viewpoint, the transition from the Pelasgians to the Hellenes that occurred formally with the move to poetry occurred materially with the transition from the Titans to Zeus. "With Zeus as head is the actually Hellenic history of the gods first present" (*ibid.* 19).¹¹ The transition from the dark, heavy religion of the Pelasgians and their unnamed, unknown gods to the light, poetic and self-conscious religion of the Hellenes corresponds to the transition from a simple world of mute, enveloped gods to their theogony, from a chaotic mass to a sensible succession, to true historical becoming and not just chaotic simultaneity. As Schelling words it,

The crisis through which the world of the gods unfolds itself into the history of the gods is not outside the poets; it occurs in the poets themselves. It makes their poems und so Herodotus can assuredly say that both poets, according to his decisive and well-grounded opinion the earliest Hellenes, have made for them [the Hellenes] the history of the gods" (*ibid.* 20)¹²

11 "Mit Zeus als Haupt ist erst die eigentliche hellenische Göttergeschichte vorhanden."

12 "Die Krisis, durch welche die Götterwelt zur Göttergeschichte sich entfaltet, ist nicht außer den Dichtern, sie vollzieht sich in den Dichtern selbst, sie macht ihre Gedichte, und so kann Herodotos wohl sagen: die beiden Dichter, nach seiner entschiedenen und wohl begründeten Meinung die frühesten der Hellenen, haben diesen die Göttergeschichte gemacht."

The poets, Homer and Hesiod, did not create this transition but this crisis objectively occurred within their consciousness. That with which they began and assumed as real were the gods from the ancient and unfathomable past; they only named and brought into a cognoscible succession that which had already been given in a chaotic whole of simultaneity and ignorance.

Taking a larger view than just Greek culture, Schelling observes that poetry, the final and not generative moment in mythology, did not exist in Egypt,¹³ but only India and Greece.¹⁴ Indian poetry too, although earlier than Greek poetry, does not indicate invention but necessity, i.e. it too appears as a necessary outgrowth from a prior world of given gods. In both cases, per Schelling, poetry follows a prior religious element; the succession of determinate gods in a sensible history follows the chaotic simultaneity of the gods in an inscrutable, unfathomable and abysmal past. Greek poetry, however, as the fulfillment of the mythological process, unlike Indian poetry, attained a separation and distance from its gods that did not exist in Indian poetry. Schelling comments, "The crisis, which gave the Hellenes their gods, clearly placed them in freedom against the same; however, the Indian has remained still deeper and more internally dependent on its gods" (*ibid.* 24).¹⁵ This distinction between Greece and India has to do with Schelling's view of the entire history of mythology and by extension world history. For now, let it suffice that the more poetry seems to be fanciful, inventive, light and unattached to its content, the later rather than sooner it must have occurred in the history of mythology. Poetry always marks the culmination and never the origination of mythology, its final stage and not its inception.

The second account of mythology Schelling discredits is the allegorical or philosophical view, which, like poetry, proves itself only to arise at the end of mythology's history, not at its inception. Theoretical moments

13 Schelling does concede one song and piece of ancestral music to Egypt as productions of poesy. Like Egypt, Babylon and Phoenicia are said to have been without the power of poesy as well.

14 In this context, Schelling argues for a comprehensive view of mythology as a whole in which Egypt would comprise the body, India the soul and Greece, the point of culmination, the spirit. Knowledge, lightness and distance towards the body are not to be found in the body itself, in the dark past, before it has been supplemented by word.

15 "Die Krisis, welche den Hellenen ihre Götter gab, hat sie offenbar zugleich in Freiheit gegen dieselben gesetzt; dagegen ist der Indier noch weit tiefer und innerlicher abhängig von seinen Göttern geblieben."

are always the last moments and never the original ones. Theory proceeds from praxis. The allegorical account, however, holds an advantage over the poetic account insofar as it does not view the myth as if only a fabrication invented simply from the mind of the poet. It intends a truth, namely an allegorical and not a literal one, or as Schelling terms it, it “admits truth and a doctrinal sense” (*ibid.* 26).¹⁶ The truth that would be admitted, however, would not be in mythology as such. The myth would only stand as the accidental clothing used to convey a truth not directly expressed. Of the truth allegedly expressed in myths, allegorically understood, “it is personalities intended, but not gods, not superhuman entities belonging to a higher order, but human, historical entities, even actual events are intended, but events of human or civic history” (*ibid.*).¹⁷ This view Schelling names Euhemerism after its first advocate Euhemerus. Schelling regards Epicurus as the most significant defender of this or, at least, a similar position but admits that Epicurus does assume real and actual gods but not that they concern themselves with human affairs. The further gradation of this view, however, could not admit this and accounted for the gods only as deified or personified objects, allegorized symbols or ethical concepts. The symbolization, allegorizing or the deification of nature, men or ethical concepts makes use of something already given but it certainly does not account for the origin of mythology, why the given is transformed into gods and made an object of religious concern. Moreover, how can nature, once assumed as a given without religious significance, be magically imbued with religious significance by a conscious transformation only later to forget this transformation and come to view nature as if she had always been divine theophany? The allegorical view, like the poetic view, may describe a moment in mythology, a certain use of mythology, but should it pretend to account for its origin, it becomes an absurd explanation in which a people would knowingly fool itself only to forget that it has pulled the wool over its own eyes. Both views, the poetic and the allegorical, assume too much as well as too little knowledge on the part of its believers. It assumes too much in the beginning, as if nature had at first been only brute, known not

16 “...Wahrheit und einen doctrinellen Sinn zuläßt...”

17 “Es sind Persönlichkeiten gemeint, aber nicht Götter, nicht übermenschliche, einer höhern Ordnung angehörige Wesen, sondern menschliche geschichtliche Wesen, auch wirkliche Ereignisse sind gemeint, aber Ereignisse der menschlichen oder bürgerlichen Geschichte.”

to be populated by gods, and then too little in the end in that the people forgets its own forgetfulness.

Gottfried Hermann, contends Schelling, takes an important step past allegorical interpretation without yet arriving at the heart of mythology. In short, the problem with the allegorical explanation of myths is that “once admitted, [it] is almost more difficult to say what it [mythology] would not mean than what it would mean” (*ibid.* 29).¹⁸ Hermann repudiates allegory, however, arguing that Poseidon, for example, does not *mean* the ocean but *is* the ocean. Schelling’s enthusiasm for this is nonetheless tempered by the fact that Hermann does not thereby also extricate himself from a philosophical or scientific view of mythology. Hermann sees in mythology a thorough philosophy free of everything supernatural, i.e. a merely natural explanation bereft of any religious meaning. The gods do not represent elements of nature but simply are these elements with the consequence that gods no longer populate a now utterly atheistic nature. Given that the name, e.g. Poseidon, is only a hyperbolic substantive for the ocean, Hermann seems to account for the arising of the name but not for the actual belief in the god. In other words, just because one capitalizes the first letter of a concept, like Justice or Beauty, or gives a name to a mountain, e.g. Olympus, that does not transform it into a person or god (*ibid.* 43). The meaning of a force of nature or one of its principal effects may be etymologically expressed in the meaning of the name, but how the people would have transformed this empty name into a factual god whom they worshipped remains unexplained under Hermann’s view. Yet, despite his emphasis that the gods are nothing but these natural realities, Hermann, on the other hand, does wish to describe the origination of these names by allegory. He presupposes a people dominated by philosophy and not religion, arguing that it was indeed the philosophers who invented this nomenclature, i.e. these gods, by wanting to end religious representation, to move from the religious to the philosophical. They “personified” nature, but in order to view nature philosophically and not religiously. Hermann, as mentioned, cannot explain though how these allegories not only became misunderstood but also how they became adopted by the people at large. Hermann’s move beyond allegory only reintroduces it as the supposed origin of mythology, but in order to express a philosophic view of nature. As Schelling says, “Here is, Hermann assures, not only a thorough scientific context but even proscriptive

18 “...einmal zugegeben, fast schwerer ist zu sagen, was sie nicht bedeute, als was sie bedeute.”

philosophy that namely reserves itself from everything hyperphysical and rather seeks to explain everything merely naturally" (*ibid.* 39).¹⁹ Hermann falsely minimizes the real religious aspect and origin of mythology but he does correctly observe a central relation between philosophy and mythology, namely that allegory is only possible once heavy religion has been lightened by the distance required for a philosophical stance towards the same. The allegorical or philosophical explanation of mythology, just as with the poetic, could only have been a later moment in the history of mythology, namely its end and not its origin. Poetry and philosophy require a distance from their object in order to become conscious of the object.

In the end, poetry and philosophy both have proven to be more than invention merely insofar as they both presuppose a dark content from which they arise by taking a distance from this dark past. Philosophy acquires this distance from the myth itself by moving from the tautegorical to the allegorical. Philosophy raises itself to principles expressed in concepts and poetry. Neither philosophy nor poetry has been excluded from mythology, but only relegated to its culminating stage, as if a pure potential present from the beginning but not yet effective. If philosophy marks the recognition of mythology's content and poetry supplies the form, then the content, philosophy, could never have been for itself (Schelling, *Mythologie*, 56). Schelling never permits a pure meaning prior to its concrete expression, substance prior to its attributes or the subject prior to its predicates. The jointure is never arbitrary. Inner meanings only exist and arise in their particular form, an external form essential and concrescent with the inner meaning, not external clothing added to a pre-existent and pure meaning but the condition of the prior. Let it nevertheless now suffice that philosophy and poetry do not represent "beginnings, but exits from mythology" (Schelling, II/1, 46, "Einleitung").²⁰

19 "Hier ist, versichert Hermann, nicht nur durchaus wissenschaftlicher Zusammenhang, sondern sogar ächte Philosophie, die nämlich von allem Hyperphysischen sich frei hält und vielmehr alles bloß natürlich zu erklären sucht."

20 "...Anfänge, aber Ausgänge der Mythologie..."

3 The Co-Originality of the Myth and the Consciousness Thereof

Myths arise neither from poetry nor from a philosophically inclined consciousness, which would use allegory as a propaedeutic tool, nor from some synthesis of the two but myths lie on the hither side of all invention. If one falsely assumes a consciousness, be it of a great individual or a people, as the condition of a myth, then one cannot but accept the myth as the invention of this pre-given consciousness, a consciousness that would have previously been without myth, perhaps even a neutral slate, a *tabula rasa*. Poetry and philosophy both mark exits from mythology, that constituting the transition from the mythological to that which succeeds it.

Now, if, as Schelling asserts, the first trace of philosophy's separation from mythology occurs in Hesiod and is only complete, if ever, in Aristotle (*ibid.* 49), then this can only be because philosophy tends towards abstraction, even abstraction from the poetic, from the mythological manner of expression. In this sense, then, poetry marks the end of mythology and philosophy the actual exit from it and advance upon something other than it. At any rate, philosophy, i. e. philosophy allegedly purged of its poetic and mythical elements, marks a moment of *self*-consciousness but does not demarcate the originaive moment of consciousness, the moment in which the consciousness of the people is aware of a content, namely a mythological content, but not yet aware of themselves as the people who is aware of this content. If consciousness is intentional, if it has an object, its first object is not itself. It does not begin in self-reflection but its intentionality first consists in its nature as god(s)-positing. If the importance of the doctrine of intentionality is that it places consciousness outside of itself only by having it begin outside of itself, then let that indeed delineate the starting point. Consciousness does not begin as *self*-consciousness but as consciousness of Being and of Being as Godly (see Chapters 3 and 4). One begins outside and the task is to construct a plane of immanence, to hollow out a hallowed space of interiority.

Philosophy and poetry (as well as language (see Chapter 7)) are all results, not origins. The origin will explain the proper union of philosophy and poetry but these two or any synthesis of the two cannot account for the origin. One sees now that the origin of poetry and philosophy, as the ends and/or exits from mythology, derive from mythology. What then,

again, is the origin of mythology? Mythology's origin lies at the hither side of all invention. This extends farther than just precluding the inventiveness of a single individual. Certainly, the idea that one individual invented mythology – and apparently a different one corresponding to each of the respective mythologies, e. g. Indian, Egyptian, Greek etc. – is implausible, unable to account for the universality of mythology and why this invented fabrication would have appeared as plausible to everyone else who had apparently adopted the fabrications as real. "To create a mythology, to accord to it that attestation and reality in the thoughts of men, exceeds the capacity of each individual" (*ibid.* 56–57).²¹ To assert, however, that it would have been the invention of a people as a whole is just as implausible insofar as this too cannot account for its universality but only its regionalization. It attempts to account for its origin but cannot account for its preservation. This also seems to leave unaccounted an apparently magic act by which a people is able simultaneously to consent to the fabrication of an invention and then just as unanimously forget their own invention, namely that they fabricated it. One must surely find consent with Schelling as he says,

The mythology of a people is in such a way connate with its life and essence that it was only able to proceed from [the people] itself. Anyway, everything instinctual operates more in the masses than in individuals, and as in certain animal families a common artistic drive combines individuals independent from one another for the production of a common work of art, so as through inner necessity a spiritual context generates itself by itself even between different individuals, although belonging to the same people, which [spiritual context] must reveal itself in a common production such as mythology" (*ibid.* 59–60)²²

To be consensual with the people in whose consciousness it occurs does not entail that the people invented the mythology but only that the mythology ensues from the people, namely from their common consciousness,

21 "Eine Mythologie zu erschaffen, ihr diejenige Beglaubigung und Realität in den Gedanken der Menschen zu erteilen...geht über das Vermögen jedes einzelnen."

22 "Die Mythologie eines Volks ist dergestalt mit seinem Leben und Wesen verwachsen, daß sie nur aus ihm selbst hervorgehen konnte. Alles Instinktartige wirkt ohnehin mehr in der Masse als in einzelnen, und wie in gewissen Familien des Thierreichs ein gemeinschaftlicher Kunsttrieb voneinander unabhängige Individuen zur Hervorbringung eines gemeinsamen Kunstwerks verbindet, so erzeugt sich auch zwischen verschiedenen, aber zu demselben Volk gehörigen Individuen von selbst und wie durch innere Nothwendigkeit ein geistiger Zusammenhang, der sich in einem gemeinschaftlichen Erzeugniß wie die Mythologie offenbaren muß."

not by invention but connately, as a natural, i.e. instinctual, birth. One should not take instinct in the biological sense, as though the mechanics of the organism, as something present for the purpose of ensuring its survival, compelling a people to act in a certain way. Instinct is a metaphor, perhaps a misleading one, used to refer to Man's – and even fallen men's – essence as God-positing consciousness, as nothing but consciousness (of) God(s). The reference to art is perhaps less misleading insofar as the production of art, at least given its Romantic conception, is a non-conscious production, an event occurring within but not at the caprice of the genial artist. Mythology is a form of geniality. Something grows without volitional assistance within the people, even without the people being aware of it. However, one must take care to assume neither the individuals populating a people as the condition of the people nor the people as the condition of the common consciousness and common drive. The people is rather the product of the content of its consciousness, i.e. its mythology. Parts do not constitute the whole but the whole of a people precedes its constituent elements. In this sense, biological or organic metaphors do provide a fair picture, though certainly not any necessary mechanics of physics, which lapses into viewing the parts before the whole again. To affirm that a mythology is connate with its life and essence is to emphasize the activity of concrescence prior to the parts that concresced. The life of mythology is its history and its essence is nothing apart from its life history, how it has grown together with the people. Neither term, life history or essence, takes precedence over the other. Neither term, mythology or people, takes precedence over the other. The connascency or concrescence does not allow the birth of one at the hands of the other but permits only a mutually reciprocal and organic emergence of the two in one act. One sees how all invention or fabrication by a pre-given consciousness, be it of mythology, poetry, philosophy, language etc., is precluded. One may not ask for the cause of the effects, for the inventor of the invention, but only for the origin in its very act of emergence.

What is a people exactly? Certainly, given its concrescence with its mythology, it is not simply a group categorized simply by its geographical proximity, a merely spatial co-existence, like a herd.²³ An inner principle

23 In response to the question of what makes a people a people, Schelling remarks, "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. [Unstreitig nicht die bloße räumliche Coexistenz einer größeren

explanatory of the common consciousness is required. No one people could account for the universality of mythologies and peoples. This external explanation would describe the origin and genealogy of mythology according to the pattern of model and copy. Mythology, however, does not present a unilateral descent from one common people, supposedly the oldest people, but consanguinity. For Schelling copies (*das Nachbild*) or simulacra are never representations of the model (*das Urbild*), never instances of a general as if the movement were from the generic to the particular, but Schelling preaches originality, a repetition whereby the repeated is always novel, always different than the model. Original repetition is itself an inception, an emergence. Myths have a common point of departure without being based upon the pattern of model and copy (Schelling, *Mythologie*, 61). No external account suffices. The constitution of a people arises from within the very people without already presupposing the people, the effect to be explained, as a pre-given group to which a principle would come from the outside. No mythology may possibly superimpose itself upon a people from the outside. That would presuppose a pre-given people that had previously existed without any mythology whatsoever, an impossible hypothesis according to Schelling. Similar or even identical social, economic or governmental conditions may preside over disparate, yet geographically proximate, peoples without also necessitating that each people have the same mythology and worship the same gods, i. e. without necessitating that they are really one and the same people. Such external aspects may perhaps express the consanguinity of a people but they are only the symptoms and not the principle of emergence.

Schelling, perhaps not without aspects of racism or ethnocentrism, proclaims that the natives of South America were certainly without mythologies, but that they were also not peoples but lived "without any type of community amongst them, completely as animals of the field, in that they just as little recognized a visible as an invisible authority over themselves and felt themselves as strange to one another as animals of the same species feel towards each other..." (Schelling, II/1, 63, "Einleitung").²⁴

oder kleineren Anzahl physisch gleichartiger Individuen, sondern die Gemeinschaft des Bewußtseyns zwischen ihnen.]" (*ibid.* 62).

24 "...ohne jede Art von Gemeinschaft unter sich, völlig wie Thiere des Feldes, indem sie so wenig eine sichtbare als eine unsichtbare Gewalt über sich erkennen, und sich einander so fremd fühlen, wie sich Thiere derselben Species einander fühlen..."

Per Schelling, these individuals – what else could they be for him but savages or at most tribes without the principle of a true people – lacked the symptoms requisite for a true community with a common, i. e. communal, consciousness and so lived in joint, but asocial, packs, herds or colonies, just as dogs, cows or ants live. The verity of this assertion and its apparent offensiveness are not the issue and shall be left to ethnologists to decide. Either these individuals were only asocial tribes or they did have mythologies and so did not live as animals and were peoples.

At issue here is the necessity of the dichotomy on philosophical grounds. No people exists without mythology and mythology only exists within the consciousness of a common people, not as an external artifact to be passed, as if by barter, from one people to the next. The mythology is determinative of any people as that people; it is the expression of the common worldview. Worldview does not mean a scientific or philosophical explanation of the world and its contents, but it indicates the only manner in which the phenomena of the world and the phenomenon of the world itself may reveal itself for a people. The worldview does not come to a people from the outside but arises within the people at their inception. Take Schelling's view of the law in relation to mythology as an example. The law also is not superimposed upon a pre-given people as that presupposes an impossible state of nature, a state in which no law could ever interject itself except by a magic and unnoticed wave of the wand. A people does not first have a neutral view of the world as it is in and of itself and then reflectively and calculatedly institute a social contract or law best suited to the reality of the world, but a people could only be a people if they already lived under common legislation. There is no view from nowhere. Every view of the world is already mythological, already populated with the gods from the start before they could ever be instituted as explanations. In this respect, any attempt to deduce the mythology from the people, and not vice versa, assumes not only something that never existed but something that never could have existed. Whether here or in trying to reunite the disparate pieces of a Cartesian dualism, if one begins atomistically, with parts outside of parts, then never the twain shall they meet again. If one begins in a state of nature, one remains there. If one begins with individuals merely habitating next to each other but not with the continuity of a people generative of its individuals, one may never reach this continuity. The whole always precedes the parts, which later may be isolated and abstracted, but one may never begin with the parts to construct a continuous whole. A people is the simplest unit with which one may begin, a unit constituted not from without

by its worldview but by the way the world affects its consciousness from within, by its formative mythological experience.

A people cannot exist without a mythology and a mythology is always the mythology of a people. Mythology has real religious meaning and is not just the product of invention. A people, then, cannot exist without religion, just as religion never exists without a corresponding mythology or unique mode of expression. A people, unlike animals of the same species who may live in groups but without ever constituting a people, is not a genus of any sort (Schelling, *Mythologie*, 62). Peoples are not groupings categorized under given laws and customs, something demarcating one genus from another, but the laws, customs, myths etc. arise in concrescence with the people. Such distinctions never come from the outside, otherwise one would have to admit the possibility of adding religion, mythologies, language, laws, customs etc. to herds of animals, somehow transforming them from a pack to a society by some external adjustment. Peoples never exist before their mythologies; peoples never have histories prior to their mythologies. A people's mythology *is* its history and not a consequence of its historical trajectory. A people's history is determined by its constitutive mythological experience.

Just as the person is the person she is on account of her character, so does a people's mythology constitute its identity by defining its character. Just as a person's character, in a manner of speaking, constitutes her destiny, so the mythology is the destiny of a people and its history. The formative mythological experience of a people is not something the people experiences in the course of its actual life and history but an affectivity experienced in its inception. Remember that the mythical character of a people was something connate or instinctual. The mythical experience births the people before it is even there and determines its history, i. e. its destiny, before it has even begun to live it. Myths can never have inner-historical origins, i. e. be constructed from historical borrowings from other, prior cultures, because the same mythological experience(s) are not shared from people to people. How could a myth retain its efficaciousness as a hand-me-down? Only mythological or aesthetic experience, i. e. the event that is the inception of both the myth and the people, accounts for the inseparable character of the myth and the people. That which comes to a myth from the outside, e. g. as a historical borrowing, can only be something accidental for it (Schelling, *Urfassung*, 338). Here one is returned to primal experience, *aesthesis* prior to all experience and cognition of things in the world, that primal consciousness that Man essentially is before he has fallen into spatio-temporal existence. This con-

consciousness is the singular individuality that is nevertheless universal for all men and peoples, that capable of accounting for the continuity requisite for the subsequent plurality of peoples that emerges in the act of the Fall.

Here consciousness does not actively experience and posit things but experiences things by undergoing them – pure *aesthesis*. Mythical, historical emergence is the culmination of a deed undergone, a deed suffered, the consequence of an inner history that was not its own but of which it nevertheless has undergone all moments only to arise as its end. Here one meets consciousness in its inception and primal affectivity anterior to its existence in time. Remember that consciousness is God-positing. One may now espouse a view of mythology that may view truth in it and not just invention or allegory. Not just any truth, however, but, given the God-positing essence of consciousness, *religious* truth. Rather than being an invention, myths were originally taken, intended and felt as truth about the gods and their history. This view may also then account for the commonality of myths amongst regions and peoples that seem to have had little or no contact with one another, as every people departed from the same unitary consciousness and fell through the same catastrophic event.

All prior explanations of mythology could not account for its religious aspect. They all began with poetry, philosophy, forces of nature, commerce, heroes etc. and attempted to show the transformation into or invention of gods. What appeared in poetry as religious was only accidentally or unintentionally religious. What could have appeared as religious under the philosophical explanation was even explicitly excluded. The philosopher knew that the myth did not express or intend religious truth but only a physical truth denoted by a nominalized predicate for the natural phenomenon under question. The philosopher knew it was nature and not a god she named. The former views all assumed something irreligious and tried to show how it became religiously construed or represented. The present view assumes religiosity from the beginning – consciousness as God-positing. Atheism is not the *terminus a quo* but that which is most in need of explanation. The question is not how the human being creates or comes to God(s) but how she ever departed from Him. Schelling acknowledges that one may interject that the history of mythology is indeed a religious history, namely a history of polytheism, and so wonder how one can begin with this evidently false religion. Schelling replies that “false religion is not irreligion, as error (at least what deserves to be called so) is not the complete lack of truth but only per-

verted truth itself" (Schelling, II/1, 74, "Einleitung").²⁵ Schelling does not dare to say that mythological gods are the true gods but only that they were intended and taken as true.²⁶ He does not purport to say that mythology is true religion, only that it is truly religious. The religious truly exists in mythology but not *as* true.

In the analysis of the "as" the remarkable consistency of Schelling's philosophy becomes manifest. His doctrine of truth corresponds perfectly to his doctrine of the copula. Truth proper is only there with the predicate nominative, with the attribute/predicate that allows the subject to be *as* true, i.e. even to be at all. The predicate nominative is nominating. Truth is a clearing, a permitting to be. The truth of what is true, however, is the subject and not the attribute permitting the appearing as true of what is true, namely the nominated subject. The subject only exists at all with the attribute, even if the attribute is false. Truth and falsity are both modes of being of the subject but at another level even the false is true because truth, ontologically and not propositionally understood, is the clearing. Even a false, i.e. distorted, clearing is a clearing, a truthing. Mythology's contents were meant and taken as true. Truth was intended even if disguised or distorted. Yet, it was truly religious. Mythology or polytheism did not have a deficiency of truth; just as much truth was in it as in monotheism, but it was not the true *as* true, not the subject in its propriety, i.e. with its proper property. If one decides for the religious explanation, then one still does not admit truth in mythology as such, i.e. in each of its particular contents in isolation, but certainly that it was intended as truth and not as invention. Mythological religion may be an error, but error, properly understood as the distortion rather than deficiency of truth, excludes neither that truth was intended nor that it is wholly absent. It, in fact, presupposes a truth existent in consciousness before consciousness made this content thematic and distorted

25 "Die falsche Religion ist darum nicht Irreligion, wie der Irrthum (wenigstens was so zu heißen verdient) nicht vollkommener Mangel an Wahrheit, sondern nur die verkehrte Wahrheit selbst ist."

26 Myths, in opposition to poetry as well as philosophy, are a-subjective. The works and procedures of the subject, even the subject itself, are, as it were, effaced. The poet, on the other hand, remains as the inventive subject behind the poetic work, albeit probably an enthused or inspired one. Myths, in contradistinction from poetry, are thoroughly anonymous. The mythological human being did not know that the locus of mythic experience was the subjective, but the myths appeared to come from nowhere.

it, i. e. disguised it or made it false. Even the distorted, perverted or false has truth as its base.

How could the unitary consciousness of Man with the one, true God as its principle ever become the source of polytheism; how could it become distorted? Now, this process has to be an inner one as any external explanation has shown itself inadequate. This does not, however, preclude that this inner process may repeat a prior process. The mythological process that occurs within consciousness appears as a repetition of nature insofar as it repeats all the phases of creation, the movement from the inorganic to the organic, from the corporeal to the spiritual or human. Yet, this process occurs independently of nature, i. e. independently of the external world, although it may be colored by it. The external may influence this process but the principle and heart is always an inner one. Now, just because the process occurs within consciousness does not imply that it is a reflective, theoretical doctrine of the gods. It is still something natural, a natural drive or, in Schelling's terms, an instinct. Should polytheism be nothing more than a doctrine, a theoretical belief, about gods, then one only explains the false movement from the correct doctrine of monotheism – here the monotheism of the creation and not that corresponding to the special revelation of history – to the false one of polytheism with grave difficulties. The distortion that occurs with the Fall, the move from Man as the perfectly God-positing center to one who posits a multitude of gods as he falls to the periphery, occurs not by some theoretical error but through the deed. Praxis and not theory fuels the happening of these events. A lot happens within consciousness that never, or at least not until much later, comes to the awareness of consciousness. Note again how science, poetry, philosophy etc., i. e. all the theoretical moments, mark the ends and exits and not the beginnings and entrances. The truth that becomes distorted is not a theoretical point of view but a fact. At the end of the creation God's essence constituted the perfect enclosure in which Man resides and post-Fall this essence, this fact, becomes distorted. That the fact and not just some viewpoint becomes distorted accounts for the universality of the distortion. Origins are never principles but deeds and facts, inclusive of polytheism and monotheism, which are historical facts, not theories.

4 Polytheism and Monotheism

Polytheism stands opposed not to an empty and formal theism derived from reason alone but to monotheism. Theism, the assertion that there is only one God who exists and not many, arises from reason and philosophy, but philosophy and reason, as the moment of reflection on its own content, only appear at the end and not at the beginning of the mythological process and so much too late to be the principle behind polytheism. Both polytheism and monotheism are expressions of facts, specifically man's relationship to God, and not of theories or ruminations of reason. If polytheism is not real religious relation but just an egregious theoretical error, then historical monotheism too, as its opposite, the overcoming of the false plurality, may not be viewed as containing a real and fundamental religious meaning but only as a purified, yet still effete, rationalization. According to rationalism, which excludes everything historical, mythology can only be a chaotic, nonsensical conglomeration of irrational representations (Schelling, *Urfassung*, 16). According to Schelling's historical rather than overly rationalized view, on the other hand, truth in its naked substantiality is presupposed as present in both polytheism and monotheism, yet only as distorted in polytheism. The *fact* is expressed that God is either one or many. Simple theism does not express any fact. It expresses the utter absence of relation or absolution. Theism is truly a synonym for atheism. Given the nature of consciousness as God (s)-positing and the real and not just theoretical religious meaning present in the fact of mythology, all apologetics must be false insofar as it assumes that the burden of proof does not lie on the side of atheism or irreligion. Polytheism and monotheism are real religions that intend gods as real facts. Only theism, as a reification of reason, lacks this factual religiosity. Here it will help to quote Schelling at length:

If one views mythology as a distortion of the revealed truth, then it is just no longer adequate to assume for it mere theism; for, in this lies only that God is thought in general. In the revelation [of the creation], however, it is not merely God in general [but] it is the determined God, the God who is this, the true God who reveals Himself, and He reveals Himself even as the true [God]. Here a determination must thus supervene: it is not theism [but] it is monotheism that precedes polytheism; for, with this, [it] is not merely religion in general [that is] generically indicated but the true one (*ibid.* 83)²⁷

27 "Wenn man indeß die Mythologie als eine Entstellung der geoffenbarten Wahrheit ansieht, so ist es eben nicht mehr hinreichend, ihr bloßen Theismus voraus-

Schelling does not yet refer to the historical revelation, the special revelation that is the event of the Christ in Jesus of Nazareth. Here he only speaks of the revelation of the creation.²⁸ There God manifested, i. e. revealed, Himself as the God who is One, as the *Monas*, and not just as the chaotic *Duas*. The *Duas* would correspond to the moment of pure theism in which God is not the One but the moment in which one may only say "It is." That is the moment that never was, that of the Naked *Daß* prior even to its own propriety, its *Was*. Neither of these moments, however, designates a mere belief in how many gods exist but they both express facts and relations. Both are on the hither side of reflection and invention. Monotheism is not the doctrine that only one god exists. That would rather remain polytheism at heart, in which one asserts that only one of the many gods really exists. If only Zeus existed one would still be operating polytheistically. Monotheism is the view, rather, that God is the One, that the aforementioned *Duas* is no longer as a mere It but *as* a Who (or Thou), who is One. There is not just one god instead of many, but the lone God, the Alone, exists *as* One instead of divided against Himself. If monotheism were merely a concept of God's singularity, i. e. theism, polytheism would never be possible. God would, by definition, exclude the possibility of other gods. This cannot account for the fact of polytheism and its corresponding multitude of diverse peoples. Only the monotheism of the creation can do this because monotheism presupposes an entire multiplicity, the *Duas* or chaos, as its ground. Real plurality may arise from the monotheism with a real multiplicity at its base but certainly not if only thought as nothing but the first part of a sequence. "One" designates not the number of gods but the manner in which the lone God exists.

