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Schelling

THE AGES OF THE WORLD

Number 3 of the
Columbia Studies in Philosophy
Edited under the Department of
Philosophy, Columbia University

Schelling

THE AGES OF THE WORLD

TRANSLATED WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY

Frederick deWolfe Bolman, Jr.

NEW YORK: MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS
1942

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FOREIGN AGENTS: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, *Humphrey Milford, Amen House, London, E.C. 4, England* AND *B. I. Building, Nicol Road, Bombay, India*

MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

To

My Mother and Father

FOREWORD

SCHELLING has never received due attention in this country. Even Royce, the greatest American interpreter of German idealism, treated Schelling somewhat slightingly, and expounded chiefly his early philosophy of identity—"the night," as Hegel called it, "in which all cows are black." The Schelling of the later period, briefly mentioned by historians like Thilly and Fuller, is almost unknown to American students of philosophy, and has not been available in translation. This later Schelling is dimly supposed to be on a lower level than the transcendental philosopher, perhaps even semisuperstitious.

It is fortunate that Dr. Frederick Bolman has taken time to translate one of the short and pregnant writings of this unknown Schelling. *Die Weltalter* was not composed in the mood of the twentieth century, but it is a work of genius which illumines with its speculations some of the most baffling problems of human destiny.

Modern advances in transportation make it relatively simple to conquer the provincialism of space. But the provincialism of time may afflict the most widely traveled. One can learn the lesson of other times with less facility than one can receive messages from other spaces. The provincialism of time may be conquered only in the realm of mind. Both the wisdom and the unwisdom of today assume new meaning when seen in the light of the great thinking of the past.

The reader is invited to join with Schelling in his struggle with spiritual reality. Whatever the logical positivists or the Barthians may have to say about the true, the certain, and the valuable, may be judged both more appreciatively and more critically if related to the insights of a mind like Schelling's.

The nature of time and eternity, and the old problems of freedom and necessity, of the rational and the irrational, of the light and the darkness of experience, are set by Schelling in new perspectives in this work. It is to be hoped that many will avail themselves of the access which Dr. Bolman here provides to one of the treasures of German philosophy. Participation in the mind of Schelling may serve as a needed reminder that the passions and struggles of the present do not reveal the whole truth about Germany or about eternal reality, and that even the most advanced modern thinking is less advanced than it would be if it had learned the lessons of the profoundest thought of the past.

If this work of the later Schelling is really mastered, a new impulse may be given to contemporary religious thought.

EDGAR SHEFFIELD BRIGHTMAN

Boston University
December, 1941

PREFACE

FRIEDRICH SCHELLING was one of Germany's greatest philosophers. This fact is not unknown to most students of the development of Western thought. His influence upon the course of transcendentalism was felt not only in Germany, but in England and America as well. His intense interest in the growth of the experimental sciences and his vision of the scheme of nature were not only immediately influential in Germany, but forecast a host of later developments. His philosophy of art has long been valued as a milestone in the history of aesthetics. These manifold early interests are known to Anglo-Saxon scholarship through various interpretative analyses. But for the most part, Schelling's later work is unknown to the English-speaking world. It is with the hope of bringing to light some aspects of this unknown work that I have written a brief introduction to, and presented for the first time in English, a short but significant monograph which is characteristic of Schelling's later thought.

My thesis, briefly stated, is that Schelling reoriented his transcendentalism and speculative theories of nature so as to present a more "realistic" interpretation of finite existence. A few interpreters have dealt with Schelling's theological development; some others have tried to present the realistic emphasis of his later metaphysics. No one, however, has tried to show in what way the theological and philosophical analyses of the later work were for Schelling but two aspects of one and the same problem. The unity of this twofold analysis made by Schelling should be added to what is already valued as part of his greatness.

The reader must be warned that he will here come upon thoughts which are not only as profound but also as difficult to master as, let us say, those of Plato and Aristotle or Descartes

and Spinoza. British and American interpreters of German metaphysics have long been in search of that linguistic philosopher's stone which will turn the most abstruse concepts and barbarous terms into the radiancy of Anglo-Saxon clarity and the king's English. While such attempts surely should be made, they have often intellectually failed to convey enough of the precise character of the original thought. In the Introduction, I have tried to soften somewhat the blow which the novice always feels on encountering speculative metaphysics; I have included a large number of rather nonliteral translations, while presenting as much of Schelling's own terminology as seemed necessary. The translation of *The Ages of the World*, however, has been more literal than literary. We have here a highly technical ontological discussion which would have been reduced to absurdity had linguistic fluency been the only criterion of translation. But even being literal is no guarantee of clarity, for German, like Greek, has a richer variety of verb forms than English. I would therefore warn the reader, as a well-known translator of Plato's *Republic* remarked after similar translational difficulties, that the subject of our study is not intentionally talking nonsense. There is a very real difficulty in developing one's own metaphysical language; there is even more difficulty in translating such a language.

Whatever value this work may have is in large measure due to many helpful suggestions given me by others. Professor Horace L. Friess of Columbia University has not only given continuous and inspiring counsel throughout the preparation of the entire volume, but has devoted countless hours to carefully checking the translation with the original text. Professors James Gutmann of Columbia University and Fritz Marti of the University of Maryland and Dr. Gerda Hartmann of the Library of Congress have also checked the entire translation with the original and offered many valuable suggestions. Professor Paul Tillich of Union Theological Seminary encouraged me to undertake the task of the translation and introduction; through his two works on Schelling, and many hours of personal conversation, his influence is evident throughout the volume. Professor E. W. Lyman's lectures on the philosophy of religion

and Professor J. H. Randall's exposition of the history of philosophy have also been influential upon my work. Naturally, however, I alone am responsible for any errors in translation or interpretation. For material assistance and encouragement in the preparation of this volume I wish to express my thanks to the Faculty of the Union Theological Seminary, the National Council on Religion in Higher Education, and the Leopold Schepp Foundation.

Finally, the greatest labor of love—the adroit handling of all clerical matters—has been carried out by my wife.

FREDERICK DEWOLFE BOLMAN, JR.

Columbia University
December, 1941

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INTRODUCTION

ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

S.W. These letters refer to Schelling's *Sämmtliche Werke*, edited by K. F. A. Schelling (J. G. Cotta, Stuttgart and Augsburg, 1856–61). This edition is in two divisions: Division I, 10 vols.; Division II, 4 vols. (The citation *S.W.*, I, 6:78 is to be interpreted *Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. K. F. A. Schelling, Division I, Vol. VI, p. 78.)

B. Reference is thus made to *Aus Schellings Leben in Briefen*, edited by G. L. Plitt (S. Hirzel, Leipzig, 1869–70).

[ ] Shaded brackets enclose German words quoted from the original for purposes of comparison. In so far as possible these are retained in the original form, with the capitalizations and divisions by which Schelling sought to stress root meanings; e. g., **["Da-sein"]**.

[ ] Plain brackets are used to enclose (1) English words interpolated by the translator and (2) italic numerals (in the translation) representing the corresponding pages of the original text; e. g., [*199*].

* † Symbols used in the translation indicate notes in the original text, made either by Schelling himself, or, when followed by "Ed.," by K. F. A. Schelling. The translator's notes are indicated by numerals.

Chapter One

THE TWOFOLD CHARACTER OF SCHELLING'S PHILOSOPHY

FRIEDRICH WILHELM JOSEPH VON SCHELLING (1775–1854) holds a unique position in the history of Western thought. He was one of the three greatest of the German idealists, both in intellectual stature and in his influence upon transcendentalism, the philosophy of nature and aesthetics. In this connection he has generally been given a place as the philosophic link between Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814) and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831). But after a decade of youthful fame and prolific work, he also became the first great critic of post-Kantian idealism—a fact rarely related by the historians of philosophy. This twofold character of his thought may be distinguished by his shift, in the interpretation of nature and history, from rational dialectic, which conceives the order and movement of existence to be the order and movement of reason, to what, for want of a better term, we may call existential dialectic, whereby Schelling attempted to find the meaning of existence by reconciling certain features of idealism with existential limitations.

From 1795 to about 1806, Schelling was largely engaged in the interpretation of the character of the movement of nature and history as limited by human consciousness and reason. The Newtonian mechanical world had been effectively razed by Hume and Kant a short time before; men could no longer naïvely declare the universe to be nothing but a perfect mathematical order of matter in motion, something quite apart from man and his view of things, without first dealing with the way

in which man's intellect operates in the process of knowing. Like Fichte, Schelling attempted to say what kind of universe we *can* know, once the critical questions have been answered as to how we know at all. Each in his own way applied positively Hume's and Kant's criticism and described the universe in terms of man's process of knowing. But while Fichte envisaged a world which is the scene of man's duty and condition of his moral freedom, Schelling, seeking greater objectivity, led the way to Hegelian absolute idealism. Attempting to unite a purely rational and therefore intelligible universe with the process of thought, he sketched a monistic system which conceived the perfect identity of being and thought, real and ideal, in one great dialectical evolution. Although in many important respects he differed widely from Hegel, Schelling's most substantial early accomplishment was nevertheless in essential agreement with the foundation of the later Hegelian dialectical monism and in no small way contributed to its genesis.[1] For both, the real was the process of reason progressing in the world by action and reaction to its consummation in the perfect, unified expression of truth. By following reflectively a logical dialectic which is one with the real movement of nature and history, philosophy was to know this world through and through. In this respect, nature and history were, for both, the gradual development of a universal mind through all its members toward its absolute or completed state of self-consciousness. Since this universal mind, which Schelling called the absolute identity and Hegel termed the idea, was functionally akin to the conception of the godhead in certain religious philosophies, this rational dialectic of nature and history approached a logical pantheism or panlogism.

Schelling soon tired of such a dialectic of logical necessity and its pantheistic overtones. In a sense the forerunner of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, he conceived voluntarism to be the ultimate critique of all forms of rationalism. The ground or moving force of nature and history became for him an inner,

[1] At first, in contrast to Fichte, Schelling stressed an intellectual intuition which immediately perceives the identity of thought and being in every particular. But with this concept of the immediacy of the identity of thought and being, he tried to harmonize that dialectic which Hegel later elaborated.

unreasonable impulse, which was intelligible only under the restrictive, formal power of reason. After 1806, his works evidence such critical dissatisfaction with that real which is merely rational. He wanted to reconstitute a monistic system that would do fuller justice to the duality of real and ideal in a universe which could not be presupposed to be rational; he reconsidered in critical terms his basic concept of the identity of thought and being. His first work which appears fully conscious of some of the problems raised by the theory of identity was *Of Human Freedom*, published in 1809.[2] *The Ages of the World*, here offered for the first time in English, was begun in 1811, but was published only after Schelling's death in 1854; it elaborates the theme of freedom both as criticism of the purely rational dialectic and as the initial stage in the construction of an existential dialectic.

Schelling's concept of freedom, introduced in his publication of 1809 and elaborated in subsequent lectures, was variously received in the contemporary philosophical circles of Germany. One of the first pronouncements upon the work on freedom coupled a vituperative tone with a charge that Schelling was a pantheist—one of the notions he was attempting to overcome.[3] Although Schelling was quick to reply to this misconstruction of his aim,[4] he became embittered by this and subsequent misunderstandings and refused to publish any major work clarifying his position. Except for a few articles in journals, his thought was known only through his lectures, first in Munich from 1806 to 1820, then in Erlangen from 1821 to 1826, and again in Munich from 1827 to 1841. During these many years Schelling was something of a mystery in intellectual circles; hearers of his lectures came away with fabulous reports of promises and declarations of an entirely new philosophy. As criticism of the Hegelian logic began to mount toward the close of He-

[2] Translated into English by James Gutmann (Chicago, 1936).

[3] Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, *Von den göttlichen Dingen und ihrer Offenbarung* (Leipzig, 1811).

[4] *F. W. J. Schelling's Denkmal der Schrift von den göttlichen Dingen . . . des Herrn Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi und der ihm in derselben gemachten Beschuldigung eines absichtlich täuschenden, Lüge redenden Atheismus* (Tübingen, 1812); reprinted in *S.W.*, I, 8:19–136.

gel's life in 1831, non-Hegelians of various parties appealed to Schelling as a leader:

> The empiricists saw in him a convert to empiricism; the pectoral theologians rejoiced over his attack on the deification of the Notion; the orthodox appealed to the fact that he put what was positive above all else; in short, every one believed that he might close his statements with the remark, that Schelling would doubtless say the same thing.[5]

Until Hegel's death in 1831, Schelling lectured much and published nothing of consequence. In 1834 he broke his literary silence long enough to attack Hegel in a Preface to Hubert Beckers's translation of Victor Cousin.[6] While he again lapsed into virtual silence with regard to publication, his lectures in Berlin from 1841 on developed in full his views on what we have called his existential dialectic. The unauthorized publication of highly critical abstracts of his earlier lectures, together with a verbatim report of the lectures in Berlin in 1841–42,[7] helped to make the already embittered Schelling resolve to leave the classroom for an increasingly solitary life, marked by one brief publication [8] and infrequent lectures.

But while Schelling's shift, after 1806, from rational to existential dialectic was both uncritically accepted by some and, perhaps equally uncritically, discounted by others, it was both typical and formative of post-Hegelian thought in the fields of metaphysics and philosophy of religion. The history of the complex period of German thought from 1830 until about the middle of the century is in no small measure a many-sided commentary upon the later thought of Schelling. During this era, warring journals, lengthy reflections upon the change being wrought upon philosophic thought, and various attempts at philosophical and theological reconstruction bear both direct

[5] J. E. Erdmann, *A History of Philosophy*, English translation, ed. by W. S. Hough (London, 1913), III, 12.

[6] Reprinted in *S.W.*, I, 10:201–24.

[7] H. E. G. Paulus, *Die endlich offenbar gewordene positive Philosophie der Offenbarung* (Darmstadt, 1843). Schelling brought suit against Paulus for this, but was unsuccessful in the case.

[8] His Foreword to *Nachgelassene Schriften von H. Steffens* (Berlin, 1846); reprinted in *S. W.*, I, 10:391–418.

and indirect trace of the later Schellingian development.[9] Yet many of the writers influenced in one way or another by the later Schellingian critique of absolute idealism gradually broke away from the source of much of their criticism. This was due partly to the unusual mobility of individual points of view, partly to the context of German thought at the time. When the Hegelian system was no longer a central issue, men ceased to relate their thought negatively to Hegel's in the fields of metaphysics, religion, and politics; Schelling's use to the critics of Hegel came to an abrupt end. But equally important, the new era of practical politics—the politics of money and steel—forced Schelling into something like total oblivion, for he contributed virtually nothing either to the criticism of Hegel or to reconstruction in this sphere.[10]

The result has been that the Schelling who developed a critique of idealism and reconstruction of philosophy from 1809 until his death in 1854 was quickly dropped from the nineteenth-century perspective of the Western mind. From 1830 to the middle of the century few found time to lay hold of all the positive or reconstructionist phases of his thought; a multipartied fight was on, arising from a variety of reactions to Hegelianism, and, for the most part, only immediately useful fragments of Schelling's philosophy were accepted. There was the further disadvantage that none of his later lectures was officially published until his son Karl brought out his collected works in the years 1856–61. After the middle of the century the world was too busy following the new-found faiths in materialism and economic man, too intent upon watching the developments of the sciences and analyzing science upon nonspeculative grounds,

[9] Erdmann, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, affords the English reader a glimpse into this changing intellectual climate by one who knew much of it at first hand. Cf. Kurt Leese, *Philosophie und Theologie im Spätidealismus* (Berlin, 1929); Horst Fuhrmans, *Schellings letzte Philosophie; die negative und positive Philosophie im Einsatz des Spätidealismus* (Berlin, 1940). Further illuminating comments may be found in Sidney Hook, *From Hegel to Marx* (New York, 1936); Karl Löwith, *Von Hegel bis Nietzsche* (New York, 1941); Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution* (New York, 1941).

[10] This does not mean, of course, that Schelling had nothing to say about politics in his later as well as his earlier works. Cf. Gertrud Jäger, *Schellings politische Anschauungen* (Berlin, 1939).

and too absorbed in developing a new Romanticism, to learn from one who appeared so completely circumscribed by the intellectual climate of his day as did Schelling. The result was that Schelling remained for history more of a mystery than ever. Until the turn of the twentieth century the later lectures of Schelling, while commented on by many and influential upon a few in a variety of ways,[11] appear to have been little understood or even read. In contrast, this century has brought forth an increasing interest in Schelling, as evidenced by a comparatively large number of essays and books working toward new understandings of all phases of his thought.[12] Many of his problems and some of his concepts are manifestly germane to the present intellectual situation. In addition, this Schelling renaissance is heightened by the realization that past philosophical systems are more than outmoded curios and should, in fact, be considered as fundamental ways in which man recurrently tries to establish the intelligibility of the world of nature and history in which he lives.

Regardless of what one thinks of his idealistic, mystical, and religious terminology, Schelling claims attention by reason of the catholic character of his pursuit. After 1809 his prime concern was to unite, with the vision which idealism had of rationally intelligible, organic characteristics and relations, the concrete factuality or "givenness" of finite existence, about which nothing may be presupposed until it has been learned how a rational process can be an adequate expression for the real process. In his construction of science he was among the very first in a procession of philosophers whose watchword was "Back to Kant!" But Schelling was only critically limited by

[11] R. H. Lotze was perhaps influenced by Schelling; Eduard von Hartmann was guided in his own thought by what he called Schelling's shift from transcendental idealism to transcendental realism; Henri Bergson called Schelling one of the greatest philosophers of all time; the direction taken by S. Kierkegaard and other modern existential philosophers may have gained an initial impulse from Schelling's philosophy of existence.

[12] From 1900 to 1941, there have been about 150 Schelling publications, including books and articles written about Schelling, and selections from his works, lectures, and letters. With the exception of the publication of Schelling's articles, books, letters, and collected works, this outnumbers the publications for the entire period 1797–1900.

Kant; his aim was to find not only the conditions but also the content of a positive knowledge. Thus the existential dialectic of the later Schelling was a continuation of his attempt to unite idealism and realism; it was to give a complete account of the intelligibility of finite, factual existence.

The terms in which this existential dialectic are put indicate the way in which Schelling tried to restrict the claims of his own earlier idealism, and that of Hegel, while yet giving it an essential role in knowledge. Thus after 1809 the union of idealism and realism was to be accomplished by a metaphysical system correctly adjusting to one another such varied antithetical terms and concepts as necessity and freedom, essence and existence, logic and history, negative conception and positively given content, universalism and individualism, monism and pluralism, reason and the irrational crisis, rationalism and empiricism. In this sense Schelling was not only one of the first of the critics of the Hegelian metaphysics but also a forerunner of many subsequent variations of idealism and realism. Moreover he was also the leader and herald of those who used the historical aspects of Christianity and its revelation as criticism against Hegel. Schelling viewed religious problems from the standpoint of the proper adjustment of such further antithetical concepts as pantheism or "naturalism" and theism, divine immanence and divine transcendence, mysticism and morality, mythology and revelation, reason and faith, creation and redemption, sin and salvation. In this sense he was the forerunner of—and not without influence upon—some present theological tendencies. Unfortunately we cannot take time in a brief introduction to trace the relevance and influence of Schelling upon present philosophical and theological discussions. As his later thought is virtually unknown to English-reading students, we must restrict ourselves to a study of Schelling's own statements. In this connection it will be our concern to see how the proper adjustments of the antitheses in the two sets of terms—the one broadly philosophical, the other characteristically religious—are directed by Schelling toward the solution of the problem of the intelligibility of finite existence.

Bearing in mind this general orientation of the later Schel-

lingian philosophy, let us turn first to the development of certain relevant aspects of his thought from 1795 through the period when *The Ages of the World* was written (about 1811). While in no way attempting to summarize the rich productivity or specialized interests of that period, we shall sketch the significance of some of Schelling's early thoughts as propaedeutic for his final statements. After this brief synopsis we shall turn to the interests of the later lectures. Since these lectures are often repetitious and lacking in unity, it will be easier to grasp Schelling's main intent if we discuss them in terms less of their chronological development than of their systematic statement regarding the problem of existence and its intelligibility. It is to be hoped that in this way the reader will more readily understand that the later interests were acutely foreshadowed by *The Ages of the World*, upon which a few concluding comments will be made.

Chapter Two

NATURE AND REALITY IN SCHELLING'S DEVELOPMENT THROUGH 1812

THE SIGNIFICANCE of Schelling's early philosophical development for his later thought may best be viewed in terms of his development of a philosophy of nature and his attitude toward the character of reality. The development brings that philosophy of nature from the status of an enterprise subordinate to a Fichtean science or analysis of self-consciousness, through a status where it has equal importance with the latter, and finally to a position where the philosophy of nature is virtually the whole of philosophy. As this proceeds, there is concomitant change in the interpretation of the nature of reality from its character as derived from self-consciousness, through its character as rationally independent, to the concept of an arational ground of creativity as the basis for objective nature.

In 1795 Schelling set his course, for he wanted to erect "a counterpart to Spinoza's *Ethics*," [1] to show, as he wrote to Hegel, that while "for Spinoza the world (the object utterly in opposition to the subject) was *everything*, to me everything is the *ego*." [2] He accepted the Fichtean interpretation of Kant and endeavored to show that the unity of philosophical analysis demanded the fundamental antithetical presuppositions of the Fichtean science, and he rejected the assumptions of unconditioned objectivity. Objectivity is simply our necessary way of setting off from ourselves our own mental activity, so that the object appears free and independent of us. As Schelling says, "The

[1] *Vom Ich als Princip der Philosophie, S.W.*, I, 1:159.
[2] *B.*, I, 76.

infinite world is and subsists only by these procedures of our mind, for it is nothing but our creating mind itself in infinite productions and reproductions." [3] In this sense, reality or objectivity depends upon the freedom of the ego ultimately to be set in a system of transcendental idealism; objectivity is not given, as the dogmatists assert, but arises for us. "The main function of all philosophy," he asserted at this time, "is the solution of the problem of the being ["Dasein"] of the world." [4] This last problem, it should be made clear, remained central for Schelling's entire intellectual career. At the outset, however, he believed that this problem was best solved by following Fichte's unified science, and Schelling was regarded by Fichte and others as his best commentator.

But at the same time Schelling was preparing for a later break with Fichte. As Goethe could see that in nature itself "there is an eternal life, coming to be, and movement," [5] and as Herder found that "all the forces of nature function organically," [6] so Schelling came to see dynamic organization from the inanimate to the animate in the realm of nature struggling toward freedom and disclosing the pure form of mind. He not only could say that "there is productive power in things outside of us," [7] but he reinterpreted Kant's concept of reflective judgment into a principle of knowledge such that mind is the character of reality and reality is therefore knowable for us. Further, in taking over Kant's teleology Schelling would seem to have thereby reinterpreted Fichte's concept of unconscious intelligence or productive imagination. He then interpreted reality as itself purposive, and nature became the development of mind. What Kant, in his *Critique of Judgment,* accepted as a subjective, regulative principle, Schelling thus reinterpreted as an objective, determinative principle. The objects of reality are not

[3] *Abhandlungen zur Erläuterung des Idealismus der Wissenschaftslehre* (1796–97), *S.W.*, I, 1:360.

[4] *Philosophische Briefe über Dogmatismus und Kriticismus* (1795), *S.W.*, I, 1:313.

[5] "Die Natur" (c.1780), *Werke* (Weimar, 1893), Div. II, Vol. XI, p. 6.

[6] *God, Some Conversations* (1787), trans. by F. H. Burkhardt (New York, 1940), p. 190.

[7] *Abhandlungen zur Erläuterung . . . , S. W.*, I, 1:387.

things in themselves but are products of a mind. Coupling this with Leibniz's stress upon life and continuity in the whole extent of nature's development, Schelling now, in 1797, boldly started his philosophy of nature:

> Philosophy . . . is nothing but a *natural science* ["Naturlehre"] *of our mind.* From now on all dogmatism is completely reversed. We consider the system of representation not in its *being* but in its *coming to be.* Philosophy becomes *genetic,* that is, it lets the entire necessary series of our representations ["Vorstellungen"] arise and end before our eyes, as it were. From now on there is no longer any separation between experience and speculation. The system of nature is at the same time the system of our mind.[8]

By an opposition of forces, construed according to Kant, Schelling considered that nature in its entire extent arises for us. A year later he stressed the unity of natural forces in terms of the world-soul which manifests its self-activity in duality throughout nature's organization.[9] By 1799 Schelling entered upon the analysis of "speculative physics," which treats of "nature *a priori*," the primal causes of nature's motion which escape empirical physics.[10]

It was at this time that Schelling wrote his oft-quoted *Epikurisch Glaubensbekenntniss Heinz Widerporstens* and poetically revealed his attitude toward the eternal ferment, power, and life of nature:

> Hinauf zu des Gedankens Jugendkraft,
> Wodurch Natur verjüngt sich wieder schafft,
> Ist Eine Kraft, Ein Pulsschlag nur, Ein Leben,
> Ein Wechselspiel von Hemmen und von Streben.[11]

---

[8] *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur, S.W.,* I, 2:39. A second edition of this work, with additions, was published in 1803; subsequent references to the *Ideen* in this Introduction refer to these later additions.

[9] *Von der Weltseele, S.W.,* I, 2:345 f.

[10] *Einleitung zu dem Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie, S.W.,* I, 3:274 f.

[11] "Up to thought's youthful vigor,
Whereby nature rejuvenates and recreates itself,
Is but one force, one pulse, one life,
One interplay of striving and resisting"
—*B.,* I, 287

When in 1800 he wrote his *System des transcendentalen Idealismus,* whose purpose is "to proceed from the *subjective as from the first and absolute and to let the objective arise from it,*" to materialize the laws of intelligence into laws of nature,[12] he had already determined that the task of the philosophy of nature was to come to the same unity of knowledge by explaining "the ideal from the real." [13] The genetic philosophy was now nearing completion, for Schelling had analyzed the "history" of nature and self-consciousness, of the spiritual production and reproduction of the world. By intellectual or rational intuition, real and ideal, being and thought, object and subject, were seen as identical, so that experience and speculation were harmonized. In art the fleeting glimpse of this harmony is made fully objective, and thus art is the universal organon of philosophy.[14] Therefore Schelling felt that he had correctly and critically broken through to the reality of nature on a path which led beyond the Fichtean science. He had now come to the concept of a continuous development from dynamic reality through transcendental ideality. As he remarked in 1800,

> If *all* nature rises to a higher power up to consciousness, or if it leaves nothing—no monument—of the different steps through which it passes, then it would be impossible for it to reproduce itself with reason, whose transcendental memory, as is well known, must be refreshed by visible things. The Platonic idea, that all philosophy is recollection, is true in this sense; all philosophy consists in a recollecting of the situation in which we were one with nature. . . . Then we can go in quite different directions—from nature to ourselves, or from ourselves to nature, but the *true* direction, for him to whom *knowing* ["Wissen"] is of supreme value, is that which nature itself has taken.[15]

In short, consciousness is but the highest power of nature itself, nature and mind are basically one.

While Schelling now saw his philosophy of nature as of equal importance with transcendental philosophy, and had elaborated

[12] *S.W.*, I, 3:342, 352.

[13] *Einleitung zu dem Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie, S.W.*, I, 3:272.

[14] *System des transcendentalen Idealismus, S.W.*, I, 3:624 f.