The monotheism from which one begins as the real, relatively historical, assumption of the ensuing polytheism and history of mythology is

zusetzen, denn in diesem ligt nur, daß überhaupt Gott gedacht werde. In der Offenbarung ist es aber nicht bloß Gott überhaupt, es ist der bestimmte Gott, der Gott der es ist, der wahre Gott, welcher sich offenbart, und er offenbart sich auch als den wahren. Hier muß also eine Bestimmung hinzukommen: es ist nicht Theismus, es ist Monotheismus, der dem Polytheismus vorausgeht, denn damit wird allgemein und überall nicht bloß die Religion überhaupt, sondern die wahre bezeichnet."

- 28 Karl-Heinz Volkman-Schluck confirms, "Now, the Christian religion of revelation is not identical with the thought of primordial revelation. [Nun ist die christliche Offenbarungsreligion nicht mit dem Gedanken einer anfänglichen Uroffenbarung identisch.] (*Mythos*, 35).

not the monotheism of a people but of humanity (*Menschheit* and *Menschengeschlecht*). Schelling no longer speaks of Man (*Mensch*), which is trans-historical, but of humanity, which is the relatively historical. Talk of a people (*Volk*) is not yet appropriate here as that implies a defining particularity that would distinguish that people from another and its god in contradistinction to others. In short, it would already belong to polytheism and the history of mythology proper. Peoples and polytheism arise at the same time. Yet, given the Fall, Schelling cannot begin with the true God either in His individuality and particularity, but one begins again, just as prior to the creation one departed from the unprethinkable Duas, with an original lump of humanity that is neither separated into distinct peoples nor yet unified into a solid mass. The primal humanity of primitive time (*Urzeit*), i.e. the relative time before historical time proper, consists of nomads and vagabonds. Here humanity does not know God, i.e. at least not by name; for, remember that God only is *as* God in His propriety once nominated, i.e. once nominalized. The indifferent race of humanity is the actual historical counterpart to the merely theistic moment, the time of darkness in which God is not known by name. Remember how the Hellenic people only appears once it knows the gods by name. The monotheism of the race of humanity does not correlate to the special monotheism of Jehovah, the God of historical revelation.²⁹ This is not yet the historically manifest monotheism that has overcome plurality within itself but that which has not yet parsed the multiplicity within itself into discrete cognoscibilities. This monotheism does not exclude this plurality; it has only not yet departed from false unity (the bad infinite if one will) into this plurality. With this starting point, though, one may be sure that once polytheism arises it will not appear as random, as parts outside of parts, i.e. as parallelism, but as an organic whole, as a successive polytheism.³⁰ Schelling explains as follows:

29 That the Duas becomes Monas, that Elohim is the same who is Jehovah, cannot possibly, argues Schelling correctly, arise as an invention of consciousness. He writes, "Jehovah, your Elohim, is only One Jehovah!" – an expression that is simply not possible through human invention... ["Jehova, dein Elohim, ist nur Ein Jehova!" – Ein Ausspruch, der schlechterdings nicht durch menschliche Erfindung möglich ist...]" (*Urfassung*, 488).

30 Successive polytheism technically designates the succession of the spiritual gods as the succession of the one God, the plurality of the one God, while simultaneous polytheism designates simply the plurality of gods. The plurality of gods in simultaneous polytheism demarcates the material gods under the reign of a head god, normally the manifestation of one of the spiritual gods of successive poly-

Not partial beings of the most accidental and ambiguous nature but the thought of the necessary and general being, before which alone the human spirit yields, rules through mythology and raises it to a true system of moments that belong together, [a system] that in divergence still marks its imprint for every single representation and therefore cannot end [by running] into a mere indeterminate plurality but only into polytheism – into a plurality of gods (*ibid.* 91)³¹

Mythology proper only begins and ends with polytheism but successive polytheism does not mean that many gods exist as if parallel entities, side by side without any real succession, without any point of contact, but it means that the Same manifests/reveals itself as Many – and that in turn lays the ground for a later manifestation/revelation as One, as the Self-Same.

Schelling's method finds its axis here. The method of gradually falsifying viewpoints of what mythology could be retroductively regressed to an explanation that found its source prior to mythology itself in the primal humanity of primal time, i.e. prior to history proper. This conclusion is then, in turn, turned around in order to become the starting point or historical hypothesis³² for a progression returning to mythology and its concomitant polytheism. This illuminates the abductive character of his method, the movement *per posterius*. He began squarely within the posterior, historical fact of mythology without attempting to explain anything from this *posterius*, i.e. *a posteriori*, and then, having retroductively regressed to the *prius* by falsifying all other explanations as insufficient, as not being original enough explanations, he transforms the *prius* into a hypothesis to be corroborated or, if one will, verified by the historical facts that ensue from this *prius*. The method is in one respect then *a priori* and verificatory in that it argues from the *prius* forth, but it is not an *a priori* argument in the traditional sense. Schelling artfully interweaves the *a pri-*

theism. Simultaneous polytheism refers to the disparateness of material gods as contemporaries and successive polytheism to the epochal history of the one God.

31 “Nicht partielle Wesen von höchst zufälliger und zweideutiger Natur, sondern der Gedanke des notwendigen und allgemeinen Wesens, vor dem allein der menschliche Geist sich beugt, waltet durch die Mythologie und erhebt sie zu einem wahren System zusammengehöriger Momente, das im Auseinandergehen noch jeder einzelnen Vorstellung sein Gepräge aufdrückt, und daher auch nicht in eine bloße unbestimmte Vielheit, sondern nur in Polytheismus – in eine Göttervielheit enden kann.”

32 “...through these historical assumptions the explanation becomes the hypothesis... [...durch diese geschichtlichen Voraussetzungen wird die Erklärung zur Hypothese...]” (II/1, 91–92, “Einleitung”).

ori and *a posteriori* in his own method *per posterius*. He employs falsification in order to regress to an origin that in turn proves to be only the starting point and not the conclusion at all. This is the trajectory this chapter has taken as well, starting from the posterior and regressing to the prior only to commence again from the prior (see the immediately following subsection). Schelling artfully employs historical explanations without explaining the historical from within history but begins always before history, from its *prius*, because that which he wishes to explain is the occurrence of history itself. The progression from the pre-historical to the historical, however, may only take the form of a narrative, i. e. of a history. The explanations cannot then be inner-historical but nor can they be a-historical. Mythology, although at any rate intended doctrinally and not allegorically, is not a theoretical teaching, so that “if it is not historical, then it is not mythological” (Schelling, *Mythology*, 29).

5 The Types of Monotheism

With the Fall a generic, anonymous totality takes the place of the universal individual. This is true both of God and Man as the image of God. Post-lapsarian, the race of mankind (*das Menschengeschlecht*), a generic unity, replaces the true unity of Man (*der Mensch*). That world becomes Past. In the creation is the movement from chaos, from the duplicitous Duas, to the Monas. History, as fallen from this state, starts again at the beginning, not with the One that is explicitly one, that has already excreted from itself all that it is not, but history begins with a relative one, with the one that is not yet explicitly one in contradistinction to the plurality to be excluded in order that it may again appear as One and not simply as the Only or the Alone. A, before B arrives or at least announces its advent, is not truly one but only a relative one. A is only first a member of a series and so not simply alone once B actually succeeds it. True number or true succession only first arises with two. Two and not one is truly the first number because one, without that which would follow it, is not one, is not a number, but just Alone (*Allein*), not yet the All (*das All*) as one, the All-One (*das All-eine*), but the lone one. The characteristic mark of mythology is polytheism and so the first god, so-called, i. e. the simply Alone, is only a mythological god for those for whom other gods have already followed, but for the consciousness of the first humanity – which is no longer Man and not yet a people – this god would not yet be mythological. The simply

Alone designates not the true monotheism that excludes that another god could follow but only a relative monotheism that neither excludes this possibility but nor has this possibility come to fruition. Mythological gods stand between the relative one of humanity and the absolute One who has eliminated the possibility of other gods that may stand alongside Him as equals. Mythology and its gods occur between these two, between the accidentally unmythological and the essentially unmythological God; it constitutes the history of the gods. The Alone is not differentiated, unknown and undecided. For the consciousness of original humanity the relative one appeared as though the absolute one. In order that the relative one could be named as such, differentiated from the distinct one and decisively determined as a false one, it must cease to assert itself as the absolute one and permit the entrance of a succeeding god. Now, according to the Hebraic tradition, this immediate content of consciousness was Elohim, as opposed to the true God, Jehovah. "...[I]n the Mosaic texts the God who is the immediate content of consciousness is named Eloh-im, the God who is distinguished as the true [one], Jehovah" (Schelling, II/1, 145, "Einleitung").³³ Schelling states that, in fact, only with the third generation of humanity was this primal god called by name, i. e. Jehovah. Adam and Seth only used Elohim, whereas Enoch first employs the proper name Jehovah.

The need to distinguish the anonymous, indistinct and relative one from the one known by a distinct name, Jehovah, could only have arisen when the relative ceases to appear as absolute and shows itself as relative, as one for whom another could follow. The name is only required when the second god threatens to appear. One sees "that the merely relatively-one god is just as well the assumption for the emergence of monotheism as polytheism" (*ibid.* 148).³⁴ Succession is required both for plurality and for explicit, decisive and distinct singularity. Oneness presupposes diversity as the artifice without which it could never appear. The Alone could approach something akin to monotheism, even for Judaism, only with the threat of polytheism. With this threat the possibility of mythology and its concomitant division of humanity into peoples arises. Note, however, that the myths do not engender the succession but rather they ensue

33 "...in den mosaischen Schriften der Gott, der der unmittelbare Inhalt des Bewußtseyns ist, Eloh-im, der Gott, der als der wahre unterschieden wird, Jehovah genannt wird."

34 "...daß jener bloß relativ-Eine Gott ebensowohl die Voraussetzung für die Entstehung des Monotheismus als des Polytheismus ist."

from the succession that occurs in consciousness (Schelling, *Mythologie*, 100). There is not a succession of mere representations (*Vorstellung*) but the mythological events are actual occurrences within consciousness. The succession has an inner and not an outer impetus.

Schelling points to the great flood – i. e. its meaning as an event within mythological consciousness and not merely as an external, historical event – as that marking the transition between a common humanity and its later division into peoples. Humanity, prior to being separated into peoples, was nomadic. He notes that for the Greeks this flood corresponds to Chronos' deposition of the Alone, the anonymous god of humanity, namely Uranus. It also corresponds to the time of the first Syrian, female divinity and for Schelling the feminine also marks the transition from one god to another (Schelling, II/1, 152–153, "Einleitung"). In like manner he points to the significance of water as a sign of malleability and transition, a loosening or becoming fluid of the former in order that it may yield to what will follow (*ibid.* 153).³⁵ Moreover, in the first centuries after the flood there were real peoples in the near East and in Abraham's time there were already peoples in Phoenicia, Egypt and Babylon, all equipped with their peculiar mythologies. After the flood even Noah himself became a man of the soil and planted a vineyard, showing that he too abandoned nomadic existence and established a settlement (*ibid.* 153). After the flood humanity no longer lived individually or in nomadic entourages but began to form communities, i. e. began to splinter into peoples.³⁶ "[One] who does not tarry anywhere is everywhere only a foreigner, a wanderer"³⁷ (*ibid.* 157).³⁸

35 To become feminine is to become matter (*materia*) or mother (*mater*). The emasculation or feminization of a god correlates to its becoming the matter of the next one, its fertile soil. Water is a common symbol for matter thought as that capable of receiving form. To become matter is to facilitate the transition from form to form, i. e. to be maternal.

36 Even the name Abraham apparently means one who is not bound to any permanent residence, who must live nomadically (Schelling, II/1, 157, "Einleitung"). The Hebrews, as the chosen people, were arguably a non-people, they who wandered through the desert without any permanent residence and who were supposed to remain pure of mythology, i. e. of polytheism. To have a mythology is to be polytheistic and to be polytheistic is to have gods and its concomitant mythology that demarcates one's own people from others. The Hebrews were a non-people or the universal people not meant to fall into this splintering effect. The closest they reached to forming distinct communities with distinct mythologies was their separation into 12 tribes, but certainly not 12 peoples. They were to take nothing from the peoples of the world. Abram was an exalted father but

The Israelites, unlike the rest of humanity, remained wanderers, the supposed representation not of just another individual people, but of humanity as a whole. They were to be holy, i. e. separated from other peoples – a non-people. Only with Israel's separation from other peoples may one even possibly attribute to them the foundation of a special revelation. Revelation, not just the creation but historical revelation, is only to be understood within the framework of mythology. It presupposes mythology as that to be overcome. Even the monotheism of Abraham is not bereft of mythological components but it has mythology as its presupposition. It presupposes Elohim as a relative rather than an absolute One, i. e. as one that has not yet decisively excluded plurality from itself, as one that appears simply as the first potency – though not actuality – of polytheism. Mythology presupposes Elohim as a singular multiplicity that has not yet splintered into an actual plurality. The true God, Jehovah, can only appear in opposition to the singular multiplicity, Elohim, and the actual plurality (mythology/paganism/polytheism) that ensues from it. The reign of Elohim as the simply Alone marked the time in which no peoples existed, but with Jehovah succession becomes real. No sacrilege is committed if one views the Genesis narratives as myths because myths do not tell false stories but the mythical is the manner in which real, although not necessarily inner-historical, events are told. The Genesis narratives “are indeed not myths in the sense that one customarily takes the word, i. e. as fables, but they are actual, though mythological, i. e. facts standing under the conditions of mythology which are told” (*ibid.* 171).³⁹

The relative one, the simply Alone, operates as the mythological presupposition behind Abraham's monotheism, but it is also that beyond which his consciousness strove. He does not yet know Jehovah as the One who has overcome all mythological elements, who has subdued Elohim within Himself, but he knows Jehovah as the One to come, as He who will be. Knowledge of the true God must distinguish Him (Jehovah)

with the name change to Abraham he became the father of many, the peoples to come.

37 The Christ has no home, no place to lay his head; he lives as a wanderer and is rejected by his own because he is supposed to be the Savior of all people and all nations.

38 “...der nirgends Weilende ist überall nur ein Fremdling, ein Wanderer.”

39 “...sie sind zwar nicht Mythen in dem Sinne wie man das Wort gewöhnlich nimmt, d. h. Fabeln, aber es sind wirkliche, obwohl mythologische, d. h. unter den Bedingungen der Mythologie stehende Facta, die erzählt werden.”

and the previous God (Elohim), who was not false but certainly not yet God *as true*. This is why Jehovah was for Abraham never being but always becoming, i. e. always futural. Abraham knows the God of the future, the God of promise, but not a God that *is*. With a future God there is the promise of true succession, of a genuine future. Judaism is fundamentally and essentially messianic. Judaism cannot view monotheism as something present but only as something on the way, as something to come. Only in this way can it fight against its mythological and polytheistic tendencies existing at its heart.⁴⁰ Israel (and Islam) preserves Elohim from being hy-

40 Amongst the mythological elements present in Judaism were the facts that 1) around Abraham's time other people's also sacrificed their children (Schelling, *Urfassung*, 485) except that with Abraham the imperative of the dark religion yielded to the command of the future God; 2) Arabs, Phoenicians and Ethiopians also practiced circumcision and the manner of its prescription to Abraham assumes it as an already known tradition (*ibid.* 502), though not on the basis of its hygienic merit but as a religious rite stemming from Chronos' castration (*ibid.* 503); and 3) specific dietary regulations as well as the fear of dirty animals, e. g. swine, also existed with Mohammed, Phoenicians and Egyptians (*ibid.* 504). The superstitious, pagan elements vouch for the reality of the religious relation in polytheism; the sinister element present in real religious relation would be absent if religion were only a man-made doctrine, a poetic or allegorical fabrication. The primary mythological element the Israelites shared in common with other peoples that vouches for the real religiosity at its base is the fact the Israelites too were polytheistic, not in theory but in practice. As veritable monolatrists the Israelites too had to pass through all the stages of the history of mythology (*ibid.* 512). Throughout their history, the inclination to idolatry hardly decreased but, quite to the contrary, it increased. Moreover, most susceptible to this "error" were not the uneducated, but the educated, even the wise Solomon was quite vulnerable to idolatry. In fact, according to Schelling, the inclination towards idolatry only disappears, and then very suddenly, with the Babylonian exile. Their contact with Persians, expounds Schelling, cannot account for this because "every inclination [*jener Hang*]" (*ibid.* 514) disappeared. Transmission of customs from one people to another is always a gradual process. The explanation could only then be that the end of the mythological process was coming to a close in humanity at large. Mythology's history, along with its sinister, idolatrous, superstitious or "pagan" elements, traces an inner process and does not move according to the accidental externalities of inner-historical transactions. Mythology or polytheism, as existent even at the heart of Judaism, proved to be nothing accidental but a universal element significant of real religious relation. The Mosaic Law, with all its superstitious elements, manifests simply the sinisterness of the dark, heavy religion of the relative one. The only difference between the Old Testament and paganism is that the Israelites were Messianic, a religion directed toward the future but still under the hegemony of the dark religious element. The Mosaic Law simply found the sinister, the demand for sacrifice, as a given and

postatized into a concretely present and tyrannical god or power, e.g. as Chronos.⁴¹ Its iconoclasm is not external but inherent, which is also why idolatry rather iconoclasm was the predominant tendency. What would otherwise only be a relative monotheism sees beyond this exclusivity towards absolute monotheism by viewing the true God as futural. The messianic character consists in the consciousness that this religion of the future stands open to all peoples.

The true God, Jehovah, is futural – He who will come – but this does not mean that He is a different God than Elohim. “Jehovah is none other

then decorated it with prescriptive directives as the conditions of its execution (*ibid.* 515). The sinister side of the Law did not arise in the mind of Moses but was something already given and assumed. The reign of the first potency after the Fall subjects humanity to its sinister reign. The element of evil – even if not evil itself – is not mere privation but a real element demanding real sacrifice, an element that must be really overcome and not just recognized as illusory or privative. If God could have snapped his fingers and redeemed humanity, then all the sacrifices of paganism, the Old Testament and Christ were merely charades. The superstitious in Moses manifests the Real, which must really be subjected by the Ideal. Circumcision, the outer manifestation of the taming of the wild principle of the Real, was not an empty rite enacted merely to represent this subjection of the untamed principle, but it was this taming of the wild itself. The distinction between outer representation and inner reality did not yet exist. Violence is at the heart of the sacred. The sinister, rather than showing that the Mosaic Law could not have been from God, witnesses instead to the verity of the religious relation. Consciousness was truly seized by the principle of the Real. The pagan typifies the Mosaic Law without invalidating it. The true was in the false, pagan religion, but it had not yet expelled the false element from itself in order that it would manifest itself *as* true religion. In this respect, the false precedes the true just as the ugly is the underbelly of the beautiful and evil the never to be sublated life force behind the good. The consciousness of Israel was pagan (Schelling, II/4, 143, “Zweiter Teil”) and the historically revealed monotheism could only then be the supplement to this natural relation.

- 41 Chronos is the exclusive reign of the firmament, Uranus become mundane, the expanse contracted into a particular entity that nevertheless still asserts an exclusive claim. Jankélévitch describes Chronos in the following way: “Chronos is Uranus’ suspicious return by the witness of Urania and by the enterprises of the new god: Uranus become concrete, historical, individual. The same principle that was diffused with Uranus appears concentratedly in Chronos, distinct and unilateral. Chronos has a contrary; he is by reflection and volition that which Uranus was by nature. [Kronos, c’est Ouranos rendu soupçonneux par l’épreuve d’Ourania et par les entreprises du dieu nouveau : Ouranos devenu concret, historique, individuel. Le même principe qui était diffus chez Ouranos apparaît en Kronos concentré, distinct et unilatéral. Kronos a un contraire, il est par réflexion et volonté ce qu’Ouranos était par nature.]” (*L’Odyssée*, 233).

than the primal God, only in His true, abiding essence" (Schelling, "Mythologie," 132).⁴² In a manner of speaking, Elohim constitutes the dark, blind substance of consciousness and Jehovah its appearing, its entry into light. To repeat, falsity is not the absence of truth and so truth is not the presence of something otherwise missing, but rather the proper arrangement or manifestation of what was already there in impropriety. The true supplements the false not from without but by an inner expulsion of what is not true in order that only the true in its purity remains. Truth adds nothing to the false but rather only subtracts the false.⁴³ Elohim and Jehovah are the same God, but Elohim is not yet this God *as* true. Schelling succinctly states, "The God of pre-time [*Vorzeit*] is an actual, real God and in whom even the true [God] Is, but not known as such" (Schelling, II/1, "Einleitung," 176).⁴⁴ Elohim, the God not yet known by name or not yet known at all, abides in pre-time. This is not the time of eternity, but also not yet history proper, which begins with mythology and polytheism, that is with the separation of peoples. This is a relatively pre-historical time in which only humanity as nomadic or tribal existed and not yet various peoples. This time corresponds to the Hobbesian state of nature. Once in the state of nature, however, one may never leave it. Contracts may never be drawn between two equally independent and neutral subjects. The state of nature must be supplemented not externally, i.e. with an addendum, but by an internal division. The state of nature subsists under the reign of the relative one, Elohim, which is the potency of a successive polytheism, i.e. of a mythological history. This succeeding polytheism is necessary in order for the absolute One, i.e. the true One, to appear. Plurality is not constituted by addition but by subtractive in-version, by turning out (*Herauswendung* or *Entäußerung*) pure multiplicity into outer plurality. With this expulsion of the plural to the outside an empty, inner and, therefore, holy plane of immanence appears. The outer is the condition for the inner, the material signifier the condition of the signified, two the condition of one, the posterior the condition for the prior. Origins are never beings present at the beginning, but they only appear as residues having existed

42 "Jehovah ist kein anderer als der Urgott, nur in seinem wahren bleibenden Wesen."

43 The notion of truth as singularity and the subtractive ontology of Alain Badiou operate similarly as here except that Badiou is atheistic and so shares a homologous structure with Schelling but bereft of the religious element.

44 "Der Gott der Vorzeit ist ein wirklicher realer Gott, und in dem auch der wahre Ist, aber nicht als solcher gewußt."

before any terminal beginning. One may not speak of beginnings and endings but only of before and after. The true God, Jehovah, comes afterwards and the Real within this God only exists as already always having been beforehand. The relative one, Elohim, does not fall within history; it exists only beforehand, in pre-time.

The crisis leading to the separation of humanity into peoples does not stand at the beginning of history but marks the very transition into the historical. "In the exact sense, historical time begins with the accomplished separation of the peoples. The time of the crisis of the peoples, however, precedes the accomplished separation, being the transition to historical time it is in that respect actually pre-historical..." (*ibid.* 181).⁴⁵ The crisis occurs neither in eternity nor in history but before history and after eternity. It is the *fall-ing*, the very transition from one to the other, the *durée* or density of the definitive deed drawing the breach betwixt the two. The true God, Jehovah, may only come afterwards, after the reconciliation of the peoples of the world into a reunified humanity that would exist no longer as nomadic or as a herd, i. e. tribally, but as a special and particular non-people.

The revelation that will come is not the merely general or natural relation expressed in the relative one, but revelation proper requires a special, peculiar, historical content. Just as the race of humanity was assumed as the starting point for the succeeding polytheism and mythology, mythology itself is actually the presupposition of historical revelation proper. Mythology re-dramatizes the natural process of the creation, the movement from the inorganic, to the organic, to the anthropomorphic, but revelation should supersede natural and essential relation in order to be the relation of person-to-person. Revelation supplements the natural. The supplement is the repetition of the Same as a self-same, the repetition of Difference, the unprethinkable Duas, via the supplementation of identity, the Monas. The true God and the knowledge thereof must be revelatory, but this...

...recognition of the true God is not natural, therefore also not stationary, but always only becoming, because the true God Himself is for consciousness not the existing, but always only the becoming [God], who as such is also called the living [God], perpetually only the appearing [God], who

45 "Im genauen Sinn fängt die Geschichtliche Zeit an mit der vollbrachten Trennung der Völker. Der vollbrachten Trennung geht aber die Zeit der Völkerkrise voraus; diese als Übergang zur geschichtlichen Zeit ist insofern eigentlich vorge-schichtlich..."

must always be called and detained, as an appearance is detained. The recognition of the true God remains, therefore, always a demand, a command (*ibid.* 177)⁴⁶

The true God, as a coming and becoming God, is a historically revealed God. His revelation/manifestation, on the other hand, cannot be reduced to historical presence, because this God cannot exist as such as an entity amidst other entities. Actual monotheism requires that God excrete as refuse everything from Himself that is not Himself in order to arrive at his purity. Knowledge of this God does not then consist in the perception of what is but in a demand. The recognition exists with the ethical and the ethical does not concern itself with the present, i. e. with what is, but with the future, i. e. with what ought to be. The move from the natural to supernatural revelation, from the relative one to the true One, supplements consonant time with its own dispersion. It supplements the Same as static – despite its chaotic nature – with temporal dispersion. The very difference constitutive of the ethical, namely the separation of the “is” from the “ought,” is synonymous with temporal dispersion. Time supplements the a-temporal. The distinction of the types of monotheism⁴⁷ is actually only a description of the transition from relative monotheism to true monotheism *through* polytheism, i.e. only a description of the transition from the Past to the Future.

46 “Seine Erkenntniß des wahren Gottes ist keine natürliche, eben darum auch keine stationäre, sondern immer nur werdende, weil der wahre Gott selbst dem Bewußtseyn nicht der seyende, sondern immer nur der werdende ist, der eben als solcher auch der lebendige heißt, stets nur der erscheinende, der immer gerufen und festgehalten werden muß, wie eine Erscheinung festgehalten wird. Die Erkenntniß des wahren Gottes bleibt daher immer eine Forderung, ein Gebot.”

47 Karl-Heinz Volkmann-Schluck correctly differentiates three different monotheisms in Schelling, the relative one that constitutes the possibility of polytheism or mythology, the exclusive one of Judaism and Islam, and the absolute monotheism of Christianity that encompasses rather than just excludes the multiplicity – the All-One (*Mythos*, 40). Of the lattermost he writes, “Christian theology asserts only that God is recognized through the revelation in His *truth*. And that means something completely otherwise than the assertion that every relation to God alone and exclusively is based on revelation. [Die christliche Theologie behauptet denn auch nur, daß Gott durch die Offenbarung in seiner *Wahrheit* erkannt werde. Und das bedeutet etwas ganz anderes als die Behauptung, daß jedes Gottesverhältnis allein und ausschließlich auf Offenbarung beruhe.]” (*ibid* 36). This is again to distinguish between revelation in general or relative monotheism and special revelation.

The temporal schema is as follows. The relative one of pre-historical time precedes the time of mythology as its point of departure (Schelling, *Mythologie*, 137). The crisis separating the race of humanity into peoples stands between this properly pre-historical time and the time that will follow; it fills the density of the act as neither pre-historical nor historical. It is “relatively historical” (*ibid.* 143). This is historical insofar as something actually happens in this middle time (intermittence) but not insofar as it does not fall into the chain of historical time proper but still precedes it. Through this crisis pre-historical time becomes determined as past. The race of humanity is past and pre-historical to the history of peoples (the history of mythology),⁴⁸ though not trans-historical as Man is. The race of humanity or mankind postdates the Fall, but it is still related to history in a way different than eternity or the time of the creation. The primal consciousness of Man sealing the time of eternity constitutes only the trans-historical (*übergeschichtlich*) (*ibid.* 145) monotheism of human nature – Man is the consciousness of God by essence – and not historical, human understanding. Historical time repeats the time of eternity. Time has been, so to speak, doubled. Eternity has an essential past, present and future, just as history has an actual past, present and future, and even

48 René Girard, like Schelling, also points to myth as that distinguishing one people from another. See e.g. *Violence and the Sacred*. Translated by P. Gregory. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1972. He, however, finds the origin of myth as an inner-historical event enacted by an apparently already given collective, the generative unanimity of collective violence towards an arbitrary, surrogate victim. The unanimity of the act forms the collective into a people. Girard does not seem to state clearly whether myth and peoples have an inner-historical birth or if these are co-primordial with historical emergence. His reasoning appears circular on this point. One encounters the problematic dynamics of trying to posit the state of nature as the first state of history rather than some pre-historical event. Against an inner-historical genesis Girard argues, “The original violence certainly did not bring into conflict two such neatly differentiated groups.” Yet, he then argues, “The original violence took place within a single, solitary group, which the mechanism of the surrogate victim compelled either to split into a separate group or to seek an association with other groups” (pg. 249). He does, then, seem to presuppose the existence of groups, already with borders demarcating the inside from the outside, as prior to the violence that is supposed to have unified them into some form or collective in the first place, social or otherwise. He also says, “(T)he origin of any cultural order involves a human death and the decisive death is a member of the community” (pg. 256). Indeed, then, does the community precede that which should be the event leading to its emergence. The many somehow erect the Leviathan from the state of nature, according to Girard.

within history mythology has its own past, present and future; but, with the fall from eternity into the time of history and succession eternity becomes Past and history the time of the Present.

6 Schelling's Historiography of Mythology

The history of mythology is not simply a re-presentation of the process of the creation, not the return of the identical, but its repetition. With repetition novel content accrues, something that was not there before. Schelling's actual account of the history of mythology, however, is quite problematic; for, as Jaspers proposes, "Schelling's *Introduction into Mythology* (II/1, 1–252) is to the present unsurpassed in the critical resolution of every ostensible conception of myths and in the beauty of the depiction of depth and the possible truth of the mythical in general" ... "Concerning the specific content of myths...Schelling teaches here as much as nothing" (Jaspers, *Schelling*, 162).⁴⁹ Schelling's perspicacity permitted him a fundamental insight into the essence of mythology, what myths are, and into its meaning, its singular truth, but regarding the specifics he is lacking.⁵⁰ Here, the simplest and briefest presentation possible will be given in order that one may see how his interpretation of the history of mythology coheres remarkably well with his other metaphysical ruminations on time. While his historiographical acumen may have been less than superb, the consistency of his interpretation of the history of mythology with his philosophy is striking.

49 "Schellings Einleitung in die Mythologie (XI, 1–252) ist bis heute unübertroffen in der kritischen Auflösung aller vordergründigen Auffassung der Mythen und in der Schönheit der Darstellung von Tiefe und möglicher Wahrheit des Mythischen überhaupt." "Über die besonderen Gehalte der Mythen...Schelling lehrt hier so gut wie nichts."

50 Schelling himself never intended to be a mythographer but only to give mythology's essence or general law as a whole and not in all of its details. He says, "To go through these various apparitions, these various appearances, of the same gods in various – earlier or later – moments where they also always portray themselves differently and to take them apart is the business of the mere mythographer, but that lies wholly outside our task. [Diese verschiedenen Apparitionen derselben Götter in verschiedenen –früheren oder späteren –Momenten, wo sie sich denn auch immer verschieden darstellen, diese verschiedenen Erscheinungen durchzugehen und auseinander zu legen, ist das Geschäft des bloßen Mythographen, aber es liegt gänzlich außer unserem Beruf.]" (II/2, 663, "Mythologie").

The other problem with giving an account of Schelling's portrayal of the history of mythology is its sheer size. His account of early Judaism has already been mentioned, although not in its entirety as presented by Schelling. Above and beyond this is the mythology of the Egyptians, Indians and Greeks as well as the account of those peoples that are properly pre-mythological, e.g. Persia and China. For the sake of brevity the focus – and that not in full detail – will be on Greek mythology, since Schelling argues that it contains the explanation of mythology as a whole (Schelling, II/2, 591, “Mythologie”), while general remarks will be made about the triform of Egypt, India and Greece. China, as a special case, will be treated in the following chapter. Prior to making general comments an attempt will be made to briefly sketch a historical succession.

That standing at the beginning, nay, even prior to the theogony, i.e. mythological development, is what the Greeks named chaos. In this Greek concept, argues Schelling, “lies the concept of withdrawal into the depths, of being opened up, of standing open” (*ibid.* 596).⁵¹ It is an opening up and subsequent standing open of the depths. Also contained in the meaning of this concept, according to Schelling, is the notion of need or deficiency, namely because it lacks something concrete, in which and only in which is resistance offered (*ibid.*). That bereft of anything concrete is nothing but withdrawal, i.e. mere retreat, yielding or giving way. Empty space offers no resistance. Empty space is the receptacle that offers no form but is pure potentiality as that capable of accepting any and every form. This is not to be confused, however, with formless matter. In chaos, there are no cosmological determinations, no matter proper yet.

Schelling contends that old Italy's Janus, who does not have a directly Greek equivalent though both he and Apollo are often associated with the sun, is the god of chaos or at least a determinate form of it. Janus is two-faced. One face looks forward and the other backwards or one to the past and the other to the future. This connection to the order and sequence of time may be another connection to Apollo, despite the fact that Apollo, the God of Order, would seem to be the contrary to the God of Chaos. Janus, however, depicts the unity of the times prior to their actual severance. The Greek understanding of chaos is not a confused mixture of material potencies but, if a confused mixture of anything at all, a “confusion

51 “...liegt der Begriff des Zurückweichens in die Tiefe, des Aufgethanseyns, des Offenstehens...”

of immaterial potencies" (II/2, 599, "Mythologie").⁵² There is not a confusion of separate elements but the indistinguishability of the same. Schelling employs the metaphor of the point, in which the periphery, diameter and middle point of the circle both are and are not enclosed. They are enclosed in it because not yet withdrawn into the open, into cognoscibility. They are not enclosed in it, however, because prior to the point's expansion into the circle periphery, diameter and middle point in no way are at all. Chaos is not a confused aggregation (*ibid.* 600)⁵³ but that prior to the possibility of confusing two elements because prior to duality as much as to the distinguishable one. In chaos the three potencies of God are and are not enclosed. The three are only possible in chaos but not yet in it as potent. They only are as potencies proper once the breach from chaos to order has been enacted. The three potencies prior to their separation or distinguishability, i.e. prior to cognoscibility, are chaos. Chaos is thus not sheer nullity but future-looking, the *prius* of the distinguishability of future moments, i.e. the a-temporal *prius* of temporal dispersion. Now, Janus too does not dramatize chaos as sheer nullity but as a determinate chaos awaiting future determination. Janus is, so to speak, on the verge of distinct cognoscibility. From without chaos is inseparable from and so equal to 0, but from within it is the "primal unity" (*ibid.* 601)⁵⁴ equal to 1. Janus is the god of the gods (*ibid.* 604),⁵⁵ i.e. their source, but was only first honored as such by the Greeks because, again, the oldest is only known by the youngest, the most original only becomes transparent at the end. Knowledge never precedes the fact known; theory always lags behind the deed. Janus is the possibility of potency, the possibility precedent to the actual mythological succession of the gods.

Chaos or Janus, the god before gods if one will, precedes mythology and the next step towards the polytheism of mythology proper is heaven worship, i.e. Sabism. Chaos is a-temporal and Sabism is mythology's past. The worship of the heavens is still a pre-Greek moment, but it is assumed by Greek consciousness as its own dark past. Chaos is pre-material and heaven worship ensues with the materialization of chaos as dramatized in Gaea, the mother of the gods. She is the becoming feminine of the previously unsexed chaos. To become matter is to yield or, as it were,

52 "...Verwirrung immaterialer Potenzen..."

53 "verworrenes Aggregat"

54 "Ureinheit"

55 "Gott der Götter"

to become feminine. To become matter (*materia*) is to become maternal/mother (*mater*). Gaea is the fertile ground lain by the yawning of abysmal chaos, the ground now ready for the impending plurality. Gaea is the dense inner becoming the expanse, expanded into the cognoscible. She is the beginning of the creative tension/stretching (*Spannung*) of the potencies. Note that the introduction of cognoscibility corresponds to a stretching (*Dehnen*) and that this German word etymologically relates to thinking (*Denken*). The heavens or the expanse is the primal one first beginning to stretch itself until torn into a plurality. The stretching and yielding makes a space that was not yet in the chaotic point. Gaea is the original spacing, the materialization of the immaterial but herself not yet something material subsisting in this spacing.

Sabism is the religion of the primal time (because chaos corresponds to no religion insofar as it precedes all time). Sabism, however, did not worship Gaea but Uranus. Gaea, as the one who yields, must undergo a process of inversion by which she, as now externalized unto the periphery, is again set as the inner one. She is turned inside out. This process Schelling deems "*universio*." The universe comes into being through an inversion by which a one (uni-) comes into being. The mere expanse or empty space surging evermore towards a borderless periphery must also acquire a contracting center for shape to come to form. The empty spacing of pure expanse or rather pure expansion must become the firmament. This corresponds to the heaven worship of Sabism. Uranus, the firmament, now has Gaea as its inner. Now this firmament is not yet the sky with its physical bodies, e.g. the stars. There are not a multitude of bodies yet but only the material firmament. Sabism was not fetishism, at least not in its own time. Uranus constitutes the first ground proper and so also the ground of mythology but still not yet one of its particular gods.

Gaea produces her own spouse, Uranus, with whom she procreates the Titans. Again, at the time, i.e. in their own proper moments, these things were not fetishes.⁵⁶ The Titans were not stars but their movement and power. Schelling affirms, "The Titans are no longer stars nor images of stars nor actual objects at all, but in relation to these already spiritual

56 Schelling states, "Every praxis that rests on a now no longer known context or no longer understood process, is a superstition. [Jede Praxis, die auf einem jetzt nicht mehr gewußten Zusammenhang oder nicht mehr verstandenen Proceß beruht, ist eine Superstition.]" (II/I, 212–213, "Historisch-kritisch"). To fixate oneself to a time whose moment has passed is fetishism.

powers" (*ibid.* 618).⁵⁷ The emphasis is not on objects of worship or even on the firmament as the one object, but on the transitivity, on the spacing, materializing and integration of a unitary firmament.

The Titans first begin with the still properly pre-historical time of Chronos. With this Schelling now stands in a position to enumerate the three times of the theogony.

So there is in the theogony only the three times a) Uranus' time, the time of the merely real potency; b) the time of the ideal-real, the time of the Titans first coming to light with Chronos, in whom [the Titans] the real, thus wild, hefty principle, although already elevated into the spiritual, nonetheless still always continues unconquered...c) the time of the perfectly ideal or of the gods of Zeus (*ibid.* 618)⁵⁸

Zeus, of course, has not yet been mentioned but is the youngest son of Chronos. There is thus the merely Real (chaos or the pure *Daß*), the supplementation of the Real with the Ideal (the introduction of a permanent and individual form with Chronos and the Titans) and the Real wholly transposed into the Ideal (Zeus). Before moving to the end, however, one must tarry a bit longer with Zeus' generation by the Titans. The Titans are a turgescence still dominated by the Real.⁵⁹ The Titans always consumed their children, never allowing them to come to the light of day. This cycle ends with Zeus despite the fact that Zeus was the youngest child who retroactively saves the elder siblings (Hades and Poseidon). Just as the power of Uranus had to be broken, i.e. become Urania or something feminine, material, malleable and capable of yielding, for Chronos to arrive, so does the same principle apply with Zeus. One can also see here the need for the gods to be sexed. The masculine reigns but only after emasculating the former god, i.e. only by making the former effeminate in order that it may yield to the new god, the coming god. In becoming effeminate it becomes mother, matter and fodder for the god to come.

57 "Die Titanen sind nicht mehr Sterne, noch Sternbilder, überhaupt nicht mehr wirkliche Gegenstände, sondern im Verhältniß zu diesen bereits geistige Götter."

58 "...(S)o gibt es in der Theogonie nur die drei Zeiten a) Uranos Zeit, die Zeit der bloß realen Potenz; b) die Zeit der ideal-realen die mit Kronos erst ans Licht kommende Zeit der Titanen, in denen das reale, also wilde, heftige Princip, wie-wohl schon ins Geistige erhoben, doch noch immer unüberwunden fortdauert...c) die Zeit der vollkommenen idealen oder der Zeusgötter."

59 "In the Titans the tension of the real principle still predominates against the ideal; the turgescence of the real principle. [In den Titanen herrscht noch die Spannung des realen Princips gegen das ideale vor, die Turgescenz des realen Princips.]" (Schelling, II/2, 619, "Mythologie").

The feminine always signifies transition, the fluidity from one state to the next. Sabism was astral worship, the adoration of the firmament, i. e. of the inorganic. By becoming fluid or malleable, i. e. by becoming feminine, Urania, the movement from Uranus to Chronos occurs. The move from Uranus to Urania is dramatized through a castration. The castrated parts were thrown into the sea causing a great foam, out of which arose Aphrodite, who was deposed by Chronos, the youngest of the Titans.

With Chronos' arrival mythology proper has begun. Its ground subsisted in Uranus, the lone one next to whom no other could stand, but with Chronos, despite the exclusivity of his reign, something other than Chronos exists. His reign, albeit exclusive, is also relative and something that came into being rather than being there from a past immemorial. Chronos signifies the first of the mythological gods. Now, as already mentioned, Chronos' children – for, he must have children as he is the first to properly belong to a succession/lineage – are Hades, Poseidon and Zeus. Chronos too must submit to gods to come. This trilogy of gods corresponds to the properly Greek consciousness just as the Titans belonged to the Pelasgians (or rather the Pelasgians to the Titans) and Sabism to Persian consciousness.

For Schelling the feminine deities signify not only transition between the masculine hierarchs but also the occurrence within consciousness of what occurs in the theogony⁶⁰ – not that these two occurrences are actually two separate events though. The masculine signifies the exoteric side of one and the same event of which the feminine signifies the esoteric. The feminine counterparts to the Greek trilogy of masculine gods are then Hestia, Demeter and Hera. Both the female and male counterparts will be important in understanding the origination of Greek mythology, i. e. Greek gods and Greek consciousness. Of Hades, Poseidon and Zeus, Hades is the oldest. If, however, the triumvirate only survives by virtue of the youngest, Zeus, then how could Hades have ever survived long enough for Zeus to save him? One must understand that Hades is not initially Hades but as the oldest he only is *as* overcome, as deposed Chronos. He is, as Schelling phrases it, “the chronic” (*ibid.* 626) because

60 “...(T)he feminine deities show the same in consciousness, they express the same moments in consciousness that the masculine [deities] indicate in God Himself. [...] (D)ie weiblichen Gottheiten zeigen dasselbe im Bewußtseyn, sie drücken dieselben Momente im Bewußtseyn aus, welche die männlichen im Gott selbst anzeigen.” (*ibid.* 626).

Hades, like Chronos, resists progressive movement, resists succession and that which will follow by trying to consume everything subsequent – a consuming fire.⁶¹ Hades' first spouse was Hestia, consciousness fixated by the heavy and burdensome yoke of the Real, although he later kidnapped Persephone, the daughter of Demeter, for his spouse. Schelling here interjects that this dispute as to who the spouse of Hades is indicates that the myth is not an artificial construction but that the theogony is a real event with all its messiness and contingency. Everything artificially construed, argues Schelling, knows how to avoid contradiction. The contradiction in the mythological process, as with the other contradiction that Zeus as the youngest saves the oldest, shows that it cannot be poetic or scientific construction but the happenings of a real and necessary event within consciousness. If the history of the gods were the product of free choice, then such blatant contradictions and inconsistencies would never appear or at least not be allowed to remain. Now, Persephone, according to Schelling, represents consciousness turned away from Hades, the Real, and toward the Ideal. Persephone is consciousness having become aware of itself, fallen consciousness.⁶² Once Hades enters the scene *as* Hades, i.e. once he emerges from out of the underworld as no longer concealed/consumed in Chronos, he abducts Persephone. Demeter, the mother, depicts the consciousness standing between Hades and Zeus, between the Real and the liberated Ideal, Spirit. While Hestia was Demeter's daughter conceived when Chronos still reigned, Persephone was conceived as Chronos receded and Zeus, the future god, approached. Persephone is then consciousness separated from the heavy burden of the Real. Demeter, then, only is *as* Demeter with her separation from Persephone because only then is she the mother liberated from the underworld, from the Real. Demeter is only Demeter as mother, i.e. with the daughter Persephone, whom she conceived with Zeus and not with Poseidon.⁶³ Note again the anachronism that persisted in the mythological narratives. When Demeter was Poseidon's spouse Chronos still ruled, i.e. still consumed the triumvirate, and so Hestia, the *as* of

61 Even the gods fear Hades. "For if he were to come forth the multitude of gods would disappear" (Tillich, *Construction*, 88).

62 Persephone is fallen consciousness but Fortuna signifies the primal accident by which consciousness fell from freedom into the dominion of the potencies, into mythological consciousness. Fortuna represents fate (*Verhängnis*) (Schelling, II/2, 622, "Mythologie").

63 Poseidon is the self-materializing that surrenders to conquest; hence, liquid is his element (Tillich, *Construction*, 88).

yet unborn wife of Hades, was still not yet separated from Demeter either. This separation only occurs with the separation of the three, with their departure from the dark shadow cast by Chronos into the light of day. Demeter only becomes free of Hestia once liberated of Persephone. All her ties to the underworld must be severed. Consciousness must cease to be consumed by Hades and conceive in Zeus, the god to come. Hades, then, is only *as* Hades once he takes Persephone as his spouse as only then are the past god and the future god truly separated. Only with this separation does Hades truly become the god of the past. The estrangement of Persephone and Demeter was not by volition but was an abduction, a forced estrangement. Consciousness still clings to the old god and only relinquishes it by compulsion and with grieving.⁶⁴

Once separated from the first God, Hades, only related to him through her estranged daughter, but now married to Zeus, Demeter becomes the consciousness that is once again free over the material potencies. She stands again in the position of primal consciousness. The entire story of Persephone's abduction from Demeter explains the appearance of Chronos' three children, the triumvirate. This story narrates the separation of the Real from the Ideal via the power of the still future Ideal, Zeus. The triumvirate only comes to be by virtue of the youngest. "Before Zeus' reign there was only wild, unruly births, nothing enduring and persistent; with Zeus, however, the kingdom of form begins, the enduring, based figures begin" (Lawrence, *Schellings*, 193).⁶⁵

As has been mentioned, Greek mythology supplies the meaning of the entire mythological process. The meaning of the whole comes to light only at the end, i. e. only first in full cognizance in the mystery religions. The mystery religions were Greek but Greek mythology is the microcosm containing the macrocosm. Schelling argues that the Greek mysteries encompass the meaning also of the mythologies of Egypt, India, et al. A recapitulation of these other mythologies is then not necessary as each of the gods has a Greek instantiation; Demeter corresponds to Egypt's Isis, the consciousness that does not return to the first God,

64 "Thus it is not a voluntary separation; consciousness reluctantly divorces itself from the principle through which God was for it indeed the blind being but at the same time the exclusive one... [Also es ist keine freiwillige Trennung; ungern scheidet sich das Bewußtseyn von dem Princip, durch welches ihm der Gott zwar der blinlings seyende, aber zugleich der ausschließlich Eine war...]"

65 "Vor Zeus Herrschaft gab es nur wilde, regellose Geburten, nichts Bleibendes und Bestehendes; mit Zeus aber beginnt das Reich der Form, beginnen die bleibenden ruhenden Gestalten."

Hades to the Egyptian Typhon etc. Just as the Greek triumvirate of gods and their feminine counterparts encapsulates the whole, so too does Schelling argue for a larger schema, one figured by Egypt, India and Greece. Egypt comprises the bodied or incarnate, India the bodiless and Greek mythology the unification of the body and the soul, the spiritual. One can say that Demeter frees herself from the matter predominant in Egyptian consciousness and the "spirituality run amuck" (*ibid.* 632)⁶⁶ or the disembodied consciousness of Indian mythology in order no longer to be captivated by matter yet also without annihilating matter or the body as it occurs in Indian consciousness. Schelling states that "in Persephone a band still always remains through which the higher, spiritual consciousness (Demeter) adheres to the material gods" (*ibid.*).⁶⁷ Demeter still has a link to the body, to the Real, but she has overcome it, subjected it to the past. Persephone is the living bond to matter, to the body, but Demeter, unlike Persephone, is not captive to it.

The Greek mystery religions espoused a Trinitarian notion before Christianity. The mystery religions showed that the youngest, the third god, is only the resurrected first; all three are Dionysius. The mysteries, the end of mythological history, recognize the inner, the esoteric meaning, of the exoteric history of the gods. The mysteries are also the celebration of a reconciled Demeter through the god to come, the third Dionysius. In the mystery religions Persephone is the seed of the consciousness that is again truly God-positing (Demeter) and not gods-positing.⁶⁸ The mystery religions – and they are truly religious and not philosophical – do

66 "ausschweifender Spiritualismus"

67 "...in Persephone noch immer ein Band bleibt, durch welches das höhere, geistige Bewußtseyn (Demeter) mit den materiellen Göttern zusammenhängt."

68 "The natural consciousness that is Persephone comports itself as the mere seed or kernel of the actual, of the true, positing of God – it is according to its nature, as we explained earlier, the merely potentially God-positing that becomes the actually God-positing only by lifting itself from its potentiality where it indeed immediately posits only the Un-God, thus becoming the God-negating, but by being returned into its potentiality, to the God-positing no longer potentially but actually. [Jenes natürliche Bewußtseyn, das Persephone ist, verhält sich als der bloße Same oder Keim des wirklichen, des wahrhaften Gottsetzens – es ist seiner Natur nach, wie früher erklärt, das bloß potentiell Gott setzende, das zum actuell Gott setzenden nur dadurch wird, daß es sich aus seiner Potentialität erhebt, wo es denn unmittelbar zwar nur den Ungott setzt, also zum Gott negierenden wird, indem es aber in seine Potentialität zurückgebracht wird, zum Gott nicht mehr potentiell, sondern actu setzenden.]" (Schelling, II/2, 638–639, "Mythologie").

not fall within the history of mythology proper insofar as that mythology is assumed as the content which is now understood. That, however, does not mean that the myths could be discarded once the inner meaning is seen. The esoteric does not have any existence once deprived of the exoteric. The external – think for example of the expanse/firmament – is the condition of the hollowing out of inner space, the inversion that is the uni-versio. The external, material signifier is the condition for the inner meaning, the signified. A lengthy quote from Schelling shall prove helpful here:

For 1) the esoteric produces itself ever again only through the mythological process; it cannot separate itself from it, it does not arise as something abstract but rather always only as a thing enveloped by it. 2) The exoteric can just as little sublate the esoteric consciousness; for, the exoteric always posits in its emergence itself the esoteric as the husk always posits the kernel and is itself only husk insofar as it encloses a kernel. Should it not posit the esoteric, so would it itself be contracted into that inner, dark place of birth in which no assortment and settlement is... (*ibid.* 643)⁶⁹

The mystery religions are not philosophy but are truly religious, unable to dispense with their mythological content because that would discard the thing itself. This indicates again how myths can be neither poetic nor philosophical inventions. Myths represent nothing but are the things themselves.⁷⁰

7 Tautegory

Above, poetic and philosophical explanations of myths proved inadequate. Through an actual analysis of the relation of the myths themselves to the breaking or understanding of the myth in the Greek mystery religions one can see that the myths cannot be used a ladder that may be discarded once one has reached the meaning of the myth. To discard the

69 "Denn 1) das Esoterische erzeugt sich selbst immer wieder nur durch den mythologischen Proceß; es kann sich nicht von ihm trennen, es entsteht nicht als ein Abstraktes, sondern stets nur als ein von jenem Eingewickeltes; 2) kann das Exoterische ebenso wenig jenes esoterische Bewußtseyn aufheben; denn das Exoterische setzt in seinem Entstehen selbst immer das Esoterische, wie die Schale immer den Kern setzt und selbst nur Schale ist, inwiefern sie einen Kern einschließt; setze es das Esoterische nicht, so wäre es selbst hineingezogen in jene innere dunkle Geburtsstätte, in der keine Sonderung und Auseinandersetzung ist..."

70 For a schema outlining the moments of mythology as a doubling or repetition of the event of the creation see the Appendix.

myth is to discard the meaning and content. Myths, thought as poetic or philosophical inventions, are treated simply as allegorical, i.e. as representations or the accidental clothing given in order to express a prior meaning, a meaning that was apparently pure, i.e. without a material signifier. Schelling, on the other hand, asserts that the myth is its meaning and the meaning is the mythical narrative itself. Myths are not allegories but they are the phenomena themselves; “the mythology is not allegorical, it is tautegorical” (Schelling, II/1, 195–196, “Einleitung”).⁷¹ Myths do not represent an idea, even the Idea or Absolute Concept, but they dramatize or manifest the reality itself. The reality of the myth consists only in this dramatization, this manifest repetition.⁷² This explains, for example, why Zeus is only Zeus once Hades has become Hades; for, Zeus is only Zeus with the recognition that he is Hades repeated and Hades is only Hades once subjected as past by the future god Zeus.⁷³ The self-same is not a constant throughout the process but identity is a novel supplement accrued through the repetition of the Same that is not identical to itself in order that it may first become a self-same, that it may be *as* identical, *as* this or that one and no longer as the relative one that is Difference itself. The repetition is not a recurrence of the same in allegorical clothing, not a representation of the Ideal, but the repetition of the Real repeating itself *as* something, different and novel in every repetition. The myth only acquires an ideality, an inner meaning, by virtue of its actual, historical reality. The analysis again stumbles upon the world law or law of decisiveness. Nothing may remain what it is – or rather is *not* – accidentally, but all must be decided; to be decided is to accrue a supervenient identity, a supervenience, however, that is essential and not extraneous to the identity of the thing itself.

71 “...die Mythologie ist nicht allegorisch, sie ist tautegorisch...”

72 Unscripted and non-representative dramatization, non-replicable repetition, original manifestation...it makes no difference. All of these notions are present in the idea of the myth as revelatory, as revealing for the first time what had no existence prior to its dramatic manifestation, i.e. its creation.

73 “Zeus himself, the real god in his last transfiguration, could not be Zeus if even the same according to the underside would not be Hades; he is only Zeus insofar as he is also Hades and he is only aware of himself as Zeus insofar as he is simultaneously aware of himself as Hades. [Zeus selbst, der reale Gott in seiner letzten Verklärung, könnte nicht Zeus seyn, wenn nicht eben derselbe nach unten Aides wäre; er ist nur Zeus, inwiefern er auch Aides ist, und nicht eben derselbe nach unten Aides wäre; er ist nur Zeus, inwiefern er auch Aides ist, und er ist sich als Zeus bewußt nur, inwiefern er sich zugleich als Aides bewußt ist.]” (Schelling, II/2, 667, “Mythologie”).

Vladimir Jankélévitch says of Schelling's doctrine of myth that "the image is not one thing and the sense another..." (*L'Odyssée*, 261).⁷⁴ The historical form of the myth, i.e. its appearance as narrative, does not represent a sense given in advance of its historical expression. Deleuze, from whom the term "dramatization" as opposed to "representation" has been borrowed, remarks that Hegel "represents" contents instead of "dramatizing" ideas (*Difference*, 10).⁷⁵ The contention is that Schelling, to speak Deleuzian, does not view mythology as a false, i.e. superfluous, drama acted out according to its pre-determined script without the dramatization supplementing the drama with something new in its very repetition or reenactment. The myth as representation only functions allegorically. The allegory requires of its material signifier only that a similitude exists between its content and form, i.e. that terms operate as metaphors and/or the structure as homologous. The allegory, as merely representative of a prior sense, requires only signs and not symbols because the only connection requisite between the sign and the signified is similarity. The material signifier is only one of many possible *simulacra*. The sign, unlike the sacramental, is replaceable and exchangeable, a true commodity. Sign and signified relate as copy and model. The myth as sacramental, however, requires a contact between the signifying and the reality signified so intimate that the two are as if one flesh. In other words, while a distinction between the image and its sense, the myth and its meaning certainly exists, since one can certainly lack an understanding of a narrative only to later "break" the myth and so distinguish the simple narrative from its meaning, the two cannot be thought in isolation. One cannot think the meaning in exclusion from the mythical narrative itself and the mythical narrative itself is only a dubious and vain story if not broken. The myth is not a representation but a dramatization that manifests, rather than merely signifying, a reality. One still states the matter too weakly, as Paul Tillich does in speaking of symbols, if one asserts that the symbol cannot be separated from the reality because the symbol participates in the reality it symbolizes. Certainly, the symbol is irreplaceable and inexchangeable, much like an heirloom, e.g. a ring inherited from a beloved parent, because even an identical ring, the perfect *simulacrum*, could never replace the original. This account of the symbol is still too

74 "...(L')image n'est pas une chose, et le sens une autre..."

75 Edward Allen Beach shares the same sentiment, arguing that for Hegel the significance of myth can only be revealed in thought (*Potencies*, 231–232) while Schelling proposes a direct experience of religious truths (*ibid.* 232).

weak because the symbol *is* the origin and the myth *is* the reality; it does not participate *in* it but it *is* it. The mythical narrative does not retell a prior event under mythic form but the myth, its form included, *is* the original event. No separation of origin and copy, mythical dramatization and original drama, exists. The myth *is* the mythical event symbolized. One may not then sever the myth, as though it would be merely the form employed in story-telling, from the actual event itself. Given that the myth is not an accidental clothing appended to a pre-given sense apparently understood in advance of its expression in the myth, so one cannot place the understanding of a sense prior to its sensibility, prior to the manifest expression made available to the senses. Myth as material signifier must be at least as old as the understanding of its sense. Remember how the meaning of mythology only becomes apparent first with the Greeks and how concomitantly the oldest, chaos, only first became evident to Greek consciousness, the end and not the beginning of mythological consciousness. In short, the myth is not an artificial clothing, an arbitrary sign, used to convey something already understood but, quite to the contrary, the myth is the thing itself, that which must come to be understood.⁷⁶ Since the content of the myth cannot be separated from its form or expression because the expression *is* the doctrinal content, so also does the myth not intend anything other than itself. When Schelling asked how myths were meant or intended, how they were to be taken and how they arose, he posed his questions poorly or, at least, inexactly. There is no intentionality behind the myth and it should not be taken as such because it did not arise by means of an intending subject.