[15] *Allgemeine Deduktion des dynamischen Processes, S.W.*, I, 4:77-78.

in detail the processive unity of nature and mind in its dynamic duality and organic unity, the year 1801 brought what he describes as the "moment when the light rose in philosophy for me." [16] Evidently he had been hiding his light under a bushel, for now what seemed implicit or but half-finished became explicit. He now fully confessed the initial break with Fichte:

> Fichte could side with idealism from the point of view of reflection, I, on the other hand, took the viewpoint of production with the principle of idealism. To express this contrast most distinctly, idealism in the subjective sense had to assert, the ego is everything, while conversely idealism in the objective sense had to assert: Everything = ego and nothing exists but what = ego. These are certainly different views, although it will not be denied that both are idealistic.[17]

Schelling proceeded to a system of objective or absolute idealism, or what is known as his system of absolute identity.[18] He developed the concept of absolute indifference of subject-object, or an absolute totality of all the powers or potencies of the universe, or, as he called it, "the identity of identity" or "absolute identity." This is the absolute reason in which everything has its being and out of whose differentiation comes the entire organically interconnected real and ideal, dynamic and transcendental series. Now Schelling says that the primal reason has self-knowledge as its form but that "the absolute identity cannot know itself infinitely without positing itself infinitely as subject and object." [19] Differentiation of the indifference of subject-object is the ground of all development and finiteness. Then everything arising, every power or potency, has the absolute identity as ultimate basis and, in its total interconnectedness with all potencies, is absolute identity. What Schelling is here

[16] *B.*, II, 60.

[17] *Darstellung meines Systems der Philosophie*, *S.W.*, I, 4:109.

[18] Schelling later claimed that he used the latter term only once, i. e., *S.W.*, I, 4:113, and that he retracted it because of misunderstanding on the part of others. Cf. *S. W.*, I, 10:107, 143 f.; II, 1:371. Hegel's *Phänomenologie des Geistes* appeared in 1806, with its Introduction referring to Schelling's absolute as "the night in which, as we say, all cows are black," and it was doubtless this attack to which Schelling refers as a misunderstanding.

[19] *Darstellung meines Systems . . . , S. W.*, I, 4:123.

attempting to make clear is that the ultimate basis of the universe is reason or knowledge as the unity of objectivity and subjectivity, that the differentiation of objectivity and subjectivity is but the measurable difference of viewpoint, and that upon such quantitative differentiation alone depend all qualitative differences or potencies. By such a view he considered that he had broken through to reality and yet avoided both monistic as well as dualistic dogmatic assertions. As he summed up the theory of absolute identity:

> This identity . . . is not what is produced but what is original, and it is produced only because it *is*. It is therefore already in everything which is. The power which flows forth in the mass of nature is essentially the same as that represented in the mental world, except that in the former it has to combat the preponderance of the real, as in the latter the preponderance of the ideal. But even this antithesis, which is not an antithesis according to its essence but according to mere potency, appears as antithesis only to him who is outside the indifference and glimpses the absolute identity itself not as the original one.[20]

If Schelling appeared early to consider Spinoza not "as a dead dog," he now accepted more fully the Spinozistic influence. All the differentiations or potencies are simultaneous—that is to say, the structure of the universe is an eternal structure, although its analysis in philosophy is genetic. The preponderance of subjectivity appears as thought, the preponderance of objectivity as extension. The difference between his view and Spinoza's, Schelling said, is that Spinoza, as he is generally understood, conceived these as ideally one, while Schelling conceived them as really one.[21] What Schelling intended to stress is that there is nothing but identity, and that all qualitative difference arises from the given viewpoint which sees a quantitative preponderance either of subjectivity or objectivity, whereas from an absolute standpoint these are the same and not two different series or orders.[22] As Schelling explained in 1803, using Spinozistic distinctions,

> Philosophy is science of the absolute. But as the absolute in its eternal action necessarily comprehends two sides, a real and an ideal, as one, so philosophy, considered from the side of form, necessarily

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 128. [21] *Ibid.*, p. 136. [22] Cf. *ibid.*, p. 134, note 1.

has to divide itself according to two sides, although its essence consists just in seeing both sides as one in the absolute act of knowledge. The real side of that eternal action is revealed in nature; nature in itself, or eternal nature, is just the mind born in what is objective, the essence of God introduced into form, except that *in the essence* this introduction immediately comprehends the other unity. Visible nature, on the other hand, is the introduction as such—or appearing in particularity—of the essence in the form, therefore the eternal nature in so far as it appears as body and thus presents itself by itself as particular form. Nature, in so far as it appears as *nature*, that is, as this particular unity, is, accordingly, as such, already *outside* the absolute, not nature as the absolute act of knowledge itself (*Natura naturans*), but nature as the mere body or symbol of the absolute (*Natura naturata*).[23]

As we shall see shortly, Schelling had not questioned precisely enough why the ground of nature comes from the absolute, or why the ground must create visible nature. Those are the difficulties which led him to a reinterpretation with the aid of mysticism and theosophy. Here, however, he is content to analyze an absolute idealism in terms which borrow from Spinoza, from the Renaissance tradition of Nicolaus Cusanus and Giordano Bruno, as well as from Plato and Leibniz. The absolute, by its self-objectification, produces unities which, from the standpoint of absoluteness, are ideas or monads or things-in-themselves which represent the manifoldness of the single essence. Thus the universe or totality is the self-revelation of the absolute. The world is but the *rerum natura*, the birth of eternal things or ideas into existence as potencies, a birth which occurs by "the eternal subject-objectivation of the absolute, by virtue of which it gives its subjectivity and the infinity, hidden in it and unknown, to be known in objectivity and finiteness, and makes its subjectivity and infinity into something." [24] Eternity and time have the relation of prototype and image. The eternal world of ideas is but the eternal multiplicity in unity or in the idea of ideas. That unity is "the holy abyss from which everything proceeds and into which everything returns." [25] In a final

[23] *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur* (edition of 1803), *S.W.*, I, 2:66–67.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 188.

[25] *Bruno oder über das göttliche und natürliche Princip der Dinge* (1802), *S.W.*, I, 4:258.

burst of exuberance, Schelling expressed his conviction that he had now realized the desired unity of idealism and realism:

> To know this indifference [of idea and substance, form and essence, thought and being] means to know the absolute center of gravity and, as it were, that primary metal whose substance consolidates every single truth, and without which nothing is true. This center of gravity is the same in idealism and realism, and if the two are opposed, only knowledge or complete presentation of it is lacking in one or both.[26]

In brief, Schelling considered that the transition from infinite, absolute identity, from indifference, or from reason to differentiation as ground and the return to unity entailed a further process which involved potencies ranging from preponderance of objectivity to preponderance of subjectivity—i. e., the elaboration of the differentiation of primal unity into forms of being and thought. By intellectual intuition the various dualities were to be overcome and the ultimate unity made clear in terms of relative identity and its relation to absolute identity. "Therefore," Schelling concluded, "philosophy is the science of ideas or the eternal prototypes of things." And, he significantly added, "Without intellectual intuition, no philosophy!" [27] Or again, "Philosophy is the science which has for its subject, subjectively, the absolute harmony of mind with itself, objectively, the return of everything real to a common identity." [28] Such was the system of absolute idealism dealing with the real which is rational. It must be borne in mind that the process here described was understood as metaphysical and not physical, although it was precisely the physical process and its intelligibility which was under investigation. Henceforth, for Schelling, all philosophy was the analysis of the ground of nature and consciousness, reality and ideality. In the development of this concept he laid almost exclusive emphasis upon the ground and its relation to nature, that is, he tried to show how potencies of nature are ideas from the absolute standpoint, because, as we shall now see, here

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 328. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 322: "Realism arose by reflection on the essence, idealism by retention of the form of the absolute."

[27] *Vorlesungen über die Methode des akademischen Studiums* (1803), *S.W.*, I, 5:255.

[28] *Propädeutik der Philosophie* (c.1804), *S.W.*, I, 6:78.

ambiguities still had to be made clear if his concept of philosophy was to stand.

We now come to that point in Schelling's development where he proceeded from a relatively static metaphysics of rationalistic identity to a more dynamic metaphysics of irrational creativity and contradiction, a point which again elaborated or completed what was left unanswered in the former treatment.[29] In order to make clear the importance of what follows, we must recall that when Schelling wrote his *Epikurisch Glaubensbekenntniss Heinz Widerporstens* in 1799, Friedrich Schlegel hailed him as displaying "a new fit of his old enthusiasm for irreligion." [30] In reality, Schelling's God at that time was one with nature. With the development, after 1801, of the philosophy of nature upon the concept of indifference and identity, God no longer was the process of nature but the absolute which simply is and from whose self-objectivation flows the eternal world of ideas which, in turn, form the ground of nature. In other words, Schelling was shifting from one style of pantheism, a simple identification of the divine and nature, to the concept of nature coming from the divine and being coincident with the divine life. When he then faced the problem of the two troublesome relations—of the absolute to its differentiation into ideas, and of the ideas to nature—both his early theological training as well as the development of his thought fully prepared him for a shift to philosophical answers in religious terms.

It was of the utmost consequence that Schelling became acquainted with the anti-Platonic thought of Jakob Böhme and Friedrich Christoph Oetinger as early as 1803, an acquaintance which was strengthened in 1806 through the influence of his friend, Franz von Baader in Munich.[31] Böhme's theogonic proc-

[29] Paul Tillich, treating the whole development of Schelling's thought as governed by "immanent-dialectic," sees the implication of the irrational in the pressure toward existence in Schelling's identity and nature philosophy. See his *Mystik und Schuldbewusstsein* (Gütersloh, 1912), pp. 56 f., 70. Tillich's contribution is unique, for by such analysis the external influences of others upon Schelling become only as important as the internal reason demanding such acceptance of influence into the system.

[30] *B.*, I, 282, note.

[31] The fruitfulness of this relation, and, in particular, the neglected relation to Oetinger, have been strongly emphasized by Kurt Leese in his

ess offered a threefold analysis of divine creativity. God is the primal ground or ungrounded ["Urgrund," "Ungrund"], the "abysmal, eternal nought," the "formless omnipossibility" ["gestaltlose Allmöglichkeit"], of the Plotinian-Dionysian-Eckhartian *via negativa*. But self-revelation of this primal ground can occur only by self-estrangement, by self-limitation of the unlimited, for nothing can become self-evident without resistance, and, since the primal ground is ungrounded, God must be "eternal contrariety" ["ewiges Kontrarium"]. For in this differentiation in the primal ground, that is, the transition from ungroundedness to self-groundedness, from the ungrounded to ground, Böhme saw the will as the dark pressure and blind impulse which, in seeking itself, vibrates the divine soul and flows circling and weaving through the formlessly eternal being. Finally, as the ground assumes shape, the self-formation arising is called the eternal "nature in God," comprising the "nature forms" or "source spirits" which, as one commentator says, "are the simplest elements into which Böhme can resolve all knowable existence, material and spiritual. . . ." [32] Nature and man are animated from within by these qualities, so that Böhme could speak of the nature in God not only in terms of daemonic, destructively creative forces of the No restricting the Yes, darkness the light, sorrow joy, etc., whose restrictive powers heighten the intensity and creativity of the opposites, but he spoke of God also in terms of corporeality, which represents the antispiritualistic tendency that later captivated Schelling. Oetinger, alloying Böhme and cabalistic concepts, reoriented the Leibnizian idea of life into the primal motion preceding thought and being: God is primordially the unfathomable depth of the *via negativa*, but he becomes eternal life and movement, the eternal fire and wheel of Ezekiel, from which come the ten re-

brochure, *Von Jakob Böhme zu Schelling: zur Metaphysik des Gottesproblems* (Erfurt, 1927). For the influence of Böhme and Baader, the English reader should refer to James Gutmann, *Schelling: Of Human Freedom*, Introduction, p. xliv f. Further recent statements of the relation to Baader may be found in the relevant sections of H. Knittermeyer, *Schelling und die romantische Schule* (Munich, 1929), and D. Baumgardt, *Franz von Baader und die philosophische Romantik* (Halle, 1927).

[32] Howard H. Brinton, *The Mystic Will: Based on a Study of the Philosophy of Jacob Boehme* (New York, 1930), p. 134.

flections or sephiroth, beings between God and the world. With Oetinger, too, "naturalism" or God's corporeality is the goal of the divine birth; man's task is to see the divine seal imprinted in nature.

One may say that nature mysticism recalled to Schelling his early love of the life and powers of nature. But now the divine footsteps—not, as it were, the divine itself—were to be discerned; divine transcendence and immanence mutually imply each other in a way impossible for him to see before 1801. He found his absolute identity to be Böhme's ungrounded; the passage from indifference to potential differentiation is the voluntaristic estrangement resulting in the world of ideas—spiritual-corporeal powers constituting the "nature in God," which, by the unresolved nature of their ontic will, become the principles of all being.

In protest against A. K. A. Eschenmayer's relegation of religious knowledge to faith alone, Schelling in 1804 wrote *Philosophie und Religion* "to vindicate reason and philosophy." [33] The discussion was prompted by the quest for the harmony of religion and philosophy, and its answer is only to be found, said Schelling, in the distinction between God or the absolute as ideal, known by intellectual intuition, and the absolute world of ideas in God, or the absolute counterpart ["Gegenbild"] whereby God is reflectively conceived in things and things conceived in God. Schelling claimed that this counterpart has productive power to change ideality into reality—an assertion apparently prompted by his desire to distinguish between ungroundedness (the nought, the abyss of thought) and ground or the primal being mystically (but none the less potentially) in thought's abyss. But even this production in God is nonfinite; it is God's eternity or "the true transcendental theogony," [34] and Schelling felt himself driven at once to account for finiteness and to avoid pantheism by a route which is dominant in his later philosophy.

In a word, there is no continuous transition from the absolute to the actual; the origin of the sensible world is conceivable only as a

[33] *S.W.*, I, 6:20.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 35.

complete break from absoluteness, by a leap. . . . The absolute is what alone is real; finite things, on the other hand, are not real; therefore their ground cannot lie in a *communication* of reality to them or their substratum, a communication which would have proceeded from the absolute, but can lie only in a *removal,* in a *fall* from the absolute.[35]

The question as to how the realm of ideas, counterpart of absoluteness, "falls," Schelling answered in terms which have since led historians to call the later system a system of freedom:

What is exclusively peculiar to absoluteness is that it invests its counterpart not only with its own nature but even independence. This being-in-self ["in-sich-selbst-Sein"], this genuine and true reality of what is first envisaged, is *freedom,* and from that first independence of the counterpart flows what comes forth in the phenomenal world as freedom, which is the last trace and, as it were, the seal of divinity envisaged in the fallen world.[36]

The ground of the possibility of finiteness is in the freedom bestowed by the absolute, the ground of the actuality of finiteness is in the act of the counterpart, the sensible universe is the result of selfhood and culminates in egoism ["Ichheit"], which is, at once, the full expression of the "fall" and the seal of divinity upon finitude. Man's view of the finite is but the Iliad of egoism which must have its Odyssey (in terms of science, art, morality, and religion) to complete the self-revelation of the divine unity.[37]

By 1809 this mode of thought flowered in Schelling's *Of Human Freedom.* Here "the real and vital conception of freedom is that it is a possibility of good and evil." [38] While "the procession of things from God is God's self-revelation" in nature and human history, "every nature can be revealed only in

[35] *Ibid.,* p. 38. [36] *Ibid.,* p. 39.

[37] Fuhrmans, in *Schellings letzte Philosophie,* p. 31 f., follows R. Kroner, *Von Kant bis Hegel* (Tübingen, 1921–24), II, 194 f., in interpreting finiteness in *Philosophie und Religion* epistemologically; thus finiteness is phenomenal, not real, because of man's "fall" from the absolute or divine perspective. But Schelling's work also introduces an ontological dualism, since "the ground of the fall . . . does not lie in the absolute but only in the real" and "this fall is as eternal . . . as absoluteness itself" (*S.W.,* I, 6:40 f.).

[38] *Of Human Freedom* (Gutmann translation), *S.W.,* I, 7:352.

its opposite—love in hatred, unity in strife." [39] Hence freedom and antithesis belong to the revelation of the absolute. To act only according to the law of inner being or identity, i. e., essentiality, is to express the union of absolute freedom and absolute necessity—this much idealism saw. But "idealism is the soul of philosophy; realism is its body; only the two together constitute a living whole." [40] Reality is not dead, not a mere act of self-position; it is vital and is only to be accomplished through antithesis and opposition. Pushing this concept farther, Schelling saw that a simple rationalistic absolute identity or indifference could never have anything but essentiality, never have existentiality, unique or individual existence, unless the possibility of opposition lay in it. The quest for the distinction between universal being (or being as subject of thought) and being as factual, free, individual being (or existence) prompts Schelling to use the term "will" as the sign of the highest potential individuality and the term "to will" as the full expression of individual, factual, free existence.

Schelling was conscious that his voluntarism was part of one phase of Hebrew-Christian thought; whatever else of Böhme's influence he later rejected, this concept remained with him throughout the remainder of his life. Thus he is led to say, "In the final and highest instance there is no other being than willing. To will is to be primordially. . . ." [41] The absolute identity is will willing itself; but in will there always lies the possibility of willing what is contrary to its essentiality, for will must have an object or other ground, and here alone is the possibility of a ground of actual existence. The fundamental character of this existential ground and the dialectic of actualization are the central themes of Schelling's *The Ages of the World;* it answers the question—left unsolved in the system of rationalistic identity—

[39] *Ibid.*, pp. 347, 373. [40] *Ibid.*, p. 356.

[41] *S.W.*, I, 7:350. Eduard von Hartmann, in *Schellings positive Philosophie* (Berlin, 1869), pp. 8 f., says that the will is the irrational remainder of existence for Schelling. Paul Tillich stresses the basic change in Schelling's thought when he places the irrational principle in God as *prius:* "The irrational does not only lie within the idea, in the manifold individual, but first of all above the idea, in the absolutely individual" (*Mystik und Schuldbewusstsein*, pp. 103–4).

as to why the absolute identity becomes differentiated and, further, why differentiation is the ground of the divine self-revelation in natural and historical existence. Schelling here proceeds to show the existential necessity of antithesis in the ground and how the potencies thus arising in the ground have a character such that they are also analytic principles of actuality. We shall see that this theme of voluntaristic antithesis was fully elaborated in his final analysis (after 1827) of essentiality and existentiality and that *The Ages of the World* foreshadowed that elaboration.

To sum up the development thus far, we may say that the rationalistic system of absolute identity received its first critique when Schelling asked the question, "Why is there anything at all, why not nothing?" [42] That question became unanswerable for him in terms of a logical transition from absolute indifference, because rationalism could not *account for* differentiation and identity in equally original terms. Schelling believed that the irrational or counteressential leap or "fall" alone could account for the ground of existence and, subsequently, for existence itself.

This metaphysical accounting for existence in terms of the character of existence itself is the problem to which Schelling devoted himself after 1804. He wished to start with existence itself. "Philosophy," he said, "does not strive from the regions of the upper world downward into the sensible world, but, as the direction of the fire, so goes that of philosophy from earth to heaven, from the sensible world to the supersensible." [43] But the path from earth to heaven had been made shorter by nature mysticism:

> There is no higher revelation either in science or religion or art than the divinity of the universe. . . . As all elements and things of nature, in so far as they are mere abstractions of the universe, finally enter the universal life of nature whose image are the earth and stars, from which life each bears divinely in itself all forms and kinds of being, so finally all elements and creations of the spirit

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[42] *Aphorismen zur Einleitung in die Naturphilosophie* (1806), *S.W.*, I, 7:174.

[43] *Propädeutik der Philosophie, S.W.*, I, 6:81.

must equally pass over to a common life which is higher than the life of each of them in particular.[44]

Not only the whole, but each particular is divine. Then the spirit of true philosophy is not only to present the universal divine laws, but to show the universe in the particular, "the holy bond which unites the things of nature." [45] But mysticism lends an empirical basis to philosophy. "We discern nothing but what is in experience, says Kant. Quite right;" adds Schelling, "but what alone is in experience is just the living, the eternal, or God. God's presence ["Dasein"] is an empirical truth, indeed, the ground of all experience." [46] The philosophy of nature is no longer a theory, but "a real life of the spirit in and with nature." It is the seers who have cut through the web of sciences, as it were, and who are one with nature's vitality. German philosophy has—rightly—been directed toward seeing "the vitality of nature and its inner union with the spiritual and divine essence." [47]

It was with this feeling of intoxication with nature that Schelling turned against the later changes in Fichte's outlook. In physics as in philosophy, Fichte is "a mere mechanist." [48] Far from seeking the living reason in nature, the identity of real and ideal as a living bond, nature for him is but a background for human utilitarian and aesthetic purposes, that man may win moral freedom. Fichte cannot see the divine vitality of nature and therefore is unaware that

all sanatory power is only in nature. . . .[49] Only in that point where the ideal has become for us itself entirely the actual, too, where the world of thought has become the world of nature, just in this point lies the last, the highest satisfaction and reconciliation of knowledge, as the fulfillment of moral demands is attained only in that they appear to us no longer as thoughts, e. g., as commands, but have

[44] *Aphorismen . . .*, *S.W.*, I, 7:140, 141.
[45] *Vorrede zu den Jahrbüchern der Medicin als Wissenschaft* (1806), *S.W.*, I, 7:133.
[46] *Kritische Fragmente* (1806), *S.W.*, I, 7:245 f.
[47] *Ibid.*, p. 246, and *Ueber das Wesen deutscher Wissenschaft* (c.1812), *S.W.*, I, 8:7.
[48] *Darlegung des wahren Verhältnisses der Naturphilosophie zu der verbesserten Fichteschen Lehre* (1806), *S.W.*, I, 7:103.
[49] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

become the nature of our soul and have become actual in it. . . . This presentation of God's life, not outside of or above nature but in nature, as a truly real and present life, is certainly the final synthesis of the ideal with the real, of knowing with being, and therefore also the final synthesis of science itself.[50]

Schelling's break with Fichte in terms of a system of identity had been, as we saw, on the basis of the former's quest for objective idealism as contrasted with the latter's subjective idealism. Henceforth, all of Fichte's works bore the stamp of subjectivity so far as Schelling was concerned; Fichte's concept of the ego led but to the human, individual ego, and his concept of nature served only the subjective purpose of human reflection. The central difficulty was that Fichte never came to the problem of existence, that for him God is being but not born in nature. In Schelling's view,

Existence is the bond of an essence as one with itself as a plurality. But *is* there then an existence? The eternal answer to this question is *God*, for God *is* and God is being itself. The divine unity is from eternity a living, actually existing unity; for the divine is just what cannot be otherwise than *actual*. But the unity is actual, real, only in and with the form. . . . Since the one does not exist *as* such, but only in so far as it, as the one, *is* the many, hence neither the one as such, nor the many as such, but only the living copula truly exists. Only this copula is existence itself and nothing else. . . . This conceptually eternal appearance in otherness of the essence and form is the realm of nature, or the eternal birth of God in things and the equally eternal resumption of these things in God, so that, considered essentially, nature itself is only the entire divine presence ["Dasein"], or God considered in the actuality of his life and in his self-revelation.[51]

Again, "The purpose of the most sublime science can only be to demonstrate the reality—reality in the strictest sense—the proximity ["Gegenwart"], the living *presence* ["Da-sein"] of a God in the totality of things and in the particular." [52] With this view Schelling felt that God is to be *seen* in nature, not merely grasped conceptually, that subjectivity is in nature itself and hence it can be known by man, that the appearance of finite-

[50] *Ibid.*, pp. 32, 33–34.
[51] *Ibid.*, pp. 56–57, 59.
[52] *Ueber das Verhältniss des Realen und Idealen in der Natur* (1806), *S.W.*, I, 2:376.

ness is but the result of a condition of guilt, a turning away of the individual will from God as the unity and blessedness of things.[53] Then man must read aright "the book of nature itself," see in reality the living law of identity, the divine bond of things, for on this depends the religious and moral life of man.[54] Philosopher and physicist alike seek the living reason indwelling in nature. On this strictly immanental path

> the long misunderstood nature itself will break through, fulfilling everything. All the booklets and books will not stop it, all the systems of the world not suffice to confine it. Then everything will be harmonious and one, even in science and knowledge, as already from eternity everything was harmonious and one in being, in the life of nature.[55]

This unity had always been Schelling's quest, but from the final break with Fichte in 1806 the search was to be for a theism grounded on "naturalism," for only in this way could the problem of existence attain an answer which lay behind human reason and concepts. As he looked back in 1812 upon his preoccupation with nature, he said, "There is no way from theism to naturalism; that much is clear. It was time, conversely, to make naturalism, i. e., the doctrine that there is a nature in God, into the substratum, the *ground* of development . . . of theism." [56] While against Fichte he had to stress the vital bond of God and nature, of essence and form, it was against Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi that he had to insist upon the reconciliation of "naturalism," theism, and science. Jacobi had denied that science or philosophy as such played an important role in knowledge of the divine, whereas, said Schelling, "It is the business of mankind that that faith which until now was merely faith be transfigured into scientific knowledge." [57] Schelling makes clear how this is possible by use of his concept of ground. The ground both of God's existence and our knowledge of him is certainly prior to but below him; Schelling will have science trace the path from involution to evolution, from the eternal world of ideas or "nature in God" to temporal finitude or visible nature outside of

[53] *Darlegung des wahren Verhältnisses . . .*, *S.W.*, I, 7:95 f., 59 f., 81 f.
[54] *Ibid.*, pp. 64 f., 20. [55] *Ibid.*, p. 126.
[56] *Denkmal . . . Jacobi* (1812), *S.W.*, I, 8:70. [57] *Ibid.*, p. 55.

God. God is ground in two senses. In the construction of nature he is ground of himself as morality and intelligence, and he makes himself into the ground of himself as free of the world, using his previously active being as passive, nature as his past. God, then, for Schelling is seen as developing from his own incompleteness; that is to say, his existence is necessary to completeness. In short, God must have a beginning of himself in himself which is different from his existence as potentiality is different from actuality. God is not moral except potentially, implicitly. Nor is he an intelligence:

> What is the beginning of an intelligence (in itself) cannot again be intelligent, since otherwise there would be no differentiation. Yet it cannot be utterly unintelligent, because it is the possibility of an intelligence. Hence it will be something between, i. e., it will operate wisely but, as it were, with a native, instinctive, blind, not yet conscious wisdom, just as we often see enthusiasts work who speak proverbs full of understanding, yet they do not speak consciously but as by inspiration. . . .[58] My true, undisguised opinion is that every life proceeds indiscriminately from a state of envelopment, since, relative to the succeeding state of development or unfoldedness, it is as if dead and dark, like the grain of seed before it is sunk in the earth.[59]

It is the antithetic character of the divine nature which brings God's personality into existence:

> So long as the God of modern theism remains the simple being which he is in all the more recent systems—a being which should be purely substantive but, actually, is characterless; so long as a real duality is not discerned in God, and a limiting, negating power is not opposed to the affirming, expanding power—so long the denial of a personal God will be scientific sincerity, the assertion of such, a deficiency in sincerity, which the genuinely honest Kant deplored so greatly in just these matters.[60]

The problem for Schelling is that of existence, the answer to the question, "Why anything?" which he seeks in terms of the "nature in God" and the presence of the divine in the world. Without the concepts of involution and evolution, the dynamic life of natural existence cannot be accounted for and hence cannot be understood. To start with a rationalistic theism and to

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 66. [59] *Ibid.*, p. 78. [60] *Ibid.*, p. 73.

deduce existence from the concept of God is impossible, yielding only subjective notions of a being without real relations and consequently unknowable; "whoever wishes to deny nature as divine organ, denies at the same time all revelation." [61] The world is "a strangely confused whole, even if brought into order"; the rationalistic theist who fails to see the divine arising therein fails to ground his theism. It should be clear that Schelling is discussing—and, as we shall see more fully in his final analysis, continues to discuss—theism and naturalism in terms which relate more readily to the tradition of men like John Scotus Erigena than to the isolated modern concepts of theism and naturalism. His attempt is to escape from the division of the natural and the supernatural, of nature without God and God without nature. But, as we shall see, his aim being thus a quest for the positive knowledge of existence, the critical problems raised by Kant are not to be swept aside. The basis for his order, naturalism-theism, lies precisely here, that for him the epistemological problem remains central. While for a time he lost himself, rather uncritically, in nature mysticism, by the time of *The Ages of the World* he had begun to deny the epistemological basis of nature mysticism.