76 Christian Danz, in his wonderful book, *Die philosophische Christologie F.W.J. Schellings*, writes of the Biblical texts that “if one observes these texts as primary historical documents, then one cannot understand them allegorically anymore but still only as Schelling terms it, actually. Now, this means, however, that the primary document as primary document qualifies an intelligibility that it makes into the outstanding medium of the understanding of the inner history and indeed in such a way that the meaning is not other than the form in which this meaning expresses itself. Content and form are identical, i.e. as the content, the doctrinal element, expresses itself, so is it also intended. [Betrachtet man diese Texte als historische Urkunden, so kann man sie nicht mehr allegorisch verstehen, sondern nur noch wie Schelling es nennt, eigentlich. Dies nun aber bedeutet, daß der Urkunde als Urkunde eine Klarheit eignet, die sie zum hervorragenden Medium des Verstehens der inneren Geschichte macht; und zwar so, daß die Bedeutung nicht eine andere ist als die Form, in der sich diese Bedeutung ausspricht. Inhalt und Form sind identisch, d.h. so wie sich der Inhalt, das Doktrinelle, ausspricht, so ist es auch gemeint.]” (36).

Myths are not allegorical representations but tautegorical⁷⁷ repetitions. Persephone does not signify grain any more than grain already signifies the kernel, the inception of something. Allegories are wielded by intending subjects wishing, by a magic act, to bestow some sense upon a brute fact, e.g. grain. Tautegory does not recognize a distinction between the fact and its meaning or a fact-value distinction. The content or fact is not something other than the form employed to imbue the fact with some meaning or value. Schelling clearly sees the ridiculousness of asking for the propositional truth-value of a myth, for its signification. Not only does the myth repeat or dramatize a reality – in which repetition the reality of the real is constituted – instead of representing one, its function is also not to express any sort of propositional truth about the world; it is the repeating of the true *as* true and so also as novel and different. Unlike propositional truth, there is no question of trying to correlate how the myth is intended with how to take it, there is no question of accuracy as if trying to bring two things into a one-to-one correspondence, the linguistics of capitalism and the bane of commodity fetishism. Instead of correspondence and its law of exchange, which expressed morally can be nothing other than the law of eye-for-an-eye, truth-*ing* in the Heideggarian sense presides. The phenomenon is not represented but revealed, revealed by becoming manifest, by repeating itself.

Myths witness against the intentionality of consciousness. Myths occur within consciousness but not as productions of the same. Myths may only ensue from the intentionality of consciousness if the understanding of the myth preceded the myth itself, which is not the case. Consciousness does not grasp myths but myths grasp consciousness. Myths exercise an affectivity prior to being “broken” or understood. They are not figuratively expressed ideas but first and foremost they are a concrete affectivity (Beach, *Potencies*, 34). This is one of the main reasons why Edward Allen Beach argues that Schelling erected one of

77 The Oxford English Dictionary actually credits Coleridge with the first use of the term “tautegory” even though blatantly plagiarized from Schelling. That Coleridge “borrowed” quite a lot from Schelling was not lost on Schelling himself although he seemed not to be horribly bothered by it even when referencing points on which Coleridge has “borrowed” from him. Edward Allen Beach, for whatever it is worth, argues that Schelling and Coleridge do not use the term univocally anyway (*Potencies*, 261). He adds that for Schelling tautegory indicates a “lived reality,” apparently in opposition to the empty formalism in Coleridge’s usage of it as philosopheme.

the first theories of the unconscious.⁷⁸ The unconscious is not non-conscious, that having nothing to do with consciousness, but that which occurs within consciousness and constitutes consciousness without consciousness being aware of it. Schelling's emphasis on unconscious elements highlights the primacy of the intuitive, aesthetic and affective prior to the perceptive, discursive and analytic. As already mentioned, consciousness is not self-positing but finds itself thrown, as already affected by something outside its own cognizance and volition. Schelling states, "The first actual consciousness already finds itself with this affection"⁷⁹ through which it is separated from its eternal and essential being" (II/1, 192, "Einleitung").⁸⁰ The first historical consciousness already finds itself estranged, thrown into the bondage of another will and into stupefaction. It finds itself as affected by and subject to images that are not there of its own invention; myths are its affectation. Contra the intentionality of consciousness one must rather affirm what in this book has been termed *aesthesis* or primal experience prior to cognition.

In trying to ascertain the nature of the myth Schelling began, as outlined in chapter two, with what may be termed a method of falsification. Now, however, Schelling positively anoints myths as tautegorical. He arrived at this view, he argues, without espousing any prior assumptions or hypotheses.⁸¹ "... (S)o we are now first free of all accidental assumptions and with it from all explanations that deserve to be call mere hypotheses"

78 Beach also argues for this already from Schelling's earlier philosophies of nature and identity (*Potencies*, 48). Arguably, then, even before 1809 Schelling presents a philosophy not completely subject to the tools of logic and linguistic analysis. In many respects, Schelling surpassed the metaphysics of presence well before his latest work.

79 Schelling's use of the term "affection" stems from Spinoza; however, given his usage, Levinas' meaning – while certainly not able to be affirmed, lest anachronism – is not excluded.

80 "Das erste wirkliche Bewußtseyn findet sich schon mit dieser Affection, durch die es von seinem ewigen und wesentlichen Seyn geschieden ist."

81 This illuminates one of the central differences between Schelling's method and Peirce's abduction, despite their other similarities. Peirce founds his method on hypothetic inference, while Schelling, on the other hand, argues that he posits no hypotheses and makes no assumptions but permits the phenomenon, mythology, to radiate forth of its own accord without being already gentrified and viewed under the guise of a prior theory. This is the phenomenological aspect in Schelling, although it is worth noting that Peirce himself endorses what he terms "phaneroscopy," though it is unclear what he means by that exactly.

(II/1, 191, "Einleitung").⁸² Surely, Schelling is neither so brash nor so stupid as to believe that one can rid oneself of utterly all presuppositions so extremely that one could somehow approach a phenomenon without even the presupposition of one's own language. He emphasizes that he only excluded "accidental" assumptions, namely ones that would have viewed myths as products of some other, some external, phenomenon. So, one may not assume out of hand that myths are poetic or philosophical inventions because then one discards the autonomy of the myth and attempts to explain it from an external, i.e. accidental, source. One may not explain the myth through an external assumption, primarily an intending subject, but must first allot to the myth the opportunity to explain itself. *If* it can be made comprehensible autonomously through itself alone, without the aid of any external and so accidental hypotheses, then none other are needed. Schelling falsifies all external explanations of the myth, all views that posit it as the invention of an intending subject. The myth, then, emerges of itself, admittedly *within* consciousness but not posited *by* consciousness. As already mentioned, the question as to how mythology was meant or intended proves inadequate. Mythology is not "meant" at all but is the emergence of an objectively theogonic process, an event within and constituting consciousness.⁸³

82 "...so sind wir jetzt erst von allen zufälligen Voraussetzungen frei, damit von allen Erklärungen, die bloß Hypothesen zu heißen verdienen."

83 Volkmann-Schluck affirms the same in more dramatic fashion in his search after the origin of language or an original saying. Myths are nothing that one says from volitional intentionality, but the "fundamental feature of mythic saying, the letting-itself-be-said... [...Grundzug des mythischen Sagens, das Sich-sagen-lassen...]" (*Mythos*, 123). Myths speak themselves prior to the consent of the subject. They speak in but not by virtue of consciousness. He elaborates, "Now, our customary and familiar saying is nothing original, but a saying from an already said, a construal of an already construed and can therefore not be taken as the measure of mythical saying. [Nun ist unser gewöhnliches und gewohntes Sagen nichts Ursprüngliches, sondern ein Sagen von schon Gesagtem, ein Auslegen von schon Ausgelegtem und kann darum nicht zum Maß des mythischen Sagens genommen werden.] (*ibid* 123). Myths, along the lines of Levinas, are a Saying and not a Said. Saying is not the anonymous speaking of language itself though. Language does not speak itself if that is to be construed along the lines of structuralism. The originary Saying of mythic experience is a Saying that does not refer to an infinite structure or string of signifiers, but its refers tautologically only to itself. It is the manifestation of the structure, the domain of the Said, by a Saying that precedes language as a string of signifiers. In this respect this work must disagree with Volkmann-Schluck, who also wrote,

Myths may be both within and constitutive of consciousness because consciousness is not fundamentally intentional but aesthetic, experiencing or suffering its contents and not positing them. Consciousness does not posit itself but is shaped by its contents. Myths seize consciousness and not the contrary. The meaning of the mythical symbol is formative for those – and only for those – who are a part of that formative experience. Once the myth appears out of its time, after its genesis, after its affective moment, it only appears as a fetish, as an inert hand-me-down. History is not retold mythologically but myths, which are originally affective experiences of consciousness, become historicized. If the myth tells a historical event, then only because the telling is as old as the event itself. Myths let the original events tell themselves in human consciousness. Myth-telling is not the presentation or representation of a prior reality or event, but it is the very manifestation of the event. Myths are tautegorical; origin, actuality and accomplishment are simultaneous because one and the same. Myths are not stories of prior events but the event itself. They do not represent the meaning or idea of a prior story or event but the immediate experience of an event resident in consciousness. Eric Voegelin, for

“In a respect the structuralist anthropology of Schelling’s philosophy of mythology stands closer than the subjectivity that understands itself historically of the hermeneutical sciences; for, it shares with Schelling the view that its object must have a systematic structure with the character of necessity in order to be able to be something objectively real. The structuralist investigation of myths remains, in principle, at the same positivistic and indeed even then, if the “positive” is not the empirically given, but are the structures which are to be developed from the empirical material through application of a previously drafted theory. [In einer Hinsicht steht die strukturalistische Anthropologie Schellings Philosophie der Mythologie näher als die sich geschichtliche verstehende Subjektivität der hermeneutischen Geisteswissenschaften; denn sie teilt mit Schelling die Auffassung, daß ihr Gegenstand eine systematische Struktur mit dem Charakter der Notwendigkeit haben müsse, um etwas objektiv Reales sein zu können. Die strukturalistische Mythenforschung bleibt zugleich im Grunde positivistisch, und zwar auch dann, wenn das “Positive” nicht das empirisch Gegebene ist, sondern die aus dem empirischen Material durch Anwendung einer zuvor entworfenen Theorie zu erarbeitenden Strukturen sind.]” (*ibid* 131–132).

This interpretation of Schelling is not uncommon and quite tempting, namely, the view that reads Schelling as first drafting the doctrine of the potencies as the structure according to which myths are to be interpreted. Rather, one should remember the priority of the phenomenon and contend that one only knows of the doctrine of the potencies because this structure has been revealed in the history of mythology. Mythology’s structure, what is Said in it, is only known on the basis of a more primordial Saying or letting-be-said that precedes this structuralist framework.

one, attributes to Schelling the insight that there are no ideas without symbols of immediate experience (Day, *Voegelin*, 5).⁸⁴ The immediate experience is the origination of a later idea. Myths do not portray ideas but are the concrete and immediate experiences from which ideas are born as later abstractions from the concrete experience. Myths escape intentionality as that which affects consciousness unconsciously, i.e. prior to synthetic judgment, prior to cognitive experience of things with properties.

Mythology arises as an objective theogonic process in the subjective – consciousness. One may not separate the meaning of mythology from its emergence because in a natural emergence the question of the truth and meaning of the myth is not asked. Where content and form cannot be separated, one may not ask for the meaning because the meaning is not separate from the very fact. One does not ask for the meaning of facts, e.g. “What does the heaviness of the bowling ball mean?” Ideas are not represented in myths but the ideas, the meaning, arises only in the emergence of the mythological process, i.e. not in isolation from its form, from the historical narrative or material signifier. One may not, then, inquire into the meaning of mythology without also delving into its actual content, into the messiness of its varying material signifiers, hence why no pre-formulated structure, even the doctrine of the potencies, can envelop the myth, i.e. subsume it into a totalizing, a-historical system. Its meaning only arises in its historical occurrence and not from some eternal perspective, not *sub specie aeternitatis*. Myths are to be taken exactly as they are “meant.” Mythology speaks of the succession of gods and ends, in the mystery religions, with the recognition that it was the becoming or succession of God. Schelling too, if one remains literally faithful to his texts, cannot be said to have first begun with an abstract doctrine of the potencies only to have construed the history of mythology from that. That would have been to force the phenomenon itself under a pre-given theory, even if a cosmological theory. Schelling could not have claimed to know the meaning of mythology in any other way than that of the Greeks. He first had to look at its history itself and then see how it revealed its own inner meaning as a theogonic becoming of the potencies

84 On page 54 of the same text one finds that Voegelin believed Schelling to have critiqued modernity in general on a number of points that also relate to the overcoming of Western metaphysics as such. Three of which follow:

- the division of reality into subjects of cognition and objects known
- the corresponding focus on the intentionality of consciousness
- the supposition that these subjects are sovereign over and wield reason

at the end of its own history in the Greek, mystery religions. Mythology presents itself as actual theogony, an actual becoming of God within consciousness, and that is how it should be taken. Though not intended by her, i.e. not consciously as an invention, the human being is indeed a factory of idols.

Mythology, as an objective process within a subjective locus, occupies a special place. It occupies "the point of contact between conceptuality and nonconceptuality, and even the nonconceptuality latent in the concept and the conceptuality latent in the nonconcept" (Schuback, "Work," *Schelling Now*, 70). The non-conceptual is the affectivity of *aesthesis*, pure receptivity. Mythology emerges from primal experience but also marks the well-documented transition to the discursive. The transition is not from *mythos* to *logos* because myth is not the first *terminus* but the very transition itself. The transition is from the utterly pre-conceptual and so also pre-mythological to the post-mythological, to the discursive bereft of sensual elements – if the latter were even possible. Language is faded mythology because mythology, like language, constitutes the content between non-conceptuality and conceptuality, uniting *aesthesis* and discursivity. The mythical image contains a latent discursivity, a latent conceptuality.⁸⁵ The myth manifests Parmenides' statement that where there is Being so is thinking.⁸⁶ Where there is blind *aesthesis* or receptivity

85 Thomas Leinkauf writes, "The [mythological figures and narratives] are there 'earlier' than they can be adequately thought or, better, thought-after-the-fact. [Sie sind 'früher da, als sie zureichend gedacht oder besser: nach-gedacht werden können.]" (*Schelling*, 191). This again indicates why myths are not to be interpreted and subsumed by some pre-given structure; for, they are only to be thought after the fact or *per posterius*, which is to say, not in advance of their actuality. Structuralism fails to grasp the essential aspect of a myth insofar as it annexes it into a greater system as merely a moment. Myths must be understood historically, in their local and regional context. They are not to be understood in advance because their concept, i.e. the meaning of the myth, only accrues *after* its historical occurrence. Thought does not grasp in advance but always comes too late. Praxis precedes theory, facts precede their comprehension and thinking is there because Being is there and not vice versa.

86 Let Volkmann-Schluck be noted again: "Through which it will be vouched that what is known in knowing is also Being. The answer is stated: through the realization that what is known is not something merely represented in consciousness but instead something deploying and holding sway from itself forth. [Wodurch wird verbürgt, daß das im Wissen Gewußte auch das Seiende ist. Die Antwort lautet: durch die Erkenntnis, daß das Gewußte nicht etwas bloß im Bewußtsein Vorgestelltes, sondern etwas von sich her Anwesendes ist.]" (*Mythos*, 113). As tautegorical the myth is a tautegorical Saying, a letting-be-said of itself and

prior to all cognition, there must cognoscibility supervene. In so supplementing the non-conceptual with conceptuality/cognoscibility, so is the prescriptive law of non-contradiction, the world law or law of decisiveness, also fulfilled. By repeating or manifesting this law, mythology is the transition to decisiveness, the theogonic movement by which the relative one decisively becomes the truly One.

8 The Objective Meaning of the History of Mythology

In beginning by asking for mythology's meaning from the question of how it is to be taken and answering, "Tautegorically!" one has only answered what it means for the human being. Objectively, however, mythology is a theogonic process that has a meaning for God and Being – an onto-theogony. Heidegger's question concerning the meaning of Being raises its head once again. The question is now clearly not about a first cause, God, but about the very being of God, His and Being's movement from indecisiveness to decisiveness, from multiplicity to an identical unity. The question does not inquire into Being's ground, normally thought to be God, but into its ground-ing, its becoming manifest as something instead of nothing. The question concerns its revelation/manifestation/imaging because the origin is not something different from its inscription, from its accomplishment. The phenomenon is not other than its appearance, as both only are at all in the act or event of emergence. Maria Schuback, as has also been done in this work, shows that the emergence is an imaging, the imaging of the imageless, and is related to the emergence of temporality. She argues, "Appearing [imaging] is time. This is Schelling's leitmotif" ("Work," *Schelling Now*, 77). There is nothing pre-given, no present entity, even God, that temporalizes itself, but temporalization things; verbing nouns; attribution substantivizes and predication nominates or nominalizes. There is no historical time prior to mythology. From the inception of mythology proper there is also historical time. Beforehand is only the relatively historical monotony of the

not the representation of another. It lets itself be said from itself by accruing its own sense through its own sensibility. The sense, the meaning, the understanding of the myth is something accrued to its very occurring. Its conceptuality follows upon its pre-conceptual actuality. What is known of the myth is its very being and not its sign-character as mere representation of its being. It is the very manifestation of the co-belonging of thinking and Being, conceptuality and pre-conceptual Being.

race of humankind prior to its division into peoples, humanity under the reign of the relative one. The mythological process is a repetition of the creative process, the process by which God comes to be *as* God and the process by which Being comes to be *as* a ground for beings, i.e. Being in its act of ground-ing.

Mythology is not the representation of Being and its potencies but the dramatization of the same theogonic potencies themselves. Mythology is the manifest and repeated drama of Being and God, the actual suffering of the divine essence, its actual distortion in the Fall and reunification within the consciousness of the human being. The questions of Being, God and Man are not distinct questions. The mysteries too were not mere human insight but the natural and necessary end of the theogonic process, of humanity's actual mythological experience. In the mysteries the difference between the materiality of the gods and their meaning, between their accidental materiality and the three Dionysius' as the three potencies themselves, became manifest. The material gods became spiritualized (Schelling, II/3, 454, "Erster Teil"), the myths became "broken," but not by sublating or removing the myths in all their contingent materiality. This recognition corresponds to mythology in its final form – anthropomorphism. Internally, not externally, human consciousness becomes restored to its proper point between the potencies as the guardian of Being and God's stability. Mythology touches upon the one question that in its unity concerns Being, God and Man. Mythology is the internal manifestation of the structure of Being and the nature of God in consciousness as an onto-theogonic process by which the human being becomes restored, internally at least, as Man. Man cannot know Being apart from its manifestation or repetition within himself because he himself only is as the end of this repetition. One cannot know Being apart from the process by which it becomes decided. One only knows it as something revealed and experienced and thus also as the result of a will and not blind chance. It becomes manifest as something decided and not as something blindly bodying and presencing forth. Mythology presents a whole and not a chaotic mixture of unrelated representations. The history of mythology does not derive from the history of inner-historical humanity but it is Being's history, the repetition of its clearing in the creation.

Being, God and Man – none of the three questions may be posed apart from the others. Being stabilizes itself, decides for itself, by taking the form of God and God decides for His identity *as* God by imaging Man. The mythological process is the objective becoming of God within

human consciousness, leading to the inner restoration of Man. Karl Jaspers has written, "The anthropomorphy of God corresponds to the theomorphy of Man" (*Schelling*, 177).⁸⁷ Markus Gabriel writes that "mythology, insofar as it is the history of consciousness, is simultaneously also the history of Being [theogony] and anthropogony" (*Mensch*, 38)⁸⁸ and that this is why anthropomorphism is mythology's virtue and not its shortcoming. Man can only become God again when the gods become men (*ibid.* 39); for, to be the image of the imageless is to be the thing itself because the thing is not at all apart from its imaging, apart from its material signifier. Mythology ends in anthropomorphism but that does not at all mean that mythology is anthropocentric; for, it is the history of Being and God. Rather, to borrow the terms from Hans Blumenberg, the mythological movement is "anthropocentripetal" – the human form is the end – and not "anthropocentrifugal." Schelling himself comments that in the earliest moments of mythology and especially the pre-historical moment prior to mythology proper in which humanity honors the relative one, the exclusive god, all anthropomorphism is excluded (*Urfassung*, 498). Only when the Real begins to be overcome does progress toward the spiritual ensue, i. e. toward the anthropomorphic, the spiritual and free that presides over rather than being ruled by the Real. Anthropomorphism finds its justification in the fact that the gods are the resurrection of the Real, the formless and imageless transfigured into the highest image imaginable, the image of imageless freedom – Man. Schelling writes, "They (the gods) cannot be formless because even the unform, the formless, the at first exclusively infinite is formed in them and nothing more Lordly can be thought than human form. Zeus no longer permits the wild, the pre-human; in him the humane God, and thus God Himself become Man, now appears..." (II/2, 651, "Mythologie").⁸⁹ The anthropomorphic far surpasses the earlier forms of the inert, inorganic and even the animal form prevalent in Egyptian mythology. Mythology is the history of God Himself arising from the unspiritual unto the

87 "Der Theomorphie des Menschen entspricht die Anthropomorphie Gottes."

88 "Mythologie, sofern sie Bewußtseinsgeschichte ist, zugleich auch Seinsgeschichte und Anthropogonie ist."

89 "Gestaltlos können sie nicht seyn, weil in ihnen eben das an sich Ungestaltete, Gestaltlose, jenes erst ausschließliche Unendliche gestaltet ist, und herrlicher als menschliche Gestalt läßt sich nichts denken. Zeus läßt das Wilde, das Vormenschliche nicht mehr zu; in ihm erscheint nun der –menschliche, und also Mensch gewordene Gott selbst..."

spiritual, not as a spiritualized teaching but as a real history manifest in real historical events.

The temptation remains to affirm, despite the foregoing, that history occurs not around Being but around the inner-historical itself, the acts of historical humanity. History, however, occurs as the repetition of the truth of Being. Man and his historical situation emerge from the inner, not yet cognitive, experience of pre-reflexive consciousness in the face of Being and not from the arbitrary will and intentions of a transcendental ego. The human person remains incomprehensible if conceived anthropologically as a rational animal or historically as an entity within history whose essence is constituted and changes according to inner-historical events merely. Man is co-primordially constituted with history itself in the decision for historicization, the false clearing that is the Fall. Man never chose this decision yet he must assume responsibility for it. The question of historicity, i.e. the emergence and becoming of history, and nihilism are related because history moves on the basis of its given meanings, i.e. its gods. The human being is not the measure of all things. Meaning is not reducible to her positing of value. She only is who she is and only experiences meaning as originating from transcendence and not as the capriciousness of value-positing, because Being manifests meaning in the creation and then historically.

The mythological process is true and historical, true because an objective process – although all mythological gods in isolation from the process, outside their time and context, are certainly false – and historical because it is not a system that could be known by reason alone. Axel Hutter, then, is certainly justified in attempting to find a new relation between reason and history in Schelling. History is not the representation of the truths of reason within history, not the presentation of the Concept or Idea, but the result of deed, of something only known historically and by no other means. The history of mythology only ends in the inner restoration of consciousness by again transfiguring it into the image of the one God, but it does this only by expelling all plurality, by shitting out everything it is not. As a consequence, however, the true God remains as the only thing that is not presented in any mythological image, the only thing that does not come to presence. It is the meaning of the whole although it appears nowhere within the whole. The process itself is distortion while that not caught up in the process is truth in its purity. The process is true while all of its contents are false. The true is historically revealed although never historically present, never within history. “One could say”, proclaims Schelling, “that *everything particular of myth-*

ology is false, but the process itself [is] not in error" (*Mythologie*, 167).⁹⁰ This does not then mean that at the end of the history of mythology unity should again be found in the universality of one people, that peoples should be gathered again from their diaspora. Mythology only heals inner consciousness and not the external occurring of history. It heals but does not alleviate all the symptoms. Mythology purifies itself of false gods without positing the one, true God as an inner-historical entity. Special revelation does not conclude the mythological process – the purgation of consciousness.

Many commentators of Schelling usually agree that the mythological process is an objective process and that, therefore, meaning and history ensue from Being and not human being's own self-positing. They take him to task, however, concerning his assertion that the history of mythology is then not the necessary result of the Idea, not its development merely. Walter Schulz represents the most prominent critic in this vein but Thomas Buchheim levels the same criticism.⁹¹ In defense of Schelling one must ask, assuming that mythology is indeed a necessary process, if this necessity arises as the unfolding of the Concept to its Idea or as the contingent end of a will. Is the necessity itself necessary or is it a contingent process that could have just as easily not have been willed? Does the internal motor, the Concept, even exist apart from its external manifestation? Admittedly, in mythology, distinct from special revelation proper, the issue concerns the necessary movement of nature and not a personal and free will. Free, personal relation only possibly occurs when consciousness is not seized by its own forces, by its own conditions. That, however, consciousness fell into this state of bondage, into this necessary process, did not happen by means of its own conditions but as the result of a free and decisive deed. Think, for example, of one in love. One commonly expresses one's "need" for the beloved. This need expresses a necessity that is certainly not overstated. The beloved is necessary in order to sustain the lover *as* the lover, *as* the person that she in fact is. Now, prior to falling in love, the lover has no "reason" and no "need" or "necessity" to love the beloved. Only *post factum* is this necessity accrued. Think also of one having undergone a religious conversion. That this conversion hap-

90 "...man kann zugeben, *alles einzelne der Mythologie ist falsch*, aber darum *nicht der Prozeß selbst Irrthum...*"

91 See Buchheim's article entitled "Zur Unterscheidung von negativer und positiver Philosophie beim späten Schelling" in *Berliner Schelling Studien 2: Vorträge der Schelling-Forschungsstelle Berlin*.

pened and that one commits oneself to it in fidelity are most probably free decisions. Afterwards, however, one cannot but act faithfully. One must necessarily maintain a certain character otherwise one loses face, becomes two-faced, and ceases to be the person who had staked their being, i.e. their identity, on that prior moment of resolve. Not to remain true would be the disintegration of the person. The consequent necessity is certainly necessary, but also consequent and conditional.⁹² The antecedent consists in free decisiveness. One enacts the deed freely but the consequences follow of necessity. As a consequence of the Fall, one is submitted to the tribunal of nature, the necessary workings of φύσις. Remember though that the fact that there is nature or essence, which postdates Naked Existence, is itself not necessary. The necessity of an organism, in this case the history of mythology, blossoming forth unto its necessary end via necessary steps, follows and does not precede the free deed by which nature was posited.

Schelling shows reason's limits, hence his emphasis on mythical *experience* as pre-conceptual and his emphasis on history as the only access to the meaning of Being. David Farrell Krell correctly points out that Schelling "does not seek to burn off concepts and essences from the mash of crude images in the distillery of dialectic... He tries to recapture the memory of the protoreal" ("God's," *Schelling Now*, 103) as it was narrated. The history of mythology cannot be the representation of a prior concept culminating in the fulfilled idea because that would disdain the image in favor of conceptual linguistics, the parsing of the pre-given concept naturing forth unto the idea. Instead, the image, the sensibility of the material signifier, takes priority over and against conceptuality. Reason alone or dialectics falters where historical narration succeeds. Time and historical contingency cannot be sublated in trying to grasp the essence of a thoroughly historical object. The historical character and time of a historical object is integral to its meaning and essence. Essences do not

92 Touching upon the same issue when comparing Schelling's thought to that of neo-Platonism, Werner Beierwaltes writes of Plotinus, "The One and the intellect – both thought of as God – are what they are, and (in contradistinction to Schelling's conception) do *not* come to themselves, to their absolute completion, first in a 'theogonic process'" (*Legacy*, 417). That God only comes into His own, into His propriety, *as* God through the theogonic process does not at all mean that God is subsumed *into* the same process or that He undergoes a change *within* His own being. Because something changes in a process *outside* of God in order that God be *as* God does not mean that God Himself is part and parcel of the same process.

endure throughout time but emerge only in their temporalization and historicization – which is not to be confused with an inner-historical becoming either. Mythology emerges not from within history but it itself temporalizes and historicizes. It is thoroughly historical but not constituted by historicism.

History is narrated and not intuited but this does not mean that philosophy is *merely* narration because the object of study is the inner and not the outer. War consists not in its battles but in the strategy devised by the generals. Yet, the inner not only cannot be known in isolation from the external husk, it does not even exist without the external signifier. Simple narration does not lead to real knowledge as then it would appear as a stone thrown from the outside, an unrecognizable alien body. The latest Schelling espouses a historical philosophy in opposition to the con-scientia of the *Ages of the World*⁹³ or *Initia Philosophiae Universae* but that does not mean that the earlier notion becomes obsolete. Schelling certainly does not abandon himself to the mere externalities of historical becoming. His view of history is not Foucauldian, whom Žižek deems a “radical conceptual nominalist” (*Indivisible*, 107). Schelling is a realist who recognizes an inside even if the inside only exists by virtue of the outside. Schelling does not reduce historical phenomena to the socio-historical but posits an organic whole amongst different cultures and geographies. This bond is not some trans-historical constant but, again following Žižek, the eternal return of the Real experienced as different and novel in every repetition. History turns upon the axis of consciousness’ experience of the Real in its varying forms, i.e. under the predominance of the multiplicity of gods. Consciousness experiences the Real as a concrete singularity and not under the generic, the conceptual. It experiences not insignificant representation but the significance of the Real. Schelling’s Real is the non-historical condition of historicity. The Real is the universal, although completely singular rather than gen-

93 Xavier Tilliette, not incorrectly, has written that “the writing of Samothrace still seems impregnated with the atmosphere of the *Ages of the World*, with the transcendental theogony... Schelling is still attached to the idea of the *Ursystem* [original system] (distinct from the *Uroffenbarung* [original revelation])... This idea will be slowly abandoned for the sake of a conception much more ‘historical’ than the theogonic process. [...l’écrit de Samothrace paraît encore imprégné de l’atmosphère des *Weltalter*, de la théogonie transcendante... Schelling est encore attaché à l’idée de l’*Ursystem* (distinct de l’*Uroffenbarung*)... Cette idée sera lentement abandonnée au profit d’une conception beaucoup plus “historique” du procès théogonique.]” (Tilliette, *Mythologie*, 53).

eral, element common to all peoples and all languages. There is *a* history and not parallel histories – if such were conceivable – because consciousness finds its universal commonality with the Real, which always repeats as utterly uncommon, as novel and heterogeneous.