We have thus far glimpsed four stages in the development of Schelling's philosophy of nature, in which he continually stressed two problems, that of the existence of the world and its intelligibility. Throughout he never accepted the concept of unconditioned existence; Kant's concept of conditioned objectivity remained an influence upon him. At first the conditioning factor was the ego, to be discovered by an analysis of self-consciousness. But Schelling always had difficulty in conceiving an analysis starting from self-consciousness as ultimately anything but subjective. Nature, like ourselves, was for him a life with its ferment and power. His next attempt, therefore, was to find an absolute conditioning factor (he called it absolute reason, absolute identity, or indifference) which differentiated itself into rationally intuitable unities or ideas behind phenomenal experience. But existence was unexplained if one merely said that the absolute reason has to know itself in the form of ob-

[61] *Ibid.*, p. 114. Cf. *S.W.*, I, 7:415 f.

jectivity and subjectivity and their identity; why then the dynamic and daemonic character of existence which we experience in ourselves and in our life in nature? Hence, with the aid of nature mysticism, he next saw that the absolute is divine but unfulfilled, that nature manifests a blind, arational impulse to higher rational forms. This nature he conceived as the divine life, necessary to divine existence, conditioned by the "nature in God" or God's "eternal past," leading to God as free of the world, related as temporal past to such a fulfilled absolute. Finally, he asserted that the intelligibility of the world demanded the scientific analysis of existence—that is, that the arational must be included in science—and that the science of existence is then a progress from naturalism to theism, from the "nature in God" to God's self-revelation in nature, and, thence, to God as free of the world, that is, the God to whom all creation is to return. With this in mind, let us turn to a brief analysis of some of Schelling's later interests, interests which led him to attempt a consequent solution of his problem of existence and its intelligibility.

Chapter Three

SCHELLING'S INTERESTS AFTER 1812

SCHELLING'S interests after 1812 centered about the themes which we have already indicated in his earlier work, namely, certain forms of ontological and epistemological problems. Because these two sets of problems appear continually in the later work, it will be more direct to show something of their character and interrelation in Schelling's own mind than to follow the historical development of his lectures. Such a treatment has the further advantage that in this way the reader will be better prepared to understand the importance of *The Ages of the World* as one of Schelling's first statements of the purpose of his later thought.[1]

The significance of this later analysis has been variously interpreted. It has usually been agreed that Schelling attempted, as

[1] All references in this section which omit the title of the work in question refer to lectures, for which the pagination in the original edition of Schelling's complete works is given here, together with the title of the lecture. *S.W.*, II, 1:1–252, *Historischkritische Einleitung in die Philosophie der Mythologie* (1842); *S.W.*, II, 1:253–572, *Philosophische Einleitung in die Philosophie der Mythologie oder Darstellung der reinrationalen Philosophie* (1847–52); *S.W.*, II, 1:573–90, *Abhandlung über die Quelle der ewigen Wahrheiten* (1850); *S.W.*, II, 2:1–131, *Der Monotheismus* (1842); *S.W.*, II, 2:133–685, *Die Mythologie* (1842); *S.W.*, II, 3:1–174, *Einleitung in die Philosophie der Offenbarung oder Begründung der positiven Philosophie* (1841–42); *S.W.*, II, 3:175–381, *Philosophie der Offenbarung*, Part I (1841–42); *S.W.*, II, 3:382–530, *Kurze Darstellung der Philosophie der Mythologie* (1841–42); *S.W.*, II, 4:1–334, *Philosophie der Offenbarung*, Part II (1841–42); *S.W.*, II, 4:335–56, *Andere Deduktion der Principien der positiven Philosophie; S.W.*, II, 4:357–67, *Erste Vorlesung in Berlin*, (1841). A brief description of the way in which these lectures developed out of the earlier Munich lectures is presented by Fuhrmans, *Schellings letzte Philosophie*, pp. 305–34.

did Hegel, to bring a rationale to the Christian religion and, in particular, to give a more penetrating analysis of the moral element which he felt the Enlightenment had treated but superficially. Several interpreters, rejecting the prevalent theories of a complete break in Schelling's development, have sought to point out the continuity of the later with the earlier thought, while yet doing full justice to the unique character of the final analysis. For example, Schelling's friend Hubert Beckers said that the later concern was for

> nothing less than to bring the principle of freedom, which had not yet fully burst forth in all preceding stages, to its highest expression, comprehending everything, and above all, of course, to put in the place of a highest free being which had only proceeded from the world-process and hence was not already existing at the beginning, the concept of a *supramundane, completely free God* from whom then were inseparable the further demands and evidences of a *free creation of the world*, of the *freedom of man*, and of *personal immortality*.[2]

Paul Tillich has since carried through a more penetrating interpretation by showing the overcoming of the mysticism implicit in Schelling's early works by a synthesis of the mystical and moral in the later works; the implicit presupposition of the quest for identity—consciousness of guilt—is then made explicit, and the ultimate relation of mysticism and conscience is fully expressed.[3] On the other hand, the more mundane philosophic implications of the religious philosophy must also be emphasized, for, as Schelling says, Christianity is simply the development in time of an idea which is older than the world, and his main concern is to present a philosophy which can understand historical religions.[4] Thus Eduard von Hartmann, who was considerably influenced by the later analysis of Schelling, was led

[2] *Schelling's Geistesentwicklung in ihrem inneren Zusammenhang* (Munich, 1875), pp. 34–35.

[3] Tillich, *Mystik und Schuldbewusstsein.*

[4] *S.W.*, II, 3:142, 313. Schelling disavowed dogmatic intentions (cf. *S.W.*, II, 4:30, 80, 184 f., 201, 233). Freedom of philosophic pursuit was at least his dominant, conscious aim (*S.W.*, I, 10:399). His real task, he confessed, is continuous with that which we noted at the conclusion of Chapter II: to relate supernaturalism, which in orthodoxy is *unnatural*, to the natural (*S.W.*, II, 3:189).

to remark, "The positive significance of the second period of Schelling lies . . . not where it has until now been sought almost exclusively, in his ethics and philosophy of religion, but in his doctrine of principles, the theory of knowledge and methodology." [5]

The truth of the matter is that, just as we saw his concept of naturalism oriented so as to lead to a new theism, and the latter grounded upon a vital concept of nature, so theology and philosophy were one and not two for the later Schelling. Begin where one will in analysis, the final outcome must be a unity which comprehends natural and historical existence in ultimately transcendent, that is, religious terms. The riddles of life are not answerable by the mere concept of life; life is not life in general, but *a* life. When one asks "Why anything—why not nothing?" one has raised the ultimate question as to the meaning of life. Schelling thus asks for the significance of divine immanence in nature and history, for that which is manifested in the world about us and, most particularly, in what, for want of a better term, we may call folk consciousness. But this type of analysis, while it flowers in a detailed study of mythology and revelation, is basically prompted by the problem of existence and its intelligibility. From beginning to end, Schelling's persistent problem is to account for the finite existence of the world and its intelligibility, i. e., the reconstruction of a universe after the Newtonian structure had been overthrown. While his answer, as we have seen, underwent continual modification, in its general character the problem remained the same. In order to make this clear, we must examine certain ontological and epistemological aspects of the problem in the later Schelling, before we can point out his methodological solution.

THE ONTOLOGICAL PROBLEM

Conceptual Necessity and Existential Freedom: the Critique of Hegel

Schelling held that the logical analysis of being must be carried through prior to positive knowledge of existence:

[5] *Schelling's philosophisches System* (Leipzig, 1897), p. 221.

Everything which is the subject of a science is something *existing*, and since everything existent already has its science, nothing remains for the final philosophy than just *what exists* in *general*, independent of all particular and accidental determinations, and the first question of philosophy is therefore this: What is that which exists? What belongs to what exists? What do I think, if I think what exists? [6]

Schelling might have said, with Aristotle: "We are seeking the principles and the causes of the things which are, and obviously of them *qua* being." [7] The ontological problem is to know why we can say "A *is* B." What is the meaning of the copula—its full existential significance? In the analysis of every sentence stands the need for analysis of being, and this analysis is twofold. In the first place, we can think the subject of being, *what* is, or, as Schelling says, the essence. Second, we can distinguish being itself which *is* "what is." To think the latter alone is to have being in concept, the concept *par excellence*. The ontological problem involves knowing what being in concept means, what, in brief, is the meaning of conceptuality.[8] The difficulty in philosophy has been that being has been contained in concept without an explanation of how this occurs; moreover the being in concept, in modern philosophy, has not been correctly related to free existentiality, existence outside the concept.[9]

Schelling points most clearly to his problem in a critical analysis of the history of modern philosophy, which represents the struggle between conceptual necessity and existential freedom.[10] His critique of Hegel, valued by some as one of the best critiques of Hegel's panlogism ever written,[11] will significantly illumine the problem in Schelling's mind.

Certainly the seeds of philosophical difference between Schelling and Hegel lay as far back as 1804,[12] yet it was not until after

[6] *Darstellung des Naturprocesses* (1843–44), *S.W.*, I, 10:303.
[7] *Metaphysics* VI, 1. [8] Cf. *S.W.*, I, 10:17 f. [9] Cf. *S.W.*, II, 2:31 f.
[10] *Zur Geschichte der neueren Philosophie* (1834), *S.W.*, I, 10:1–200.
[11] Cf. E. von Hartmann, *Schellings positive Philosophie* (Berlin, 1869), and notes in Arthur Drews, *Schellings Münchener Vorlesungen* (Leipzig, 1902).
[12] Hegel and Schelling had jointly published the *Kritisches Journal der Philosophie* in 1802–3, with such philosophical affinities that for some time the authorship of their anonymous articles could not be differentiated. After Hegel's disparaging remarks in his *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (1806) concerning Schelling's concept of absolute identity, their friendly

1827 that Schelling precisely stated the difference. That difference has to do with Schelling's self-confessed change in attitude toward his own early philosophy of nature; the change concerns the concept of God. Of his own philosophy of nature prior to 1804, Schelling said:

> God was that subject which remains *as* subject, victorious over all, which can no longer fall into the object; just this subject had passed through all nature, through all history, through the succession of *all* moments, from which it appeared only as the final result. This passing through was represented as a real movement (not as a progress in mere thought), represented even as real process. Now I can indeed conceive God as end and mere result of my thought, as he was in ancient metaphysics, but I cannot conceive him as result of an *objective* process.[13]

We recall that in 1804 Schelling, in accounting for finitude, spoke of a "fall"; here was the change whereafter he wished to speak in immanent yet nonpantheistic terms, and so God was considered as in some sense transcendent, or, in Schelling's terms, God contains the ground of independent existence within himself.

In effect, Schelling blamed Hegel with having made the same error. In his logic, Hegel started from what is most negative or logical, the notion of pure being, that in which there is nothing of subject. But, claimed Schelling, while Hegel proceeded to ascribe immanent movement to pure being, the notion is immovable if it is not the notion of a thinking subject, i. e., if it is not a *thought*, and, further, the movement Hegel described as immanent has a *terminus ad quem*, the actual world, which unconsciously affects the course of such philosophizing. Pure being without subject with which it is identical or for which it is object is an impossibility, and, further, for causation Schelling would substitute his concept of *ground*, a concept which eliminates a final cause. When Hegel started with the *notions* of being, nought, and coming to be, there was no true antithesis, nothing to be overcome, no process. Schelling pointed out, on

relations were severed for life, and until Hegel's death in 1831 Schelling, with typical personal vituperation, charged Hegel with having stolen his system.

[13] *S.W.*, I, 10:123–24.

the other hand, that in his own system the only place for notions as such was where the infinite subject, having passed through nature, is objective for itself, develops its objectively dispersed organism subjectively in consciousness as organism of reason, and hence, dealt with at the end of the philosophy of nature, they were objective, while for Hegel they were prior to the analysis of nature and subjective. With more than a glance at his later system, Schelling said, "Real thought is that whereby something opposed to thought is overcome. Where one has only thought, and that abstract thought, for content, thought has nothing to overcome." [14]

While he considered Hegel correct in asserting that logic in the metaphysical sense must be the real foundation of all philosophy, Schelling held that Hegel failed to recognize that the logical is merely the negative aspect of existence. "The whole world lies, as it were, in the nets of understanding or of reason, but the question is *how* it came into these nets, since something else and something *more* than mere reason, indeed, even something striving beyond these limits, is evidently in the world." [15] This, as we shall see, was Schelling's ultimate epistemological as well as ontological critique of all forms of rationalism, idealistic as well as realistic. Hegel's logic, then, was the science in which the divine idea completed itself in mere thought before actuality, and the idea was thus *logically* result. But Hegel wanted—as did Schelling—the divine idea as *real* result. At the end of the Hegelian logic, the actualized idea was defined just as the absolute was at the end of the philosophy of identity, but, as actual, it was on the boundary of the logical. Schelling felt that there was no further necessity for movement in the idea, and that any such movement must then be assumed to be a consequence of nature's existence. But, for Schelling, Hegel became ambiguous by saying that the idea decides to discharge itself ["sich entlassen"] as nature. What freely decides must be actually existing, so what, asked Schelling, moves the idea to become subjectless again, to enter nature and rise again to human and finally absolute mind? Schelling acknowledged that later, in the second edition of the *Logic*, Hegel sought to

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 141. [15] *Ibid.*, pp. 143–44. Cf. *S.W.*, I, 7:359 f.

attain the idea of a free creation whereby the world contains everything in the preceding development, that is, the previous result becomes principle and what was beginning becomes dependent upon this new principle.[16] But Hegel's formal approach to free creation ended, according to Schelling, in pantheism of the worst kind, in which God has no freedom but enters endlessly into process. This necessity, this eternal happening, is but the movement of the idea logically considered transposed into reality, is but the false translation of purely logical relations to the realm of actuality. The rationalist, Schelling was convinced, can never enter the realm of existence.[17] While calling his philosophy of identity absolute idealism because it did not question existence but considered nature merely hypothetically, Hegel, he said, tried to make pure thought or logic account for existence. But existence for Hegel did not have the character of natural object, but only that of an object of thought, which, since Hegel denied the real illogicity of existence at the outset, could only characterize reality essentially, not existentially.[18]

It is clear from this discussion how Schelling wanted to solve the ontological problem, "Why anything?" In order to explain existence, one must show how knowledge passes beyond the realm of essence; the question raises the problem of the ultimate meaning of existentiality.[19] The validity of a final cause of being is bound up with a first efficient cause, or, as we shall see shortly, the Kantian ideal of reason, having not only regulative but constitutive significance. In brief, the quest is for the primordial character of being which is existence itself and freely determines the coming to be of finiteness, for that being which is prior to the distinction of thought and being, reason and experience, being which is pure actuality and individuality expressed in the will to develop existentially, actually, all possibility or essentiality.

[16] Cf. *S.W.*, I, 10:156 f. [17] Cf. *S.W.*, II, 3:83.

[18] H. E. G. Paulus, in *Die endlich offenbar gewordene positive Philosophie*, p. 372, quotes Schelling as saying in a lecture: "In immanent thought the discussion does not concern being, but only *essence*."

[19] Cf. *S.W.*, I, 10:181, 308.

The Rational Analysis of the Principles of Being and Process: the Return to Aristotle

The analysis of this ontological problem Schelling carried out with the greatest feeling of affinity with Aristotle. This sense of kinship is most clearly expressed in his metaphysical terminology,[20] of which perhaps the most important single term is potency ["Potenz"]. The analysis of the logical possibility of being must be carried through in order to be able to think being, and this logical exploration Schelling conducted in terms of the development ["Steigerung"] of potencies into principles of being. The term potency, used by Schelling from 1799 on, originally indicated an analogy to the mathematical term "power," but it was then elaborated in the context of the dynamic-transcendental analysis of nature and history. As Jonas Cohn has pointed out,[21] the varied subsequent meanings were all retained in the later use of the term. By the term potency Schelling indicated potentiality, possibility, beginning, what can be but is not, a form of willing, a degree of subjectivity.[22] He denied Hegel's charge that it meant category,[23] for he was attempting with it to attain the principle of being, and "what is potency is by its nature on the verge of being, as it were." [24] He was fully conscious of its relation to the Aristotelian *dynamis* and its Latin *potentia*.[25] The use of the term potency allows movement through antithesis; it grounds the entire dialectic of nonbeing and being, of potentiality and actuality in thought, and thus eventually allows a positive science of existence to be built. By

[20] In "Schellings Verhältnis zu Aristoteles," *Philosophisches Jahrbuch der Görres-Gesellschaft*, XLVII, No. 1, 84–112, Karl Eswein has outlined Schelling's use of Aristotle. He has portrayed Schelling's early philosophy of nature—the organic-dynamic world-view—as using Aristotle mediated through other writers; the use made of him is not conscious, and Schelling's early works contain relatively few references to him. But in his later period, Schelling's Aristotelianism became highly self-conscious, and most particularly, says Eswein, in the doctrine of potencies; consequently there is constant reference and comparison to Aristotle.

[21] "Potenz und Existenz," in *Festschrift für Karl Joël* (Basel, 1934), p. 46.

[22] *S.W.*, II, 2:50, 114 f.; 3:272; 4:288; 1:114; I, 10:348.

[23] *S.W.*, II, 2:60, n. 1; 3:244.

[24] *S.W.*, II, 3:102.

[25] *S.W.*, II, 1:291; 3:63.

the use of potencies of increasing exponent, Schelling sought to give an analysis of the *archai* of all being and process.

But while Schelling used many other Aristotelian metaphysical distinctions, which we cannot discuss here, the ground of existence of God formed the basis of critical attack upon Aristotle. For the latter, as for all rationalism, God is the goal or end of thought, the final cause.[26] Schelling, on the other hand, believed that a science of actuality depends upon God as efficient cause in the ultimate sense, i. e., the unity of thought and being which contains within it the possibility of their severance. As Karl Eswein summarizes the problem, "The main point of Schelling's discussions of the Aristotelian God is that *personality*, i. e., for Schelling the bearer of irrationality, does not appear firmly sketched with Aristotle." [27] How this demand for individual, pure actuality as creator and ultimate lord of being arises in conceptuality we shall later see. Yet despite a significant break from Aristotelian metaphysics, Schelling could say, "The best course of a life devoted to philosophy might be to begin with Plato and end with Aristotle" [28]—a course not unlike that of his own development from 1801 on.

Summary Statement of the Ontological Problem

Schelling's ontological problem was to find, by the analysis of the existential copula, how a dialectic of being could arise which ultimately demonstrates the primacy of individual, suprarational being and which, having established the dependence of concept upon actuality, could be reapplied so that a positive science of existence will be possible. This ontology must point to the possibility of free creation or an act of will as the ground of finite existence. Then, and only then, may we be sure that reason has something other than itself as object, something to be overcome, so that a positive science can deal with existence. As Helmut Schelsky says,

> The two transcendental spheres of reason and will mutually exist in thought only if the will demonstrates that it has to be grasped

[26] Cf. *S.W.*, II, 1:559, n. 1; 3:103 f. [27] Eswein, *op. cit.*, p. 109.
[28] *S.W.*, II, 1:380.

as *prius* and reason as *posterius*. . . . [Schelling] was always clear that a metaphysical logic is the scientific presupposition of his doctrine of will and existence; this appears in his severance with Hegel to whom, at least in this respect, he does full justice.[29]

THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL PROBLEM

Possibility of Positive Knowledge: Extension of the Critical Philosophy

While the ontological problem in this sense is central, it has already been made clear that for Schelling this was only soluble in complete harmony with the answer to the epistemological problem. At this point one cannot stress too greatly Schelling's continual tendency to go historically behind Fichte to Kant. As he said in 1804, the year of Kant's death, Kant alone was capable "of winning the most lasting victory over dogmatism and of thus brightening the philosophical horizon which dogmatism darkened." [30] For the later Schelling this meant that Kant, by his division of theoretical and practical reason, had forced a division in philosophy itself. After 1827 he said of Kant:

> While he believed to have made an end forever of *all* knowledge of the supersensible by his critique, he really only brought it about that the negative and the positive had to be separated in philosophy; but just thereby the positive, now coming forward in its entire independence, was able, as positive, to oppose itself to the merely negative philosophy as the second aspect of philosophy. Kant introduced this separation and the resultant process of transfiguration of philosophy into the positive. Kant's critique contributed to this all the more inasmuch as it is in no way *hostilely* disposed toward the positive. While he breaks down the entire structure of that metaphysics, he none the less always shows the intention that in the end one must *want* what it wanted, and that its content would finally be the *true* metaphysics if it were only possible.[31]

Kant clearly showed that reason cannot transcend itself and, by inferences, reach existence, that ancient metaphysics can only discuss the pure "what" of things.[32] The difficulty for the now

[29] "Schellings Philosophie des Willens und der Existenz," *Christliche Metaphysik und das Schicksal des modernen Bewusstseins* (Leipzig, 1937), pp. 93–94.

[30] *Immanuel Kant*, *S.W.*, I, 6:6–7.

[31] *S.W.*, I, 10:74–75. Cf. *S.W.*, II, 3:245.

[32] *S.W.*, II, 3:82 f.

realistic-minded Schelling lay just where it could not have been for Schelling the transcendentalist. As he said in Berlin in 1841:

> The main question always remains: What is this thing-in-itself? If I only knew this, I would believe I know what is properly most worth knowing. . . . Kant asserts that there is *a priori* knowledge of things, but from this knowledge *a priori* he takes just the main thing, namely what itself exists ["das Existirende selbst"], the in-itself ["das An sich"], the character of things, that which truly *is* in them. For what appears in things by virtue of the asserted determinations of our faculty of knowledge, *is* not truly in them—but what is that which finally is in them, even independent of the determinations of our faculty of knowledge? To this Kant has no answer.[33]

Fichte's interpretation had its meritorious side, according to Schelling, in conceiving a completely aprioristic science which deduced the matter and form of things from the same absolute *prius*, so that existence was posited with the assertion, "I am." But Schelling considered Fichte's science to be without true positive knowledge; in neglecting to explain the existential dependence of the ego it failed to get beyond subjectivism.[34] In Fichte's later works, too, he failed to show how positive knowledge of existence could be gained. "How is it possible," asked Schelling, "to connect that idealism, whose foundation had ever been that everyone's ego is the only substance, with the absolute divine being of which he teaches that it is that which alone is real?" [35] The epistemological problem is that of answering how we can know not only that anything exists, but how existence in itself can be comprehended in a science which will be the highest. Kant and his idealistic interpreters have manifestly failed to provide the answer.

Limitations of Empirical Knowledge: Traditional and Mystical Empiricism

But did nonrationalistic epistemologies satisfy Schelling? What of empiricism? To this Schelling wished, as we shall see, to do full justice; but in its traditional English and French forms

[33] *S.W.*, II, 3:50. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 149. [34] Cf. *S.W.*, I, 10:90 f.; II, 1:369 f.
[35] *S.W.*, II, 3:54.

he found its formulation of experience too limited, for it restricted the certainty of the existence of an external world to inner or outer sense:

> Here it is therefore assumed that *everything* capable of being experienced can be found only in the external or inner sensible world. If empiricism becomes thus wholly exclusive, then it denies the reality of universal and necessary notions; it can go so far as to consider even the legal and moral notions as something which have become natural for us by mere habit and education, which is indeed the lowest degree of limitation to which it can sink.[36]

But Schelling claimed that this limitation, deplored by Hegel, was unnecessary. For instance, we know a freely willing and acting intelligence only by its actions, i. e., *a posteriori* and hence empirically; yet as such that intelligence is supersensible. Hence, he said,

> empiricism as such does not in any way exclude all knowledge of the supersensible, as is usually assumed and as even Hegel presupposes. One must distinguish between what is the object of *actual* experience and what by its *nature* is capable of being experienced. There is much within nature itself which was never the object of an actual experience and yet assuredly does not therefore lie outside the sphere of at least possible sensible experience. But does everything capable of being experienced suddenly break off beyond this sphere, as is imagined? Supposing it does cease, it is surely not assumed that *everything* ceases, perhaps not even that beyond these bounds all movement ceases. For with the cessation of movement even science would cease, for science is essentially movement.[37]

In the movement of science in pure thought every free act, hence actual occurrence, is excluded; but free act was the foundation of experience for Schelling, and while free act may be supersensible as such, he claimed that it may yet be capable of being experienced and its movement brought within the movement of scientific knowledge. "Therefore," he concluded, "there is also a metaphysical empiricism, as we wish to call it for the time being; under the *universal* concept of philosophical empiricism still other systems are therefore to be subsumed than those sensualistic ones which limit all knowledge to sense per-

[36] *S.W.*, II, 3:112–13. [37] *S.W.*, II, 3:113–14.

ception, or even deny the existence of everything supersensible." [38]

While Schelling was thus in search of a new analysis of experience, he rejected three forms of mystical epistemology claiming the supersensible as an immediate object of experience. Theosophy—and, for Schelling, this meant preëminently Jakob Böhme—claims to *see* all things in God and tries to grasp the going forth of things from God as an *actual* process. This involves God in a kind of natural process in which he is not merely logical but actual result of a process. Schelling's critique of Böhme at this point is akin to that directed against Hegel: theosophy, striving to transcend rationalism, really cannot free itself of the merely substantial knowing of rationalism itself, for both lack the insight into a free act or creation, and both know everything *aeterno modo* or in immanent movement.[39] Böhme's thought thus falls back into theogonic or necessary movement. Whatever other aspects of Böhme's thought remained influential upon the later Schelling, he consciously rejected the mystical notion of immediate vision. For Schelling, knowledge of the divine must be mediated; the object of knowledge must be the consequence of that free act behind which neither vision nor intuition can pass without mediation.

Second, the Christian revelation was no source of knowledge of the supersensible for Schelling. His problem was rather to know how to proceed *to* instead of *from* revelation in order to secure its meaning as a historical fact. To accept revelation as authority would mean to build rather than ground a Christian philosophy—which was precisely counter to his aim. Of the knowledge of existence he said, "Revelation will exercise no other authority over it than that which any other object, with which science has to do, exercises over it." [40] In short, revelation is a historical fact, a result requiring a context which it does not immediately present to experience.[41]

[38] *S.W.*, II, 3:114. Cf. *Darstellung des philosophischen Empirismus*, *S.W.*, I, 10:227 f.

[39] Cf. *S.W.*, II, 3:121 f.; I, 10:153, 184 f.; II, 4:33.

[40] *S.W.*, II, 3:133. Cf. *S.W.*, II, 3:139 f.; 4:17 f.

[41] As he said of his philosophy of revelation, its content is historical, but not temporally historical, for the content is prior to the foundation of the world (*S.W.*, II, 3:142).

Finally, Schelling, like Hegel, ruled out a third form of empiricism whose source is feeling. The difficulty here—and this meant for him the inadequacy in Jacobi's early views—is that feeling, while it gropes for the positive, arises as a renunciation of science. To use feeling as source is to limit the source to the individual and subjective. Jacobi's later substitution of reason for feeling, whereby he became, according to Schelling, a rationalist, was proof enough for him that feeling by itself cannot be a satisfactory source of experience which will lead to the positive knowledge of free being as ground of existence.[42]

The quest of the later Schelling is thus seen to be directed toward the establishment of nothing less than a science of positive knowledge which can know *what* is both suprarational and suprasensible, and *that* there is a ground of being or highest being. From the standpoint of the construction of such a science which can *account for* existence, Schelling wanted to know Kant's ideal of reason not merely as a regulative but also as a constitutive principle.[43] For Kant the ideas of pure reason are further removed from objective reality than the categories; they contain completeness, and reason aims in them only at a systematic unity to which empirically possible unity is to approximate. On the other hand, the ideal of pure reason is still farther removed from objective reality; it is the idea *in individuo*, individuality determined by the idea alone.[44] For Kant, ideas and ideal are no more than subjective principles—"maxims of reason"—which help to bring speculative, scientific unity to the variety and manifoldness of the understanding. They are regulative only, never constitutive for knowledge, although the ideal is constitutive for practical reason. Now Schelling agreed that, so far as pure reason is concerned, the ideal is determined by the idea, but he held that Kant's ideal, the sum of all possibilities, is too broad a concept with which to begin a science.[45] He therefore built a new rational science, or negative philosophy, which demonstrates the dependence of the idea on the

[42] Cf. *S.W.*, I, 10:165 f.; 8:55; II, 3:115 f., 154.
[43] *S.W.*, II, 3:44 f. Cf. *S.W.*, I, 6:118 f.; 10:83 f.; II, 1:282 f.
[44] *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by F. Max Müller (New York, 1927), pp. 459 f., 516 f.
[45] *S.W.*, II, 1:287.

ideal, and joins to this a deductive science, or positive philosophy, which attempts to show that the ideal is constitutive not only for practical reason but for positive knowledge of existence as well. What this means, as Schelling elaborated his science, we may state briefly thus: Reason, assigning rules for the correct use of the understanding, cannot claim existence for God, but can arrive at God only as defined in reason's idea. This idea of God—an abstract God without motive power and hence without true existence—is as much as rationalism can know of God; here God is the goal of the process of thought, its final cause, not its first efficient cause. Schelling in effect now equated the absolute subject, produced at the conclusion of the earlier philosophy of nature, with the ideal of pure reason.[46] But, first, because he saw, as did Kant, that such an ideal could never be an object of worship—and for Schelling a permanent object of worship had to have existence—and second, because, like Fichte and Hegel, he wanted to overcome the Kantian dualism of the phenomenal and the noumenal, Schelling tried to find the actuality behind the ideal, as it were, which makes the ideal constitutive for knowledge.

Summary Statement of the Epistemological Problem

Schelling was in search of positive knowledge of existence. He rejected all types of epistemologies which appeared to him ultimately bounded by man himself; knowledge must start with existence itself, an objective "given," with brute resistance to the human mind. Moreover, since in ontological terms this "given" is free act over against the logic of strict necessity of the mind, he sought some "metaphysical empiricism" which could unite these two; somehow the logic of the mind must mediately grasp the free existence beyond and bring it into "the nets of understanding." Thus he distinguished between "dogmatizing" and "dogmatic" philosophy.[47] Kant overcame that "dogmatizing" reason which tried to pass by inferences from itself to existence. Schelling now proposed that a "dogmatic" or "positive" philosophy be constructed. Only then would the

[46] Cf. *S.W.*, I, 10:123–25. [47] *S.W.*, II, 3:82.

Kantian antinomies all be true, the theses in the "positive," the antitheses in the "negative," branch of one science.[48] The unity of this one science would yield that knowledge which combines science and the immediately unknown, logical necessity and existential contingency or freedom, the universal and the individual.

THE METHODOLOGICAL SOLUTION

We now must turn to the basis upon which Schelling proposed a methodological solution to these problems, bearing in mind that we have broken down merely as central interests an ontological and epistemological problem whose solution Schelling considered to be one and the same. Although, as we shall see, he developed two "philosophies," these were to be but branches of one unified science of finite existence.

The Systematic Division of Essential and Existential Cognition

In the first place, it is of the utmost importance to understand his distinction between essential and existential cognitive relationships. Schelling turned the full force of his critical powers upon concepts common to medieval as well as ancient thought, and it is this analysis which led him to a reinterpretation of the old problem of essence and existence. His inquiry was directed toward the adjustment of the logical structure of being—what cannot be otherwise—and the extralogical nature of existence—what can be otherwise. As always, his quest was for the unity or unifying aspect of these two. He carried this out in terms of a unity which embraces all possibility as well as actuality. To put it in post-Hegelian terms, the quest is for the unity of notion and existence:

> God contains in himself nothing but the pure conjunctive *that* ["Dass"] of his own being. But this, *that* he *is*, would be no truth were he not *something*—something, to be sure, not in the sense of a something which is, but of what is everything. Further, this would be no truth if he did not have a relation to thought, a relation not

[48] Cf. *S.W.*, I, 10:332 f.; II, 1:490 f.; 3:145 f.

to a *notion* but to the *notion of all notions*, to the *Idea*. Here is the true place for that unity of being and thought. . . . The unity intended here extends to the highest antithesis. Here, therefore, is also the final boundary, is that *beyond which one cannot pass*. But in this unity priority belongs not to thought; *being* is first, thought only second or following.[49]

Such being which is actually prior to all thought, therefore described by the German adjective *unvordenklich*,[50] is of itself necessary, without potency, and in the highest sense individual actuality.[51] This is the pure substance of being, and all predicable being can only be said of it.

But how universal statements apply to it is just the problem. Schelling was in search of a science of actuality, of existence, of individuality. As he said, as such no science of the individual is possible.[52] Hence this pure actuality must have the ability to be something, must, in fact, be what comprehends everything. Schelling delineated a twofold relationship which, he claimed, permits a science of actuality:

> Would it not be simpler and more natural to seek the cause of the different relationship to God [as depicted in Leibniz' *Theodicy* by divine will and divine understanding] in the nature of that *nescio quod* itself, which should contain the ground of all possibility and, as it were, the stuff and material for all possibilities, but accordingly itself can be only possibility, therefore only the *potentia universalis*, which, as such, is *toto coelo* different from God and so far as it is considered essentially, therefore merely logically, must be independent of that of which *all* doctrines unanimously say that it is *pure actuality*, actuality in which is nothing of potency. So far, the relation is merely a logical one. But how is the real relation to be represented? Simply thus: That which comprehends all possibility, what itself is merely possible, incapable of *self*-being, can be only in such a manner that it is related as mere material of something else which is being to it and with respect to which it appears as what itself is not.[53]

When Schelling spoke in this highly abstract manner, he was attempting analytically to break down the unity of thought and

[49] *S.W.*, II, 1:587.

[50] In this volume the term is translated "immemorial." Schelling means specifically the being actually antecedent to thought (cf. *S.W.*, II, 3:211).

[51] Cf. *S.W.*, II, 4:337 f. [52] *S.W.*, II, 1:273. [53] *S.W.*, II, 1:584–85.

being to the more manageable terms of essence and existence, which are then totally different, while retaining their primordial and ultimate unity. "Nothing universal exists . . . only what is individual exists," he said, "and universal being exists only if the absolute individual being *is* the former." [54] Put in another way, he was reapplying Böhme's mystic primal reality (or ungrounded) and ground in a context where, first, a science of actuality is possible and, second, this science will be the highest science in accounting for finite existence. In brief, he was trying to translate Böhme's vision into a science which included freedom.

This involves many difficulties. But, stated in simple terms, Schelling's attack was twofold. First, the analysis of essentiality, that is, of the *ens universale*, had to proceed as if it were capable of self-being in order that, in the strictest fashion, it could be shown that this is impossible. Schelling believed that the positive science of existence depended upon everything first becoming "inward" for us.[55] Thus, before we can say that the universal structure of science is the structure of reality, we must experiment with reason itself by trying to make it contain existence. This experiment must be more than the construction of that logic which only concerns itself with internal relations; it must try to find the elements of the relation between thought and being itself. What happens, he asked, if I try to think *being* without using any empirical determinations? By what *process* does mind move toward the notion of being itself? What is the *character* of each stage of such a process? Since no principle is given from which a deduction can proceed, the process of thinking being itself must be inductive. Further, since the *process* of thought must be understood, this induction can only be such that its stages are interrelated by the movement of thought, which means for Schelling that they must be dialectically related.

Now the *primum cogitabile* of such dialectical induction in pure reason, he held, can only be the pure subject. This first moment or potency of pure reason has the character of limitless self-relation. Nothing is objective for this pure subject; it is con-

[54] *S.W.*, II, 1:586. [55] *S. W.*, I, 8:202.

ceived as having its being in itself. Its being, we might say, is involved within itself, and its only relation is to itself. But thought cannot stop with this, for with this moment of thought we have only pure subjectivity without object. There is here a privation, a lack of objective being. If we conceive this subjectivity as developing into being, that is, as being all there "is," we would rationally have only the dead substance of pantheism, only the necessary structure of self-relationship. So, proposed Schelling in effect, let us immediately posit pure objectivity and conceive it as restraining such pure subjectivity, keeping it in a state of privation or nonbeing. Now this pure object is the opposite of the pure subject. In contrast to the first moment, it must be conceived as having the character of limitless external relationship, self-estrangement; there is nothing of subject in it, and its being can only be in something else. Hence its being is not involved or potentially within it; in relation to the first moment there is nothing potential about it, and it must be conceived as fully actual. When Schelling called this moment actuality, he meant that pure thought has passed from the potential to the actual, that the first moment is subject to the second, the second object to the first. Or, in order to indicate the dynamic relation between the two potencies, the first is given the character of will as subjective propulsion, the second the character of will as objective repulsion. Whatever signification we give these moments, they are dialectically related in the pure noetic series. The pure subject is not to pass *a potentia ad actum*, for it is now considered to be restrained by the pure object; the pure object is nonpotential, fully actual, but yet also nonbeing, for its being is in something else. Since both of these moments are privative, each in its own way, thought must pass to something more. This third moment must be subject and object—have within it both potentiality and actuality, being subject and object to itself. Here thought expresses in a higher unity the interdependence of the first two moments; here is the balance, as it were, between involvement and evolvement, the perfect rational expression of becoming and being. These three moments of speculation, Schelling claimed, constitute the involuntary course of pure thought; they form a purely noetic series of potencies where

the laws of thought are the laws of being. Taken together, these *noemata* or moments of conceptual being stand as the possibility or potency of being itself, that is, they can rationally be developed into principles of being.

But before rationally developing the potencies into principles of conceptual being, thought can conceive one further significant relation, the relation of the pure *noemata* to being itself, or pure actuality which is free of *all* noetic determinations. This actuality stood in Schelling's analysis for the fact of "givenness," the unrelatedness of being itself. As "given" and as unrelated, it cannot be considered as other than purely actual and individual, for the *noemata* contain the entire potential and universal character of being. Thought and language try to encompass it immediately, but as yet no guaranty of its relation to thought and language has been won; that is the task of all philosophic endeavor, unless man wishes to forfeit reason and indulge in the vision of theosophical immediacy or nonscientific empiricism. This being itself is *unvordenklich*, not to be attained by mere speculation. Now the speculative content of reason, the totality of *noemata* or idea of being, while surely not just nothing at all, is yet nonbeing; it can only really be said to be if this pure actuality *is* the idea. Schelling at this point merely states the hypothesis that the *noemata* appear to reason as in some sense privative; they appear to require something outside of reason in which to have their actuality. Thus being itself would be the principle of universal or noetic being, but *why* this is so, and *how* it is related to the universality of speculative reason, must first be shown. From the standpoint of speculation, such a principle of being has existence and freedom, while the *noemata* have eternity and are dialectically interrelated or interrelated by the necessary laws of thought.[56] Put in theological terms, as we shall note them in *The Ages of the World*, this relation is expressed by "God's necessity" and "God's freedom."

[56] Schelling designated the principle of being by a number of untranslatable terms, such as *das Seiende selbst, das was das Seiende ist, das Seiende seiende, was überhaupt actus ist,* αὐτὸ τὸ "Ον, *der Ueberseiende, die Uebergottheit.* The *noemata* he designates as *das Seiende,* which has been translated as "what is" in *The Ages of the World.* When Schelling writes *das Sein,* "being," he usually means the unanalyzed character of being.

Thus far, says Schelling, we have that pure actuality only as determined by the totality of pure *noemata* as its *logical prius*. If, on the other hand, reason could claim that pure actuality as a *real prius*, then reason would have a principle whereby a real deduction could be carried through, a deduction which would have in its prius the guaranty that a nontranscendental, real, or positive science could be constructed. How can we attain that principle of being, free of all rational limitation? Only by science—a science of reason. If reason can operate by the dialectical law whereby the three moments were inductively seen to point to what lies beyond reason, and if reason can then show that all possible speculative or conceptual being depends for its reality upon such a principle, then and only then can we be sure that that principle as pure actuality and pure freedom is, as it were, the lord of all being. A science must accomplish this, a science whose only principle, for the moment, is the principle of indifference toward existence.

Schelling showed that by such a principle of indifference we can consider the pure potencies of being as becoming principles of universal being. By such principles or *archai* we can transcendentally traverse the entire realm of possible being, dialectically evolve eternal or universal being. Creation, man, and the concept of God are thus transcendentally built up in pure reason. Here Schelling stressed that in the primal nature in God, creation, and man, the same principles operate, so that man, the last in development, has a co-knowledge of God and creation. But while this entire rationalistic development points to God as final cause upon which nature and man depend for their being, this final cause or ultimate principle of reality is known merely in abstraction, in concept.

Schelling proceeds to show that the chain of being thus engendered must, in the end, depend for its reality upon a final possibility beyond reason, and this is pure actuality, freedom, existence. Thus it is shown that the latter is the necessary *prius* of the reality of conceptual being. Such is the task of negative philosophy, the first or universal science. Each link in the chain of conceptual being is shown to depend for its actuality upon the succeeding link; the final link is then shown to depend for

its actuality upon that which lies beyond conceptuality, that is, upon being itself, pure actuality, freedom, or existence. The intention is that a second branch of philosophy—positive philosophy—will use this result of negative philosophy as *prius* for an *a priori* deduction, and will then prove that this *prius* has being *per posterius*. That real *prius*, Schelling intended to say, is known negatively; it is known by the final overthrow of reason, reason's failure, as it were. But reason must be reinstated, science must be reconstructed. Thus from the bare fact of actuality as the abyss of reason, reason must strive to discover the character of its real *prius* by what follows deductively from this *prius*. Then empirically we must find the deduced character of the *prius* in nature and history, thereby proving that the deduction proceeded from that *prius* which is the principle of existence or being itself. By such an *a priori* construction and empirical verification, essence or the realm of being engendered by the necessary laws of thought will have won the guaranty that it can encompass existence; in other words, a positive knowledge of existence is now considered possible.

The importance of this whole analysis lies in the fact that it represents a complete reworking as well as limitation of absolute idealism. Here Schelling addresses the problem of rationally analyzing a dialectic of arational creativity, of bringing the creative power of will into a science. But he limits the scope of the procedure. "Reason," he says, "gives everything, with respect to content, which appears in experience; it comprehends *what is actual* but, on that account, not *actuality*." [57] The science of reason is indifferent to existence; it is the form of a possible science of actuality, a metaphysical logic which is limited by its presupposition.[58]

[57] *S.W.*, II, 3:61.

[58] Schelling developed the dialectical method of induction and the rational science most clearly in *Philosophisches Einleitung in die Philosophie der Mythologie oder Darstellung der reinrationalen Philosophie* (*S.W.*, II, 1:253–572). This is a collection of lectures written between 1847 and 1852, and is his last philosophical work, which he was about to revise when he fell ill during the winter of 1853–54; he died in August of the latter year. While it evidences lack of revision, it is clear enough as to the basic logical structure of the negative philosophy, or reconstruction of idealism in critical terms such that the positive philosophy or science of finite existence

But having developed the idea of that pure actuality upon which all transcendental or predicable being depends—or, as Schelling says, the concept of what itself *is* all that is—the real relation between God, nature, and man is demonstrated by the second science, or positive philosophy. Reason is analytic and definitive, but mere analysis and definition cannot understand the world. Schelling poetically expressed the problem forcing philosophy to existential cognition:

Reason ["Vernunft"] discerns only the immediate, what cannot be; it is like the wife at home, assigned to substance, *ousia*, to which it must cling, so that prosperity and order remain at home. Reason is just what holds together, limits, while understanding ["Verstand"] is what amplifies, progresses, is active. Reason is what is immovable; it is the ground on which everything must be built, but just on that account it is not itself what builds. It is related immediately only to pure substance, which is what is immediately certain for it, and everything else which it is to comprehend must first be mediated to it by the understanding. But the function of reason is just to hold fast to the negative whereby the understanding is forced to seek the positive, to which alone the understanding is subjected. Reason is so little the immediate organ for the positive that rather only in

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may be added to complete the total task of philosophy. As early as *The Ages of the World*, Schelling expressed the desirability of treating "of the noble art of reason" (cf. [*214*]). The necessity of such a treatment later prompted him to say, "Any philosophy which does not retain its foundation *in* what is negative, and *without* the latter, therefore immediately, wishes to attain what is positive, the divine, finally dies of inevitable spiritual impoverishment" (*S.W.*, I, 10:176). Still later he continued to insist, "No one can value the negative philosophy more than I; indeed, I would call academic youth fortunate if a purely rational philosophy is again taught in the schools" (*S.W.*, II, 3:132). Again, in his opening lecture in Berlin in 1841, Schelling said: "Nothing is to be lost by me which has been won by genuine science since Kant. How should I give up that philosophy which I myself founded earlier, the discovery of my youth? Not to put another philosophy in its place, but to add thereto a new science until now considered impossible, to give it again the attitude which, by surpassing its natural bounds, it had lost in that one wanted to make what could only be a fragment of a higher whole, itself into the whole—this is the task and purpose" (*S.W.*, II, 4:366, cf. *S.W.*, II, 3:90, 133, 152 f.). It may well be that Hegel showed the later Schelling the necessity of constructing a logic before philosophy could deal with reality itself. Paulus quotes Schelling as saying of his early philosophy of nature and mind: "That . . . this entire science must dissolve into what is logical, I myself have understood only later—and not independently of Hegel" (*Die endlich offenbar gewordene positive Philosophie . . .*, p. 377; cf. *S.W.*, I, 10:126).

reason's contradiction does understanding rise to the notion of the positive.[59]

The question to be answered is: How is the understanding to be subjected to the positive, to existence, once it has risen to the concept of the positive?

To answer this, Schelling introduced his distinction between knowledge of *what* a thing is and knowledge *that* it is:

> Here it is to be noticed that there are two sorts of knowledge of everything real, two quite different matters to be known: *what* "that which is" is, *quid sit*, and *that* it is, *quod sit*. The former—the answer to the question: "What is it?"—gives me insight into the *essence* of the thing, or brings it about that I understand the thing, that I have an understanding or a concept of it, or *it itself* in concept. But the other, the insight *that* it is, gives me not the mere concept, but something surpassing the mere concept, which is existence. This is a *discerning* ["Erkennen"], whereby it is certainly clear that a concept is indeed possible without a real discerning, but a discerning is not possible without the concept.[60]

What a thing is concerns the expansion of reason by the understanding—thus the science of reason; that a thing is, however, concerns experience, either in its immediate sensual form or in Schelling's specialized sense of "metaphysical empiricism." Thus two sciences are required: "a science which comprehends the essence of things, the content of being, and a science which explains the actual existence of things." [61]

In the science of pure reason, God as the principle of all being was shown to be *natura necessaria*, that which *essentia* is *actus;* the aim of the deductive science of the positive philosophy is by a free act of man to put what *essentia* is *actus* out of its notion, so that it is *actu actus*, so that God as the pure conjunctive *that* of existence is not the goal but the beginning of science, not regulative but constitutive.[62] Here Schelling proceeded deductively from the immediate notion of existence prior to the notion of God. Thus existence is *prius* and reason *posterius*. To commence such a deduction, Schelling claimed that reason must be put outside itself, in ecstasy.[63] Then, after an act of faith in

[59] *S.W.*, I, 10:174. Cf. *S.W.*, I, 7:42 f.
[60] *S.W.*, II, 3:57–58.
[61] *S.W.*, II, 3:95.
[62] *S.W.*, II, 1:562 f.; 3:45 f.
[63] Cf. *S.W.*, II, 3:155 f.; 4:337 f.; I, 9:228 f.

the immediacy of existence, reason may proceed deductively and essence may be made subject to existence.[64]

The meaning of an immediate concept of actuality as such and its relation to the deductive method are obscure in Schelling's lectures. Consequently no precise relation of his two sciences can be given. At one point he claimed that the positive philosophy could stand alone; this was doubtless said in a moment of rashness, for the character of reason and its principles could hardly be "deduced" from an immediate notion of existence. The positive philosophy appears truly positive in two respects: it limits reason by calling for an immediate concept of existence, the bare fact *that* something exists; and it proceeds to the facts of history to substantiate its deduction.

Put in the Kantian terms by which he tried to make this clear, the idea, analyzed into a science of reason, is the sum of all possible predicates belonging to the intellectual determination of things. It belonged to the essential cognitive function—the science of reason—to show in what way this idea cannot of itself exist, and this included showing that the idea depends upon the ideal. Here the prime difficulty involved the kind of knowledge which we had of the ideal. It was most certainly bound to the idea, and only known in logical or essential dependence. The difficulty, according to Schelling, is overcome once we understand how to subject essence to existence in such a way that, proceeding deductively from the ideal as first efficient cause of the idea, we may have a science in which factual, historical existence will, *a posteriori,* demonstrate the efficient causality of the object of faith extending beyond reason.[65] Thus Schelling said that the negative philosophy is aprioristic empiricism presenting *a priori* (i. e., transcendental) knowledge of the empirical, while the positive philosophy is empirical apriorism presenting first an *a priori* deduction from an absolute *prius,* and proving that the *prius* has being *per posterius.*[66] Both methods are required for a unified science of existence, since the second is in effect an inversion of the first, and its task is to demonstrate

[64] Cf. *S.W.*, I, 10:179 f., 406; 3:172 f.
[65] Cf. *S.W.*, II, 3:168 f., 248; 4:337 f., 346 f.
[66] Cf. *S.W.*, II, 3:101 f., 130, 249.

that the logical structure of conceptuality applies to factual existence only when the previous relationship of logic and actuality is inverted.

A possible pattern for the difficult web of science which Schelling is here weaving is his assumption, made at the outset of the deductive science of the positive philosophy, which he hopes will be corroborated or demonstrated *a posteriori*. The science of actuality depends for its reality upon a higher necessity. "Let us say," Schelling proposed, "this necessity is that of the unity of thought and being—*this* is the highest law, and its meaning this: that what always *is*, must also have a relation to the *notion*, which is *nothing*, i. e., what has no relation to thought, also truly *is* not." [67] It is the task of the *a posteriori* or historical division of the positive philosophy to demonstrate this; thus we are to know *that* the *prius* has being *per posterius*, that God *is* the world or, conversely, that the existential character of the world depends upon a principle of actuality.

The Historical Reference of Essential and Existential Cognition

This *a posteriori* demonstration that what *is* has a relation to the notion, constitutes the second phase of Schelling's solution of the problem of existence, that phase in which he discussed the historical development of religious consciousness in terms of the work of fate and divine providence, whereby man gradually returns to consciousness and knowledge of the source of being. Here Schelling tried to show the possibility of the relation of essence and existence in what might be called existential thought. "Just he, man, impelled me," he confessed, "to the final desperate question: Why is there anything at all? Why not nothing?" [68]

[67] *S.W.*, II, 1:587.

[68] *S.W.*, II, 3:7.

Descriptive terms which border on the existential thinking commonly associated with S. Kierkegaard and others have purposely been used to describe Schelling's later thought. "Existential thought" and "existential dialectic" relate to the boundary which Schelling found between logic and history, speculative continuity and discontinuous decision or crisis. There is certainly a general affinity between Schelling and later existential philosophy which the attentive reader of *The Ages of the World* will not pass over lightly. But Schelling's existential thinking seems to involve

Human nature demands a solution of the baffling problem of existence. Since he was dealing with an ultimately transcendent being as first efficient cause, the form which this analysis takes is that of the philosophy of historical religion. It should be said at the outset that this is an *application* of the preceding analysis, but an application which is important not merely in offering an example, but in showing that the theoretical analysis also takes place *factually* in history, and hence is an *a posteriori* demonstration.[69] When Schelling presented what is known as his philosophy of mythology and philosophy of revelation, he was trying to answer the same problem of the intelligibility of existence which he attempted to answer in the dual logical and real analysis. But it had this further significance, that he here asserted that man's thought has been directed in such a manner by the very character of the existential nature in which he has involved himself by his freedom.[70]

Schelling claimed that the spirit of the whole of his later philosophy is historical, and urged the reader to remember that the importance for him of the historical dated back to the *System des transcendentalen Idealismus*.[71] Historical, as he used the term, must be understood in two senses. First it is used in a higher, almost methodological sense, which certainly has an affinity with the method of Schelling's earlier transcendentalism. But in the later philosophy this methodology is ultimately one with its suprahistorical content, for, as he said of his philosophy depicting the world as the effect of a free resolution or act, "the expression historical, used of philosophy, was related . . . not to the manner of knowing in it, but only to the *content* of knowledge."[72] In the realm of the suprahistorical belongs the pretemporal eternity, or qualitative distinction of time, which is posited as past by the free divine decision for creation. In this

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a wider range than that of certain later philosophers; he had destroyed—in his own mind, at least—the presuppositions of speculative idealism while retaining its persistent problem of a developing scientific knowledge of the world. In whatever other respects he remains enigmatic, he should be recognized as one of the first to envisage both the advantages and the limitations of existential thinking.

[69] Cf. *S.W.*, II, 2:672. [70] Cf. *S.W.*, II, 3:346 f.

[71] *S.W.*, II, 3:317; I, 10:96 f. [72] *S.W.*, II, 3:139 n. Cf. *S.W.*, II, 2:138.

sense the suprahistorical grounds empirical natural history. But also to the suprahistorical belongs the transcendent act of freedom expressed by the myth of the fall. In this sense, the suprahistorical grounds human historical consciousness, which is the evolution in consciousness and knowledge of the threefold God, and which is the ever continuing restoration of man to God, and proof of the actually existing God.[73] In each case, empirical history is the result of an act, and such history is in some sense a gradual realization of the suprahistorical content. Besides making such a distinction of suprahistorical and empirical-historical, Schelling said that "the true time consists of a succession of times and, conversely, the world is only a link of the true time, and in so far itself an epoch. . . ." [74] The true time has three epochs or ages. "Let us distinguish," he said, "(1) pretemporal eternity, which is posited as past *by* the creation; (2) the age of the creation itself, which is the *present;* (3) the age in which everything is attained by the creation and which stands as future eternity." [75] Now the suprahistorical would seem to describe the dialectical process which Schelling conceived in the pretemporal eternity and the future; further, the relation of these two "ages" to the present is suprahistorical, for between the "ages" a nondialectical act of freedom intervenes. The suprahistorical content is then the substance of essential knowledge or reason. But while man's reason can transcend finitude and know universal or eternal relations, reason cannot account for finitude and the nonuniversal or contingent character of existence. Thus man must in some way conceive eternity as broken by freedom, as, again, he must conceive the evil of this world as overcome by freedom; finite history, the object of empirical knowledge, must be conceived as beginning and ending with a free act.