All consciousness experiences the Same but the Same is Difference itself, which is never experienced univocally, but can take any and all forms. In Paradise, Man is the image of God but post-lapsarian he loses his image and falls under the domain of the images of the gods. The chasm rendered by the Fall means God is neither properly inside nor outside of experience. Certainly the potencies of God are really experienced in the history of mythology but never *as* God. The images are only partial images, never the true image of the imageless; they are only traces. If one thinks the chasm rendered by the Fall radically enough, then art can no longer serve as the medium through which the divine is revealed, as art is only a product of the creativity of human finitude (Fackenheim, *God*, 90–91). God is not and cannot be intuited as a whole in one fell swoop, even in genial artwork. God is recognized even in the false, pagan religion or mythology, in which He appears under distorted and multiple forms. Consciousness recognizes this image because its genesis in the creation already underwent the same process now repeated mythologically. With the Fall con-scientia is lost but that does not mean that all traces of the immemorial have been effaced. Schelling argues, “Only the consequence of the deed remains in consciousness. No memory reaches back to the event itself” (II/2, 154, “Mythologie”).⁹⁴ Mankind (*Menschheit/Menschengeschlecht*), once estranged from its essential being as Man (*Mensch*) suffers amnesia. Memory, then, is not irrevocably lost, but only as long as the consciousness of historical human being remains estranged from its true being as Lord of the potencies. Once historical restoration occurs at the end of the history of mythology, albeit only internally and not externally, the unity is recollected. Memory does not vanish without a trace but, indeed, the very existence of the history of mythology within consciousness is the trace, the consequence of the deed itself, left as a residue within God-positing consciousness. Recollection, however, could occur under no circumstance except by means of historical revelation (not yet in the special sense). As Schelling says, “The dark traces of this event thus find themselves first in the later mythology. What is in the

94 “Nur die Folge der That bleibt im Bewußtseyn. Bis zu dem Vorgang selbst reicht keine Erinnerung zurück.”

beginning of a process first becomes clear through the end" (*ibid.*).⁹⁵ Recollection does not occur through retention, as in the metaphysics of presence, but only through historical manifestation, historical repetition. Note here what Kierkegaard wrote of repetition, what for him corresponds the Greek notion of recollection, in 1843 only one year after attending Schelling's lectures in Berlin:

Repetition is the new category that will be discovered. If one knows anything of modern philosophy and is not entirely ignorant of Greek philosophy, one will readily see that this category precisely explains the relation between the Eleatics and Heraclitus, and that repetition proper is what has mistakenly been called mediation (*Fear*, 148)

Mythology is historical repetition, the trace and eventual manifestation of a lost memory. It unites sameness and difference, the same of the Eleatics repeats as different, producing actual difference and identity as self-same. Repetition does not occur via conceptual mediation but only via the concreteness of historical experience; it is not recurrence or representation but dramatization and manifestation.

Traumatic events, like the Fall, one neither forgets nor adequately remembers. The trace of the event, i. e. its effects, remains and so the possibility of a future recollection is not excluded, but that does not entail the continuity of memory through retention and protention. This also explains how mythology is neither true nor false proper but simply untrue or not yet true. Mystery remains concealed in it. Mythological religion is not error, if error means the absence of truth, but also not yet truth, if truth means the presence of truth in its true form. Axel Hutter recognizes that contrary to his earlier philosophy, even the *Ages of the World*, Schelling repudiates the immediacy of knowledge through intellectual intuition, art or the immediate intuition of consciousness' own past (*Geschichtliche*, 290), which, of course, is prior to itself as conscious and reflective. The latest Schelling unequivocally asserts history, the written past, as the only access to a fact never known in its purity, i. e. free of inscription, free of signification. History takes priority over nature and its transcendental history. The oldest history is no longer immediate but written, inscribed in signs that do not represent it, but manifest it,⁹⁶ writ-

95 "Die dunklen Spuren dieses Vorgangs finden sich darum erst in der spätern Mythologie. Denn was im Anfang eines Processes ist, wird erst durch das Ende klar."

96 The objective onto-theogonic movement of mythology corresponds to anthropogony in that myths offer to human being various senses and meaning prior

ing the very origin into being as a deferred or delayed effect. The latter takes precedence over the former; two precedes one. In doing this, Schelling has also broadened the question from the transcendental history of the ego to the history of the whole, the history of Being (*ibid.* 291). The whole, though, does not give itself in one fell swoop through the immediacy of intuition or in genial art. One cannot foresee the totality of a happening because true happenings, events, do not have terminal points, beginnings and ends, but only admit of “before” and “after.” One may not speak of the origin that never “was” as a beginning but only always already “has been” as the prior that only exists with the inscription of the posterior. The end is not something that “will be” but only something to come “after,” something for which one hopes but never anticipates or pretends as actually existent. The origin and its accomplishment are not, never were and never can be present.

9 Considerations of the Philosophy of Mythology for the Philosophies of History and Religion

The philosophy of mythology, according to Schelling himself, explicates 1) the subjective truth of mythology, i.e. it is to be taken as true, as fact, as tautology; 2) the objective actuality of mythology; 3) that it is therefore a theogonic process, the very becoming of the divine nature itself; 4) that it has an objective meaning and truth as a whole – though not in its particulars – as the restoration of the divine essence within consciousness; 5) that the immediate meaning of the process is thus religious (and so only cosmic or anthropological in a derivative sense); and 6) that the philosophy of mythology is the true science of mythology (*Mythologie*, 173).

to any procedure on her own part. As will be seen in the following chapter, myths and mythological narratives stand on the border between the non-conceptual and conceptual. They are inceptive. Myths anonymously, i.e. without subjective invention and intention, offer up possible signifiers without which sense and meaningful discourse would be possible. Myths cannot be an invention of consciousness because they stand as the very condition of consciousness coming to discursivity. Significance ensues from mythical signifiers rather than signifiers being nothing more than an arbitrary sign used to express a pre-given meaning. The signification of mythical signifiers resulting from the onto-theogonic process first manifests sense and meaning for the anthropogenic. The question of Man, God and Being cannot be separated.

Methodologically, Schelling reached these conclusions by working from the bottom up, first using false explanations, namely those which could not see any truth or real religious meaning in mythology, as springboards into more and more adequate explanations. Once forced to admit truth in mythology in at least some respect the rule of interpretation demanded that one view mythology as its own history without need of outside explanations.

“(T)he simple secret of our method is the assumption that mythology contains its own history, that it does not require any assumptions lying outside of itself (e. g. cosmogonies and the like) but it alone explains itself perfectly, that the same principles, therefore, which taken materially constitute its content, are also the formal causes of its first formation and emergence (II/2, 670, “Einleitung”)⁹⁷

The earlier viewpoints assumed truth but could not show how mythological representations arising as inventions could have any efficaciousness without presuming nonsense or stupidity on the part of its adherents. Myths as accidental effects and fantasies would be denuded of their actual efficacy. The later viewpoint assumes truth in mythology, that it is an objective process produced without human being's express assistance. The question then becomes, however, how this view could possibly ever be falsified. The later view assumes nothing but the thing itself, the potencies in their historical manifestation/repetition. The only available possibility of falsifying this remaining assumption – assuming, minimally, that Schelling's historiography is not so far eschew that it is completely worthless – would be either if nullity would reign – in which case the point is moot – or if perhaps an atheistic people existed, which would at least show that the potencies were merely cosmogonic and not theogonic. The latter possibility has occurred in China and will be discussed in the following chapter. Suffice it to say, for Schelling, the analysis of China will not falsify this view.

Schelling would not dare work from the bottom up, he contends, had the Greeks not first set the precedent. The Greeks first moved from the external husk of mythology to its internal core. His interpretative method

97 “...das einfache Geheimniß unseres Verfahrens ist die Voraussetzung, daß die Mythologie ihre eigne Geschichte enthalte, daß es keiner außer ihr selbst liegenden Voraussetzungen (z. B. kosmogonische Philosophien u. dgl.) bedürfe, sondern sie allein sich selbst vollkommen erkläre, daß also dieselben Principien, welche materiell genommen ihren Inhalt ausmachen, auch die formellen Ursachen ihrer ersten Bildung und Entstehung seyen.”

is then neither wholly novel nor artificial; it is historical. The method begins by taking note of the concrete details themselves without first hoisting any abstract philosophical apparatus upon them. The doctrine of the potencies emerges from the study of mythology rather than mythology finding its explanation under this already operative conceptual framework. If the opposite would be the case, then Schelling's negative philosophy could and would precede his positive philosophy. If one takes Schelling both at face value and attempts to push his views to their limit, then one must maintain the priority of historical philosophy, the means by which positive philosophy precedes the negative.⁹⁸

Mythology has an inner and an outer, although inseparable. History too has an inner and an outer, the condition of *a* history and *a* time. Neither pure internality nor pure, blind externality ever makes a "happening" or "event" (Schulz, *Vollendung*, 267). History must be grasped as an organic whole, though certainly not in one fell swoop in an eternal now. Historical time "fills (*erfüllt*)" pre-historical time (Schelling, *Mythologie*, 182). It fills it by positing it as Past and by repeating it under the guise of an image. The imaging, however, is nothing other than the manifestation and emergence of the thing itself. As Jason Wirth has commented, the lectures on mythology unprecedentedly "address the question of difference at the heart and the ground of all history" (*Historical-Critical*, viii). The imaging is a differencing that creates novelty. The Past or inner history is first posited only with this very differencing. The outer is not the recurring of the inner but the repetition of the inner, a repetition by which the difference between inner and outer first becomes manifest at all.

Religion has a historical and not a rational basis. Wolfgang Trillhaas presumes that Schelling never gives an essence of what religion is ("Gott" in Hasler, Ludwig, *Schelling*, 44) but in the infamous 1809 text he defines religion as the "conscientiousness" by which one does not do right for duty's sake, as religiosity does not allow for this bane of morality, the "*aequilibrium arbitrii*," but religiosity has to do with a decisiveness prior to choice, prior to *liberum arbitrium* (*Human*, 71). Also, in his lectures on the philosophy of revelation he distinguishes two types of religion, the scientific and the non-scientific, the latter not being the product of reason. Under non-scientific religion stands the natural (mythology) and the supernatural (special revelation), both of the non-scientific forms stand-

98 This, again, is why Schelling's method is closer to a historical hermeneutics than structuralism.

ing as productions of a “real course of events [*realer Hergang*]” (II/3, 193, “Erster Teil”). The truly religious, opposed to the effete rational religion, originates not through reason but by means of a real theogonic and ontological principle. History, at least inner history, is religious history, which turns upon the axes of the principles of Being and the divine nature. Religion only attains a universal significance if not relegated to rational religion or special revelation. Religion’s validity is universal, the inner meaning of history. History and religion do not operate according to the dialectics of reason but, as Schelling contends, the lectures of mythology have shown that philosophy herself must be broadened out of pure thought (*Mythologie*, 210). Jason Wirth confirms this point, writing that the purpose is not for theology or the science of myth, but to expand philosophy and philosophical consciousness (Schelling, *Historical-Critical*, viii).

The philosophy of mythology, insofar as it is a religious history and not the history of reason, founds the philosophy of art because mythological consciousness first shows an “original” production within consciousness that is prior to and so not the production of consciousness. Art too, like mythological productions in consciousness, stands at the border of the pre-conceptual and the conceptual. Genial artwork is not the copy of a model, not the representation of an idea, but the sensuality that births ideas and conceptuality. Certain objects seem to stand on this border as well. Does slime, for example, represent sliminess, i.e. duplicity, double-mindedness and two-facedness, or do these moral ideas arise from the very experience of slime? In witnessing the tribal dance of savages in which they make a display of throwing a virgin into the fire but without actually doing it, does the horror and disgust of the observer arise through a conceptual understanding of what is taking place or does the horror impinge itself on one simply by experiencing the horrific character of the gesture itself? Is violence terrifying because of its consequences or in itself? The unity of various experiences of slime or violence, for example, cannot be extrinsic. The intrinsic unity relating disparate experience can only be the thing itself. Contra Foucault, the phenomenological thing itself does exist, but not in and of itself. Both mythology and art emerge from that within consciousness that is not the production of the same and both also stand at the border of pre-conceptual sensibility and conceptual discursivity, i.e. both stand as phenomena.

Extrinsic objectivity in isolation from the subjective would be nothing but externality and the subjective in isolation from the objective would be effete. “The religious consciousness maps all the religious in-

stants of the theogonic drama – because Schelling does not distinguish between the subjective perspective and the objective perspective” (Jankélévitch, *L’Odyssée*, 17).⁹⁹ There are two poles but they are not independent. The inner is religious history and the external is the State, says Schelling. Religion is esoteric, the human being as God-positing, and the State exoteric. Religion corresponds to inner understanding – at least once it has reached its culmination – and the State to externality. These two, says Schelling, have an essential connection and “neither can have its true effect without the other” (II/3, 179, “Erster Teil”).¹⁰⁰ History has a religious and secular side, although, given their essential unity, the secular is never wholly profane and the religious never pure.

10 Ruminations on a Future Mythology

The question of the future of mythology concerns an event that will occur outside of and not just within consciousness. The new mythology or the post-mythological – though this cannot mean the sublation of the sensual elements of mythology, contra demythologization – announces the God to come. The history of mythology was a blind process, the repetition of nature, within consciousness. Historical consciousness only arrives at the understanding of this whole at the end of this process, when consciousness is raised to *self*-consciousness and personhood. Understanding is only possible with this elevation to self-consciousness and personhood. Mythology, then, as a process occurring within the subjective, elevates human consciousness to personhood, making possible the relation of person to person and not just the production of nature as was the case in mythology. Mythology is past but history also has a future. The future promises not just the productions of the natural but the person to person relation of the supernatural. Schelling argues that mythology makes special revelation possible. The Christ *could* only appear once the mythological process had run its course because only then do the potencies stand under a personal unity and not as natural and cosmic tension. The object of revelation is properly a decision and natural processes do not reveal decisiveness but only the deeds of a person can do this. Personal relation is, again, impossible if consciousness is seized by its own

99 “La conscience religieuse enregistre tous les instants du drame théogonique – car Schelling ne sépare pas la perspective subjective et la perspective objective.”

100 “...keine ohne die andere ihre wahre Wirkung haben kann...”

forces, which is why mythology makes possible and is the prerequisite to a philosophy of revelation.

The future time must be post-historical just as the creation is pre- and even trans-historical. Schelling enumerates the following times: the Past, which is the trans-historical or eternal creation, which is only related to the Present, i.e. the historical, by that intermittence between eternity and history, the relatively pre-historical deed of the Fall that falls neither within history nor is it a-historical (*Mythologie*, 182). The Past or trans-historical is in and of itself not a time but only becomes one with the succeeding time. The Past does not precede the Present but is co-primordially constituted with it. History, however, must also have a Future. In the Future, the internal would culminate in the complete understanding of the external. The Future must be the embodiment of the internal in the external, i.e. complete revelation. Here the sign would not just be inseparable from the signified but so consonant with it that tautegory would become homooousie. In the Future homooousie the external would be transfigured into the internal, healing the cleft between origin and accomplishment, meaning and inscription. The Future heals historical intermittence; it is post-historical.

Chapter 7

Language is Faded Mythology: On the Origin and Essence of Language

“Language itself is only faded mythology, only in abstract and formal differences is enshrined in it what mythology still encapsulates in living and concrete [differences]” (Schelling, II/1, 52, “Historisch-kritisch”).¹ This chapter shall neither analyze the fading of mythology into the formal and abstract nor analyze it in complete isolation from its mythological origin, but it shall study language in its originaive emergence before it has faded from its mythological origin. By analyzing language at its inception in its connascency with mythology a view of what is fundamental to language will hopefully come to view, i.e. a view of language prior to its sedimentation in the abstract, formal and reified. The following, then, consists primarily of an analysis of the Chinese language, people and mythology because they, according to Schelling, are the people that has remained more or less unchanged since their inception. They are the best remaining artifact of the pre-historical race of humanity, prior to its dispersion into peoples with their varying mythologies and languages. This places the final nail in the coffin of the metaphysics of presence. Language too neither begins nor ends in presence; neither begins nor ends in representation and identity.

1 Language is not an Invention of Consciousness

The word for “father” in Hebrew means desiring or longing because the need for a successor, e.g. a son, is expressed in the notion of father. Schelling argues that they did not derive the term “father” from the verb “to desire” because the concept of desire could not have been understood apart from and so prior to fatherhood. Remember in the foregoing chap-

1 “...die Sprache selbst sey nur die verblichene Mythologie, in ihr sey nur in abstracten und formellen Unterschieden bewahrt, was die Mythologie noch in lebendigen und concreten bewahre.”

ter how sliminess or duplicity does not find representation in slime but that slime first manifests the meaning of two-facedness and duplicity. For Schelling the question is whether the spirit of the Hebrews referred to fathers thusly because they represented the meaning of the abstract verb or whether the abstract verb, “to desire,” acquired its meaning only because it had already been implicit in the meaning of father (*ibid.* 51). The thing itself, i.e. the father, could not have been the representation of the abstract, i.e. pure, meaning under Schelling’s view because the meaning only arises with the manifestation of the phenomenon, the thing itself. Language, just as mythology and the formation of peoples, is not something invented and enacted by consciousness but points to a pre-reflective and pre-conscious inception. Consciousness presupposes language and so language itself could not have emerged consciously. In other words, the origination of language cannot be conceptual but only inceptive. Abstract and formal conceptuality, like philosophy, can only appear as a later sedimentation of language but not at its inception. Language, as faded mythology, must be the product of *aesthesis*, emerging from primal, mythological experiences.

In the prior chapter one saw that philosophy, as doctrinal content, did not seek its form in poetry, but that, insofar as both stand as exits and not entries into mythology, they both came to fruition together. Content (philosophy) and form (poetry) do not arise in isolation, which is why there is no content, no pure meaning, that might await its representation by a subsequent form. The content only exists with and through the form. Language, in its emergence, is bereft of philosophical meaning, as if definitions could simply be stipulated as a doctrinal element and then seek their own expression, i.e. as if the philosopher could then arbitrarily assign a material signifier to her pure signified. Language, just like its form and content, emerges from mythological experience and so not as a product of the inventiveness of consciousness. Language, just like its form and content, is only a symptom, an expression of and not the cause of the uprising of a people.

2 The Tower of Babel

One cannot first assume a people – apparently one either without language or even with multiple languages – that would then invent for itself a common language. The people is first there with the common language. If one could not avoid positing a common humanity (and ultimately

Man) as the point of contact for the diaspora of peoples, then so must one also posit a point of contact for the disparity of languages. The book of Genesis even explains the separation of peoples and languages through the same event, the confusion of tongues at the Tower of Babel. This, however, is a mythical event, which means that, though it is also a historical one, its meaning is internal and not external. In other words, the confusion of languages may only be thought as an internal "tremor (*Erschütterung*)" of the consciousness of homogenous humanity, through an "affection of consciousness (*Affection des Bewußtseyns*)" (*ibid.* 103). This affectivity is reminiscent of Spinoza but forbearing of Levinas and the dephasing of the self through affectivity, what Schelling in *Initia Philosophiae Universae* has termed *Entsetzung* (dephasing). The myth of the Tower of Babel manifests, i.e. is synonymous with, this internal event. The Tower of Babel has always been the symbol of paganism,² which for Schelling is the very concept of the diaspora of peoples, and this link between paganism and peoplehood, says Schelling, arises from an "unprethinkable impression (*unvordenklichen Eindruck*)" (*ibid.* 106). This impression is mythological first and foremost because it is unprethinkable, i.e. pre-reflective and unconscious.

The term "Babel" is a contraction of the onomatopoetic "Balbel," deriving from the Greek word "βάββαρος." Schelling derives this from the Chaldean "bar," meaning outside, as in "barja" or foreigner (*ibid.*). Already as early as the Greeks and Romans, however, had the word come primarily to mean talking incomprehensibly. The word relates to the German "babbeln" and the French "balbutier," both of which mean "to stammer."

Polytheism (or paganism) and the dispersion of peoples with their languages are all related events. The separation of peoples and languages under the various mythological gods results from the crisis within the unconscious of the homogeneous race of humanity. Here the original point of contact requisite for the possibility of one universal language more or less loosely translatable into all others finds its place. Surely, translation is scarcely, if ever, a one-to-one correspondence, but that does not preclude

2 The healing of the diaspora of peoples and their languages, the counterpart to the Tower of Babel in the Bible, is the restored unity of language at the Pentecost where a language of the Holy Spirit was spoken that was understandable to all. This linguistic meaning of the story cannot be separated from its meaning as the event whereby paganism, i.e. the reign of nations, was overcome in favor of salvation for the whole world and not just a special people. Peoples turned to the one, true God and away from their various polytheistic deities.

all understanding such that translation becomes the impossible task of trying to translate gibberish into something sensible. The impossibility of translation would correspond as well to the impossibility of language as such, since even within one language do many dialectics, differences in pronunciation, handwriting, accent etc. occur. If a perfect correspondence were the only path to translation, then nobody could ever speak with anybody. The loss of a common point of contact would correspond to the loss of humanity at large. Not even two cows in the pasture, however, are this estranged from one another and the human person is only more than animal because she transcends her singularity. Language is communal; language breeds communion and community only because it presupposes the common. If the peculiar characteristic of savages is that they lived outside of any people, i.e. outside of communion and common-unity, then the savage is truly less than human.

Humanity presupposes a point of commonality, not a proto-language, but a pre-historical point of departure. The pre-historical departure point cannot guarantee the perfect commensurability of discourse but it does guarantee that no radical incommensurability, i.e. parallelism, would subsist betwixt them either. In every historical language the primary principle uniting all languages must remain efficacious as the removal of this principle altogether would destroy all languages and humanity as a whole. The primary point of contact is not removed but only distorted. This point of contact, again, is only relatively historical, certainly not a proto-language within history. Nothing within history could account for the requisite contact between languages insofar as language itself, as concrescent with the formation of a people, its mythology and its gods, has a pre-historical inception. No language is the first language, yet the language Schelling believes bears most prominently the trace of this lost unity is Chinese.

3 The Case of China

With China, its identity as a so-called people, its so-called religion, so-called history, so-called mythology and language, one encounters an anomaly. China is properly neither a people, religious, historical nor mythological. China is either the lone outlier falsifying all of the previously suggested explanations of mythology, history, religion and language or it is the exception that confirms the rule. China exemplifies neither monotheism nor polytheism but atheism, “a complete absence of the re-

ligious principle”³ (Schelling, II/2, 522, “Mythologie”). Schelling does not permit one to retort that Buddhism testifies to a religious element in China because, for him, this entered China very late and does not cohere with the essence of China; it is an outside force merely operative within the same geographic bounds. This exclusion should not be detrimental since the identity of a people is an internal and not an external constitution anyway. As atheistic, China is consequently not mythological because mythology is the expression of real religious relation. Myths arise as concrescent with their people and so China is also not a people but mere humanity. “The Chinese comport themselves in this regard (insofar as they are not a people in the sense as others) as a still preserved part of the absolutely pre-historical humanity” (*ibid.*).⁴

The original principle of the firmament as in astral religion dominates Chinese consciousness before it has relinquished its hold on exclusivity and become a particular being still trying to exercise this exclusive claim, namely as Chronos. Chronos, if one remembers, corresponded to the beginning of mythology proper. Beforehand was the pre-historical and so also pre-mythological “time” of the wanderers and vagabonds who followed the movement of the heavens without any fixed place to lay their head. These nomads were not yet organized into peoples but only constituents of the race of humanity. Not even polytheistic gods but only the simply Alone seizes Chinese consciousness, the relative one corresponding to the moment of theism prior to both polytheism and monotheism. Theism, it was said, is synonymous with atheism. Not one particular principle holds consciousness captive but only the relative one, that which is truly not yet one...or many. The dispersion of the relative one into plurality at least posits the recognition of distortion and estrangement, at least then one is on the path to reflection, but under the blind hegemony of the relative one that is simply Alone consciousness finds itself – or rather does *not* find itself – in its pre-reflective state. China, of course, does not correspond to the reality of this state because China is certainly existent within and not before history. China certainly is sentient; they are not unconscious objects, not merely inorganic, but are full-fledged human beings. This does not preclude, however, that they manifest the preservation of primal, pre-historical humanity – inso-

3 “eine völlige Abwesenheit des religiösen Princips”

4 “Die Chinesen verhalten sich in diesem Betracht (inwiefern sie kein Volk in dem Sinne wie die andern sind) als ein noch erhaltener Theil der absolut vorgeschichtlichen Menschheit.”

far as this is possible – within history itself. China manifests the moment prior even to consciousness' self-alienation insofar as it manifests itself as completely irreligious, because religiosity requires the recognition of estrangement, the acknowledgment that one is not actually what one has been and ought to be again. Where past, present and future are not separated neither are what is the case and what ought to be the case separated. Ethics and religion can only exist with the separation of times. China comports itself irreligiously because it also comports itself a-historically.

China does not behave as though a consciousness under the principle of that which *could* admit of succession and so *could* become a principle proper, but it retains the exclusivity of the relative one, only foregoing it as a God-positing principle. China lives under the exclusive one as under an un-God or "unprincipled (*Unprinzip*)" (*ibid.* 523). The religiosity of the proto-principle must nevertheless continue to "shimmer" through according to Schelling, lest the identity of the principle would not be recognizable at all and China, rather than being the manifestation of the preservation of this exclusivity, would correspond to the primal humanity as such and would not even appear in history at all. The exclusive one only acquires identity and relation by admitting the possibility of that which at least *could* follow. Remember that God is pure relation. The principle in its exclusivity as a non-principle is then the un-God. Religion stems etymologically from "religio," which means duty to that which is holy or steadfast (*ibid.* 524). Formally, then, religion draws one into a dutiful or, better, conscientious relation. This explicates the formal side of religion, namely that it places one in a relation of ultimate concern. That about which one is concerned, however, constitutes the material side. China concerns itself ultimately with the exclusive power of the Alone and in this respect only is it religious, i.e. *religare*. Materially, on the other hand, China finds itself bound only to the theistic moment equivalent to atheism. The God-positing principle retains its formal side; consciousness is still intentional, i.e. relates, and thus cannot be without an object. Despite this it loses its material, religious meaning. Of course, Chinese consciousness is bound to the same proto-principle that had a materially religious meaning as astral religion, but with China the firmament loses its "materially religious" character. If it were only still present, then China could find itself as the point of departure for the ensuing history of religious consciousness, namely mythology, but for China the proto-principle has become rigid, a non-principle incapable of admitting of even possible succession. China's atheism goes hand in hand with its a-historicity and vice versa.

China appears not to be the contradiction to the theogonic process that would falsify it, but it appears as “one of the ways out, one of the deviations from the consequences of this process” (*ibid.* 526).⁵ Schelling actually even implicitly argues for this deviation as one of the consequences of the world law. If everything must be decided, then all possibilities must arise as well – even though not all must be actualized. He writes, “For, it is the character of the world spirit in general that it fulfills all truthful possibilities, [that it] everywhere wants or permits the greatest possible totality of appearances...”⁶ (*ibid.*). This possibility is not an abstract one, however, but only one history and positive philosophy can bring to light, a novel possibility unknowable in advance of its actuality. A singular possibility is manifest in China, not the copy of a prior generality. Contradiction only resides in the concept but China does not manifest a possibility able to be parsed out of the concept, but the repetition of the dominance of the exclusively Alone under the conditions of history, as something novel and singular, as something original.

The exclusive one does not nullify itself but asserts itself in China by denying the materially religious meaning predominant in the peoples of the world. This authority appears as a contrast and not as a contradiction to the mythology of the peoples. The Israelites too were to be preserved as a non-people but also as more than sheer humanity. China affirms its exclusivity as humanity in general insofar as the exclusive power of the heavens asserts itself in contrast to the manifold authorities of the peoples of the world by rejecting the latter’s religiosity. China is bound to the central authority of the heavens, not to the heavenly bodies or authorities but to the one authority of heaven. The astral religion of the Persians honored the firmament as well, but Persia was dualistic, eventually leading to the separation of heaven and earth, of Uranus and Gaea. Even that duality already plants the seeds that will eventually undermine the one, central authority of *the* heavens. Chinese consciousness is not allotted this concession. It is not even a monism in contrast to a possible dualism, but simple monotony or consonance. The heavy religion permits no alleviation of the burden in China. The higher potency cannot even announce

5 “...einer der Auswege, eine der Ausweichungen vor den Folgen dieses Processes...”

6 “Denn es ist der Charakter des Weltgeistes überhaupt, daß er alle wahrhaften Möglichkeiten erfüllt, die größtmögliche Totalität der Erscheinungen überall will oder zuläßt...”

its entrance in China; advent not only does not advene but she is not even prophesied.