Schelling's interest in the relation of finite and nonfinite aspects of history is evident in his early works.[76] Hence it would be an error to say that he was later influenced entirely by others into speaking of his final philosophy as "historical philosophy." But he did find kindred spirits who quickened the final emphasis.

[73] Cf. *S.W.*, II, 2:152 f.; 3:131; 4:35 f., 217 f.
[74] *S.W.*, II, 3:308. [75] *S.W.*, II, 4:109.
[76] Cf. *B.*, I, 39 f.; *S.W.*, I, 1:1–83; 3:587–603; 5:280–316, 388–457.

Pascal, who had so far opposed Cartesian rationalism as to find the conception of life in the living personality and its direct experience of God, appealed to Schelling.[77] But he felt greater kinship with Jacobi, to whom he attributed the first use of the term "historical philosophy." For, as he said, Jacobi "of all modern philosophers felt most ardently the need of a historical philosophy (in our sense). From youth on there was in him something which rebelled, as it were, against a system reducing everything to *mere* rational relationships, a system excluding freedom and personality." [78]

In the history of religious consciousness, Schelling found his deduction from the absolute *prius* substantiated, and the ultimate unity of thought and being, essentiality and actuality, revealed to man. The scientific or logical analysis of creation or being other than God provided that man—in idea the mediator between the world of ideas and God, and akin to the beginning of creation by the contradivine principle in God seeking a being other than God, in reality the final end of creation—can change from what denies God to what posits God in consciousness. Further, if this occurs, it is shown that this re-creation in consciousness must occur gradually in a certain manner, which is a duplicate of the process of creation. The theogonic process is the gradual recollection of the cosmogonic process. Now Schelling found that the tripartite theogonic process does actually occur in a tripartite development within each of three great mythologic systems—the Egyptian, Indian, and Greek. In effect he maintained that these mythologic systems can only be a consequence of his deductive cosmogonic process which includes the prehistorical and the transition to history in terms of the creation and fall. The potencies which were deduced principles of being in the cosmogonic process became gods in human con-

[77] Cf. *S.W.*, I, 10:170.

[78] *S.W.*, I, 10:168. Schelling's main assertion is that rationalism cannot understand the reality of history. "For rationalism nothing can arise by an act, e. g., by free creation; it knows merely essential relations. For it everything follows merely *modo aeterno*, eternally, i. e., merely logically, by immanent movement. For that is only a falsified rationalism which, for example, wants to explain the origin of the world by a free expression ["Entäusserung"] of the absolute spirit, which wants merely to assert factual creation" (*S.W.*, II, 3:124).

sciousness. The concept of the "nature in God," or God's necessity, was gradually built up in human consciousness. But just as the science of reason can have God or pure actuality merely in concept, so the necessary development of natural religion, i.e., the religious production in human consciousness, cannot be other than *praeter divina*, mere preparation and anticipation (as in the Greek mysteries) for the time when God will be revealed as real *prius* or actual lord of being. In Judaism, Schelling found the link between the mythologic process and revelation; the person of God the Father here was realized, but to be revealed as actual the work of God the Son was required. In Christ, this factual revelation was completed, and the way prepared for the completion of an actual God in as well as above history. This completion is the work of God the Spirit, a development of history which Schelling divided in terms of the Petrine or Catholic Church, the Pauline or Protestant Church, and the Johannine or universal church.

Thus, to recapitulate, the transcendent God becomes immanent, first in consciousness, then in the factuality of history itself, and mankind then knows positively, progressively, *that* God in his threefold nature is lord of being. Schelling's intention throughout was to prove *a posteriori* his cosmogony, wherein God is first efficient cause, and to depict the restoration of consciousness to unity with its source.

At the conclusion of his summary of Schelling's historical philosophy, Constantin Frantz stressed an important dual relation of history:

> Two different things are under discussion, namely, as much a radical distinction of history and nature, as, on the other hand again, an undeniable inner connection of these two realms. Hence both demand explanation. One is explained in that the realm of history has not been created by *God*, but is founded by the primordial act of *man* himself. And because by this primordial act *eo ipso* also something *which should not be* was posited, which must again be overcome, so just from this results the historical process, for there is a process only where there is something to be overcome. If, on the other hand, such a thing were not in world-history, then the latter would have quickly run its course, so to speak. There would not be even any obligation for man, were there not in him *something*

which should not be. What is as it should be is beyond any obligation. This concerns the first point in question. But the other, i. e., the inner connection between nature and history, is explained thus, that, in and for themselves, it is the same powers which operate in the latter as in the former, only in much different form.[79]

Schelling's solution of the ontological problem was to account for nature and history in terms of freedom. To the question "Why anything?" he answered: Because in the prehistorical, God's eternity was overcome by freedom expressed in the creation and fall. His solution of the epistemological problem was twofold. First, he showed that the natural consciousness of man has already run a continuous historical gamut of recovering essentiality or that eternal past which is prior to the primordial act of freedom—this is the necessary development of mythology. Schelling traced this recovery by showing the inner history of human consciousness. After the prehistorical fall, human consciousness gradually, by the mythologic process, realized the "nature in God," the true suprahistorical content. Second, Schelling showed that there is a free restoration of the existential consciousness, now in possession of its essential nature, to the divine unity as lord of being, and that, without such restoration, being loses its significance—this is the free development of revelation through Christ and the Spirit. Thus the historical philosophy is (as Vladimir Jankélévitch [80] has pointed out) the Odyssey of consciousness after its counteressential fall, the gradual restoration of the knowledge of reality as the transcendent unity of being and thought, existence and essence. Schelling himself confessed that his entire aim was nothing less than the restoration of man's fallen consciousness. "True philosophy," he asserted, "faces only the whole and wants to restore consciousness in its entirety, its integrity. The philosopher who knows his calling is the physician who again dresses and seeks to heal with gentle, slow hand the deep wounds of human consciousness." And he added, with some resentment, "The restoration is all the more difficult since most people do not *want* to be

[79] *Schelling's positive Philosophie* (Cöthen, 1880), III, 186.

[80] *L'Odyssée de la conscience dans la dernière philosophie de Schelling* (Paris, 1933).

healed at all and, like unhappy patients, raise an unruly outcry if one even approaches their wounds. . . ." [81]

Thus we see that the "metaphysical empiricism" at which Schelling was aiming in order to acquire positive knowledge is served by this twofold doctrine of recollection and revelation, the necessary or logical elaboration of the self-being of the idea and its dependence upon the ideal, and the reversal of self-being, or the proof *in history* of the ontic dependence of finite existence upon the transhistorical. Recollection is the process arising when in human consciousness what annuls God is turned into what posits God.[82] Then God as final cause is slowly built up in consciousness, that is, the essential or past state of the "nature in God" is recalled. Second, historical revelation in Christianity marks the entrance into human consciousness of what is more than reason or essential.[83] That this historical analysis is the analysis of essential and existential cognitive functions as we viewed them above, Schelling most certainly admitted. In revelation, he said, "the realm of mere representation ["Vorstellung"] ceases; truth and actuality take its place." [84] The philosophy of revelation must connect factual or existential and the higher or essential history.[85] Mythology and revelation have much the same relation as Schelling's new formulation of the relation of idealism and realism.[86] Further, like idealism, mythology is a necessary progression with an end, attained, Schelling held, in the mystery religions, while, like the science of actuality in its deductive aspect, revelation as positive knowledge proceeds in history and is never concluded.[87]

Summary Statement of the Solution

Let us now state what appears to be the fundamental drive of this intricate development in Schelling's final thought. Here his aim was what it had been throughout his entire development—namely, to show that thought and existence are ultimately

[81] *S.W.*, II, 3:364–65. Cf. *S.W.*, II, 2:318.
[82] Cf. *S.W.*, II, 2:118. [83] Cf. *S.W.*, II, 3:143.
[84] *S.W.*, II, 4:231. This sentence rather nicely brings out the difference between Schelling's and Hegel's intentions in analyzing the history of religion.
[85] Cf. *S.W.*, II, 4:220. [86] Cf. *S.W.*, II, 2:315. [87] *S.W.*, II, 1:571.

reducible not only to similar terms but to a common ground and unity. This is the character of German idealism which attempted to overcome the Kantian dualism of the first two critiques in a more satisfactory manner than Kant himself had intimated in the *Critique of Judgment*. We have stated in preceding passages some of the basic shifts in Schelling's thought through the period of *The Ages of the World*. After that time his thought was by no means as systematic and unified as one might wish. Yet we may synoptically lay down the following as the final solution.

The problem after 1809 was to overcome the dichotomy of reason and existence, Logos and will. The solution may be put in this general schema. Human reason may speculatively be exploited and exhausted in a science of being, but this is found unsatisfactory to the life of man. Actuality, individuality, personality, freedom—in short, existence itself—always remain just beyond the grasp of reason. This, Schelling tells us in that part of the negative philosophy called the science of reason, shows that existence cannot be rationally inferred, and that we must invert our science and proceed deductively from what is most actual, most individual, most personal, most free. While this existence beyond reason cannot itself be characterized positively, it has already been made known in the science of reason negatively—hence Schelling's negative philosophy may be considered to stand for the *via negativa* of the ancients. Like Plotinus, Dionysius, and others, Schelling speaks of reason in ecstasy, whereby through faith reason may work deductively from an immediate concept of actuality so that what before could be characterized but negatively now receives positive character. Schelling elaborated this deduction of reason in the deductive science of the positive philosophy. This deductive science is the inversion of the science of reason; what before was exemplary ["vorbildlich"] now becomes actual ["wirklich"].[88] Here he treated of the metaphysical reality which lies in the suprahistorical—namely, the "nature in God," creation, and man. Schelling's deduction by itself would appear to be merely speculative metaphysics. It could never stand as the realm of eternal truth

[88] Cf. *S.W.*, II, 4:353.

behind factual reality were not the schema of historical reality deducible from it in terms which exactly meet the empirical data of history itself. Thus Schelling said that the positive philosophy does not start from experience but proceeds to experience. What he apparently meant was that the suprahistorical stands for the intelligibility of nature and history. Then we must treat empirical history—as this is outlined by him in the later part of the philosophies of mythology and revelation—as the *a posteriori* demonstration that the realm of eternal truth, the suprahistorical, *actually* underlies empirical history. The suprahistorical *is* the principle of the intelligibility of empirical history. Now, in that he found that empirical history is a fulfillment of his rational deduction from the immediate notion of existence, he claimed that he had finally found the unity of reason and existence behind the epistemological division of subjectivity and objectivity.

Thus Schelling followed the ancients in declaring the eternality of the Logos, while yet indicating the blind, impulsive, creative character behind the Logos. On the other hand, he definitely broke with the Gnostics by treating, in the philosophy of revelation, the factual history of mankind as the return to the knowledge of God as lord of being. Nature and history throughout are the life of God. This, however, is only disclosed to us in the fact that with the coming of the Son it is revealed that the ultimate sovereignty of God himself is to be restored. Thus, from the fall, the Iliad of human consciousness, man returns not only to sure consciousness of the sovereignty of a transcendent God, but history itself is the Odyssey of human life in its attempt to let God be the sole lord of being. Thus reason, or the Logos in history, is to find its fuller unity with its source in a future eternity, and thought and being once again restored to unity, but now in a vastly richer form.

Thus we see that, both in the systematic and in the historical analyses, Schelling was trying to answer his early problem of the finite existence of the world, or his later problem—"Why anything?"—in terms which explain how we can know reality. This "how" is only to be explained by the existential nature of human consciousness, which is, or rather is potentially, the

imago dei, and which, further, has the potential restoration within it. His hope, as he expressed it in *The Ages of the World*, was that in this way the time would come when "there will no longer be any difference between the world of thought and the world of reality," when there will be "the harmonious union of all sciences." [89] The prime difficulty is that while he showed continued intent to herald the intellectual golden age, he never persevered in showing any relation between his concept of scientific knowledge and the other sciences. Negatively he was intent upon showing the non-self-sufficiency of the vision of idealism, positively in reconstructing it so that it could be inverted and used in behalf of positive knowledge of existence. But in the elaboration of the positive intent, he never showed any relation of his science beyond that of its application to religious consciousness. Sensing his own inability to reveal to others all that he felt must come to pass, he quotes Goethe:

Ist's denn so grosses Geheimniss, was Gott und der Mensch und die Welt sei?
Nein! doch niemand hört's gerne; da bleibt es geheim.[90]

While he listened reverently to the answers which his science produced as it ground into the history of mythology and Christian revelation, that golden age of scientific harmony remained secret.

Schelling's main interests were to show the reality, the factual existence, which idealism failed to account for, and to construct a positive science of such existence. He wanted to be not only post-Hegelian but post-Kantian. Few who have carefully worked through his final analysis will deny that he had outgrown idealism. In this sense, Schelling's conception of existence is an important link in a cultural effort to transcend the stagnant metaphysics of rationalism. But in behalf of a new interpretation of existence, one can hardly say more than that he gave significant clues. Since many of these appear in *The Ages of the World*, it will be well to comment briefly upon various phases of this work before presenting the reader with the English translation.

[89] *S.W.*, I, 8:206.

[90] *S.W.*, I, 7:40. This is a slight variation of Goethe's Epigram 65 (1790), in *Goethes Werke* (Weimar, 1887), I, 322.

Chapter Four

THE CHARACTER AND SIGNIFICANCE OF *THE AGES OF THE WORLD*

THIS INTRODUCTION, with its emphasis upon the problem of the intelligibility of existence in Schelling's later thought, has attempted not only to present synoptically some aspects of what Schelling said, but to state with implicit sympathy what appears to be his greatest intellectual impulse. He was impelled toward sublime wholeness, toward a poetic monism which should embrace the depths and heights, the hatreds and loves, the despairs and hopes of human existence. To discover order in disorder, to show the continuity in chaos, to reveal the divine in the profane—these were for him the human problems *par excellence*. Without this order, this continuity, this divinity implicit in their very opposites, existence would be unintelligible. And that is the message of sublimity. Sublimity, Schelling once said, is "the conception of the infinite in the finite." [1] His later philosophy represents an attempt to ground that statement in the creativity of nature and history. He never lost his poetic sense of the unity of opposites in life and creativity. His later thought is characterized by a profound sense of the struggle of reason and impulse in existence, a powerful duality which is not to be overcome by the speculative dialectic of idealism, but which can be unified only in the vital process of creativity. Hence his later poetic monism is grounded in strife and flux:

To be drunk and sober not in different moments but at once in the same moment—this is the secret of true poetry. Thus is the

[1] *Philosophie der Kunst* (1802–5), *S.W.*, I, 5:461.

Apollonian different from the merely Dionysian ecstasy. To represent an infinite content, therefore, a content which really resists form, which seems to destroy any form—to represent such an infinite content in the most perfect, that is, in the most finite form, that is the highest task of art.[2]

In this sense of creativity, Schelling's dominant impulse was marked by the transition from a relatively static to a truly dynamic poetic monism.

In view of the direction in which his thought was moving, it is no wonder that Schelling referred to *The Ages of the World* as "a favorite child." [3] Drawing together his reflections upon freedom, this work deals with the intelligibility of finite existence in much the same terms which he used throughout his later lectures. While the work itself was not published until after his death,[4] Schelling not only elaborated its content but

[2] *S.W.*, II, 4:25. [3] *B.*, II, 256.

[4] Schelling first began work on *The Ages of the World* in 1811. This we know from a remark made in the work itself [330] as well as from his correspondence of that year with Pauline Gotter, who was shortly to become Schelling's second wife—his first wife, Caroline Schlegel, died in 1809 (*B.*, II, 244, 256). Publication of the work was repeatedly announced to friends and the public (*B.*, II, 270, 295, 429 f., 434; III, 5); Schelling even claimed that the first part of the manuscript had been set in type in 1811 (*B.*, II, 250). His hesitation to publish seems unaccountable except upon two scores. First, there was his preoccupation in 1812 with his reply to Jacobi's attack upon *Of Human Freedom* (*B.*, II, 330 f., cf. *B.*, II, 340). In that year Schelling published his vituperative work, *Denkmal der Schrift von den göttlichen Dingen . . . des Herrn Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi* (*S.W.*, I, 8:19–136). Second, Schelling's bitterness over the negative public reception of the work on freedom, coupled with a growing sense of isolation from the philosophical world of his day, probably made him hesitant about letting his "favorite child" be set before an abusive world. The work on freedom discussed specifically the relation of God and man; the more general ontological relation of God and being is the focus of *The Ages of the World*. Thus, as Manfred Schröter reminds us, the latter is an extension of the former work (*Schellings Schriften zur Gesellschaftsphilosophie*, p. 844). The unfavorable reception of the work on freedom may well have assured Schelling of unfavorable response to *The Ages of the World*. Émile Bréhier has suggested that Schelling did not wish to risk public discussion of mesmeric sleep or the concept of the spirit world (*Schelling*, p. 240 f.). This seems improbable, for Schelling discusses the latter concept in his published work against Jacobi, and his remarks on mesmeric sleep could hardly have involved greater risk than his discussions, in former works, of other new developments of experimental science. It seems more probable that

applied to his lectures from 1827 to 1833 on the positive philosophy the title, "System of the Ages of the World." [5] Through *The Ages of the World* the reader has the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the style of thought and general intellectual trend—as well as some of the idiosyncrasies of expression—of the later Schelling.

The major task of *The Ages of the World* is to discover the meaning of being. In his Introduction, Schelling draws the reader's attention to two aspects of a science which may achieve this task. There is, first of all, what he calls "recollection," which is to yield knowledge of the ideal or logical significance of being. By investigation of human consciousness of being, man can know what being means to him, what are the essential constituents of being. Such an investigation depends upon "inwardness," a conscious reflection upon being and an attempt to construe its significance. Man stands at the summit of nature's development, "the past" of all being is in some sense retained within him. The fact that man feels a

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Schelling hesitated to publish because he felt that the analysis of divine freedom had not been satisfactorily carried through; moreover, he had not decided in what way to continue the work. Kuno Fischer maintains that Schelling's hope of early completion of the work, and his assertion that it had been accomplished, were but self-deceptions (*Schellings Leben, Werke, und Lehre,* p. 167 f.).

It seems improbable that Schelling ever completed more than Book I, "The Past," of *The Ages of the World,* the whole of which is here offered for the first time in English. While his son Karl, the editor of Schelling's collected works, indicates that a few pages of Book II, "The Present," were known to him, these have never been published (cf. *S.W.,* I, 8:v f.). Further, Karl Schelling conjectures that something of the content for the intended Book III, to deal with "The Future," is preserved in the dialogue, *Ueber den Zusammenhang der Natur mit der Geisterwelt* (*S.W.,* I, 9:1–110). *The Ages of the World* was thus to be a great trilogic introduction to the philosophy of history. But Book I, "The Past," is the ground of Schelling's philosophy of history and an adequate unity in itself.

[5] Cf. H. Fuhrmans, *Schellings letzte Philosophie,* p. 307. Many of Schelling's followers and commentators have realized the close relation between *The Ages of the World* and the later lectures: e.g., H. Beckers, *Ueber die negative und positive Philosophie Schellings* (Munich, 1855); Kuno Fischer, *Schellings Leben, Werke, und Lehre* (Heidelberg, 1923), p. 700; Émile Bréhier, *Schelling* (Paris, 1912), Part III, chap. iii; V. Jankélévitch, *L'Odyssée de la conscience . . .* , chap. i.

lack of knowledge of being and yearns for such knowledge indicates this primordial affinity between the human mind and all being. Man treats the full knowledge of being as if lost, as if there were a time when he knew. Then, to regain or "recall" the essential or ideal significance of being, man must "retrace the long course of developments from the present back into the deepest night of the past," must inquire into the beginning of being or "creation." By this method, Schelling hopes that man can make clear to himself the ideal significance of coming to be and being.

But man is not satisfied with such a logical analysis of being. He demands that the ideal significance be relevant to reality, to existence. He must know how existence really came to be. Thus Schelling treats "recollection" as the approach to an understanding of reality. The full knowledge of the meaning of being consists of recollection, which yields the ideal significance of being, and the understanding of the relevance of the ideal to the real. The second aspect of Schelling's science, then, will discuss the meaning of the nonideal, contingent character of existence. These two aspects of science later became constituents of Schelling's "metaphysical empiricism."

The discussion of such a science, which seeks the full knowledge of the meaning of being, is conducted throughout the remainder of the work in mythological and religious terminology. Such a terminology was utterly necessary from Schelling's point of view, for the answer to the philosophical question as to the meaning of being can only be answered by the human awareness of what lies beyond human consciousness and experience. Being, either as an essential, logical structure recalled to consciousness or as a series of contingent events, is not wholly self-explanatory. A transcendent principle is required to explain the relation between logic and history. Thus recollection, the life of *theoria* which traces the logical structure of being, must point to what lies beyond itself, to freedom. And the realm of pure freedom must also be acknowledged to be beyond, yet in some sense to govern, the existential, contingent realm of history. This superlogical, supernatural concept of freedom, however, is only realized gradually. First

necessity must be overcome, found to be limited, before we can understand the meaning of freedom. Second, nature and history must actually display or reveal the character of freedom in a dynamic context. Schelling's discussion of the problem of the meaning of being thus presents the boundary between philosophy and theology, necessity and freedom, logic and history.

The first major division of *The Ages of the World* [207–74] is devoted to a description of the idea of God. In the divine unity there is a duality: a primal nature and a principle of reality. When Schelling discusses the primal "nature in God," he is delineating the logical structure of being; this he accomplishes by an analysis of the potencies of being akin to his use of these in his later lectures. On the other hand, the principle of reality is the pure freedom to be or not to be; organic, living reality is thus asserted to depend on something more than rational structure. These two aspects of the divine unity are considered as eternal or evolving prior to any concept of time; by a dialectical method leading from the concept of necessity to that of freedom prior to any temporal distinctions, Schelling broke with all ideas of logical pantheism and tried to regain the notion of a transcendent God. Having thus considered the evolution in eternity of the transcendent God who is conscious of his eternal, purposive role as what was, is, and shall be, Schelling portrays what he means by the higher freedom which can overcome its past and make this past into the ground of the manifestation of freedom. Freedom, then, is an overcoming of necessity, time an activity of free will which makes a present situation into a past one. The whole idea of God is the unity of these concepts of a necessary nature and freedom, a structure of being and a principle of being. Schelling concludes the discussion of the idea of God by showing that being, merely as logical structure, i. e., self-sufficient being, would be capable of no development, would remain as a restless, blind longing for a higher reality. Thus in his concept of the prehistorical eternity Schelling describes the meaning of the horror of being, the dreaded state of self-sufficiency lead-

ing to contradiction which amounts to nonbeing; time has no reality, history no meaning for self-sufficient being.

Up to this point Schelling has shown the reader how the idea of God may be recalled. This recollection of the moments of the structure of being and its principle of reality presents the ideal significance of being. To complete the discussion of the ideal significance of being, Schelling proceeds to the possible historical development of an organic universe which strives, under the governance of freedom, to release itself from the unreality of self-sufficiency [*275–98*]. The possibility of distinction in God must be analyzed, the total potentiality of otherness resolved into a division within the divine unity, or, as Schelling depicted it later, the *existentia praeterdivina* or ideal extradivine world must be shown to evolve on the basis of the figurative action of the potencies.[6] In *The Ages of the World* Schelling accomplishes this by delineating the possible function of the three potencies in nature, the spirit world, and the world-soul, and their relation to pure freedom.

In accordance with his previous analysis of the potencies, Schelling conceives nature to be neither the inert matter of the materialists nor merely a product of spiritual forces. Nature works like the artist who is one with his material; in nature the divine unity prefigures each creation, and the natural process can only be an evolution motivated both by increasing limit or necessity and the freest play of its essence. Development is from universality to particularity; the struggle and turmoil of nature is but a mark of its growing continuity with higher forms of being, its inner growth from unreason and unconsciousness toward reason and consciousness, toward man. Thus nature both freely prepares itself for what is higher and is guided or limited by the higher form. The great chain of being, therefore, is portrayed as an organic process. But this chain is only figurative; Schelling is not yet talking of actual nature but merely of the analyzed process of nature, a process which requires a decisive, divine act in order to become actual. This means simply that he portrays how nature is present *for*

[6] Cf. *S.W.*, II, 1:386 f.

us, how a dialectic of daemonic creativity must displace a mechanistic logic. Thus we may understand nature in terms not merely of inert matter but of a dynamic process—in terms not merely of spiritual force but of the evolution toward the unity of spiritual-corporeal being. Matter and spirit are then but relative terms; the transition from inorganic to organic nature is but the transfiguration of blind impulse into order under the power of spirituality, the liberation of the inner, unitive essence of nature.

The analysis of the spirit world displays Schelling's intense concern to show how nature and the supernatural, while qualitatively different in that a decisive act intervenes between them, are yet closely related, since the powers active in the former are developed into those powers which operate in the latter, and, at the same time, the whole constitution of the supernatural has an effect upon the natural realm. But the concept of spirit world also means the overcoming of turmoil and duality in nature. One may say that for Schelling this term stands not only for the higher control of the present world, but also for the historical finality of the development of spirit through the process of nature and history. Thus, if "the past" stands for the *essential* character of all being, the all in one, or universe in God, and the present stands (as we shall see) for the *existential* reality or the dualistic actuality of being, then the spirit world signifies the *eschatological* character of existential being, or the explicit unity in all under the influence of the world-soul.

We may here interpret Schelling as expressing the fullness of time which is the fullness of being, being which is not merely numerically fully divided but providentially overcome in a crisis or final judgment, so that essence and existence, subject and object, thought and being, freedom and necessity, and all other dualities, can be brought to a final unity. But this unity both is being prepared for by duality and, as Schelling is sure, is itself ideally operating within the natural realm. When that unity ceases to be ideal but becomes real, then the true golden age will have come.[7] Expressing his early love of

[7] This synoptic view is an attempt to interpret a number of difficult

the elevated creativity of art, Schelling says elsewhere: "The spirit world is God's poetry, nature his plastic art." [8]

The third potency was conceived as the unity of the first two potencies in their sequential construction. In the ideal extradivine world or *existentia praeterdivina*, this aspect of unity is assumed by what Schelling calls the world-soul—a favorite unifying concept of his, as we noted earlier. Here is that mediary link which connects the unuttered unity of the godhead with the duality in nature and with the growing unity of the spirit world. For the latter two, this world-soul, says Schelling in a later analysis, is *instar Dei*.[9] But the world-soul itself brings about the unity and continuity of the ideal extradivine world; it not only mediates the divine unity to this world, but it also develops this world—"as in a youthful dream of the golden future"—before the one. Thus the concept of world-soul stands for the unity and continuity of all being and is an assertion of Schelling's organic monism.[10]

Thus far we have been concerned with what Schelling later called negative philosophy; all possibility—the entire realm of possible being, or being in concept or idea—has been exhausted and shown to be dependent upon that pure actuality which shuns the concept. From now on [*298–344*] we are presented with what Schelling later called the positive philosophy—the

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passages in Schelling's later works. Besides the relevant section in *The Ages of the World*, see *S.W.*, I, 6:60 f.; 7:478 f.; 8:26, 93 f.; 9:3–110; II, 1:467 f.; 4:209 f., 217 f., 284 f., 292 f.

[8] *S.W.*, I, 7:480. As one reads in *The Ages of the World* Schelling's statements of playful delight and sure freedom of creation [*296* f.], it is well to recall his early conception of the unity of artistic freedom and the creation of the universe of nature and history. "I construct the universe in the form of art," he said, "and the philosophy of art is the science of the universe in the form or potency of art" (*Philosophie der Kunst*, 1802–5, *S.W.*, I, 5:368).

[9] *S.W.*, II, 1:417. He here represents the world-soul as the fourth principle of being.

[10] Johannes Jost, *Die Bedeutung der Weltseele in der Schelling'schen Philosophie im Vergleich mit der Platonischen Lehre* (Bonn, 1929), pp. 53 f., says: "It [the world-soul] was for Schelling continually a means of maintaining his monism and of presenting his system without a break; here is the deepest significance of the world-soul in the Schellingian philosophy." Jost notes the mystical use Schelling made of the term in order to overcome Platonic dualism.

revelation of God *in* nature and history, or the way in which essence comes to have existence. What before was *posterius*, the last in thought, or God, becomes *prius*, which is known *per posterius;* the problem is to show how the transcendent God, or the actuality which is the abyss of conscious reflection, is revealed as immanent. At the time when Schelling wrote *The Ages of the World*, the transition from negative to positive philosophy had not been clearly thought out in terms of reason's ecstasy or faith in empirical experience as the consummation of rational experience. The statement of the transition in the present work, therefore, is couched in theological rather than in the philosophical terms in which we stated them earlier. This theological description represents Schelling's analysis of Old Testament revelation in terms of the wrath and love, the No and Yes of God, and their unity.[11] The problem concerns the way in which the existential world (or the existence of the world present to human consciousness) evolves from a superrational, supernatural act.[12]

"Up to this point," says Schelling, "the progress of life was a necessary one. If life progresses from now on, this progress is only by virtue of a free, divine decision" [*300*]. Schelling now presents the possibility of God as divine freedom revealing himself [*300–305*]. Once the freedom to be "decides" to become manifest, this manifestation can only occur by a process within the natural realm. Thus Schelling breaks the concept of rational dialectic by the notion of "decision," but he never rejects an existential dialectic. On the contrary, he emphasizes the existential evolution of freedom and love, an emphasis which he justifies dialectically by making necessity

[11] Cf. *S.W.*, II, 4:24 f., 119 f.

[12] In Schelling's later work this problem is analyzed in four ways: as a rationally conscious possibility of *existentia extradivina* or real extradivine being (*S.W.*, II, 1:413 f.); as a mythologically conscious possibility of reality (*S.W.*, II, 2:16 f., 166 f.; 3:385 f.); as a rationally deduced reality (*S.W.*, II, 3:155 f., 198 f.; 4:337 f.); and as a historical reality (*S.W.*, II, 3:250 f.; 4:51 f.). The first two methods represent the analysis of possible reality in the negative philosophy, the last two the analytic and empirical reality of the positive philosophy. The convergent significance of all of these methods appears to be embryonically contained in *The Ages of the World.*

the ground of freedom, wrath the ground of love, the No the ground of the Yes. Thus God, who cannot but be *wholly* revealed (for character depends upon wholeness), "decides" to appear sequentially as ground and grounded, for only thus can the monistic unity itself be grounded. Furthermore, the notion of time itself depends upon the notion of "decision." We have already noticed that time for Schelling was a doing, an act of making something into a past; here he continues this notion by discussing the relation of such an act to the meaning of decision.

"From now on," says Schelling, "the history of the realization or of the real revelations of God begins" [*305*]. These real revelations include the free creation of the world in time, whereby the sequence of potencies in God's nature becomes a sequence of principles of real being of increasing potency [*309*]. Thus, since revelation is an act of the highest freedom, Schelling places free act at the basis of finite existence; but the character of finite existence, its sequential, epochal nature, is governed by the same necessary dialectic which held between the potencies in God's necessary nature. Translated into humbler philosophical terms, what Schelling says is that in the myth of creation lies an assertion of the unity of essence and existence. The dialectic of the essence of things, their *whatness*, is asserted to be made subject to existence, to the fact *that* they are. Schelling's cosmogony therefore stands, in the first place, for the denial of the cognitive self-sufficiency of mere speculation. Finite existence, an intelligible world of reality, depends upon and is, indeed, the compound of a necessary process and initiative free act; the necessary process, further, is the same process *qua* process as that process by which a logic is constructed; but the difference between a dialectical logic and existence is the difference between *mere* dialectic as speculation, and dialectic which has an unfathomable free act at its basis. Thus, Schelling's assertion in the Introduction to *The Ages of the World*, that man has a coknowledge of creation, is an assertion of a specialized conception of dialectic, which is both the way in which thought must pursue its speculative goal and the way in which reality it-

self operates independent of speculation. We witness in Schelling's cosmogony, then, an analysis of the long-sought union of idealism and realism—an *intelligible existential world.*

But lest one say that Schelling is pursuing the goal of absolute idealism by the very same rationalistic process so long used by German speculation, we must refer not only to the concept of initiative freedom but also to the concept of irrationality in natural process. An irrational principle in nature is needed to explain both the life of God in nature and the divine transcendence or separation of God and creature [cf. *328, 342* f.]. In terms of human creativity, Schelling expresses the irrational principle by madness [cf. *337* f.]. An understanding of what this irrationalism means to Schelling requires some reflection on his concepts of involution, contradiction, moral process, and irony. In the first place, the rule for analysis of finite existence is that "priority stands in inverse ratio to superiority" [*311*]. Natural process toward higher forms can only take place by development from involution to evolution [*297* f.]. Thus, when the one becomes the all in creation by the primal negation of independence [*312, 317*], existential freedom can only grow out of existential necessity, existential love out of existential wrath, the existentially rational out of the existentially irrational.

This real dialectic process, like its essential prototype, however, is a movement from involution to evolution only by means of contradiction [*316* f.]. Activity or life is such only by the sequential process of an evolution of its own contradictory nature [*219, 246, 321* f.] toward a state of immobility, stability, will-less will, which lies beyond inert matter [*235* f., *246* f.]. This being for Schelling the law of life, he envisages the beginning of all activity as the positing of that which should not be, which means that he grounds the moral endeavor of all activity in the beginning of process, and all process has the character of moral process [*211, 220, 224, 228, 267*]. Perhaps just here lies the deepest significance of nonbeing for Schelling. Metaphysically, nonbeing is not just nothing at all but the ground of coming to be. But this metaphysics of

privation is *moral* metaphysics. For nonbeing should be freely posited in order that the privation of nonbeing may be overcome, not by its passing immediately into inert or mere being (which should not be), but by gradually coming under the influence of a higher power which can order blind impulse into ever higher forms [*336 f.*]. This moral process is as much the process of creation itself, as portrayed in *The Ages of the World,* as it is later, in Schelling's philosophies of mythology and revelation, the process of historical consciousness.

Now, while such a moral process would seem to be a frontal attack upon the earlier aesthetic theories of the system of identity, Schelling here blends aesthetics and moral theory in terms of the union of the Romantic concept of irony and the concept of freedom. Here we come to those frequent passages in *The Ages of the World* where Schelling, following the form of the one dialectical process, says that God first posits himself as No in order to become manifest as Yes [*298* f.]. The ground of revelation is divine wrath, for, as Schelling explains later, this is the creation of the universe, the *universum* or "inverted one." He later said:

> Nothing prevented God from now making just this otherness, which was what is originally invisible of his godhead, conversely rather into what veils his godhead. God does this in an act of freest willing, which, just because it is an extroversion of plurality and introversion of unity, can also be called *universio.* In this, however, *he himself* in himself does not come to be another, even though he disguises himself and appears to be another, and in consequence of this divine art of dissimulation or irony displays the reverse of that which he genuinely wills.[13]

Thus the *Deus absconditus* of all religious realism is given a creative function, and the Romantic concept of irony is set in a religious frame of reference.[14] The experience of the

[13] *S.W.*, II, 3:304–5. Cf. *S.W.*, I, 10:311 f.; II, 1:398; 2:90 f., 172, 259, 531; 4:24 f.

[14] This same principle operates in the historic development of God in human consciousness. Thus, at the outset of the philosophy of revelation, when the Son of God becomes the Son of Man by an act of human freedom, God still operates the substance of the world by his will ["Wille"] but, from God's side, this will is wrath ["Unwille"]. Cf. *S.W.*, II, 3:372.

Psalmist is witnessed: "The Lord most high is terrible; he is a great king over all the earth." By means, then, of these concepts of involution, contradiction, moral process, and divine irony, Schelling poetically states at once the case for divine immanence in terms of the irrational ground of reality, and for divine transcendence in terms of that which the irrational signifies, and so exhibits his continued critique of the optimistic rationalism of absolute idealism.

We thus see that Schelling's cosmogony is a construction of daemonic creativity where the negative aspects of existence —which the reader will find most poignantly expressed in terms of dread, vexation, despair, etc.—are overcome dialectically by the divine spirit working both in and above the natural process. The optimism of the eighteenth-century doctrine of divine immanence, as expressed, let us say, by Herder, is restricted; the *inclinatio ad existendum* of eighteenth-century rationalism is changed into the path of the horrible birthpangs, incessant turmoil, abnegation, which is part of the reality of all creativity. But Schelling's dialectic is the ground of divine lordship over being; the ways of divine immanence are governed dialectically by divine transcendence. Thus the gulf between essence and existence, between divine unity and divine duality, is to be overcome, and the pain of existence grounds the heights of bliss.

While this is an optimistic view, Schelling felt that such optimism was rooted in the nature of reality; and this is the theological aspect of the philosophical problem which we have followed in terms of essence and existence. The veil is trembling, the myth and revelation of reality will some day be true. The day will come "when truth again becomes fable and fable truth" [*200*]. Knowledge, which can speak in terms of essence, of idealistic vision of the universe of reality, of the *whatness* of existence, thus receives its guaranty *that* what it envisages *is* the nature of reality. While knowledge must first be inward for man, while dialectic and a doctrine of ideas or visions presents us with the essential nature of reality, the vision of such idealism is not enough; the most supersensible thoughts must receive physical power and life as knowledge regains the

memory of its unity with nature [*202* f., *289* f.]. As the dialectic structure of the first two potencies leads to their unity, so existence and the world of intelligible knowledge will some day work themselves into their unity.

In all that has been said in this Introduction we should see that Schelling was in search of that decisive experience which would destroy the mythology of Hegelian panlogism and institute a truly positive, scientific knowledge of existential relations. Philosophic dogmatism in its sophisticated, idealistic forms and enterprises was otiose. Skeptical empiricism, on the other hand, could not yield science. Hence an entirely new start had to be made, a *metaphysical empiricism* had to be constructed. Whether or not Schelling would have agreed with late nineteenth and early twentieth century voluntaristic, vitalistic, and pragmatic approaches to the problem must remain hypothetical; while the content of his vision is resourceful for these newer enterprises, it is none the less historically limited. But it should be clear that at a number of points his insight was ahead of his time, as measured by subsequent developments in the history of Western thought, and markedly inclined toward a reinterpretation of the processes of human knowledge in terms of the dynamic, functional relations of powers and structures. Today many philosophers are elaborating this vision in a variety of ways and, like Schelling, firmly believe that present investigations may herald a new era of human understanding, a uniformly acceptable method of knowing an intelligible, existential world.

THE AGES OF THE WORLD

A Fragment, from Writings
Left in Manuscript

INTRODUCTION

[*199*] What is past is known, what is present is discerned, what is future is divined.[1]

The known is retold, the discerned is represented, the divined is foretold.

The conception of science ["Wissenschaft"] hitherto accepted was that it is a mere consequence and development of its own concepts and thoughts. The true conception is that it is the development of a living, actual essence ["Wesen"], which is represented in it.

It is a distinction of our times that this essence has been restored to science, and indeed, it may be asserted, in such a way that science cannot easily lose it again. Now, since the dynamic spirit is at last awakened, it is not too harsh to condemn any philosophizing which does not draw its power from that spirit, and to consider it as a vain misuse of the noble gift of thought and speech.

The living reality of the highest science can only be primal living reality, the essence, which is preceded by nothing else and which is thus the oldest of all beings.

There is nothing before or outside this primal living reality by which it might be determined. Therefore, in so far as it develops itself, it can only do so freely, by its own impulse and volition, purely by itself, yet just on this account not law-

[1] In terms of the Christian world-view, Schelling repeats much the same view later: "What is past is known—what is future is believed. This much is certain: . . . according to the intention of the first creation, everything was to be concluded *in* God. But because what originally was to be can never be relinquished, the final purpose can only be that the entire inward world, as it originally was to be, be made outwardly visible in the outer world, that man, inwardly purely spiritual being, be a purely spiritual being *outwardly*, too" (*S.W.*, II, 4:221).

lessly but only according to law. There is no arbitrariness in it; it is a nature in the most complete meaning of the [*200*] word, just as man is a nature without prejudice to his freedom, nay, owing to his freedom.

After science has achieved objectivity with respect to the object, it seems a natural consequence that science seek objectivity also with respect to form.

Why has this remained impossible until now? Why cannot that which is known, even in the highest science, be related with the same directness and simplicity as every other *known* thing? What holds back the anticipated golden age when truth again becomes fable and fable truth?

A principle which is outside and above the world must be conceded to man. For how could he alone of all creatures retrace the long course of developments from the present back into the deepest night of the past, he alone ascend to the beginning of the ages, if there were not in him a principle of the beginning of the ages? Drawn from the source of things and akin to it, the human soul has a co-knowledge of creation. In the soul lies the highest clarity of all things, and the soul is not so much knowing as itself knowledge.[2]

In man, however, the supramundane principle is no longer free in its primordial purity, but is bound to another, lesser principle. This other is itself something which became, and therefore is by nature unknowing and obscure, and it necessarily also obscures the higher principle with which it is bound.

[2] Schelling's doctrine of the intelligent soul is to be found in *S.W.*, II, 1:445 f., 516 f. Intelligible relations are innate within the soul. In the soul is science or pure knowledge, but the latter is slumbering, in potentiality, needing to be aroused: "The soul ["Seele"] does not know, but it is knowledge. . . . In spirit ["Geist"] there is nothing merely materially or potentially; it is therefore not knowledge but *knowing*—knowing, however, only by its relation to the soul. This relation to the soul depends upon this, first, that in the soul there are notions [or] representations ["Vorstellungen"], free of all matter and therefore containing mere form—notions and representations of individual sensible things, but without these notions being objective to the soul itself. . . . Only the spirit raises them to reality; but therefore in the spirit there are no longer mere notions of individual, sensibly perceived things, but notions of these notions, i. e., the most universal notions by which the spirit comes to master and know things. . . . Second, it is to be noticed that the spirit exercises these operations above all not by a special act but by its presence, its merely being there ["Dasein"]" *ibid.*, pp. 519–21).

To be sure, in that lesser principle there lies a recollection of all things—their original relationships, their becoming, their significance. But this archetype of things slumbers in the soul like an obscured and forgotten, even if not completely obliterated, image. Perhaps it would never awaken again, if the divining and yearning toward discernment did not lie in that same dark region. But the higher principle, incessantly besought by this lower about its elevation, observes that the lower principle is not added to the higher in order that the latter may remain fettered by it, but in order that the higher itself may have another in which it can view itself, represent and become intelligible to itself. |*201*| For everything lies in the higher without distinction, that is, as one; but it can make distinguishable, express, interpret in the other that which is one in the higher itself. |Thus there is in man one thing which must again be brought to mind, and another thing which brings it to mind; one thing in which lies the answer to every question of research, and another thing which brings forth this answer from it. This other is free with respect to all things and is able to think all things, but it is bound by that innermost one, and can believe nothing true without the assent of this witness. On the other hand, the innermost is originally bound and cannot develop itself; but it becomes free through the other and discloses itself to the same.] [3] Therefore both principles alike long intensely for the separation—the higher principle in order that it may return home to its original freedom and become manifest to itself,* the lower principle in order that it may conceive of the higher and likewise, although in a quite different way, come to know.

This separation, this duplication of ourselves, this secret intercourse in which there are two essences, an asking one and an answering one, an ignorant one which, however, seeks knowledge, and a knowing one which, however, does not know its knowledge—this silent dialogue, this inner art of

* Thereby transplanting itself again into its original and innate knowledge. [All notes indicated by symbols are in the original text. Translator.]

[3] The passage enclosed in brackets appears thus in the original text; it seems probable that K. F. A. Schelling indicated in this way a passage taken from Schelling's own notes or manuscripts.

conversation, the peculiar secret of the philosopher, is that of which the external, therefore called dialectic, is the imitation. But where this inner art has become mere form, it is the empty semblance and shadow of itself.

Thus, according to its nature, everything known is retold. The known, however, is not something lying finished and ready to hand from the beginning but something always first arising from within by an altogether characteristic process. The light of science must arise by inner separation and deliverance before it can illuminate. What we call knowledge is just striving after conscious recollection ["Wiederbewusstwerden"], thus more an aspiring after knowledge than knowledge itself; for which reason unquestionably the name philosophy has been given to it by that great man of antiquity.[4] For the belief,

[4] "We struggle and strive for that knowledge [the highest understanding]," said Schelling later, "just because it ought to be in us, because it belongs to our nature. Plato already set up the doctrine—and, of course, even as a tradition from a still older time—that all true knowledge ["Wissenschaft"] is only reminiscence, and therefore, too, all striving for knowledge, in particular philosophy, is only the striving for recollection. In knowledge we only strive toward where we were, i. e., where what is essentially human in us was before. And this striving for a truly central discernment ["Erkenntniss"] surveying everything from the center, this striving itself, is the most incontrovertible evidence that human consciousness was originally in this discernment and was to be in it." (*S.W.*, II, 3:287 f.)

Schelling proceeds to show how the same subject which passed through all moments of nature in increasing objectivity finally would have become subject again in the human ego had not man, by his freedom, become the beginning of another (historical) process. Thus the subject lost its material power over things, but it retains its formal power: "The expression of this innate power over things are those universal notions with which man really grasps everything, like those notions of substance, cause and effect, etc., notions which obtain their sanction not first from experience, whose authority and aprioristic significance derive rather from this, that the understanding itself is nothing else than the primordial potency, the *prius* of everything" (*ibid.*, p. 298). The divine wisdom, child of God, which prefigures creation, becomes human consciousness; hence man can know creation, the entire divine way (*ibid.*, p. 303).

With the concept of recollection, Schelling attempts to gain reality beyond the emptiness of the Hegelian dialectic; without the possibility of recapturing the original harmony of nature and spirit or mind, that is, without the possibility of passing behind the duality of essence and existence, subject and object, and of doing so on the basis of consciousness itself, reality forever remains beyond the grasp of knowledge. The

cherished from age to age, [*202*] of being able to turn philosophy at last into actual knowledge by means of dialectic, of considering the most perfect dialectic as science itself, betrays not a little narrowness, since indeed just the presence ["Dasein"] and necessity of dialectic prove that it is still in no way actual knowledge.

The philosopher, however, is in this regard in no different situation from another historian. For even the latter must win what he desires to know from the statements of original documents or the memory of living witnesses; and he needs great art of discrimination or criticism in order to separate the false from the true, the wrong from the right, in the preserved traditions. Also, he greatly needs that discrimination in himself, whence the customary saying, he must try to free himself from the concepts and peculiarities of his own age, and also much else of which it would be too much of a digression to speak here.

Everything, absolutely everything—even what is by nature external—must previously have become inward for us before we can represent it externally or objectively. If the ancient era, whose image he wishes to sketch for us, does not dawn again within the historian, then he will never truly, never plastically, never vitally represent it. What would all history be if an inner meaning did not come to its aid? It would be what it is for so many who know, to be sure, most of what has happened, but who understand not the slightest thing about real history. Not only human events, but even the history of nature has its monuments, and one can indeed say that neither passes from any stage in its broad path of creation without leaving behind something as a mark. These monuments of

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character of human freedom is the separation of intelligible and material worlds (*S.W.*, II, 1:491). Thus recollection must pass behind the myth of the fall (*S.W.*, II, 2:153 f.). But man can only posit God in consciousness, only copy ["nachbilden"] divine wisdom (*S.W.*, II, 2:114 f.; I, 9:223 f.). Schelling thus carefully avoids claiming mystical identity of knower and known, or logical inference as to the nature of reality. Inner liberation from the material and accidental, growth toward the knowledge of the essential harmonious unity of nature and spirit or mind—this is the reward of recollection.

nature for the most part lie open to view, are repeatedly investigated, in part actually deciphered; and yet they do not speak to us, but remain dead, until that succession of actions and productions has become inward for man. Thus everything remains incomprehensible for man before it has become inward for him, that is, has been led back to just that innermost part of his nature which is for him, as it were, the living witness of all truth.

[*203*] Now there have always been some who thought that it is possible to set aside that subordinated part * and to annul all duality in one's self, so that we would be, as it were, only inwardly, and live altogether in the supramundane, discerning everything immediately. Who can entirely deny the possibility of such a transposition of man into his supramundane principle, and therefore an elevation of the powers of mind into vision itself? From time to time, every physical and moral whole requires a reduction to its innermost origin for its preservation. Man rejuvenates himself again and again and is blessed anew by feeling the unity of his nature. Particularly the person seeking knowledge continually draws fresh power in just this way. Not only the poet but also the philosopher has his ecstasies. He needs them in order to be preserved against the forced concepts of an empty and inspirationless dialectic by the feeling of indescribable reality of those higher ideas. But to demand the continuity of this state of vision, which is at odds with the nature and character of the present life, is another matter. For however we may consider life's relation to its innermost origin, it always comes back to this, that what was indivisibly together in the origin unfolds and is spread out piece by piece in this present life. We do not live in vision; our knowledge is piecework, that is, it must be produced piece by piece in a fragmentary way, with divisions and gradations, all of which cannot occur without reflection.[5]

Therefore the goal is also not attained by mere vision. For in vision, in and by itself, there is no understanding. In the

* The external tool.

[5] Schelling reiterates this same argument against the theosophical vision of Böhme, in *S.W.*, I, 10:187 f. Cf. *S.W.*, II, 3:119 f.

external world everyone sees more or less the same thing, and yet not everyone can express it. In order to complete itself, each thing runs through certain moments—a series of processes following one another, in which the later always involves the earlier, brings each thing to its maturity. The peasant as well as the scholar, for example, sees this process in the plant, and yet does not really know it, [*204*] because he cannot keep the moments apart, cannot observe them severally, in their mutual contrast. Just in this way man is able to run through, and, as it were, immediately experience in himself that series of processes whereby the infinite manifoldness is finally born out of the highest simplicity of being; indeed, to speak accurately, he must experience it in himself. But all experiencing, feeling, intuiting, merely as such, is mute and needs a mediating organ in order to attain expression. If the one having vision lacks the mediating organ, or if he intentionally thrusts it from himself in order to talk immediately from vision, then he loses the criterion which he needs, he is united with the object, and is like the object itself for a third person. Just for this reason he is not master of his thoughts, and yet he strives in vain to express the inexpressible without any certainty; what he hits upon he hits upon without being sure of it, without being able to place it firmly before himself and inspect it again in the understanding, as if in a mirror.

That relatively external principle is thus at all costs not to be given up; for everything must first be submitted to real reflection in order to attain the highest expression. Here is the boundary between theosophy and philosophy, which the lover of knowledge will try to keep pure. The former has just as much advantage in depth, fullness, and vitality of content over the latter, as the real object over its image, nature over its representation; and of course the two become incomparably disparate if a dead philosophy, seeking the essence in forms and concepts, is taken for comparison. Therefore the preference of the inwardly disposed for theosophy is just as easily explained as the preference for nature in contrast to art. For theosophical systems have this advantage over all systems previously current, that in them at least there stirs a nature,

even if not one which is master of itself; in the other systems, on the other hand, there is nothing but affectation and vain artifice. But the fullness and depth of life are just as attainable for science, correctly understood, as nature is for correctly understood art; [*205*] only more slowly, more indirectly, and by gradual progress does that science attain to fullness and depth of life, so that the knower always remains different from his object, and the latter, on the other hand, also remains separated from him, and becomes the object of a deliberate, tranquilly enjoying contemplation.

All science must thus pass through dialectic. Another question, however, is this: Does the time never come when knowledge becomes free and living, as does the image of the ages for the historian, who no longer thinks of his researches when he is expounding it? Can the memory of the primordial beginning of things never again become so living that science, since it is history in substance and in name, could be so in its outer form too, and the philosopher able to return to the innocence of history, like the divine Plato, who is dialectical throughout the entire series of his works, yet becomes historical in each at the summit and last stage of transfiguration? [6]

It seems reserved for our age at least to open the way for science to attain this objective form. So long as science restricts itself to the inward, the ideal, it lacks the natural means of external representation. Now, after long wanderings, it has regained the memory of nature and of nature's former unity with knowledge. But the matter did not rest there. Hardly had the first steps of reuniting philosophy and nature taken place, when one had to acknowledge the great antiquity of the physical, and how the physical, far from being the last, is rather the first from which everything, even the development of the divine life, originates.* Science no longer takes its origin from the remoteness of abstract thoughts in order to

* How, even if the last with regard to dignity, it may be the first with regard to all development.

[6] Socratic ignorance, which posits a positive knowledge, and Platonic historical myth, which indicates a break with dialectic, are both on the boundary of the logical and the positive (*S.W.*, II, 3:97 f.).

descend from these to natural objects; but conversely, originating from the unconscious presence ["Dasein"] of the eternal, knowledge leads this presence up to the highest transfiguration in a divine consciousness. The most supersensible thoughts now receive physical power and life, and, conversely, nature becomes more and more the visible impress of the highest concepts. [*206*] In a short time the contempt with which, after all, only the ignorant still look down on everything physical, will cease, and the expression will once more be true: The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. Then general acknowledgment, so often sought in vain, will come of its own accord. Then there will no longer be any difference between the world of thought and the world of reality. There will be one world, and the peace of the golden age will make itself known for the first time in the harmonious union of all sciences.[7]

With such prospects, which the present book will try to justify in more than one way, an oft-considered essay which contains some preparation for that future objective presentation of science may well venture forth. Perhaps he will yet come who is to sing the greatest heroic poem, comprehending in spirit what was, what is, what will be, the kind of poem attributed to the seers of yore. But this time has not yet come. We must not misconstrue our age. Heralds of it, we do not want to gather its fruit before it is ripe, nor to misunderstand

[7] "Mankind does not progress *ad infinitum*, mankind *has* a goal," says Schelling later. "Therefore a point is surely to be expected where the striving after knowing *attains* its long-sought end, where the age-old unrest of the human spirit comes to rest, where man finally takes possession of the true organism of his knowledge and his knowing, where, over all the parts of human knowing until now separated and mutually exclusive, the spirit of universal mediation pours forth like a balm which heals all wounds with which the human spirit has inflicted itself in zealous struggle toward light and truth, and from which wounds our era still bleeds" (*S.W.*, II, 3:10–11). The history of philosophy has been the struggle to adjust the divisions of negative and positive knowledge; no philosophy has yet come to actual knowledge, and even modern German philosophy is "a preface without end" (*ibid.*, pp. 94 f., 145, 177 f.). Perhaps, says the sanguine Schelling, philosophy is now in its final crisis (*ibid.*, p. 32). As we have noted in the Introduction, this was Schelling's continually sanguine message after his early interest in the life and power of nature.

what is already ours. It is still an age of struggle. The goal of the search is not yet reached. We cannot be narrators but only explorers, weighing the pro and con of each opinion until the right one stands firm, indubitable, rooted forever.