Unlike the history of mythology proper, which has religious history as the esoteric and the history of the State as the exoteric, China exists only exoterically. The central and exclusive authority of heaven is manifest as the Chinese State. The earthly State is simply the embodiment of the exclusive authority of heaven. China's formally religious side shines through in that it knows nothing but steadfastness without the slightest possibility of alteration and succession. Schelling speaks in astonishment of China's ability to remain completely unaltered despite being conquered on two different occasions, once in the 13th century by the Tartars or Mongols and once more by the Manchu-Tartars (*ibid.* 529), which now comprise only one of the nationalities of the People's Republic of China. Internally, argues Schelling, despite these two conquests of China, the essence of its constitution, customs, traditions and arrangement changed only marginally, while "the State, according to its inner, has completely the same esteem nowadays (*ibid.*)"⁷ as before. Schelling does indeed concede that the system of the Emperor as one knows it today has only been around since 200 B.C., but he continues to explain that newer, historical research has shown this as a mere reestablishment and institutionalization of the former as an exclusive authority.

China lives under the rule of heaven. Remember, however, that Uranus only first exists as such after the inversion, after the uni-versio, that externalizes the heavens as a great expanse. For the astral worship of Sabism this externalization also posited the inner, hence Persia's dualism. In China, however, the externalization is not relative because the second potency to which it could relate by becoming the prior potency is excluded. The externalization is, therefore, absolute, with the consequence that nothing can ever follow it. Its authority is indelible and not even open for challenge. In China the authority of heaven as merely an external authority becomes transformed and transposed into the authority of the State, the merely exoteric. The State manifests the inverted heavenly with the consequence that the earthly and exoteric dominates the consciousness of China to the exclusion of any esotericism. The State is the central authority so exclusively that not even the relatives of the Emperor receive a continued privilege after the death of the Emperor. They are only esteemed as long as they exercise a role for the State. There is also not a hereditary system in China, which lays an importance on suc-

7 "...der Staat seinem Innern nach heutzutage völlig dasselbe Ansehen hat..."

cession, but all rights and hierarchy revolves around the function one serves in the State" (*ibid.* 532).

China is "heaven become visible," (*ibid.* 534)⁸ the mundane but still unalterable and still-standing heaven. While other great kingdoms have come and gone, China remains. China stands immune to internal disruption insofar as the Emperor manifests "the sovereign one of the world, because the middle, the center, the power of heaven is in him" (*ibid.* 535).⁹ China, Schelling argues, can impossibly have two Emperors because the Emperor is the earthly manifestation of the "simply exclusive one (*der schlechthin einzige*)" (*ibid.*). The Emperor is, in principle, sovereign over the world and not just over his people; for, his so-called "people" identifies itself as *the* humanity of the world. China is not a theocracy but a "cosmocracy (*Kosmokratie*)" (*ibid.* 538); even the forces of nature are said to replicate the action of the Emperor. China manifests the impersonal, cosmological order of the world fallen from heaven. The term "heaven" does not carry any religious meaning and certainly does not refer to God. China is thoroughly irreligious and simply political. In this regard, then, China is a-historical. Certainly China has a history, but insofar as historical philosophy concerns itself with the revelation of will and decisiveness in word and deed China is a-historical. It is simply inner-historical because it does not recognize an esoteric side. It knows nothing but the exoteric, but both an inside and an outside are necessary for a real event and that always means historical eventality. True historical events, for Schelling, are not those occurring within history but those standing neither wholly outside of nor within history, but they are the liminal events that bring about historical movement and rupture, even if they themselves do not fall into the process of the same. China cannot be truly historical because it only knows the exclusively exoteric.

The only remnant of a division between inside and outside Schelling finds in China is its recognition that the heavenly power become mundane is a displacement. Earthly power is synonymous with the power of heaven, but China still recognizes that this power belongs to heaven and not to earth (*ibid.* 540). This estrangement marks the only remnant and link between China and the original mythological crisis, namely the separation of Uranus and Gaea (Urania). Earth's power is synonymous with the power of heaven, but China still acknowledges a minimal divi-

8 "der sichtbar gewordene Himmel"

9 "...der Weltherrscher, weil die Mitte, das Centrum, die Macht des Himmels in ihm ist..."

sion between the two. The difference, however, is always minimal because heaven is never something spiritual, but always only the visible, material power simply fallen to earth.

4 China and the Language of Humanity

The foregoing shall serve as a propaedeutic to understanding the more important issue of the essence of the Chinese language. Their language also involves an attachment to the worldly power of heaven. The Chinese language too does not even admit of possible succession, not even allotting space for that which *could* come. Its language is monosyllabic; it contains roughly only 300 “words” of no more than one syllable (Schelling, II/2, 542, “Mythologie”). As is well documented, the spoken and written language are not isomorphic, with the written language containing 80,000 characters (*ibid.*), dwarfing the comparative poverty of the spoken language. Schelling states that even with the variation of tone in the spoken language this would raise the total number of its ground elements to no more than 1,600 (*ibid.*).

These ground elements may hardly count as “words,” however, since by separately pronouncing all of the syllables contained in the words of a polysyllabic language one does not thereby increase the number of words in the language but, quite the contrary, one loses the language itself. Hebrew, for example, perhaps the first polysyllabic language, does not incidentally contain polysyllabic words but its very essence, e. g. its grammar, is based on its disyllabic structure. By removing all prefixes and suffixes one still finds a polysyllabism at its base in that the basic units may still contain a vowel enclosed by two consonants. Polysyllabism requires the intervention, one might even say the intermittence, of aspiration while monosyllabism does not admit of this enclosure and separation of units as words. Disyllabism marks the departure from the consonant, i. e. from consonance, by introducing the vowel, by introducing aspiration into the monotony of the monotone. The intermittence of express difference into the exclusivity of the monotone correlates to the departure from the so-called proto-language. The word functions always as supplementary interstice; the word requires the aspiration of the vowel as the supplement to the consonant. For the Chinese “is the single word, as it

were, nothing and does not have the freedom to expand itself” (*ibid.* 544).¹⁰

There are no single words in Chinese because under the monosyllabic the basic units do not possess the freedom to detach themselves from the continuity of the whole. Only the later appearance of abstraction would allow the basic unit to be removed as a single unit severed from its immediate context. Just as one cannot play one note from a musical piece and convey much, if any, meaning, so the ground elements of spoken language in Chinese have not acquired any independence. They are without grammatical determination because the ground element, as a non-word, cannot be verb or noun. Etymology also lacks because just as the note on a piano does not admit of etymological analysis nor does the ground element of the Chinese language, which stripped from its context becomes nothing more than noise. This, at least, is the picture Schelling presents.¹¹ Schelling deems these ground elements “word atoms (*Wortatome*)” and even as word atoms, i.e. as single notes, they are abstractions from the larger masterpiece. One impossibly thinks parts outside of parts here. The word atom attains a meaning only in actually being spoken. Only by being spoken with a specific intonation is meaning accrued (*ibid.* 544).

This is forbearing of Derrida’s *Speech and Phenomena*, which more literally rendered from the French *La Voix et la Phénomène* reads “the voice and the phenomenon” or one might even say “phoneme and phenomenon.” Apart from the material contingency of the literal voice meaning remains utterly absent. The material condition, now the voice, not only conditions the manner or form under which the phenomenon appears, but it *is* the very manifestation of the phenomenon, the thing itself. One should also readily see the parallel with Schelling’s tautegorical explanation of the myth here. Language truly is faded mythology. If language becomes abstract, i.e. polysyllabic, then that is its very fading from its tautegorical origin. Yet, one must remember that there is no proto-language. The fading is not a descent from the first language but the origination of language itself is nothing but the emergence of this faded

10 “...das einzelne Wort gleichsam nichts ist, und keine Freiheit hat sich auszubreiten.”

11 The verity of Schelling’s comments on the nature of the Chinese language fall outside the expertise of this author. Of greater interest is the philosophic consistency these arguments express with his mythological, ethnological, religious and cosmological analyses.

ing. There is no proto-language from which others faded but language itself is the very process of fading. The speaking of a word atom is tautological with its meaning. Against structuralism, the intonation of a word is essential. China's lack of grammar proper indicates that its language does not consist in the application of its law through arbitrarily fixed signifiers, i.e. words, but its language is literally its use. This, of course, is reminiscent of Wittgenstein except that here the notion that language is use confirms rather than disconfirms the existence of the thing itself. Abstract words fall under grammatical categories and may be applied according to the rule while word units are not categorical but functional. The Chinese language exists in advance of its words. She is not constructed from existent parts awaiting their application but the very application, the speaking and intonation, manifests, i.e. brings into being, the meaning itself. As with Derrida, semiology falters because a division between sign and referent is impossible.

Western languages lend themselves to grammatical categorization, semiology, semantics, etymology etc. because its languages are already well sedimented, i.e. already abstract. Western languages, or at least their transmission, function according to rules. At root, however, their emergence is something like that which is still retained in Chinese. At root language is not even properly monosyllabic because not even the solitary syllable lends itself to isolation. Word atoms are only the deposited traces from the abstracted moments of speech, the voice and its intonations.¹² In opposition to the grammatical accent lain upon words in the West, China stresses the musical accent. The grammatical accent confers independence upon the atom as an autonomous word and without this accent all language would be monosyllabic or mere music (*ibid.* 545). Words would never be complete in themselves, enclosing aspiration within two consonants, but word atoms, i.e. notes, would only find their boundaries in the foregoing and succeeding notes. Word atoms, like the notes of a musical work, never acquire the excess necessary to emerge as singular and individual units standing independently of the whole. Western languages have words that can add, lose, change or

12 "(Words) are only traces or moments of speech and for just this reason mere sounds or tones to which, contrary to language, no independence comes, as though they would be something for themselves. [Sie sind nur Spuren oder Momente der Rede, und ebendarum bloße Laute oder Töne, denen gegen die Sprache keine Selbstständigkeit zukommt, als wären sie etwas für sich.]" (Schelling, II/2, 545, "Mythologie").

blur meanings because they can be taken out of context while Chinese word units cannot. In a bit of hyperbole, one might temptingly conclude that parody is impossible in the Chinese language insofar as nothing may be transferred as an isomorphic unit from one context to another. In China word atoms are moments of speech and in the West words are atoms thought as fundamental building blocks.

Chinese finds a comparable example in music. Schelling's thesis is that the Chinese language has preserved elements of the language of universal humanity; for, China's essence is to consist as a relic. Now, music too is often thought to be the language of humanity or rather the language of all peoples. Traditionally, music consists not in the concatenation of its notes but as *liaison*. It alleviates discordance or, perhaps better, does not permit discordance any entry. In a musical piece one does not hear the fictitious, separate notes but only the flow of the one song. Notes are never heard, at least not before the work of abstraction, which, in this case, disassembles what never first required assemblage. The so-called proto-language from which humanity departed as it dispersed into peoples did not admit of discordance and so squelched, until its time, the possibility of excess, namely that something could arise as an independent protuberance apart from the whole. This essence, contrary to all discordance, constitutes the power that held humanity together prior to its diaspora. Where meaning only appears through the music of the voice, there meaning is also immediate and not something transmitted or mediated *through* the voice. The diaspora into peoples with discordant, though not incommensurable, languages was the loss of the immediacy of meaning. Music is the trace of this lost immediacy, that in which the signifier must first be abstracted from the meaningful rather than first needing to be introduced as the arbitrary element by which a pre-given meaning would find signification.

The aforementioned confusion of languages at the Tower of Babel occurred through the elevation or protuberance of single elements against the force that had formerly subjected them to the harmony of the whole. This corresponds to the emergence of a plurality from the formerly exclusive one. The manifold/multiplicity is here brought out of darkness into light and drawn as explicit plurality. Of no surprise is that cosmological pluralism corresponds ethnologically to a plurality of peoples, religiously to polytheism and linguistically to polysyllabism. The move from monosyllabism to polysyllabism is then, also unsurprisingly, not the historical addition of the latter to the former. To repeat, China is not the oldest language, not the proto-language, but simply that language which has

preserved the most from the pre-historical language of the race of humanity. The transition from monosyllabism to polysyllabism is not an external addendum but an internal tremor, an internal change of character and identity, namely the transition from the static to transitive succession.

“Not the matter, only the law of the proto-language is preserved in the Chinese language” (*ibid.* 548).¹³ The Chinese language can hardly be the first existing language because it is, in fact, not a language proper, but only one in the same respect that as the preservation or sedimented trace of humanity China is also not a people properly speaking. Humanity as a whole was never a historical state but only pre-historical. The historical always contains only the consequences of the departure from humanity but never the departure point itself. As soon as history is, so is language also already given over to its distortion, the senseless parts outside of parts representative of polysyllabism. History emerges not as a descent from but only by means of the distortion of a prior unity. China preserves the inner, formal law of this prior unity but is still at least minimally subject to the material contingencies of language.

What about China’s written language though? Given its distinction from the spoken language does that mean that its inner law is different as well? The written language is pictographic – which Schelling sharply distinguishes from the hieroglyphic (see II/2, 551, “Mythologie). Egyptian hieroglyphics, says Schelling, was able to function with significantly fewer symbols, 8,000 compared to 80,000 for the Chinese, because it was already on the way to becoming phonetic, i.e. alphabetic, while the Chinese language is purely pictorial (*Gedankenschrift*). Any language that does not yet have isolated word units certainly cannot write them either. It must express always only the thing itself, hence its pictographic nature. The picture, as an image, however – and here one should remember the few paragraphs on art at the end of the last chapter – stands at the border of non-conceptuality and conceptuality. Pictorial characters do not name – language is not ostensive – but they dramatize ideas; they are theatrical. They cannot name because the term that would only name an indexical referent must have already undergone the process by which it acquires independence as a word, but word units are not Chinese. The word acquires the proper status of singular word only with the alphabetic system. Only then is it, in principle though never in practice, capable of isomorphic replication, like the name. Language is not, at least in its origin,

13 “...nicht das Materiale, nur das Gesetz der Ursprache ist in der chinesischen Sprache erhalten...”

naming. The language of humanity operated without the mediation of words. Words are mediums and mediums must, in principle, be infinitely repeatable and this only in the manner that the variations accompanying every repetition are ignored as merely accidental. If words name, then they must be infinitely replicable, but the pictorial signifies as a singular repetition. The picture, just like the work of art, conveys meaning as a one-time event. It is not a medium that must be exchangeable, replaceable and replicable, but singular manifestation. Take, for example, the often repeated phrase, "I love you." One treats this not as a string of three words with each functioning as a medium denoting the singular referent, but one says this phrase as if the words are not universal and thus not universals, as if every repetition is not a recurrence of the medium but a singular and novel repetition – original repetition. In this sense one catches a glimpse of language as mere gesture, i.e. as a singular speech act or singular stroke of the pen that does not presuppose the community of language users. There is no private language but the genius also does not treat her work as a universal. Even the genial work of art is not the example of a private language, but it is capable of being understood by others not because it functions only in universals – as it manifests a singular as real in advance of its possibility – but because it is pictorial. The pictorial, unlike the abstract word that names a referent, does not represent the signified but it manifests the signified. The distance between the sign and the meaning does not yet exist. Pictures, unlike words, neither await instantiation nor do they simply point to the reality to be named because they do not need to point to or name objects, i.e. referents, but only ideas. Pictures are never instantiated because they express not the referent but the idea or meaning of the referent and immediately so. An image of the horrific does not name and refer to a horrific referent but simply dramatizes horror. The beautiful does not acquire sense by pointing to beautiful objects and then purging its references of everything incidental through abstraction, but by pictorializing just one beautiful object it dramatizes not the referent but its beauty.

The transition from the language – or was it really a language at all? – of humanity to the various polysyllabic languages of the peoples corresponds to the transition from the immediacy of sense to words as universal mediums, as infinitely replicable signifiers that hopefully find instantiation by a referent. This is, then, also the transition from truth as ontological to propositional truth, which is dominated by the approximations of correctness. Dependent upon how well the word signifies its referent to the exclusion of incidental qualities or unintended referents, therein lies

the approximation of the signifier to truth. The pictographic nature of the written Chinese language, on the other hand, does not measure according to the distance between the signifier and the signified. Truth is in all images but just not always *as* true. The transition from the immediacy of sense to words results from Man's Fall from the inner space of the creation where sense emerged through the images formed as the second potency overcame the first under the seal of the third. In the event of the creation, and here contra Derrida, sense does not depend upon the materiality of the signifier. In the creation, rather, the material occupies the subject-position and the form the predicate-position, i. e. the first potency only becomes materialized insofar as the demiurgic second imprints form in it. Even in the creation, however, matter is not there first only to await the imprint of form, but form and matter arise in connascency. The written language of China is pictographic and thus does not admit of the separation of form and matter (the idea signified). The idea is consonant with its image just as slime is consonant with the meaning of sliminess. One might say that, whether spoken or written, Chinese is a language of the consonant in opposition to aspiration.

China bears all the traces of the oldest but that does not mean that it can stand at the beginning of history as the first people because nothing begins with China; its characteristic is stasis. China stubbornly resists all movement, succession, temporalization and historicization. China is not the beginning but only "a negation of movement" (*ibid.* 557).¹⁴ In like manner, "Chinese consciousness is no longer the pre-historical state itself but a dead imprint, a mummy, as it were, of the same" (*ibid.*).¹⁵ The same moment that China exemplifies may also find expression in other peoples but normally as an already past moment but in China this moment becomes static and fixed in a never ending present. China can only be recognized as the arresting of the first moment, however, in contrast to the peoples of the world in whom the mythological process did occur. Without this opposition, their arrested moment could not be known as such. The moment arrested in China though is not one of the moments in the mythological process but only the moment of departure for the whole process. China does not stop mythology in its midst but from the outset, without allowing it even to begin. China knows no commencement.

14 "eine Negation der Bewegung"

15 "Das chinesische Bewußseyn ist nicht mehr der vorgeschichtliche Zustand selbst, sondern ein todter Abdruck, gleichsam eine Mumie desselben."

Before leaving China, Schelling does tarry a while with Confucianism, Lao-Tzu (Taoism) and Buddhism, but only in order to show that these appearances of the religious did not falsify China's essence as atheistic fixation to the power of heaven as manifested by the State. In short, he argues that Confucius, for one, founded neither a philosophy nor a religion but confirmed the authority of the State. Confucius, in Schelling's words, is an "antithesis to Socrates" (*ibid.* 561).¹⁶ Unlike Socrates, Confucius never came under the suspicion of a people whom he would have enraged by calling into question the authority of the State but he only ushered into the State a practical wisdom concerning the same. Confucius, unlike Socrates, did not affirm the peculiarity of his individuality but he served as the exemplary representative of his so-called people. He embodied the nature of all Chinese, for whom the State is everything. He was no conscientious objector. His writings were practical, free of cosmological speculation and mythological expression. Even his god imposed only law, order and reason to the indifference of the personality of the god. For Confucius, heaven indicated the prevailing principle "operative only as fate, as a law that always remains the same, immovable and unalterable" (*ibid.* 562).¹⁷

Lao-Tzu was a contemporary of Confucius in the 6th century B.C. He taught the ways of the Tao, which means "gate," the gate from non-being into being (*ibid.* 564). Schelling dismisses Lao-Tzu fairly quickly by arguing that his philosophy was not a system but only a practical wisdom concerning the origin, whose followers were few and exercised only a little influence.

Buddhism spread throughout China in the first century A.D. and, in opposition to Lao-Tzu, the teaching concerned not the transition into being but instead the end of being or the overcoming of being. Eventually this became atheistic as the soul or subject also found its annihilation from being. Buddhism is certainly not a historical religion but a-historical in its core. One should not hope for fulfillment in any sort of future but only see that all was illusory. Real pain and suffering are not so much overcome as acknowledged for what they are – apparitions. Also, says Schelling, the Buddhism that has appeared in China since 1700 is fully subordinate to the State (*ibid.* 565). Even should Tibet splinter and acquire its independence from China, this would tear the authority of

16 "Gegensatz von Sokrates"

17 "...wirkt nur als ein Fatum, als ein immer sich gleichbleibendes, unbewegliches und unveränderliches Gesetz..."

China into two but then Tibet would simply be numbered as a people distinct from China. China would remain in her essence as it has always been and, if one believes Schelling, always will be.

5 Music and Causal Efficacy

Music, like art, does not represent a meaning through the mediation of signs but impinges itself upon the affectivity of the listener. Music, then, is not a medium at all but the efficacy of that synonymous with the meaning itself that exercises a causal efficacy upon the listener. Music does not exact its influence through mere signs, which are often not influential at all, and their ability to represent a meaning, but through causal efficacy. Music elicits a response that does not necessarily bear any semblance to the music itself, i.e. does not resemble it. The efficacy of music prompts a heterogeneous response and not homogeneous representation.

If language, at its origin, is indeed akin to music, then it does not proceed from its structure, i.e. the grammar, to that which it wants to signify and then, and this in the last place, to the empty ostentation of the material signifier that hopefully resembles the pre-given meaning in order that it may adequately represent it. This presupposes a pure meaning completely unaffected by its material representation, i.e. a meaning unaffected by history and time. The material signifier only points to the signified *at* a certain *place within* time, but as unaffected by both its space and time. This view presupposes that the signified simply finds material signification in an empty, formal time, time transformed into purely homogenous extension. The signified finds a time in which it may be expressed; it is merely synchronic. The signifier is the only thing that remains open to diachronic investigation. Translated into musical terms, the pure meaning would simply need to find an accompanying sound; its synchrony would correspond to the sym-phonie, i.e. it needs to find its place *with* sound. The sound itself, the phoneme, may be subject to diachronic analysis but the meaning arbitrarily fixed to the sound would remain without temporalization or historicity. Conversely, the melody or lyricism dominant in the Chinese language, a language in which the intonation of the audible sound determines the signified meaning, suggests a movement beginning with the material signifier as simple gesture that then moves, and this only through a fictitious abstraction, to the structure or grammar, if the latter appears at all. Not only

is the material signifier open to historical analysis but, as the condition of the signified meaning, so does the inner meaning becoming historical. This time is not the homogeneity of the same but a living temporalization at the heart of the meaning itself. The meaning does not stand outside of time waiting for its expression by an inner-historical, material signifier, but meaning itself is temporal and historical at its core. Language thought along the lines of music ironically emphasizes the historicity of meaning despite the fact that music is often said to stop time. The causal efficacy of music seems to be able to cut across time, uniting those separated by large gaps in history and geography, hence the emphasis upon it as the element common to all humanity. Music can only do this, however, because it does not rest upon representation but the efficacy of the gesture, the efficacy and immediacy of expressiveness. Thus, Adorno can say in *prima facie* contrast to the argument here that “music is called upon to do nothing less than retract the historical tendency of language, which is based on signification, and to substitute expressiveness for it” (*Search*, 88). This does not contradict the argument outlined here though. The material signifier, as just as old as the signified, does not represent, does not require that the signifier function as a medium, but this view affirms that the material gesture may be immediately expressive, manifesting rather than representing a meaning. This excludes only that language evolves *within* history merely, it only excludes that it might undergo changes due to inner-historical happenings. On the other hand, the argument here asserts that language, from the moment that it exists – and it does not exist prior to its dispersion into a plurality of historical languages – exists as a historical phenomenon. Language is not merely *in* history but its very emergence is historical, corresponding to the rupture that severs beginning and end, origin and accomplishment, referent and sign. Language arises historically but not as an artifact within history. There was no proto-language but only the preservation of the trace of language before the Fall. Language in the creation did not require any material signification that would operate as a medium because every sense arose in immediate relation to every other. Neither music nor Chinese are the proto-language but the preservation of its law. They are both, however, abandoned to the material signifier. Admittedly, the signifier does not function according to the law of representation in these, but meaning does not also exert an influence apart from any and every gesture or expressivity. The need for the gesture as such indicates the loss of immediacy even if not yet the fall into complete detachment. The emergence of language is as old as the emergence of time because both

indicate the severance of before and after, origin and accomplishment. Only once language has become sedimented and abstract, however, does it become the empty formality of representation.

The Chinese language and music both show the unsublatable context Schelling seeks between word and thing, even if this unity cannot be posited as something that would have ever been present in history. Schelling is certainly not Foucault; there is not a history of language (the movement of *episteme*) apart from its connection to the things themselves, to the mythological experiences themselves. For Schelling, the “thing” is not any physical referent but already its meaning or *Wesen*, not the sun but, “as it were, the sun in the sun” (VIII, 443, “Bericht”).¹⁸ The thing is not a referent but the meaning. Language is certainly not naming or pointing. Schelling certainly also rejects any view that regards language as something subjective, the product of consciousness’ free positing. He must then occupy a position somewhere between semiology or structuralism and the radical and relativizing historicism of Foucault. Meaning is neither a pure inner awaiting external representation nor abandoned to pure externality. Remember that Schelling’s historical philosophy does not remove the *con-scientia* of the creative process. Languages are not incommensurable and can be translated “more or less” well because there is a common point of departure for all languages. Schelling, for example, views poetry as a higher language and yet it comes from the inner of the soul (*ibid.* 450). Poetry, that which seemingly stretches meaning to its limit, is arguably accessible to everybody. Whatever the unity of languages may be, it is not external, not the descent from an inner-historical proto-language, and yet language is also thoroughly historical, denying that material signifiers are simply the accidental clothing expressing an eternal meaning.

One may retort that mythology was interpreted this way and mythology was the theogonic process of the eternal potencies, potencies that must surely have existed prior to mythology. This, however, does not necessarily follow, because the time of the creation, as Past, only first became Past with the fall into the Present time. One is only really one once two is there. The origin simply did not exist prior to this succession. The origin, to speak like Derrida, can only be thought under erasure. The origin is that which never was but always already has been. It has been, shall one say, only since the advent of history, since there was something rather than nothing. If eternity is only Past once the Present is there, then no

18 “...gleichsam die Sonne in der Sonne...”

lapse of time existed in the Past before it would have finally arrived at the present time. This would be to think time as a continuous flow but time is rupture and dissonance, only existent by means of intermittence, that bringing the Past or the origin into being. Beforehand the origin is not.

Now, what if the peoples should be restored to a universal humanity? Would all speak the same language? This reunion of the peoples, however, would not only transform the internal into the external but the external would also be transformed into internality. One would not even be able to say that the inner and outer are tautegorical such that one can distinguish the two without separating them, but one would have homooou-sie, in which this distinction would be null and void. There would cease to be externality, audible sound and visible inscription. Once referent and sign, origin and accomplishment, become consonant, aspiration is extinguished and language disappears. Language, time, history and the dispersion of peoples only exist in the space opened by the severance of before and after. Before and after, however, are not beginning and end, not times that actually ever were or ever will be. The beginning never was and the end never will be. That would spell the closure of time, man, God and Being.

Meaning is natural and the context between word and meaning is supernatural. The eternal Nature all by itself, i. e. the theistic moment of the Alone, Difference itself or the Duas, never was. Nature only first comes into being at all once it has been supplemented. Word, the supernatural, supplements nature. Audible and written words become the sedimentation and abstraction of the original Word. Word, in all of its senses, is both supplement and origin. The origin only exists with the supplement, i. e. *as* supplemented. Word, even mundanely thought as material signifier, supplements the non-identical, which does not exist, with identity; it supplements the nature that does not exist with an *as*-character in order that it may exist. The sea never existed prior to Poseidon and Poseidon never prior to the sea, but from time immemorial the sea has always been *as* Poseidon. The thing itself, Being, never is in advance of its supplement, the divine nature. Being itself, the absolute *prius*, never exists in its nudity. It only exists *as* God, i. e. *as* theomorphic, just as God only exists *as* anthropomorphic. The absolute *prius* is not the positive in positive philosophy but the positive is the act of commencement, the departing from it. The substance in advance of its attribute or the subject in advance of its predicate truly is not. Origins exist only under erasure. Origins are not at the beginning because that which is prior only exists *after* what is posterior. More original than Nature, more original than the

thing itself, more original than the origin, is its supplement, super-natural inscription or superscription. A does not exist at all in advance of its superscripts, A^1 , A^2 , A^3 and A^4 . Similarly, language, even as music or the Chinese language, is not added to a pre-given people but the people only arises with a language. Language, as the supplement, is more original than the people speaking it. One could say that the supplement supplements the nothing with something rather than letting it remain as nothing. The supplement supplements the origin with itself.¹⁹

6 The Copula Revisited in Light of Supplementation

If Schelling is correct that “the general concept of the subject is to be pure capacity [to be]” (II/1, 50, “Historisch-kritische”),²⁰ then not only must one think the copula transitively as that which ought to take an accusative but, moreover, this accusative must be that which finally brings the subject, as that which is not but simply can be, into being. Jankélévitch certainly reads Schelling correctly in remarking,

In an emphatic proposition, where the verb is no longer simply copulative, but synthetic, several adjectives are latent, but only one is attributed in act, emphatically, to the free subject that awaits its determination. The subject is by itself indifferent to all forms and qualities of which it will become the bearer. The subject is the *ἄπειρον*, the indecisive matter of the judgment; this matter attracts to itself the predicates via a type of magic... (*L’Odyssée*, 38)²¹

Jankélévitch is inexact in stating that the subject “awaits” its determination as though it were already there but more exact in stating that “it will become” the bearer. The subject only has meaning as something future or, once already determined by a predicate, as something past, as al-

19 In this light, Hans Blumenberg said more than he ever intended when he wrote, “Significance is the form in which the background of nothing [des Nichts], as that which produces anxiety, has been put at a distance, whereby, without this ‘prehistory,’ the function of what is significant remains uncomprehended, though present” (*Work*, 110).

20 “...der allgemeine Begriff des Subjects also ist reines Können zu seyn...”