Book One

THE PAST

[207] Even as the outcome of the future, God has taken pains to envelop in dark night the beginning of the past.[1] It is not given to everyone to know the end, it is given to few to see the primordial beginnings of life, to fewer still to think through the totality of things from the first to the last. As by an inevitable fate, the senses of those are confused who pursue such an investigation not by reason of an inner impulse, but as imitation; for fortitude is necessary to hold fast the continuity of movement from beginning to end. But, where action alone is decisive, they would like to smooth over everything with pacific, general concepts, and to present a history where, in reality, scenes of war and peace, pain and pleasure, deliverance and peril, alternate as a mere sequence of thoughts.

A light in this darkness is that just as man, according to the old and nearly threadbare saying, is the world on a small scale, so the processes of human life from the utmost depths to its highest consummation must agree with the processes of universal life. It is certain that whoever could write the history

[1] The beginning of history, in the philosophy of mythology, is the fact of a possible act of freedom becoming actual—the fall of man. This act, whereby consciousness falls from pure substantial knowledge, is suprahistorical, and actual consciousness is no longer conscious of that act. Thus "the past" for human consciousness is veiled; only the struggle of consciousness to attain substantiality begins to lift the veil—in the unitive concept of Dionysus in the Greek mysteries (*S.W.*, II, 2:152 f., 632 f.). Schelling thus sees the immemorial unity of being and thought, of objectivity and subjectivity, lying at the basis of present consciousness; but this is hidden, is "past," and only a process within consciousness itself can recall that unity. Then, after that unity is recalled, the fact of revelation can truly reveal the beginning of actual restoration of consciousness.

of his own life from its very ground, would have thereby grasped in a brief conspectus the history of the universe. Most men turn from the obscurities of their own inner lives just as from the depths of that great life, and avoid a view into the [*208*] abysses of that past which still is in man too much as present.

Because of this avoidance, and because I am conscious that I do not discuss something known or popular, or what is in agreement with what is accepted, it seems all the more necessary to me first to recall the nature of all that happens, how everything begins in darkness, since no one sees the goal, and the individual occurrence is never intelligible by itself, but only the entire event when it has completely transpired. We must also recall that all history, not only in reality but also in narration, can only be relived; it cannot be communicated by a universal concept all at once, as it were. Whoever wishes knowledge of history must make the long journey, dwell upon each moment, submit himself to the gradualness of the development. The darkness of the spirit cannot be overcome suddenly, nor with a single blow. The world is not a riddle whose solution could be given in a single word; its history is too involved to be presented, as it were, in a few short, chopped-off sentences on a page of paper, as some seem to wish.

But to tell the truth, in true science as little as in history are there propositions properly speaking, that is, assertions which are valid in and by themselves or apart from the movement by which they are produced, or which have an unlimited and universal validity. What is essential in science is movement; deprived of this vital principle, its assertions die like fruit taken from the living tree. Propositions which are unconditioned, that is, valid once for all, are antagonistic to the nature of true science, which consists in progress. For let the object of knowledge be A, and let the first proposition which is asserted be that $A = x$ is true. Now if this proposition is unconditionally valid, that is, if A is always and in every case only x, then the inquiry is finished; there is nothing further to add. But as surely as the inquiry is progressive, so $A = x$ certainly is a proposition of limited validity only. The proposition is per-

haps valid at the beginning, but as the inquiry progresses it is found that A is not merely x, that it is also y and hence x + y. Here those are mistaken [*209*] who have no concept of the character of true science, since they accept the first proposition, A = x, as unlimited, and then, perhaps elsewhere having ascertained or conceived that A = y, they oppose the second immediately to the first, instead of waiting until the incompleteness of the first would of itself require the progress to the second. For if they wish to comprehend all in one, they can admit only an absolute thesis, but they must forego science. For where there is no consequence, there is no science.

Thus it is indeed clear that in true science each proposition has only a definite and, so to speak, local significance, and that, taken away from its definite locus and posited as an absolute (dogmatic) one, the proposition either loses sense and meaning or entangles us in contradictions. In so far then as method means the way of progression, it is evident that here method is inseparable from the essence, and aside from the method even the subject matter is lost. Whoever then believes that he may take the last for the first, and vice versa, or that he can recoin the proposition which should be valid only in a definite locus, into a universal or unlimited one, may indeed stir up sufficient confusion and contradictions for the ignorant in this way, but he has really not touched the matter itself, much less harmed it.

God is the oldest of beings. This judgment is said to be as ancient as Thales of Miletus. But the concept of God is of great, indeed, of the very greatest compass, and not thus to be expressed in one word. Freedom and necessity are in God. The latter is already acknowledged in that a necessary existence ["Dasein"] is ascribed to him. To speak naturally, necessity is in God before freedom, inasmuch as a being must first be ["dasein"] in order to be able to act freely. Necessity lies at the basis of freedom and, as far as there can be such a distinction in God, is the first and oldest thing in God himself, which is only to be clarified by further consideration. Now, even though the God who is the necessary is also he who is the free, the two are not the same. [*210*] What a being is by

nature and what it is by freedom are two quite different things. If it were already everything by necessity, then it would be nothing by freedom. And yet, by common consent, God is the most spontaneous being.

Everyone recognizes that God created beings besides himself, not by virtue of a blind necessity of his nature, but by the highest spontaneity. Indeed, to be more exact, by virtue of God's mere necessity there would be no creature, since that necessity only refers to *God's* being ["Dasein"] as his own. Thus in creation God surmounts by freedom the necessity in his nature, and it is freedom which overcomes necessity, not necessity which overcomes freedom.

What is necessary in God we call God's nature. Its relation to freedom is similar to (not the same as) the relation which Scripture [2] shows between the natural and the spiritual life of man, where, by the former, is understood not merely that which is commonly called physical, namely, corporeal; soul and spirit, if not born again, that is, raised to a different, higher life, as well as the body, also belong to the natural life. The abstract concept of nature is as little known to all antiquity as to Scripture.

But even this nature of God is living, is indeed the greatest vitality, and not to be expressed at once. Only by progress from the simple to the compound, by gradual generation, may we hope to attain the entire concept of this vitality.

All agree that the deity is a being of all beings, the purest love, infinite communicativeness and emanation. Yet they wish at the same time that it exist ["existire"] as such. By itself, however, love does not come to be. To be is se-ity ["Seinheit"], own-ness, seclusion. Love, however, is the nought of own-ness; it does not seek what is its own, and therefore also by itself cannot have being. Hence a being of all beings is by itself without support and supported by nothing; it is in itself the antithesis of personality. Thus another power making for personality must first give it a ground. An equally eternal power of selfhood, of egoity ["Egoität"], is demanded so

[2] Schelling probably had the Epistles of St. Paul in mind. Cf. Rom. 7:23 f.; I Cor. 15:44 f., etc.

that [*211*] the being which is love may subsist as independent and be for itself.

There are thus two principles even in what is necessary in God: the outflowing, outspreading, self-giving essence, and an equally eternal power of selfhood, of return unto self, of being-in-self. Without his further deed, God is in himself both of these, that essence and this power.

It is not enough to see the antithesis; it must also be recognized that these contraries are equally essential and original. The power by which the essence confines itself, denies itself, is in its kind as real as the contrary principle; each has its own root, and neither is to be derived from the other. For if this were to be the case, then the antithesis would again immediately cease. But it is in itself impossible that exact opposites be derived from each other.

To be sure, men show a natural preference for the affirmative, as, on the other hand, they turn away from the negative. Everything expanding and ongoing is intelligible to them; they cannot so immediately comprehend what is self-confined and withdrawing, although it is just as essential, and meets them everywhere in many forms. Most people would find nothing more natural than if everything in the world consisted purely of meekness and kindness, though they very soon become aware that the reverse is the case. Something hindering, resisting, obtrudes itself everywhere: this other thing which, so to speak, should not be and yet is, indeed must be, this No which is opposed to the Yes, this darkening opposed to the light, this crooked opposed to the straight, this left opposed to the right, and however else one has sought to express in images this eternal contrast. But it is not easy to reach the point of expressing it or understanding it scientifically.

The presence ["Dasein"] of such an eternal antithesis could not escape the first man who felt and perceived intimately. Already finding this duality in the primordial beginnings of nature, but nowhere finding its sources in the visible, he would soon have to say to himself that the basis of the [*212*] antithesis is as old as, indeed even older than, the world; that, as in all that is living, so already in the primal life there is indeed a

doubleness which, descended through many steps, has determined itself as that which appears to us as light and darkness, the male and the female, the spiritual and the corporeal. Therefore precisely the most ancient doctrines represented the first nature as an essence with two modes of action which clash with each other.

But in the later ages, which were more and more estranged from that original feeling, the attempt was often made to destroy the antithesis at its very source, that is, to annul the antithesis right at the outset, by seeking to reduce one of the opponents to the other and to derive the other from it. In our times this has applied chiefly to the power opposing the spiritual. The contrast finally received the most abstract expression, that of thought and being. Being always stood opposite thought in this sense as something unconquerable, so that philosophy, which would explain everything, found nothing more difficult than to give an explanation of just this being. It had to accept as explanation precisely this incomprehensibility, this active opposition toward all thought, this dynamic darkness, this positive inclination to obscurity. But it would have preferred to do away altogether with the inconvenient, to dissolve the unintelligible entirely into reason or (like Leibniz) into representation ["Vorstellung"].

Idealism, which really consists in the denial or nonrecognition of that primordial negating power, is the general system of our times. Without this power, God is that empty infinite which the new philosophy has put in his place. This philosophy calls God the most unlimited being (*ens illimitatissimum*), without considering that the impossibility of any limit outside of him cannot undo the possibility of something in him whereby he limits himself from within, renders himself, to a certain degree, finite (as an object) for himself. To be infinite is by itself no perfection; rather it is the token of the imperfect. What is perfected is just what is in itself rounded, completed, finished.

Yet it is not enough merely to discern the antithesis, if the unity of the essence is not recognized at the same time, or if it is not seen that it is indeed [*213*] *one and the same* which is

the affirmation and the negation, the outspreading and the restraining. The concept of coherence or anything like it is much too weak for the thought which is to be expressed here. Even the merely different can cohere; the directly opposed has the power to be one only intrinsically, and, so to speak, personally, as only the individual nature of man is capable of uniting opposites. But if one wanted to call coherence everything which is not identity ["Einerleiheit"], then one would have to say even of a man who appears now gentle, now angry: the gentle man coheres in him with the angry man, whereas, in truth, they are one and the same man.

If anyone wished further to say, it is a contradiction that *one and the same* thing is both this and its exact opposite, then, in the first place, he would have to explain this principle of contradiction more definitely, since, as is well known, Leibniz already contested the absoluteness of that still repeated rule.[3] Furthermore, he might take thought as to whether what one wishes is not precisely that there be contradiction.

The contradiction would again be immediately annulled, or rather the real, essential contradiction would be changed into a merely formal and verbal one, if the unity of the essence were mistaken for a sameness of the opposites themselves. Even the most careless expression—the Yes is also the No, the ideal also the real, and vice versa—would not justify such an idiotic explanation. For in no sort of judgment, not even in the merely reiterating judgment, is there expressed a sameness of the things joined together (of subject and predicate), but only a sameness of the essence, of the bond (of the copula). The true meaning of every judgment—for example, A is B—can only be this: *that which* is A is *that which* is B, or *that which* is A and *that which* is B *are* the same. Thus a doubleness lies at the basis even of the simple concept: A in this judgment is not A, but something (= x) which is A; thus B is not B, but something (= x) which is B, and not the latter (not A and B in themselves) but the x which is A and the x which is B are the same, namely, the same x. [*214*] Really three propositions are contained in the one quoted: first, A = x; second, B = x;

[3] Cf. Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics,* XIII; *Monadology,* 31, 33.

and only then, following from this, the third, A and B are one and the same, namely, both are x.

It follows automatically that the copula in judgment is the essential thing, lying at the basis of *all* parts, that the subject and predicate are each for itself already a unity, and what is usually called the copula indicates only the unity of these unities. Further, it follows that the judgment is already prefigured in the simple concept, the conclusion implied in the judgment—that the concept is thus only the enveloped judgment, the conclusion the developed judgment. These are observations which are here laid down for a future, most desirable treatment of the noble art of reason, for knowledge of the common laws of judgment must always accompany the highest science. We do not philosophize, however, for beginners, or for those who are ignorant of this art; they should be sent to school, as happens in other arts, for no one will dare to produce or criticize a musical composition who has not learned the first rules of composition.

Thus, that the ideal, *as such*, is ever the real, and, conversely, Yes is No and No is Yes—this is quite impossible; for to assert this would mean to annul human reason, the possibility of expressing oneself, indeed, the antithesis itself. But it is quite possible that one and the same (= x) may be both Yes and No, love and anger, gentleness and severity.

Perhaps some already find a contradiction here. But the principle of contradiction, correctly understood, really only says this much, that one and the same *as such* cannot be something and its opposite—which, however, does not preclude what is A from being able to be something else not A (*contradictio debet esse ad idem*). The same man may be called, for example, "good" with respect to his disposition or in action; thus, *as such*, that is with respect to his disposition or in action, he cannot be evil. This does not preclude, however, that he may be evil with respect to what is not disposition, or what is inactive in him, and that in this [*215*] way two completely opposed predicates can quite well be ascribed to him. Expressed in other words this would mean: of two exact opposites, which are predicated of one and the same subject,

if the one expresses what is active, what is ["das Seiende"], the other, according to the law of contradiction, must express what is relatively inactive, [mere] being ["Sein"].

Now, actually and in the strictest sense, one and the same (= x) must here be oppositely determined as both affirming and negating power. Thus it seems that, when the opposites *actually* become one, the one or the other respectively would have to become what is not ["nicht Seienden"], what is non-active, to wit, the negating power (because this appears to most people as what is alien).

The original equivalence (equipollence) of the two, however, interposes here. For as each power is by its nature equally original, equally essential, each also has equal claim to be that which is. Each counterbalances the other, and neither by its nature yields to the other.

It is thus admitted that of opposites, if they as a matter of fact become one, only one is active, the other passive. But, by virtue of the equivalence of the two, it follows that if the one is passive, then the other must also be passive, and likewise if the one is active, the other must surely be active, too. But this is impossible in one and the same unity; here each member can only be either active or passive. Hence from that necessity it can follow only that the one unity decomposes itself into two unities; the simple opposition (which we seek to indicate by A and B) rises to a double one. It does not follow that in God only the one power is active, the other inactive, but that God himself is twofold: first, negating power (B), which forces back the affirming essence (A), secretes it inwardly as passive; second, expansive, self-communicating essence, which on the contrary suppresses in itself the negating power and does not let it come to outward effect.

And this is the case also in another respect. For the opposites [*216*] are not even to be separated in themselves. The negating, centripetal power could not be by itself without something which it negates, which it draws in, and this which is negated, drawn in, cannot be anything but just that which of itself flows out in affirmation. Thus that negating power withdraws itself automatically, as it were, into a complete na-

ture of its own. Again, that spiritual potency, centrifugal by its nature, could not continue as such if it did not have in itself a power of selfhood at least in a hidden way. Thus this spiritual potency also withdraws as a nature of its own, and, instead of the unity sought, two opposed and separate unities have now resulted.

Whichever of the two we should want to sacrifice, we would thus always have given up one of the two principles itself; for simply because one is alone active in it, each of these unities acts only as this one, the first as B, the other as A. If, however, these were equivalent, so that neither could by nature be secondary to the other, then each of the two unities again would balance the other, each would have the same claim to be.

And thus the two would be completely separate and without mutual contact, like the two original natures of the Persian doctrine, the one a power pressing toward confining and darkening of the essence, the other toward diffusion and revelation. Both would appear not as one but as two deities.

But it still remains that the one and the same (= x) is both principles (A and B). Not merely conceptually, however, but really, actually. Thus must the same (= x) which is the two unities, also be the unity of the two unities; and the unity is found enhanced ["gesteigert"] with the enhanced antithesis.

Yet contradiction appears inevitable here, since the two opposed unities are to be posited as active and as one. And yet the paradox permits solution, for the unity demanded here has no meaning other than this. The opposites should be one, that is, a unity of the two is posited; but it is [217] not thereby posited that they cease being opposed. Rather there should be unity as well as antithesis, or unity and antithesis should again be in contrast. But antithesis in and by itself is no contradiction; as little as it could appear contradictory that there may be A as well as B, so little can it be a contradiction that there is unity as well as antithesis. These are, between themselves, again equivalent; the antithesis can as little yield to the unity as the unity to the antithesis.

The antithesis rests on this, that each of the two contending powers is a nature by itself, a real *principle*. The antithesis as

such is present therefore only if the two contending principles are like principles which are really independent and separated from each other. To say there should be both antithesis and unity therefore means: the negating principle, the affirming principle, and again the unity of the two—each of these three should be a particular principle separated from the others. But in this the unity is on the same footing as the two opposites; it is assuredly not preferentially the essence, but only a principle of the essence, and thus the complete equivalent of the other two.

The true meaning of that unity which was originally asserted is therefore this: one and the same (= x) is the unity as well as the antithesis; or the two opposites, the eternally negating and eternally affirming potency, and the unity of the two, constitute the one, indivisible primordial essence.

And only now, after the complete development of that initial concept, are we able to view primal nature in its complete vitality. We see it in a sense broken down primitively into three powers. Each of these powers is able to be for itself, as unity is unity for itself, and each of the opposites is the whole, complete essence. Yet there cannot be one *without* the others, for only together do they fulfill the entire concept of the godhead, and only God must be. None of these powers is necessarily and by nature subordinated to the others. With respect to that [*218*] indivisible primordial essence, the negating potency is as essential as the affirming one, and the unity, again, is not more essential than each of the opposites is by itself. Thus each has also precisely the same claims to be the essence, that which is ["das Seiende"]; none can by nature be satisfied merely to be, or not to be that which is.

The law of contradiction, which says that opposites cannot in one and the same case simultaneously be that which is, finds its application here at last.[4] God, according to the necessity of

[4] The importance for Schelling of the law of contradiction as grounding processive life has been discussed in our Introduction. In the exposition of his later science of reason, Schelling spoke of a positive and negative use of dialectic. The positive use of dialectic is the proper application of the law of contradiction, which determines the sequential character of the moments of pure thought. It is this law which determines that contradic-

his nature, is an eternal No, the highest being-in-self, an eternal retraction of his nature into himself, in which retraction no creature could live. But with a like necessity of his nature, although not as the same, but according to a completely dissimilar principle, one different from the first, God is the eternal Yes, an eternal outgoing, giving, communicating of his essence. Each of these principles is in just the same way the essence, that is, each has the same claim to be God or that which is. Yet they are mutually exclusive; if one is that which is, then the other can only be what is not ["das nicht Seiende"]. But God is just as eternally the third principle or unity of the Yes and the No. As the opposites exclude each other from being that which is ["seiend-Sein"], so the unity again excludes the antithesis, and thus each of the opposites; and again, the antithesis as such, or even each one of the two opposites, excludes the unity from being what is ["seiend-Sein"]. If the unity is that which is, then the antithesis, that is, each of the opposites, can only be what is not. And again, if one of the opposites and thus the antithesis is, then the unity can only retreat into what is not.

Now it is not as if all three could remain inactive and the contradiction itself thus remain hidden. For these three compose the necessary nature, the essence, which is not permitted

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tory predicates cannot be predicated in pure thought *eodem loco,* but only *primo loco, secundo loco,* etc. Thus intelligible time, the series of *noemata,* or the idea of being itself, arises in thought; this intelligible time is eternity which includes movement (*S.W.*, II, 1:304 f.). The negative aspect of dialectic is the successive deposition of the moments of pure thought, so that the final moment points inductively beyond to being itself (*S.W.*, II, 1:327 f.).

Contradiction and bipolarity had been an important aspect of Schelling's earlier philosophy of nature. But his stress upon it, beginning with *The Ages of the World,* was characteristic of his attempt to explain the inner vitality of nature and history. Thus Karl Groos remarked: "In the first period of his development . . . Schelling emphasized less the methodically furthering power of this kind of contradiction, but chiefly fixed his eyes upon the thought that all contradiction is extinguished, so to speak, in the absolute identity. . . . On the other hand, in *The Ages of the World* we find the *onward driving* power of contradiction most vitally expressed" (*Die reine Vernunftwissenschaft, Systematische Darstellung von Schellings rationaler oder negativer Philosophie,* Heidelberg, 1889, p. 62).

not to be, which absolutely must be. But the essence can only be the inseparable union of these three; none by itself would fulfill the entire concept of the necessary nature (of the godhead), and each of these three has the same right to be the essence, i. e., that which is.

[*219*] Thus we find that the first nature is of itself in contradiction—not in an accidental contradiction, or one in which it would be placed from without (for there is nothing outside of it), but in a necessary contradiction, posited together with its nature, and which therefore, strictly speaking, is its nature.

Men appear no more disinclined from anything in life than from contradiction, which compels them to act and drives them from their comfortable rest; if contradiction cannot be covered up any longer, they try at least to hide it from themselves, and to postpone the moment when action becomes a matter of life and death. A similar comfort was sought in science by an interpretation of the law of contradiction, according to which there was to be not even any possibility of contradiction. Yet how is a law to be established for something which can never be in any way? In knowing that there can be no contradiction, it must nevertheless be known that in a certain way there is one. How else should its inability to be become manifest, how should the law hold good, that is, prove itself true?

All else allows activity to be in some sense optional; that which absolutely does not permit inactivity, which urges, indeed forces, to activity is solely contradiction. Without contradiction there would thus be no motion, no life, no progress, but eternal immobility, a deathly slumber of all powers.

If primal nature were in harmony with itself, it would remain; there would be an abiding one and never a two, an eternal immobility without progress. As certainly as there is life, there is contradiction in primal nature. As surely as the nature of science consists in progress, the positing of contradiction is necessarily its first postulate.

A transition from unity to contradiction is unintelligible. For how should what is in itself one, complete, and perfect, be tempted, charmed, and lured to step out of this peace? On

the other hand, the transition from contradiction to unity is natural, for, because nothing can tolerate contradiction, nothing which finds itself in contradiction will rest until the unity which reconciles or overcomes it has been found.

[*220*] Contradiction alone brings life even into the first necessary nature, which we have considered merely conceptually until now. In primal nature there is thus necessarily a decision ["Entscheidung"], even if one which happens only blindly, since *each* of the three principles, whose indissoluble concatenation constitutes this primal nature, is by its nature that which is; but if the one is such, then necessarily the others are not, and at the same time primal nature does not have the freedom to be or not to be. If the one is ["seiend"], then the other is not; yet each should and must equally be that which is. Thus there is nothing left but an alternate positing, since now the one is ["seiend"], the others not, and then again one of the latter two is and the others not. Yet, in order that this alternating positing may happen in that primordial impulse ["Urdrang"] to be, it is necessary that one be the beginning or what is first ["das erste Seiende"], and that after this there be a second and a third, and from this again the movement returns to the first, and thus there is an eternally ending and eternally renewing life.

But just in order *that* one begin, that one be the first, a decision must ensue, which, to be sure, cannot happen consciously, by deliberation, but only in the pressure between the necessity and the impossibility of being, by a violence blindly breaking the unity. That alone in which a determinative ground for the priority of the one and the consequence of the other can be sought, however, is the particular nature of each one of the principles, a nature which is distinguished from their common nature, which consists in this, that each is equally original, equally independent, and each has the same claim to be that which is. Not that one of the principles would have to be absolutely the one which precedes or which follows, but only that, permitted by its special nature, the possibility is given to it to be the first, the second, or the third.

Now it is evident that what is posited for a beginning is

precisely that which is subordinated in the sequel. The beginning is only beginning inasmuch as it is not what really should be, not that which is veritably and unto itself. If there is a decision, then only [*221*] that can be posited for a beginning which distinctively inclines most to the nature of what *is* not.[5]

In the original negation precisely the affirming principle, the real essence, or that which is (A), is posited as not active, that is, as not being. Not that it would be utterly negated as that which is (this is impossible); on the contrary, it is posited as that which is, but not as being that which is—in other words not as that which is manifestly and actually so. On the other hand, what alone is active in this unity is the negating potency (B), which, as the potency opposed to the essence or that which truly is, cannot be called that which is, although on that account it by no means is not or is nothing.

Thus whether we look at what is active in that original negation or at what is posited in it as inactive and passive, we will say that the negation partakes mostly of the nature of what is not, or itself appears as what *is* not.

The concept of that which is not, chiefly, however, the appearance of this everywhere in so many forms, has always led observers astray and, like a true Proteus, repeatedly confused them. For just as it is evident to very few that real power lies more in limitation than in diffusion, and that it requires more strength to withhold than to give one's self, so it is

[5] The importance of "what is not" is elaborated throughout the rest of the work. Schelling had in mind not only Plato, to whom he refers, but also Aristotle; this is seen most clearly in the later work, where he refers to the *Metaphysics* IV, 4. Schelling felt driven repeatedly to explain what he himself meant by nonbeing. Cf. *S.W.*, I, 7:436 f.; 10:235 f., 282 f., 304, 344 f.; II, 1:288 f., 306 f., etc. Paul Tillich nicely sums up the importance of this concept: "Schelling's significance in the history of philosophy can be seen directly in the comprehension of this notion, the *crux philosophiae* from Parmenides to Hegel. He determined positively and concretely in the irrational will the amphibolic character of what is not: it is the principle of freedom of God and man, it is the nought from which the world is created, and it is that which should not be, which constitutes the power of sin and error. Schelling's presentation of the first potency is an ontology of what is not" (*Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion in Schellings positiver Philosophie, ihre Voraussetzungen und Prinzipien*, Breslau, 1910, pp. 17–18).

natural for them to consider that which of itself is not, wherever it meets them, rather as nothing, and to pronounce it the greatest contradiction if it is asserted to be precisely as that which is not.

From this merely grammatical misunderstanding, which even confused many an interpreter of the Greek philosophers, and to which, among other things, the concept of creation out of nothing seems to owe its origin, they could nevertheless have been freed by the quite simple distinction between not being at all ["nicht Sein"] (μὴ εἶναι) and being which is not ["nicht seiend Sein"] (μὴ Ὂν εἶναι), which is to be learned from Plutarch if nowhere else. By this also the expression "privation" (στέρησις), with which Aristotle indicated the other, the opposite (τοὐναντίον), is defensible in as far as the negating [222] power drawing in the essence does not posit that it is not at all ["nicht-ist"], but only that it is not that which is.

Moreover, even the most general considerations must lead to the concept of that which is not. For the genuine being which each thing has cannot, by very reason of the antithesis, be identical with that which is, but is, by its nature, what is not. But on this account it is in no wise nothing; for how should that be nothing which is being itself? Being must after all be. There is no mere being in which there would be nothing at all of that which is (no A without B). That which is not, indeed, is not that which is, with respect to another (objectively), but it is so in itself (subjectively). Compared with another as preëminently that which is, it is something which is not, but with reference to itself it is, indeed, something which is. Everything ["alles Seiende"] of a lower degree stands to that of a higher degree as something which is not; and the same A, which, compared with another, is something which is, can appear, when compared with the A of a still higher order, as something which is not.