21 “Dans une proposition emphatique, ou le verbe n’est plus simplement copulative, mais synthétique, plusieurs adjectifs sont latents mais un seul est attribué en acte, emphatiquement, au libre sujet que attend sa détermination. Le sujet est par lui-même indifférent aux formes et qualités dont il deviendra porteur. Le sujet est l’*ἄπειρον*, la matière indéécise du jugement ; cette matière attire à soi les prédicats par une sorte de magie...”

ready subjected. He possesses a more radical understanding, however, as he writes later in the same text, "And not only the simple object and not only the pure subject do not exist with right before the mixture that they are supposedly to form, but to the contrary it is the ideally balanced synthesis that is first. The composed is more original than the simple!" (*ibid.* 313).²² Neither the subject nor the object can exist alone but the true origin is not the oldest but the novelty of the composed! Supplementation synthesizes the past and the future but only by first bringing each of them into being at all by positing an intermittence between them. The synthesis is "ideally" balanced and not the preponderance of the Real. The Real only really is once supplemented and brought to a state of balance and stability, i. e. to a state of identity, by the Ideal.

Derrida says nothing exists outside the text, i. e. outside inscription. Foucault says the world is nothing from which one could read its meaning. Schelling says there is something anterior to inscription, the unpre-thinkable *Daß*, but that it does not actually exist until its inscription. Where Being is, there too is cognoscibility. "Too" indicates its supplementary character and "where" must be read as an "if." If Being is, there must cognoscibility find inscription. Schelling, contra Foucault, does not discard the Thing itself while also asserting that it is never a Thing by or in itself. The Thing must be inscribed or rather the Thing, the sub-ject, must be sub-scribed, the subscript written by the supplementary superscript. Derrida states, "*The thing itself is a sign*" (*Grammatology*, 49) and "from the moment that there is meaning there are nothing but signs" (*ibid.* 50). As the subscript one might say that the Thing is the signature testifying to its existence.²³ Revelation does not present a being, but revelation makes a sign. The Thing not only does not simply present itself but it only is *under* the supplementation of signification. If $A=A$ denotes the self-presence of representational intentionality, $A=B$ "marks" the supplementation of novelty. A never simply shows itself but becomes a sign-event in the *différance* of $A=B$. The Same, A, only even comes to be as a self-same, $A=A$, by means of the

22 "Et non seulement l'objet simple, et non seulement le sujet pur n'existent pas en droit, avant le mélange qu'ils sont censés former, mais au contraire c'est la synthèse idéalement équilibrée qui est première. Le composé est plus original que le simple !"

23 According to Peirce's "phaneroscopy" or "phenomenology" manifestation comprises the idea of the sign.

contingency of the heterogeneous sign, $A=B$. Meaning has no subsistence at all apart from the signification of the material signifier.

If the question why there is something and not nothing may be translated as the question why there is meaning at all rather than insignificance, then one may only answer that this is because Being has excreted as refuse everything that it is not in order to appear as the self-identical A that is wholly other than any and all of its revelatory sign-events. That which comes to presence, the sign, does as much to reveal as to betray. The subtext is only the product of the given text and yet also only revealed by the same. The signifier is completely contingent and yet inextricably tied to the being of the thing itself. The sign is not the sign for something, e.g. the signified, but the very sense itself. The thing could not be without it and yet could have been something completely other than what it is under that particular inscription. With a new inscription the old passes out of being as the novel passes into being. The inscription is the original repetition; repetition supplements the original and yet is more original than the origin. One can only question the fact that there is something and not nothing *per posterius*, i.e. through the posterior in order that a *prius* might arise as the retroactive deposit of supplementation. One can only retroactively say that consonance reigned before there was something rather than nothing. That something is there results from the supplementation of the consonant with the aspiration of the vowel. The vowel drives a wedge into consonance in order to make a place for itself. The vowel supplements the consonance of nature by drawing a liaison – a relation – in monotonous consonance.

Part IV
The Future:
Advent

Chapter 8

Intimations of the Future and Concluding Remarks

Man was sketched (*entworfen*) as the image of God and, by extension, the image of Being in the creation, but through his own deed he was exiled or abjected (*verworfen*) from this composition (*Wesen*), resulting in depravity (*Verworfenheit*) and the resolution of forces, i. e. the decomposure or decomposure (*Verwesung*) of the potencies. In Paradise, which in Hebrew and Greek literally means “enclosed and nurtured space (*umhiegter Raum*)” (Schelling, *Urfassung*, 217), Man occupies the center space, free from the periphery composed by the cosmic causes, coddled (*eingehegt*) within them as free and non-substantial. With the deed Man falls abject, exiled unto the expanse or space as unlimited extension. Quantitative extension replaces the qualitative spatium. In this fallen world of mere extension, corporeality replaces matter. Authentic images or every εἶδος is lost and everything happens without purpose and destination; this world is not ensouled. Temporally considered, this world consists in the nauseous repetition of the same. There is nothing new under the sun and everything is vain. The time of this world does not have a true past and future, diagnoses Schelling, but only distinguishes itself through the returning of the same and its passing away (*Einleitung*, 136). The continuity of time’s flow ensures the return of the same and prescinds the possibility of discontinuous rupture or substantial change. The temporality of dynamic, differential spacing – as in the creation – gives way to a time indicated by $a+a+a$ and not $a+b+c$. The same returns as a recurrence of the present without a genuine past or future. The problem of time coincides with the problem of meaning or nihilism, because this time perpetually births without ever generating anything new.

Even this work’s favorite scapegoat, Walter Schulz,¹ affirms that nihilism results from the hegemony of the present and presence in which

1 For yet another critique of Walter Schulz’s now canonical reading of Schelling as the culmination of the metaphysics of presence see pgs. 201–203 of Albert

nothing new could ever appear. If Schelling fulfills the tradition of presence, as Schulz argues, then he also fulfills the history of nihilism; yet, his sole purpose is to overcome it. Time, for Schelling, is not seamless mediation but only admits of a genuine future if something other than the same, i.e. novelty, could advene. The time of $a+a+a$ is really not a time at all because it does not admit of real advance, though it never stops moving. At least if everything were standing still, this would be understandable, but everything compulsively moves and still nothing happens. The homogeneous time of pure continuity prescind ruptures, transforming time into an empty space with the result that temporalization itself gives way only to things that would move *through* this vacuous time, this empty receptacle of space-time. In this nauseating pseudo-time there is no escape from the consequences of nihilism. One must surely agree with Walter Benjamin's remark: "What we experience will be sorrowful and only in the inexperienceable can courage, hope, and meaning be given foundation" (*Selected Writings Vol. I*). Nothing *in* time brings healing, only new temporality.

Schelling poignantly states that the world itself is only *a* time, a member of true time (*Urfassung*, 138). True time promises novelty, not $a+a+a$ but $a+b+c$. Contemporary philosophy criticizes presence and its concomitant return of the same but, as Alain Badiou accurately describes, "Contemporary philosophy combines the deconstruction of its past and the empty awaiting of its future" (*Ethics*, "(Re)turn," 114). Wanted is the surpassing, not destruction, of the metaphysics of presence without the nihilistic consequence, a real future and not vacuity. In lamenting the state of contemporary philosophy, Badiou further writes, "The modern sophists are those that, in the footsteps of the great Wittgenstein, maintain that thought is held to the following alternative: either effects of discourse [Foucault], language games [Wittgenstein and Derrida], or the silent indication, the pure 'showing' of something subtracted from the clutches of language" (*ibid.* 115). Schelling's philosophy shatters the metaphysics of presence without foregoing all doctrinal/kerygmatic elements. He avoids traditional metaphysics without ending in nihilism or simply the empty hope for novelty *qua* novelty. Schelling hints at a Future that is not just the next link in the Present time but one of an entirely different order. Schelling finds the rupture putting an end to the Present

Franz's *Philosophische Religion: Eine Auseinandersetzung mit den Grundlegungsproblemen der Spätphilosophie* F.W.J. Schellings. Hggbn von Rudolph Berlinger und Wibke Schrader.

time and opening onto the Future in his Christology. The intention here is not to proselytize but briefly to show how his analysis of the special revelation or his Christology coheres perfectly with the rest of his philosophy without lapsing into religious zeal or a positivistic totality, which always hovers dangerously close to totalitarianism and fanaticism. After analyzing his account of the revelatory Christ-event, an overall synopsis will be given that deals with Schelling's late philosophy as a whole and its relation to the critique of the metaphysics of presence.

1 The Man-God as Exemplary Repetition/Copulation

All Christological heresies, argues Schelling, begin with two natures (II/4, "2ter Teil," 184) and then are never able to unite them. Dualism and parallelism suffer under the same problem. Once one begins with parts outside of parts, never the twain shall they meet again. Schelling, inversely, narrates how the one being acquires an identity at all by manifesting itself in two natures. If one begins with two natures, divine and human respectively, and then either asks how the divine becomes human or the human divine, one embarks upon a losing game. Schelling's Christology begins with the spoken Word, neither the Wisdom-moment prior to the creation nor the implicit word concealed in A⁴ as that which is willed in the creation, but the Word already separated from God as a result of the Fall, the second potency brought into independence. Set outside of God in the Fall, it does not function by nature and necessity dependent upon whether A¹ is in potency or act, but it functions freely and independently. Here one finds that which is no longer God, God-positing or God-mediating by nature, but that which, if it chooses to affirm its unity with God, does so only decisively. Remember, however, that all divine acts operate *per contrarium*. If this estranged Word, estranged from God by Man's Fall and so also called the Son of Man, should affirm its kinship with God, then it does so only by decisively affirming its humanity.

If one begins with two natures, then one assumes either that the human raises itself to divinity or that the divine debases itself to the level of humanity. In other words, one would have to think of the consequent identity as an atrocious *mixture* of two contradictory natures. If one gives primacy to the divine nature, for example, then one has no other choice than to think the incarnation as a "removal of the godly (*Entgottung*)" (*ibid.* 187). Of course, what is wanted is neither a contradiction or a suspension of one of the natures, nor a compromised mixture

of the two, but that each be there as a whole. The Word, given its outer-divine condition due to the Fall, has already been removed from the godly; it is an outer-divine divine. From this unitary substance and not from a composite of two natures the analysis must proceed. The divine and human natures are not shared but the outer-divine divine is its own peculiar nature, something different and prior to each of the other two natures, not a third nature but that which must decide for a nature, for kinship with God or independence from Him. This decisiveness reveals one Person or one will under two forms. The human cannot be a clothing donned by God but it is the condition of His revelation just as the material signifier is the condition without which the meaning, substance or subject could not even be at all. As Schelling elsewhere states, the common, indefensible theory that begins with two distinct and non-synthesizable natures “does not distinguish between the pure or *simpliciter* being of God and...the *How* of God’s being” (Schelling, *Urfassung*, 539),² the *form of* or His existing *as* God. Also, for the traditional theories even the subject of the incarnation is only God *simpliciter* and not the outer-divine divine, i.e. the generated Word.

Under Schelling’s view, God *simpliciter* does not become human but the Word as something already other than the two natures, neither divine nor human as such but a third thing, the liminal. Jesus of Nazareth, the historical subject of the incarnation, manifests God because, as Jesus the Christ, he is said to share the same will as God. Remember that the execution of a will is what reveals and manifests the person as that particular person. If Jesus is a transparency for God’s will, sharing the same will, then his personhood is God’s. The identity between divinity and humanity is not at all substantial but personal. They are not the same substance but one Person. According to the substance Jesus was wholly human, but the personhood, the divine aspect, is more than substantial (*das Übersubstantielle*) (*ibid.* 542). The God who is beyond being and beyond all substance is one and the same who exists as Person in the human substance that is Jesus the Christ. There is no mixture whatsoever of divinity and humanity, nor the descension of one or the ascension of the other. Before the incarnation there was not a mixture of substance but only the one Word that is itself not something properly substantial but that binding all substances into self-sames. In Jesus as the Christ divinity is revealed, “visible” as it were, without having undergone a change of substance;

2 “Die gewöhnliche Theorie unterscheidet nicht zwischen dem reinen oder simpliter Gott Sein und...dem *Wie* Gott Sein...”

for, that which is not substantial certainly cannot undergo a change of substance. The incarnation does not alter the divine substance but, in fact, reveals it precisely by showing it too be the most untouchable, unalterable aspect. Schelling attempts to show that, as Hans Michael Baumgartner³ states it, “the humanity of Jesus Christ is not that which conceals his godliness but rather that which first and foremost reveals godliness” (*Friedrich*, 188).⁴ Christian Danz’s great work best illustrates how the incarnation reveals rather than conceals the divine, how Jesus could not have been the Christ any other way than by humbling himself as man.

Danz reminds that just as the second potency only mediates the path to the third as the fulfillment of the divine by sacrificing itself, by denying itself in order to return itself to a state of potency and subservience, likewise Jesus is only Christ and only incarnates God by denying rather than affirming and exalting himself. The second potency could only mediate to the third if it yielded, i.e. if it materialized itself in order to become subject to that which follows. Danz writes, “For, as long as the second potency is itself in being, it negates the third potency. The accomplishment of the incarnation of Christ, which is perceived by Schelling in its first moment as a materialization, can...only be understood as the accomplishment of the Trinitarian God.” “The becoming man of Christ is his becoming God” (*philosophische*, 78).⁵ The incarnation is the same as divinization. There is not divinization without incarnation. Jesus could only be the Christ and Son of God by accepting full humanity. In this way can one see that the two natures, the divine and human, only are there at all through this deed that is both incarnation and divinization, becoming human only by rejecting divinity from nature/substance and becoming God only by affirming full humanity. It is the act executed *per contrarium*; the exemplary repetition or event/act of copula-

3 Baumgartner espouses a form of the Schulzian interpretation of Schelling, yet he also admits that, in this article, he does not consider Schelling’s concept of experience and epochal deeds (“Vernunft” in Hasler, *Schelling*, 190–191). These are two of the most essential and determinative aspects of his late lectures. If one discards these, then *de facto* one could only have reason and its necessary mediation.

4 “Die Menschheit Jesu Christi ist darum nicht das Verbergende seiner Göttlichkeit, sondern das die Göttlichkeit allererst Offenbarende.”

5 “Denn solange die zweite Potenz selbst Seiende ist, negiert sie die dritte Potenz. Der Vollzug der Menschwerdung Christi, der von Schelling in seinem ersten Moment als Materialisierung in den Blick genommen wurde, kann...nur als Vollzug des trinitarischen Gottes verstanden werden.”...“daß die Menschwerdung Christi seine Gottwerdung ist.”

tion. Two natures are not conjoined from without but the very difference between the two only first arises in the deed that severs each from the other. The severance of the two is their very genesis. The decisive point is not the nature of Jesus but the deed of Jesus, not his substantiality but his concrete life. One begins historically with the concrete life of Jesus, not in metaphysical speculation about his substance. Prior to his death on the cross his humanity and mortality had not yet been completely affirmed and so also prior to this historical deed God was not yet fully revealed in him. The Spirit would not have come had he not drank this cup. The third only comes through the self-denial of the second.

Jesus as Christ is God not substantially but personally and the Person of God only reveals Himself in fullness *per contrarium*, i. e. by denying being for Himself and by never permitting Himself to be present as He is. Danz explains, "In this respect the incarnation cannot sublimate the personality of the Son as he has become human, as this rather first and foremost constitutes this [personality]." "Only because this subject has decided for the Father, for unity with Him, has it become human." "The subject is understood essentially from the relation" (*ibid.* 91).⁶ One does not begin with divinity as one *relata* and humanity the other only to ask how they may be united, which is a great absurdity, but the *relata* may only be understood and even be at all from the copulating of pure relation. The unity enacted by the more primordial differencing of copulation is neither contradiction nor equivalency but truly synthetic, i. e. generative of novelty – the two *relata*. The substance of God did not become human any more than the human was raised to divinity, but the same outer-divine divine repeats *as* both God and human. The one subject manifests itself *as* God-Man and beforehand, i. e. before it decided for this essence, it was as if a non-entity. In other words, from eternity forth this decision had always already been made, although the effects of the deed are deferred. Jesus only receives the divine attributes, so-called, in and through the incarnation and death on the cross, which is the nail that finally realizes the full difference between the divine and human as a freely wrought deed. Paradisiacal Man fell by trying to affirm his divine

6 "Insofern kann die Menschwerdung nicht die Personalität des Sohnes als Menschgewordenem aufheben, da sie diese vielmehr und allererst konstituiert."... "Denn nur weil dieses Subjekt sich für den Vater entschieden hat, für die Einheit mit ihm, ist es ja Mensch geworden."... "daß das Subjekt wesentlich aus der Relation heraus verstanden wird."

position; Jesus as the Christ gains the position once and for all by renouncing it. Take omnipotence as an example. The Christ only manifests this attribute by renouncing it. Danz writes, "Christ is human in relation to the Father and as such a full transparency for the Father or, as Schelling plastically says here, through his willing he is a vacuum. Exactly in this giving-oneself-away, in this radical self-renunciation the divine manifests itself and therein the Son has his own self. The omnipotence is thus to be ascribed to the Father who is active in Christ" (*ibid.* 95).⁷ Everything operates *per contrarium* because the workings of difference precede the hegemony of identity.

Identity, then, never marks the end of a natural or dialectical process but the effect of a freely wrought deed. "For God does not need the world and even the Fall of the world does not influence Him adversely in His being as God. That He nonetheless does not let the world become lost is the incomprehensibility that shows itself in the death of Christ as a not to be mediated truth." "The accomplishment of God's unity is not an immediate truth of reason" (*ibid.* 124).⁸ This event, should one interpret it this way, is truly revelatory, illuminating a truth that could not have even been thought possible apart from its historical actuality, which is the earmark of originality. Schelling sees in this happening the event of the creation repeated, the copulating, differencing repetition that not only severs the Present epoch from the Past one but also proclaims that it has set into motion the advent of the Future. The Past can no longer swallow the Present time; this event promises to break the circularity of the Present time in which the past recurs over and over again rather than decisively repeating once and for all. Identity does not exist but is on the way, its advent never again to be threatened by the recurrence of what has always already been. All cycles are broken and something novel has truly made a difference.

7 "Christus is im Verhältnis zum Vater Mensch und als solcher völlige Transparenz für den Vater, oder wie Schelling hier sehr plastisch sagt, durch sein Wollen ist er ein Vakuum. Und gerade in diesem Sich-selbst-weggeben, in dieser radikalen Selbstentschlagung manifestiert sich das Göttliche und darin hat er als Sohn sein eigentliches Selbst. Die Allmacht ist so dem in Christus wirkenden Vater zuzuschreiben."

8 "Denn Gott bedarf der Welt nicht, und auch der Fall der Welt beeinträchtigt ihn nicht in seinem Gottsein. Daß er dennoch die Welt nicht verlorengehen läßt, ist die Unbegreiflichkeit, die in dem Tod des Christus als unmittelbare Wahrheit sich zeigt." ... "der Vollzug der Einheit Gottes, ist keine unmittelbare Vernunft-wahrheit."

2 Difference and Identity

The revelation creates a *novel* relation by first bringing the *relata* into being. It keeps the past from hardening against real futuration by positing a real beginning – a break – and not just the recurrence of the same. The identical or the same – as self-same – does not stand at the origin in the Past immemorial but in the Future, visible only in its advent. Contra the Schulzian interpretation, Schelling does not begin in presence with an identity from which all differences must be mediated through a necessary dialectic that would allow one to know the future in advance of its happening. Antoon Braeckman, who also rightly distances himself from the Schulzian interpretation which can only view Schelling as the culmination of metaphysics as presence, comments:

A revelation is a deed, which is not to be understood *a priori* and in that sense is not necessary, through which something becomes knowable (visible) that otherwise would be impossibly knowable. A revelation is therefore *not* to be equated with an objective becoming. It is...a becoming visible of something that itself cannot at all possibly become object. In a revelation, it concerns a subject that shows itself by means of something “other” (a deed and its result) through which this “other” receives an indexical or symbolic character in view of the subject. Applied to the Absolute this holds in that the Absolute primarily cannot be *made* into an object *as* Freedom, but only in that it can *reveal* itself as absolute Freedom in and through “something other” without ceasing to be Freedom (“Voorbij,” *Tijdschrift*, 436)⁹

The Absolute, Freedom, whatever one calls it, consists in difference and not identity. Identity must come to difference as futural supplement. Differences and not the same are what is; the same is what comes to be. The future promise is for all, that which is truly indifferent to differences, yet also without nullifying them. This promise of future identity is that which is truly different, truly other than the present recurrence of the same. For Schelling, true historicity is not the seamless flow of homoge-

9 “Een openbaring is een daad, die niet *a priori* in te zien en in die zin niet noodzakelijk is, waardoor iets kenbaar (zichtbaar) wordt wat anders onmogelijk kenbaar zou zijn. Een openbaring is dus *niet* gelijk te stellen met een objectief worden. Het is veeleer een zich tonen, een zichtbaar worden van iets dat zelf onmogelijk object kan worden. In een openbaring gaat het om een subject dat zich toont door middel van iets ‘anders’ (een daad en zijn resultaat) waardoor dit ‘andere’ een verwijzings- of symboolkarakter krijgt ten aanzien van dit subject. Toegepast op het Absolute houdt dit in dat het Absolute weliswaar niet *als* Vrijheid *geobjectiveerd* kan worden, maar dat het zich als absolute Vrijheid kan *openbaren* in en door ‘iets anders’ zonder op te houden Vrijheid te zijn.”

neity but epochal rupture or genuine (re)commencement. Being is commencement, the advent of a new order that breaks with the Past and progresses towards the Future.

Difference precedes the same or identity, but the repetition of Difference, that which institutes actual differences, does not differ from a given unity but first promises a future unity. The repetition of Difference, rather than deferring from a given identity, “must be articulation and connection in itself; it must relate different to different without any mediation whatsoever by the identical, the similar, the analogous or the opposed. There must be a differentiation of difference...by virtue of which the different is gathered all at once rather than represented on condition of a prior resemblance, identity, analogy or opposition” (Deleuze, *Difference*, 117). This is why Difference does not lead to contradiction but synthesis, i.e. identification; it is because Difference does not negate a given identical but first brings identity into being in the act of differentiation. If Christ’s humanity were the negation of his divinity, then the story is absurd, but if the differentiation of the two natures corresponds to their genesis, then the difference is not negation or deferral from the given identity but generative of novelty. For Schelling, contra Schulz, one can rightly say that Being is commencement, Difference breaking from itself as difference in order to usher in the synthesis of the Future time in which all will be in all as the utterly articulated unity. Again with Deleuze, “If ‘being’ is above all difference and commencement, Being is itself repetition, the recommencement of being” (*ibid.* 202).

In the doctrine of the potencies the three determinations were all *modes* of the One. That is the doctrine of simplicity. With the revelation, however, now all three *are* the One. This indicates the historical nature of the Trinity. The three Persons of the Trinity, depending upon which one is dominant, constitute three different times. The Past Schelling calls *tautousie*, the Present *heteroousie* and the Future *homousie* (II/4, 66, “Zweiter Teil”). One can see how the Future promises the coming of the self-same. The thetic Same arrives. Schelling shows how each of the first two times corresponds to different Christological heresies with *tautousie* corresponding to Sabellianism and *heteroousie* to Arianism (*ibid.* 67). The second progresses farther than the first heresy at least insofar as it avoids nominalizing the Trinity by affirming that the separation of the divine and human natures is real. The heresy corresponding to the third time is tritheism, which says that three are one only according to divinity and not according to substance (*ibid.* 68). In other words, this would not be able to recognize successive polytheism as the historical as-

sumption of monotheism but would only see in it a simultaneous polytheism. This would somehow view Difference itself as pluralistic, i.e. parallelism, rather than as plethora or multiplicity, i.e. the one manifold. This would only view the unity of the three as a nominal unity under the generic term (*Gattungsbegriff*) of divinity. The three do not share a common genus but are rather singular repetitions of the Same. Schelling analogically states that Jacob, Peter and John are not three instantiations under the genus of humanity (*ibid.*). The proper unity of the three figures of the Trinity, while not substantial *per se* and determined by the personal character of the will, is also not the merely nominal unity of a genus or concept. They do not exist parallel to each other but share a real point of contact in the moment of tautousie. Difference precedes identity but Difference is not the parallelism of plurality but the non-identity of the Multiple or Manifold.

Schelling's work, at all levels, even when speaking of the special revelation, clearly precociously deals with themes of Deleuzian Difference, Heidegger's ontological difference and Derrida's *différance* already in the 1830s and 1840s. In this way Schelling first surpasses metaphysics as presence before its critique even came to explicit formulation. He answers *the* question of contemporary philosophy. Badiou aptly states:

The general question of the status of the event in relation to the ontology of the manifold...and on how not to reintroduce the power of the One to such an extent that the manifold law ends up failing, is...the main question of any contemporary philosophy. This was all pre-constituted with Heidegger in the slide from *Sein* to *Ereignis*, from Being to his conception of the Event. ... This is also a decisive problem for Nietzsche: if the task is to break the history of the world in two, what is the thinkable principle of such a break in the absolute affirmation of life? It also happens to be Wittgenstein's central problem: how does the act open up onto a silent access to the "mystical element," that is, to ethics and aesthetics, if sense is always captive of a proposition? In each of the aforementioned cases, the latent matrix of the problem is the following: if by "*philosophy*" one must understand both the One's jurisdiction and the conditioned subtraction from this jurisdiction, how can philosophy seize what is happening? (*Briefings*, 61)

Schelling clearly allots a space for that other than what is in being, other than ontology or theology, i.e. other than onto-theology or metaphysics as presence. He begins neither with identity, nor with a self-same, nor with what is in being nor with the enframing of the One, but with Deleuzian Difference itself. This is rather that *from* which he begins; actual commencement only occurs with the event of the deed or Heidegger's move from Being to Event. Difference itself only institutes actual differ-

ences in the event of ontological difference, the primal event of copulation.¹⁰ The copulating, differencing event of the creation corresponds to Heidegger's ἀλήθεια, the freedom of God. The freedom of the human being manifests itself at the same place it was lost, namely in the Fall or the institution of the false, the perverted repetition of the first truthing. Schelling, then, does not speak of one clearing but, in fact, three. The first is the creation and is the clearing or differencing of truth. The second – actually an “unclearing” – clears the false by distorting the difference from openness into concealment. Now differences hide more than they reveal.

Temporally, the clearing of the creation is the Past event and the Fall the Present. The Future clearing must reinstitute truth by overcoming historical concealment. This event, argues Schelling, occurs in Christ, but the Christ-event does not usher in this Future but it only announces its imminent advent, i. e. it is not yet the time of glorification. The Future arrives indefinitely. The nihilism of Being may have been instituted by Man in the second clearing, the Fall, but its overcoming does not advance through any of his own strategies but one must await the Future happening. The Future is Messianic. Whether it be in the creation of the Future restoration, to think unconcealment, to think the event and truth of Being, is to overcome the metaphysics of presence.

Whether the creation, the Fall or the event of the Future, these clearings do not *self*-differentiate and *self*-actualize but happen on account of a dephasing or, using Schelling's rhetoric from *Initia Philosophiae Universae*, *Entsetzung* (dephasing/dehiscing/depositing). Alterity demands response and the very response first lays the ground of the *self*-same that one attributes with this response. The responding precedes the one who actually responds and is responsible. Alterity – the interstice – shows one one's own freedom and self-identity. Of course, dephasing or *Entsetzung* may have both a good and a bad meaning, good in the creation and the healing of the Future but bad in the Fall. The dephasing

10 Although this has been called “*Entäußerung*” in the third chapter one must take care to understand exactly what that did and did not mean in that context. Albert Franz states, for example, “Schelling repudiates the concept of kenosis: God rather lifts himself into Himself, into His divinity, insofar as He is creator; He steps into His own divinity” (XIV, 353). [Schelling weist den Begriff der Entäußerung ab: Gott ‘erhebt sich vielmehr in sich selbst, in Seine Gottheit, dadurch daß er Schöpfer ist, er tritt eben damit in Seine gottheit’ (XIV/353).]” (*Philosophische*, 274). Kenosis does not mean that something already present simply exposes or presentifies its contents but it is the creative betstowal or investiture of novelty.

instigating the creation resulted in the origination of sense (*Sinn*) from non-sense (*Wahnsinn*), while the Fall resulted in a loss of sense (*Unsinn*) and meaning. The Future event must lead to the reactivation of sense from the clutches of nihilism, i.e. it must lead to *Be-sinnung*. That which is aware and in possession of its own meaning and identity, the unchanging self-same, does not stand at the beginning, but as the ever-approaching and asymptotic end. Certainly, anything unchanging – given, at least, that it could change but decisively does not – inspires deep respect and the opposite decreases esteem. Those who constantly change appear to be perpetually in flux and uncertainty. Even when the deed is great, one can never be certain that the individual will not later act timidly and against her prior resolve. She who has decisively excluded from herself manners of being other than the present one stamps her existence with indissolubility, i.e. with an integrity that no other may disintegrate.

Difference, in the Deleuzian or Heideggerian sense, precedes Identity or the Self-Same. Consequently, a picture of time as differencing temporalization rather than the flow of a unity emerges. The final form of difference Schelling anticipates well before his time is Derrida's *différance*. God, for example, is never present but only exists by decisively rejecting as inappropriate the totality of what can exist. His propriety consists in His expropriation of all properties. The running proof of His existence, then, finds its evidence in the totality of what is as that which cannot be attributed to God. This aligns with Badiou's description of Derrida's task: "What is at stake in Derrida's work...is the *inscription of the non-existent ...the inscription of the impossibility of the non-existence as the form of its inscription*" (*Pocket*, 132). If ontological difference means Being can never be present as itself, then it is only inscribed in beings under erasure. Beings comprise what God is not but also what nevertheless *could* not have even been possible without God's unprethinkable deed. The process dehiscing God from the totality of possibility – the impossible inscription – first makes beings not just actual but even possible. The creation is not just the institution of difference, but novel, original difference unforeseeable in advance of its actuality. The inscription both is and is not the thing itself. There is nothing but disproportionate signs of God's existence, that without which He could not be in His own propriety, yet none of these signs actually signify the being of God at all.

3 The World Law Revisited in Light of the Transcendentals

Horst Fuhrmans does not over-exaggerate in saying that the question as to why there is anything at all rather than nothing constitutes the center of Schelling's latest work (*Initia*, Endnotes, note 31, pg. 242). As response, one can only affirm that the freedom of the Absolute alone answers this question. Freedom, however, is only genuinely free in the deed, i.e. as decided rather than at an accidental rest. More specifically, then, one must reply that there is something instead of nothing because Being as act and as essence, i.e. act and potency, *Daß* and *Was*, belong together in an eternal unity. This is Parmenides' law that where there is Being, there is thinking. This, again, as has been seen, is nothing other than the world law or law of decisiveness. Parmenides' statement is not descriptive but prescriptive. Being and thinking belong together because each ought to be decided, each ought to affirm its difference from the other. Nothing may remain undecided but, as Jankélévitch correctly states, "*Everything possible must arrive*"¹¹ (*L'Odyssée*, 198).¹² The law of decisiveness demands that all possibilities – the totality of what could be – must arrive and so it truly incites the clearing or truthing, the copulative act of the creation. Truthing, then, is not propositional or theoretical but an extended type of praxis, the execution of the prescription that all must be resolved.

Truth, then, despite being the consequence of the first clearing – the creation – admits of a "prior," that from which it departs insofar as it finds its incitation therefrom. This one may only call "the Good." The Good is older than the True because the True is only willed in the deed because of its desirability, namely the fact that it would be better if something would be instead of nullity. The Good prefers the Better and so it prefers the True and decided. The Good is pure, undecided freedom, but the ambivalent will of freedom can only will the Good, i.e. the Better, and so absolute freedom is, positively demarcated, freedom *for* the True, freedom *for* revelation. The will of the Good, as undecided, is beyond good and evil. These two are only decided or distinguished in the deed, the execution of the will. To complete the theory of the transcendentals, one might then argue that the result of this primordial execution

11 "Tout le possible doit arriver."

12 Jankélévitch continues to explain that this is, "understood well, less Spinozistic than it appears: because with Spinoza nothing *arrives*... [(La phrase) est, bien entendu, moins spinoziste qu'elle n'en a l'air : car chez Spinoza rien n'*arrive*...]"

of the will, the willed and decided good, is the Beautiful. The third repeats or doubles the primal. The Beautiful repeats the Good but now with a distinction between the one as the invisible will of the Good and the latter as the willed Good – the Beautiful or Glorification. The One results from this interplay of the transcendentals, the decisiveness that separates wheat and chaff by first bringing each into being. The One is not the source or the origin but the result, the willed, decided and segregated – in order to be made explicitly Holy – Good. Both good and evil as such are an excess to that which at rest is beyond good and evil. Each is a supplementation to resting Nature, i.e. they are both repetitions of it.¹³ The creative repetition is good and the repetition of the Fall institutes evil. At any rate, the Good is not emanatory but excessive supplementation and evil is not a deviation or negation from this emanation but also an excessive and positive supplement, but now as obscenity rather than an ornamental cosmetic that would enhance rather than detract. The creation is arranged, decorative adornment – the cosmos – and the Fall its perversion. The Fall does not negate or lack anything that was in the creation, it brings it into disarray and disarrangement. The Fall reverses the transcendentals so that the distorted or false becomes the presupposition of synthetic truth and actual evil becomes the presupposition to be overcome in order that goodness may not be effete. The ugly, that which has had its form broken, must be mended in order to be made beautiful again.

The Good wills the True; the True supplements the Good with goodness, i.e. with itself. The revelatory event supplements something with its own identity. One must ask now, as Badiou does, “Is truth what comes to Being or what unfolds Being?” (*Briefings*, 62). Both are accurate descriptions because what unfolds or, better, reveals is the supplement itself. Truth supplements blind, unprethinkable Being with cognoscibility, with something actually good to will. Only in the actual deed, however, can the Good properly come into its own as Good. Truth does not come to Being from without but supplements from within, providing the very condition of its own revelation. Paradisiacal Man, as the Truth or Understanding of Being, is the seat of all possibilities as he is the end of creation and the creation first made possible the totality of what is possible.

13 Pseudo-Dionysius has written, “...(H)e who surpasses everything also transcends the source of divinity, transcends the source of all goodness. This is possible if by divinity and goodness you mean...the inimitable imitation of him who is beyond divinity and beyond goodness...” (*Complete*, 263).

“(Man) would only be himself if he exhausts all possibilities; yet, these are infinite” (Danz, *philosophische*, 136).¹⁴ All possibilities must arrive. That is the world law, the prescriptive form of Parmenides’ statement. Man, even as seal and guardian of the creation, may act and fall due to the same “reason” as God, the incitation of Law. The Law demands that all possibilities, even evil ones, must arrive and, accordingly, Man stands open to the temptation of evil. That does not mean he had to fall, only that the *possibility* had to advene in order that Man could will or reject it *decisively*.¹⁵ Evil, just like goodness, is a repetition without reason, a novel repetition whose actuality could only be known once the deed is past. Evil is “without why” not in the sense that Marguerite Porete uses the phrase to denote the life of godliness, but evil is that which flares up “because it can.” Radical evil has no reason other than the fact that one could. Evil, however, acts from the will of the Good and in this sense it enacts a given power, an option that presents itself, without having created the very possibility of this option, which is what happens with the good will of the creation. Evil enacts a possibility that should never have been actual but remained potent.

In this context, Schelling offers an ingenious account of Satan in respect to the (World) Law. Satan operates within the divine economy until

14 “Denn er (Mensch) wäre nur er selbst, wenn er alle Möglichkeiten ausschöpft, doch diese sind unendlich.”

15 Joseph Lawrence helpfully comments that:

“...the exclusion of evil should in no way be equated with the exclusion of the ground (of possibility) of evil: freedom is also – is even before all else – the thing of the Good. The sought after Good is in fact nothing other than the letting be effective of the ground that makes evil possible, whereby man no longer attempts to subject the ground from which he lives, the “earth,” to himself but lets it preside in its own dimension as the bearer of the understanding. This allowance is not the suspension of life; it is the liberation of its creative essence. Schelling’s thinking accordingly aims not for an “end” of history in the sense of its closure, but rather for its accomplishment and realization [...daß die Ausscheidung des Bösen keineswegs mit der Ausscheidung des Grundes (der Möglichkeit) des Bösen gleichgesetzt werden soll: Freiheit ist auch – ist sogar vor allem – die Sache des Guten. Das erstrebte Gute ist in der Tat nichts anderes als das Wirkenlassen jenes das Böse ermöglichenden Grundes, wobei der Mensch den Grund, aus dem er lebt, die “Erde” also, nicht mehr sich unterzuordnen versuchte, sondern ihn in seiner eigenen Dimension als das Tragende des Verstandes walten läßt. Dieses Lassen ist nicht die Aufhebung des Lebens; es ist die Befreiung seines schöpferischen Wesens. Schellings Denken zielt dementsprechend nicht auf ein “Ende” der Geschichte im Sinne ihres Abschlusses, sondern auf deren Vollzug und Realisation.]” (Lawrence, *Schellings*, 138)

the work of Christ, says Schelling; for, with the appearance of Christ everything is decided and Satan's role in the economy comes to an end (*Urfassung*, 624). Satan's role as tempter is to dangle all possibilities. He is the vehicle by which all possibilities arrive. Satan is not evil himself but the agent that exposes every option that is still concealed (Schelling, II/4, 248, "Zweiter Teil"). The exposure of these options is the prerequisite for the glorification of God as He who has decisively overcome all evil. Satan's being stems from the double-edged principle of the ambivalent, undecided first, the *Sein-* and *Nichtseinkönnendes*. This principle is beyond good and evil without even the *nisus* to the True. It is indifferent even to own its own revelation. It is beyond good and evil and yet the life of both. Satan results from God's wrath or recalcitrance (*Unwillen*) (*ibid.* 252), obstinate toward all principalities. He manifests the wrath of God in the fallen world, His judgment upon it. The purpose of the creation was this recalcitrant will's subjection to non-being (*ibid.* 259) – but decisively so. God cannot allow that evil remain concealed under the Good without being overcome in the open, i.e. in the True.

Now, the true opposite of the philosophy of nature is the philosophy of revelation¹⁶ because revelation is the will of the super-natural. The will that does not will all possibilities but decisively excludes what should never come to presence is not a natural will but divine. The history of mythology is a necessary process within human consciousness without relation to a free or supernatural Cause. Only this way can humanity hope for more than just the fulfillment of a natural process, the fulfillment of nature or one's virtue, but one is again set into the position of freedom in order that one may decisively bring about an entirely new order. This is the difference between fulfillment and novel commencement. That the Law demands that all possibilities must arrive does not mean they

16 Even the reception of the special revelation, the Christ-event, can appear as heteronymous if it is not understood. Schelling calls the true religion that unites the historical revelation with the proper understanding of it philosophical religion. This free religion neither suspends the historicity of the Christ nor does it heteronomously experience it as a doctrine to which one must grant epistemic assent. Philosophical religion has all the outer conditions for understanding with the corresponding inner understanding. This religion remains historical, never sublimating its images and historical occurrences. In short, for philosophical religion Christ is not present to consciousness merely as a particular content but as living presence. "God does not reveal something but He enters into relation with human consciousness. [Gott offenbart nicht Etwas, sondern er tritt in ein Verhältnis zum menschlichen Bewußtsein.]" (Danz, *philosophische*, 48).

must all become manifest,¹⁷ only that they must all be decided – for or against, but one or the other. Salvation is not natural reconciliation but supernatural, residing in decisive fidelity and not in the virtuous fulfillment of nature. One authentically exists only in existing above nature. The human person is not without essence but above the essential and substantial.

4 Time and the End of History

Joseph Lawrence argues that the Christian aspect of Schelling's lectures on revelation...

...is so little something exclusive like the person of Christ himself... The truthfully universal church will not be based on the universalization of a particular form but on the liberation from every form, a liberation that simultaneously means the openness *for* every form. In order to access the higher life the Christian church in its particularity and exclusivity must also first of all die. The future church should bring humanity to unity but without suspending the variance of the cultures (*Schellings*, 196)¹⁸

17 Karl-Heinz Volkmann-Schluck has helpfully written,

"The truth holding sway in the Logos, the [World] Law... is indeed revelatory, but just as concealing... The Law... is therefore not of the type that it demands that nothing remains concealed, but everything becomes open. [Die im Logos waltende Wahrheit, das Gesetz... ist zwar offenbarmachend, aber ebenso sehr verborgend... Das Gesetz... ist also nicht von der Art, daß es fordert, daß nichts verborgen bleibe, sondern alles offenbar werde.]" (*Mythos*, 114)

The world law is not a law of presence, but a law of decisiveness, a law separating the present from the absent, being and non-being. Not as appropriate, however, is that Volkmann-Schluck nevertheless still aligns himself with the traditional Schulzian interpretation of Schelling in stating,

"The truth that Schelling's thinking follows is the [truth] that begins with the exclusive sovereignty of the Logos [and] the truth of metaphysics that completes itself in German Idealism. [Die Wahrheit, der Schellings Denken folgt, ist die mit der ausschließlichen Herrschaft des Logos beginnende, sich im Deutschen Idealismus vollendende Wahrheit der Metaphysik...]" (*ibid* 115)

18 "...ist so wenig etwas Ausschließliches wie die Person Christi selber... Die wahrhaft allgemeine Kirche wird nicht auf der Verallgemeinerung einer besonderen Gestalt beruhen, sondern auf der Befreiung von jeder Gestalt, einer Befreiung, die zugleich die Offenheit *für* jede Gestalt bedeutet. Um zum höheren Leben zu gelangen, muß auch die christliche Kirche, d. h. in ihrer Besonderheit und Ausschließlichkeit, zuerst sterben. Die zukünftige Kirche soll die Menschheit zur Einheit bringen, aber ohne die Verschiedenheit der Kulturen aufzuheben."

Positive philosophy is historical philosophy but historical philosophy does not impose a concrete τέλος on history, even in the Christ-event. History stands united under the experience of the unity of *Wollen*, not the unity of a concept or idea. This is the difference between teleology and eschatology. Neither reason nor the growth of an organism propels history forward, but deeds alone do this. History has no teleology, just as a will is directed towards an end (ἔσχατον) but does not nature forth/presence according to a teleological principle. History is without end though it has a trajectory. Wirth remarks, “Schelling, with his critique of presence and his unswerving protection of both the mystery of all origins and the unprethinkability of the future, is, in Arendt’s sense, the sworn enemy of all ideology” (*Conspiracy*, 239 (note)). This includes Christian ideologies.

To posit a concrete, temporal fulfillment of history is utopianism or a fundamentalist extremism. To place the end of history within history and not post-historically idolatrously gives ultimacy to something preliminary and conditional; it is fetishism. Here one encounters one of the rare moments in Schelling’s late philosophy in which the political plays a significant role. The perfect State, for him, is negative – in the sense given to it by Adorno – and not a positivistic end to history. Drawing the correct political consequence, Lawrence writes, “One must ask if Schelling’s relativizing of the State is to be assessed as Romantic renunciation from politics and flight into the innerness of the Spirit, whereby one may see in him a precursor to the fatal political immaturity of the Germans, or as an early warning against the very danger of totalitarianism...” (*Schellings*, 126).¹⁹ Speaking of the religio-political end to history, not the teleological but eschatological end, Christian Danz argues similarly. Politically, religiously or historically Schelling certainly demands an end, lest meaninglessness. The ends, however, are also the ruptures making novel commencement possible and not the fulfillment of a natural, teleological process but the hope of the will. Teleology and totalitarian fanaticism play no role in Schelling’s eschatology. Danz writes:

Indeed, Schelling speaks also of an end of history, but this [is] to be understood not in the sense of a closure but rather in the sense of an openness for

19 “Zu fragen ist, ob Schellings Relativierung des Staates als romantische Abkehr von der Politik und Flucht in die Innerlichkeit des Geistes zu bewerten sei, wobei man in ihm ein Vorzeichen der verhängnisvollen politischen Unmündigkeit der Deutschen sehen mag, oder als eine frühe Warnung gegen gerade diejenige Gefahr des Totalitarismus...”

the whole that is capable of integrating everything in its non-accountability. A teleology of history, which requires knowledge of the course of history, always absorbs the contingency and non-accountability of the events. ... The here advening, inaccessible Future, the unaccountably novel, makes every teleology impossible that knows about a determinate end of history (*philosophische*, 146)²⁰

Unlike in teleology, the end is not the *terminus*. Schelling's portrait of time and history is not drawn between two *termini* – beginning and end – but the *termini* act as ruptures first severing “before” and “after.” This severance first posits the origin and end. The origin has not realized itself until the end has been achieved, but the will first posits a ground only by positing an unground as a relative “before” and the accomplishment as an ever-advancing, messianic Future – that which can only arrive afterwards. One may measure the quantity between two *termini* but never the quality of “before” and “after,” of departure and advent. The Future is an advent, i.e. a sign of novel commencement and not telic completion. This precludes all inner-historical fanaticism and extremism, i.e. utopianism in all forms. Additionally, all possible political ideologies and totalitarian projects are prescinded. Being's “unsublatability” prevents the infinite and open movement of history from ever being enclosed by the hegemony of its cognoscibility, i.e. by a concept that would impose a telological law of normativity upon Being.

The Future impends but is nothing imminent nor something immanent within the concept. The Future is not conceptual but an imperative, the demand for the inception of the Good. God – He who gives precedence to the Better over the Worse – comes to be or withdraws not just by His own accord, but the inception of the Divine Life here on Earth is partly in the hands of humanity. All acts are eternally significant in the sense that they are either resolute and divine by giving priority to the better over the worse or they stall the approach of the Good in full rancor by hardening the possible futuration of the Past. These ones replicate the past again and again, their lives characterized by a+a+a and not by the novel

20 “Zwar redet auch Schelling von einem Ende der Geschichte, aber dieses ist nicht im Sinne eines Abschlusses zu verstehen, sondern eher im Sinne einer Offenheit für das Ganze, welche alles in seiner Unverrechenbarkeit zu integrieren vermag. Eine Geschichtsteleologie, welche ein Wissen um den Verlauf der Geschichte beansprucht, absorbiert immer die Kontingenz und Unverrechenbarkeit der Ereignisse.” “Die hier ankommende unverfügbare Zukunft, das unverrechenbar Neue, macht jede Teleologie, die um ein bestimmtes Ende der Geschichte weiß, unmöglich.”

repetition of $a+b+c$. C, the Future epoch, may never be present but it is nevertheless on the way. There is an escape from the nauseating Same that is nothing other than monotony. In this respect, the birth of the Kingdom of God on Earth does not rest in the hands of humans. Human beings can only prepare the way but the prepared path must be travelled by Being; something novel must simply happen – a novel event.

Despite the eternal ramifications of human beings' acts time is primarily Being's. There is no subject, no present entity, that temporalizes by undergoing an evolutionary development unto its teleological fulfillment.²¹ Temporality is completely asymmetrical, discordant and heterogeneous. It does not link before and after but creates them by drawing the breach between them. All subjects, including God, ensue from temporalization; they are its products not its condition. In this regard, Peter Koslowski remarks that the late Schelling is so historical that, in his view, Schelling "fell from one extreme into the other, from the pure theory of the system of identity into the pure history of the philosophy of revelation which just retells the story of the narratives of mythology and revelation" (*Discovery*, 36). This is a gross overstatement. That he could make it, however, displays just how radically one can and ought to read the late Schelling. All vestiges of the old metaphysics of presence have been completely abandoned in favor of a temporality even more original than Being. One cannot even properly view Being as an origin that temporalizes. As Derrida might write under erasure, ~~Being~~²² is a non-origin. ~~Eternity~~ as the Past epoch did not even precede history, the Present epoch. Eternity alone is that which one may call the ever-present, but eternity

21 Jean-François Courtine agrees that Schelling does not present a teleological picture and that this has to do with his surpassing of the metaphysics of presence. He writes, "This is a clean break with the dominant metaphysical tradition in which time is first of all given as present, whereas history only allows a teleological interpretation" ("Schelling" in *Companion*, 91). He also affirms that for Schelling "temporality is essentially determined as futurity" (*ibid.*).

22 From this point forward, though not in all possible instances due to its annoyance for the reader, a line will be drawn through all origins. This practice stems from Derrida but for this work the practice indicates three meanings. (1) The origin – Being, eternity, the Past, the Real, the Thing, indifference, Spirit – is under erasure. This is the meaning in Derrida. (2) The Future advenes and supplements the stricken through origin only by drawing a breach, i.e. by opening the cleft separating before and after. (3) Although, the line is drawn through the origin, so-called, one might also bear in mind that the origin, as the Real, breaks all its forms, the Ideal. The Real reciprocally breaks the boundaries that stand as the posthumous condition of its identity.

is not timelessness, not an endless stretching of duration, but pure transition, the essentially transitive. Eternity is not in time, not a part of time, some past that was, but eternity is pure temporalization. Eternity is decisiveness, separating wheat and chaff, Past and Future. Eternity is the present transition without an extended duration. The duration of the act is a non-extended presence, an absent presence that brings into being that which is, the Past that always already has been and the Future to come.

One might easily criticize Schelling's rumination on eternity as vestiges of metaphysics, but this Past never was. History is just as old as eternity because Past, Present and Future only come into being together and eternity executes the decisive deed that separates the three. Eternity is not the ground of the present time nor merely a chain in absolute time but the temporalizing of time, the timing of time. Hans-Joachim Friedrich writes of Schelling's *Freiheitsschrift* of 1809:

The differentiation of ground and existence is here traced back to an origin that is itself no longer a ground. With this Schelling's philosophy comes to a rupture and not only that [but] finally it comes to a rupture in the history of philosophy *as* a history of metaphysics. Meanwhile [it] has become questionable if the differentiation between ground and existence can still be comprehended as a relation between ground and grounded (*Ungrund*, 28–29)²³

Eternity does not presence but is the presence of decisiveness, which ruptures beginning and end, Past and Future, ground and grounded. Schelling's eternity is not a metaphysical residue but the very exemplary of post-metaphysical thinking. Eternity is not timelessness, not a *nunc stans*, but the very timeliness of time – though it can often be quite untimely. Eternity is not the ground of time but time itself, not that which lays the foundation for future transition but ungrounded, decisive transition itself. Friedrich writes:

The way into the unground leads as such to the surpassing of metaphysics. It no longer goes *above and beyond nature* (μετὰ τὰ φυσικά) to the highest ground of being (θεός); rather, it leads *behind* nature back into that which is preceded by the existence of things as well as the fathoming and grounding

23 “Die Unterscheidung von Grund und Existenz wird hier auf einen Ursprung zurückgeführt, der selbst kein Grund mehr ist. Damit kommt es zum Bruch in Schellings Philosophie. Und nicht nur das. Letzlich kommt es damit zum Bruch in der Geschichte der Philosophie *als* Geschichte der Metaphysik. Seitdem ist zumindest fraglich geworden, ob die Unterscheidung zwischen Grund und Existenz noch als Verhältnis zwischen Grund und Gegründetem begriffen werden kann.”

of them. On this way or “step back” lies that which Heidegger names the “turn” (*ibid.* 29)²⁴

The unground precedes both ground and grounded. The unground, however, is nothing. There is nothing that temporalizes, nothing that disperses itself as past and future, but the dispersion itself creates the antecedents and consequents. Originality exists, that which is only possible by first being actual, because time “things.” Creation is neither within nor outside time but the temporalization of time itself creates what later stands “within it.” Being is creation, otherwise there would not be time and Being would be reduced to the stable presence of the Identical. Being does not gather into an identitarian presence but, as creation, it stretches out in originary temporalization. Being is neither that which temporalizes nor something in time but it comes to-be as time. Being is essentially futural. Schelling was not a metaphysical thinker because ~~eternity~~ and ~~Being~~ are written under erasure; they are not the origins but they too also come to-be. *Nothing stands behind time.*

Alain Badiou writes of metaphysics, “It is because the One normatively decides on Being that the latter is reduced to what is common, reduced to empty generality. This is why it must also endure the metaphysical pre-eminence of beings. Metaphysics can be defined as follows: the *enframing* of Being by the One” (*Briefings*, 34). Schelling avoids metaphysics by placing the One in his eschatology instead of beginning with it as origin. History does not stand subordinated to the One; it does not derive from the One but the One advenes as novel supplement. The supplement is messianic, advening upon ~~Being~~ in order that Being might convene. Being commences and recommences only because time does not flow uninterruptedly but is rather fundamentally breach and rupture – intermitence. Time does not subsist between two *termini* but it posits both origin and end. Even in his philosophy of revelation, the Christ does not pronounce the end of history but closes an old epoch only in order to open time upon a never to be pre-accounted Future.

* * *

24 “Der Weg in den Ungrund führt als solcher zur Überwindung der Metaphysik. Er geht jetzt nicht mehr *über die Natur* (μετὰ τὰ φυσικά) hinaus auf einen höchsten Grund des Seins (θεός); vielmehr führt er *hinter* die Natur zurück in das, was sowohl der Existenz der Dinge als auch ihrer Ergründung vorausgegangen ist. In diesem Weg oder “Schritt zurück” liegt das, was Heidegger die “Kehre” nennt.”

The criticism of Western philosophy as a metaphysics of presence or onto-theology proved imperative as it is evident this tradition could only end in nihilism. This work, despite its adherence to Schelling, finds itself aligned with anti-postmodern thinkers like Alain Badiou. The task is to criticize traditional metaphysics without finding oneself thrown to the wolves of non-philosophy. Schelling historicizes ~~Being~~. ~~Being~~ only exists temporally and historically. ~~Eternity~~ was never “prior” to history as the ~~ground~~ of history. All epochs, even eternity, require the decisiveness of the rupturing deed. For Schelling – unlike Badiou – this is a deed and not chance. The kerygmatic Christian element of Schelling’s work cannot and ought not be set in suspension. It cannot be removed because the form stands as indispensable condition for both the reality and meaning of the ~~Thing~~. There is no ~~Thing~~ apart from its historical manifestation. ~~Eternity~~ is nought apart from history and ~~indifference~~ never existed in advance of difference. While things escape their form and are never reducible to them, the form still stands as condition of the being of things. Meaning is neither enclosed within form nor wholly outside it and independent from it. If meaning abides in rebirth, novelty or re-commencement, then *a breach must be drawn through the old*. The Thing, its abysmal aspect – Being – promises always to recommence by breaking the old wine skin. The Thing, however, is vacuous and meaningless apart from the skin burst asunder. Meaning abides in the Real but only as it proves to exceed the Ideal. Where Being is, there is thinking, but thinking cannot comprehend its condition any more than Being in its nudity can see itself *en brève* before it has been supplemented with its investiture. The investiture is a novel supplement, something other than the Thing. The investiture clothes and creates the Thing that inversely breaks it. This shattering breathes meaning and vitality into the consonance that would otherwise be a dead corpse. If the corpse is a body without meaning, then the meaning that overcomes nihilism must be that which always exceeds the boundaries of the body – the broken body and accomplished law.

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven:
a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build,
a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance,
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time
to refrain,
a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away,
a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak,
a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.

What does the worker gain from his toil? I have seen the burden God has laid
on men. He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity
in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from be-
ginning to end. I know that there is nothing better for men than to be happy
and do good while they live. That everyone may eat and drink, and find sa-
tisfaction in all his toil—this is the gift of God. I know that everything God
does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it.
God does it so that men will revere him.

Whatever is has already been, and what will be has been before; and God will
call the past to account.

Ecclesiastes 3:1–15

Schema of the Doubled Temporal Relations of the Creation and Mythology with Reference to the Corresponding Gods and Peoples

- I) Eternity = 0
 - 1) Divine essence (momenta) before it is as God, i. e. before it is Lord of Being
 - A) that which purely can be (*das rein Seinkönnende*)
 - B) that which must be (*das Seinmüssende*)
 - C) that which ought to be (*das Seinsollende*)
 - 2) Divine as God, i. e. as Lord of *Urpotenz* for Creation
 - 3) God as Creator, the momenta actually brought into separation and tension (*Spannung*)
 - A) Inorganic moment of creation
 - B) Organic moment of creation
 - C) Man as end of creation (actualization of a veritable fourth in God, *Seele, Wille*)
- II) History of Mythology (caused by Fall, the link between the pre-historical and historical)
 - 1) The chaos or non-moment (Janus) before a sequential, temporal succession.
 - 2) Superstitious religion of pre-mythological past – form of the inorganic
 - A) Sabism – Uranus (the relative one of the race of humanity; a-historical)
 - B) Urania and the first peoples (Dualism of Persia, Assyria, Babylonia and then Arabia. Urania (*Gaea*) split from Uranus, the above and the below, heaven and earth. Gaea first means earth and Uranus heaven as only now does the first become matter. Here is first time or a real succession, A+B, and not just the relative one.)
 - C) Battle between the again masculine Chronos, a Titan offspring of Gaea and Uranus, and the coming god.
 - a) Moment in which the first potency or Chronos dominates (Canaanites, Phoenicians).

- b) Beginning of actual and not just possible overcoming of the first (Phrygians & Thracians (Cybele)).
 - c) The past or first principle is fully overcome, but in varying ways; the beginning of the mythological, i.e. polytheistic, gods proper.
 - i) Egyptian – form of organic (animal form) – the body
 - Typhon
 - Osiris
 - Horus
 - ii) Indian – form of the soul stripped of the body – the soul
 - Brahma (dualistic moment of Buddhists)
 - Shiva
 - Vishnu
 - iii) Greek (see below) – form of man; anthropomorphism – the spirit as the unity of the body and the soul
- 3) Greek mythology as overcoming of past superstition
 - A) Hades – Persephone
 - B) Poseidon – Demeter
 - C) Zeus – Athena=Persephone repeated and restored to virginity, enclosed but untouched by the potencies as in primal consciousness; abstinence.
 - a) Greek mysteries as prophetic; all three male counterparts are Dionysius
 - i) Zagreus – Persephone
 - ii) Bacchus – Demeter
 - iii) Iacchus – Kore (Iacchus=Demeter and Zeus' offspring; Kore=Persephone repeated as again virginal.)
- III) The Christ-Event and the Church
 - 1) Revelation (Son) and its preparation in the Old Testament
 - A) Moses/Law
 - B) Elijah – prophecy as critique of Law, pointing to its inner meaning
 - C) John the Baptist – proclamation of redeemer and fulfillment of Law
 - 2) Glorification (time of Spirit and its body, the Church) – John's time is its fulfillment
 - A) Peter/Catholic
 - B) (Jacob) Paul/Protestant
 - C) John – time of second coming, the full glorification

- IV) Eschatological Time
 - 1) The Time of Advent and Novelty
 - 2) A post-historical time that does not suspend the happenings of history
- V) Four fetishes that arrest time– China, Parsiism, Buddhism, Mohammedanism

Addendum

Artemis or Diana enacts the cause of the tension of Janus into three times or potencies.

Hermes dramatizes the unity that passes from the higher to the lower and vice versa, e. g. from Hades to Zeus. He stands as the principle uniting the groups of three into organic triumvirates. Hermes dramatizes the fourth potency, the repetition of the willed or decided aim, the εἶδος, *Wille* or Soul of the entire process. This is not the pre-synthetic, implicit unity of chaos or Janus but A⁴. Hermes dramatizes not the *logos endiathetos* but the *logos prophorikos*, the latter spoken word being the repetition and immaterial imaging of the prior. The three potencies, of course, comprise the material configuration of the immaterial image.

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