What Plato has shown in his magnificent dialogue [6] about that which is not, that is, how it is necessary, and how everywhere certainty would be indistinguishable from doubt, truth

[6] Doubtless Schelling had in mind *The Sophist.*

from error, without this insight, may perhaps thus be expressed in our way.

Conceptually that is always "what is" in which the affirming principle is active, externally manifest. But it does not always follow that what conceptually stands as that which is also does so actually. For in an inverted order, or where there is yet no order, intelligence ["Besonnenheit"] and systematic arrangement, that which in itself or essentially is, can just as well become "what is not" in relation to what truly by its own nature is not. As the good man suppresses evil in himself, so, conversely, the evil man silences good in himself and actually posits what by its nature is as what is not.

We still want to bear in mind the misuse which another kind of sophistry makes of the concept of that which is not. Because being appears as highest to blind feeling, and because all being [*223*] depends on confinement ["Verschlossenheit"] of the essence, therefore, this sophistry concludes (unless too much is credited to it by this explanation) that being is indiscernible; and because for it everything is *being*, it concludes that nothing is discernible, that all actual learning dissolves being, and that only the undiscerning person discerns. In itself, of course, only that which is is also the discernible, what is not is the indiscernible. But surely it is incomprehensible only in so far as and wherein it is what is not; as far as it is at the same time something which is, it is certainly comprehensible and discernible. For that by which it is what is not, is just that by which it is that which is. For it is what is not, not on account of a total deficiency in light and essence, but on account of active confinement of the essence, hence by active power. We may therefore look to what is interior and hidden in it or to what is external and patent about it: the former is just the very essence itself, the latter, however, an active power, indeed, we would more rightly say power, strength itself, which, as such, likewise must surely be something which is, and thus something discernible.

It is God's eternal power and strength that he negates himself, confines and retracts his essence into himself. In this act

the negating power is the only manifest aspect of God; the real essence, however, is the hidden aspect. The whole therefore stands as A, which, outwardly, is B, [and the whole] = (A = B). Because God herein is he who is not (i. e., is not manifest), this whole inclines, in relation to all else, most distinctly by its very essence not to be. This is thus the beginning, or, as we expressed it elsewhere, the first potency.

According to the most ancient doctrines, night is thus generally not the highest essence (as it is when these doctrines are misunderstood today) but the first essence, which therefore becomes the lowest in the process of development, and just that which negates all revelation must be made the basis of revelation.

The same thing may be shown in another way. A being cannot negate itself without thereby turning in upon itself, thus making itself the object of its own willing and desire. The beginning of all knowledge lies in the recognition of one's ignorance;[7] [*224*] but it is impossible for man to posit himself as ignorant without thereby inwardly making knowledge into an object of his desire. To posit one's self as not being, and to will one's self, are therefore one and the same. The first [principle] of each being is that it wills itself; this self-willing is then the foundation of egoity, that whereby a being withdraws or excludes itself from other things, whereby it is itself alone and thus negatory outwardly or in relation to all else.

But, also, initiatory power is after all only in willing. For what is willed and what thus is intended to be is thereby posited as not being, in that it is *willed*. But every beginning depends on that not being which really should be (that which is unto itself) ["das an sich Seiende"]. Now since a being which has nothing outside of itself can will nothing else than

[7] Schelling warmly appreciated Socratic ignorance, the *docta ignorantia* of Nicolaus Cusanus, and the *ignorance savante* of Pascal. Cf. *S.W.*, II, 3:97 f. We may compare his attitude toward ignorance in these forms with his interpretation of the significance of the Greek mysteries. In effect, the declaration of ignorance in philosophic form, and the incommunicableness and secretive aspect of the mysteries, are considered denials of the further relevance of speculative dialectic, and hence express a criticism of idealism. Both ignorance and mysteries then express the awareness of further positive knowledge of existence.

itself, the unconditioned, very first beginning can only lie in such self-willing. But to will one's self and to negate one's self as being are one and the same thing. Thus the first beginning can also only be by negating self as being.

For beginning in any case lies only in negation. Every beginning is by nature only a desiring of the end or of what leads to the end, and thus negates itself as the end. It is only the first tension of the bow, not so much itself being as it is the ground that something be. In order that a movement may now begin or come to be, it is not sufficient for it merely not to be; it must explicitly be posited as not being. Thus a ground is given for it to be. The starting-point (*terminus a quo*) of a movement is not an empty, inactive one, but a negation of movement; the movement actually arising is an overcoming of this negation. Had the movement not been negated, then it could not be explicitly posited. Negation is thus the necessary precedent (*prius*) of every movement. The beginning of a line is the geometrical point, not because it is extended but because it is the negation of all extension. "One" is the beginning of all number, not because it is itself number, but because it is the negation of all number, of all multiplicity. Whatever is to increase itself, must first collect itself and assume the status of root. [*225*] Whatever wants to grow, must first curtail itself. And thus negation is everywhere the first transition from nothing into something.

There can therefore be no doubt that, if there is to be a succession among the primordial powers of life, only that which encloses and forces back the essence can be the first. What is first in God after the decision, or, since we must assume this decision as having *happened* from all eternity (and hence as still happening), that which is absolutely first in God, in the living God, the eternal beginning of himself in himself, is that he confines himself, denies himself, withdraws his essence from without, and retires into himself.

The current doctrine of God is that he is without any beginning. Scripture, on the other hand, says that God is the beginning and the end. We would have to conceive of an essence without beginning in any respect, as eternal immobility,

purest inefficacy. For no action is without a point from which and a point to which it goes. An action which had nothing firm for a ground, and no definite goal and end which it desires, would be an action completely undetermined, not actual and distinguishable as an action. A nonactual eternal without beginning may indeed be conceived, but never an actual one. Now, however, we are discussing the necessary actuality of God. God then has no beginning only in so far as there is no beginning of his beginning. The beginning in God is eternal beginning, that is, such a one as was beginning from all eternity, and still is, and also never ceases to be beginning. The beginning which a being has outside itself and that which it has within itself are different; and different is the beginning from which a being can be separated and from which it can withdraw, and the beginning in which it remains eternally because it is the beginning of itself.

But the divine nature does not suffer God to be merely eternal No, eternal denial of himself; it is likewise his nature to be an essence of all essences, the infinitely self-giving and self-communicating. Thus, while he hides his essence, by virtue of the eternal necessity of his nature, the eternal affirmation of his nature opposes that [*226*] negation (which is certainly not to be annulled, but remains, although now retreating into the negative). On the other hand, the eternal affirmation thus represses the negating power and precisely thereby develops ["sich steigert"] into an independent being.

Just as a body, as it contracts and cools down, directly spreads perceptible warmth about itself and thus raises the previously ineffective warmth into effectiveness, so, and with precisely the same necessity, that original negation becomes the immediate ground, the generating potency, of the true essence, and posits this essence outside of itself, independent of itself, as one set off from and indeed opposed to it, as that which is eternally in itself.

A new light thus falls on that original negation. An essence cannot negate itself as actual without positing itself at the same time as the actualizing, generating potency of itself. Conversely, to posit itself as the actualizing potency of itself and

to posit itself as not being are thus again one and the same thing.

In the first potency (A = B) there was also something which is (A); but the latter was here posited as not being (as passive, as object). In what is generated by it, however, according to the very nature of the case, that which is is posited *as what is*. It can thus be called that which is of the second potency (we indicate it by A^2, as that in which the negatory, B, now disappears). And from this alone it would be clear that, if that original No is the beginning and the first, the essence opposed to it is the second and consequent.

That the former can only precede, the latter only follow, may nevertheless be understood in yet another way. That the negating power represses the essence is natural to it; and a negating power once posited cannot operate save in confining of the essence. But the negating power is altogether foreign to the affirming principle in itself; and yet the affirming principle is and acts as that which is, only in that it represses in itself the negating power. It would never come to that by itself and thus also never rise to efficacy, if the negation of the essence had not [227] preceded. For that it is, is indeed due to itself; but that, second, it is also that which is, proves itself efficacious and reveals itself as that which is—the ground for this lies in the negating potency. If there were no No then the Yes would be without power. There is no ego without the non-ego, and to this extent the non-ego is before the ego.[8] That which is, because it naturally is, has therefore no reason ["Grund"] to desire to be. But to be negated is repugnant to

[8] In his *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre* (1794), Fichte had elaborated his three antithetic principles of knowledge. First, the ego posits itself as unlimited rational act, second, the ego posits a non-ego or something other than rational act, and third, the ego opposes within itself a divisible non-ego to the divisible ego, whence theoretical knowledge is grounded by the ego positing itself as limited or determined by the non-ego, and practical knowledge is grounded by the ego positing the non-ego as limited or determined by the ego. Schelling broke from Fichte not only by making the shift from what he called Fichte's subjective idealism to objective idealism, but, even more significantly, he broke away from Fichte's rationalism. Thus, for Schelling, irrationalism, the non-ego, must come first; rational consciousness must be a development, a higher form of objective being becoming subjective.

its nature. If it is thus negated at all, then it follows that, outside of that in which it is negated, it is in itself not negated and is in its own purity.

The primordial antithesis is given with these two potencies; yet it is not one which depends upon a total, mutual exclusion, only one which depends on an opposed relation, and an inverse position, as it were, of those first powers of life. What in the preceding potency was the outer, confining, negating, is in the following the internal, confined, and negated. And conversely, what was there the restrained is here the free. Though infinitely far from each other, they are infinitely near to each other: far, because what in the one is affirmed and manifest, in the other is negated and placed in darkness; near, because only an inversion, a turning out of what is hidden and a turning in of what is manifest, is needed in order to transplant and transform, as it were, the one into the other.

Thus we already see here the foundation ["Anlage"] for a future, inner unity proceeding out of each potency by itself. Thus day lies hidden in night, but overpowered by night; thus night lies in day, but subjected to day, so that night can restore itself as soon as the restraining potency disappears. Thus good in evil, but rendered indiscernible by evil; thus evil in good, but overruled by good and brought to ineffectiveness.

But now the unity of the essence seems torn, since each of the opposites in and by itself constitutes an essence of its own. But they tend toward unity, or to a convergence in one and the same, for the negating power [*228*] can only perceive itself as negating if there is a disclosing essence, and the latter can only act as the affirming when it liberates the negated, the restrained. It is also impossible for the unity of the essence to be annulled. By virtue of eternal necessity, therefore, through the power of indissoluble life, they posit outside and above themselves a third, which is the unity.

This third must in itself be outside of and above all antithesis, the purest potency, that which is indifferent toward both, free of both, and most essential.

From the foregoing it is self-evident that this cannot be the

first, nor the second, but only the third, and can stand only as that which is of the third potency (= A^3).

As the original negation is the eternal beginning, thus is this third potency the eternal end. From the first potency to the third there is a continual progression, a necessary concatenation. If the first potency is posited, necessarily the second is also, and these two just as necessarily produce the third. Thereby the goal is then attained; there is nothing higher to be produced in that process.

But, having attained its summit, the movement of itself returns to its beginning. For each of the three has the same right to be that which is. That distinction [of potencies] with the subordination proceeding from it is only a distinction of the essence; but such a distinction cannot annul the equivalence [of the potencies] in respect to being [“seiend-Seins”], or, as we express it more briefly, cannot annul the existential equality [“die existentielle Gleichheit”].

As yet the discussion cannot be about a moral relation at all; for we have throughout as yet posited only blind nature, but no moral principle. We have often enough been informed that the ideal stands above the real, the physical is subordinated to the spiritual, and the like, just as we have never lacked such instruction. Indeed, this subordination seemed most definitely expressed, since we always posited that which is related to the real as the first potency, what is related to the ideal as the second. But if one straightway begins by positing what should be subordinated as already actually subordinated, what has he then to achieve? [*229*] He is done right at the outset. Everything has already taken place, and there is no further progress.

That original, necessary, and lasting life thus indeed ascends from the lowest to the highest [potency], but, having arrived at the latter, it immediately returns to the beginning in order to rise from this again. And only here do we attain the complete concept of that primal nature (after which all individual concepts, that only had to be posited in order to attain this complete concept, must again be removed), namely, that

primal nature is a life eternally revolving in itself, a kind of circle, since the lowest always flows into the highest, and the highest again into the lowest. For, by virtue of the nature of the three principles, it is just as impossible that each be or that each not be that which is, and therefore only an alternating positing may be conceived of in this pressure toward being [“Drang zum Dasein”], since now the one, now the other potency is what is, alternately the one conquers and the other yields.

Of course the distinction of higher and lower again is annulled in this continual circular movement; there is neither a truly higher nor a truly lower, because alternately the one is higher and the other lower; there is only an incessant wheel, a never resting, rotating movement in which there is no distinction. Even the concept of beginning and end is again annulled in this rotation. There is, of course, a beginning of potency in it as a matter of possibility, something which could be the beginning, but is not the real beginning. Real beginning is one which posits itself as not being, in respect to what should really be. But that which could be the beginning in this movement does not recognize itself as beginning, and makes the same claim as the other principles to be what is. That is a true beginning which does not begin again and again but persists. A true beginning is that which is the ground of a continual progress, not of an alternately progressing and retrogressing movement. Likewise a true end is only that in which an essence abides, from which it does not need to return to the beginning again. Thus we can [*230*] also explain that first, blind life as one that can find neither its beginning nor its end; in this respect we can say, it is *without* (true) beginning and *without* (true) end.

Since that life did not begin at any time but began from all eternity never truly to end, and ended from all eternity to begin again and again, it is clear that that primal nature is, from eternity and hence originally, such a self-renewing movement and that this is its true, living concept.

These are the powers of that inner life incessantly giving birth to and consuming itself again, which man not without

fear divines as what is hidden in everything, although it is now covered up and has outwardly assumed stable properties. By that continual return to the beginning and the eternal recommencing, that life makes itself substance in the real sense of the word (*id quod substat*), into the always abiding; [9] it is the constant inner mainspring and clockwork, it is time which is eternally beginning, eternally becoming, always devouring itself and always giving birth to itself again.

The antithesis eternally begets itself in order to be consumed again and again by the unity, and the antithesis is eternally consumed by the unity in order to revive itself ever anew. This is the center ["die Feste"] (ἑστία), the hearth of the life which is continually perishing in its own flames and rejuvenating itself anew from the ash. This is the undying fire (ἀκάματον πῦρ), by the smothering of which, as Heraclitus asserted,[10] the universe was created, and which was shown to one of the prophets in a vision [11] as something returning upon itself, ever repeating itself by retrogression and again going forward. This is the object of the ancient Magian wisdom, and of that fire doctrine in accordance with which the Jewish lawgiver also left his people this saying: [12] "The Lord, your God, is a consuming fire"—not in his inmost genuine essence, yet according to his nature.

But unquestionably this motion incessantly returning into itself and beginning again is the scientific concept of that wheel [*231*] of birth which was already revealed as the interior of all nature to one of the apostles,* who was distinguished by

* ὁ τροχὸς τῆς γενέσεως (Jas. 3:6).

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[9] Schelling here grounds his distinction between substantial and existential being, which becomes clearer later on in the work. He wrote in a later work: "Existence is to be distinguished from being-for-self ["für-sich-Sein"] or subsistence, since one cannot avoid granting existence to accidents, whereas they lack being-for-self because they presuppose something else by which they are upheld, *quod substat accidentiis*, and which on that account is called substance" (*S.W.*, I, 10:347–48).

[10] Cf. Diels, Fragment 30.

[11] Apparently Schelling had in mind Ezekiel's visions.

[12] Deut. 4:24; 9:3. Cf. Ps. 21:9; Heb. 12:29.

a deep insight into nature, and also later to those who wrote from feeling and intuition.[13]

This movement may also be conceived as a systole and diastole. It is a completely involuntary movement which, once begun, automatically repeats itself. The beginning again, rising again, is a systole, is tension, which reaches its acme in the third potency; the returning to the first potency is diastole, relaxation, upon which, however, new contraction immediately follows. Consequently this is the first pulsation, the beginning of that alternating movement which goes through all visible nature, of the eternal contraction and eternal expansion, of the universal ebb and flood.

Visible nature, in detail and in its entirety, is an image of this ever forthgoing and returning movement. A tree, for example, develops continually from the root to the fruit, and when it has arrived at the summit it again throws everything off, reverts to the state of barrenness, and again makes itself into a root, only to rise anew. The whole activity of the plant goes toward the production of seed, only to start afresh and by a new developmental process produce more seeds, and then begin over again. But all visible nature appears unable to attain any permanence and seems untiringly to turn in a similar cycle. One generation comes, the other goes; with painful effort nature develops qualities, aspects, achievements, and talents up to a summit, in order to bury them for centuries again in oblivion, and then begins with a new start, perhaps in a new way, only to attain the same height again.

But in this way that primal essence never comes to *be;* for

[13] The conception of rotary motion and the wheel Schelling doubtless took over from Böhme and Judaic-Christian mysticism. But he also later refers to the wheel in doctrines of the Bhagavad-Gita (*S.W.*, II, 2:493). The rotary motion represents unpurposive, unordered, necessary movement, which must be broken so that purpose, order, and free creation can result. It further characterizes divine unblessedness, human unrest, the longing for purpose. Cf. *S.W.*, I, 9:231; 10:307 f.; II, 2:83 n., 173 f.; 3:273 f.

This symbol of the wheel and rotary motion stands in Schelling's mind for the pregnancy of nonbeing; it is but an expression for the elaborate scheme of involution and its potential evolution. Thus it is applied to the nature in God, to eternity, to the recollective function of human consciousness, etc., in order to account for the results which a crisis or decision—a cutting of the rotary motion—will bring forth.

only together do the three potencies fulfill the concept of the divine nature, and only that this divine nature be, is necessary. Since there thus is an incessant urge ["Drang"] to be, and that primal essence nevertheless cannot be, it remains in a state of perpetual [*232*] desire ["Begierde"], as an incessant seeking, an eternal, never quieted passion ["Sucht"] to be. Hence the old expression is valid: Nature seeks itself and does not find itself (*quaerit se natura, non invenit*).

If life were to stop here, then there would be nothing but an eternal exhaling and inhaling, a continual alternation of living and dying, which is no true being ["Dasein"], but only an eternal impulse ["Trieb"] and zeal to be, without real being.

It is clear that life could never come to real being by virtue of the mere necessity of the divine [nature],[14] or indeed by virtue of necessity in general.

How or by what was life delivered from this cycle ["Umtrieb"] and led into freedom?

Since each of the three principles has the same claims to be that which is, the contradiction cannot be solved by one becoming what is, at the expense of the others. But since the contradiction also cannot remain, and yet remains just because each for itself wishes to be that which is, therefore no other solution is thinkable than that *all* jointly and voluntarily (for by what should they be forced?) renounce being that which is, and consequently degrade themselves into mere being. For thus that equivalence (equipollence) automatically ceases, which does not refer to their essence or special nature (by virtue of which they rather form a gradation) but only to this, that each was driven by its nature in like manner to be that which is. As long as this necessity persists, they must all try to be in one and the same place, namely, in the place of that which is, consequently in one point, as it were. A mutual inexistence ["Inexistenz"] is demanded, since they are incompatible, and if one is what is, then the others must necessarily not be. This necessity can therefore only cease if all in like manner renounce being that which is. For if one of them is what is, then, according to their nature, all must strive to be

[14] This word was probably inserted by K. F. A. Schelling.

the same. Now as soon as this necessity ceases, differentiation ["Auseinandersetzung"] becomes possible, or it is possible for each to assume its potency; [*233*] there is now place for all, and that blind necessity of mutual inexistence ["Inexistenz"] is changed into the relation of a free, mutual congruity ["Zusammengehörigkeit"].

This by itself is certainly obvious enough. But the question arises: How is it possible for all together to renounce being that which is?

In itself it is clear that in no case can anything cease being except in relation to something higher. As the heart of man feels itself entitled to selfish desire just as long as his yearning, his desire, that inner emptiness which consumes him, is not filled by a higher good, and as the soul only settles and quiets itself when it recognizes something above itself by which it is incomparably more inspired, so also can that blind passion and desire of primal [nature] [15] only be silent before something higher, before which it gladly and willingly recognizes itself as mere being, as what *is* not.

To this it must be added that that resignation and subsidence into being should be voluntary. Until now, however, there is nothing in that primal nature but irresistible impulse ["Trieb"], unconscious movement. No freedom is conceivable in it as long as it is not lifted out of this involuntary movement. It cannot itself avoid this movement; it can only be removed from this movement by something else, and, unquestionably, only by something higher. And, since that involuntary movement depended on the necessity of mutual inexistence ["Inexistenz"], that primal nature cannot be free of this movement except when a separation and differentiation occurs without its aid. Thus the possibility would be given to primal nature either to accept this separation, and thus to save itself from the cycle ["Umtrieb"], or not to accept it and thus to fall back into that blind passion and desire.

In no other way, consequently, can deliverance and redemption come to it than by something else which is outside of it, completely independent of it, and elevated above it. For, since

[15] This word was probably inserted by K. F. A. Schelling.

it should recognize itself as mere being and not as something which *is* in comparison with what is outside of it, this recognition is not possible without at the same time recognizing its true being in that other.

[*234*] Of what kind this other will be—this is naturally the next object of consideration.

First of all, it is evident that this other cannot be posited by that eternally beginning nature, with continuity (*in actu continuo,* as it were) as a potency belonging to it; this other is rather outside of and above all potency, is rather what in itself is nonpotent ["das an sich Potenzlose"]. Likewise it cannot again be passion, desire, or nature, since then it could be of no avail here. It must rather be free of all desire, completely passionless and natureless.

But just on that account it also cannot be something which is real by necessity; and since as yet we do not know of anything which is real by freedom, it cannot in any way be anything real. And yet it also cannot be something unreal. Consequently it is in itself neither what is nor what is not, but only the eternal freedom to be.

That the highest is above all being, is said with one accord in all higher and better doctrines. The feeling dwells with us all that necessity follows all being ["Dasein"] as its fate. Whatever is only real or strives to be real is thereby in contradiction, and contradiction is the cause of all necessity. A profound feeling tells us that the true, the eternal freedom, dwells only above being.

To most people, because they never felt that freedom, to be something which is, or to be subject, seems highest, although this word [subject] itself indicates that everything which is only something which is, inasmuch as it is this, recognizes something higher above itself. Therefore they ask: What, then, could be considered as above all being, or what is it which neither is nor is not? And they answer smugly: Nothing.

Indeed, it is a nothing, but as the pure godhead is a nothing, in the sense in which an ecclesiastical epigrammatic poet inimitably expressed it:

The tender godhead is the naught and overnaught;
Could'st *see* but naught in all, oh man, you'd *see* God's aught.[16]

[*235*] The godhead is nothing because nothing can belong to it in a way distinguished from its nature, and, again, it is above all nothing because it is itself everything.

Indeed, it is a nothing, but just as pure freedom is a nothing, like the will which wills nothing, which does not hunger for anything, to which all things are indifferent, and which is therefore moved by none. Such a will is nothing and everything. It is nothing inasmuch as it neither desires to become active itself nor longs for any actuality. It is everything because all power certainly comes from it as from eternal freedom alone, because it has all things under it, rules everything, and is ruled by nothing.

The meaning of negation is in general very different, according to whether it is referred to the internal or external. For the highest negation in the latter sense must be one with the highest affirmation in the former. What in itself is everything, can on that very account not have everything outwardly at the same time. Everything has attributes whereby it is recognized and understood, and the more attributes it has, the more comprehensible it is. What is greatest is round and without attribute. Taste, that is, the gift of making distinctions, finds nothing to taste in what is sublime—as little as in the water that is drawn from the spring. Thus an earlier German writer in a significant epigram calls that will poor which, because it is self-sufficient, has nothing which it can will.

Freedom, or will in so far as it does not really will, is the affirmative concept of unconditioned eternity, which we can

[16] The metrical translation was made by Fritz Marti. The original, as Schelling presented it, is:

Die zarte Gottheit ist das Nichts und Uebernichts,
Wer Nichts in allem sieht, Mensch glaube, dieser siehts.

This is one of the epigrams of the German mystic, Angelus Silesius (Johann Scheffler 1624–77). See *Angelus Silesius sämtliche poetische Werke*, ed. by Georg Ellinger (Berlin, 1924), Vol. I, p. 37, "Der cherubinische Wandersmann," Book I, Epigram 111. Schelling was fond of Silesius. Cf. *B.*, II, 252. While he does not refer to him often, he does cite another of his epigrams indicating the three ages of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Cf. *S.W.*, II, 4:72.

imagine only outside of all time, only as eternal immobility. Everything aims at that; everything longs for it. All movement has only eternal immobility as a goal, and all time, even that eternal time, is nothing but the continual longing for eternity.

Everything rests only in so far as it has found its real nature, its stay and stability ["Bestand"], in the will which wills nothing. In the greatest unrest of life, in the most violent movement of all powers, the will which wills nothing is always the real goal.

Every creature, and especially man, really only strives to return to [*236*] the position of willing nothing. This is true not only of the man who abstains from all covetousness but also of the man who, though unwittingly, gives himself up to all desires, for even the latter longs only for the condition where he has nothing more to will, although such a situation flees before him, and the more eagerly it is followed, the farther it draws away from him.

It is customary to say, man's will is his kingdom of heaven, and it is true, if the pure, naked will alone is understood by this. For only the man who would be transported into pure willing would be free of all nature.

Consequently that naturelessness which the eternal nature desires is not an essence, nothing which is, although also not the opposite; but it is eternal freedom, pure will, but not the will for something—for example, the will to reveal one's self—but pure, passionless, and desireless will, will in so far as it does not really will. We have also expressed what is highest otherwise as pure apathy (indifference), which is nothing and yet everything. It is nothing, like pure delight which is not self-conscious, like calm joy which is completely self-fulfilled and thinks of nothing, like the quiet intimacy which does not take heed of itself and does not become aware of its not being. It is the greatest simplicity, and is not God so much as what is godhead in God himself and consequently above God, even as some ancients spoke of a supergodhead ["Uebergottheit"].[17]

[17] The concept of the supergodhead may have been recalled to Schelling by Silesius. Cf. *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 23, "Der cherubinische Wandersmann," Book I, Epigram 15. At any rate the significance of the concept is as old as

It is not the divine nature or substance but the consuming poignancy of purity, which man is able to approach only with similar purity. For, since all being is consumed in it as in a fire, so it is necessarily unapproachable for everyone who is still enveloped in being.

All agree that God is pure spirit with respect to his highest self. But it might be doubted whether everyone has grasped the full purity and acuteness of this thought.

To be sure, the earlier theologians expressly teach that by the expression "spirit," God is not placed in a special class or category of essences, as in that of the so-called pure spirits, nor [do they hold] that he might be spirit alone, in contrast to natural objects. God [*237*] [they taught] is above all spirits, the most spiritual spirit, pure, ineffable breath, the spirit of all spirit, as it were. Thus far the spirituality of God coincides with the simplicity of his nature.

According to the theologians' own doctrine, not only is any kind of antithesis incompatible with this simplicity, but also nothing at all is to be ascribed to the godhead in a way distinct from its essence.

According to this doctrine, taken strictly, one cannot say of the godhead that it is good, for this sounds as if the good were added to its being as something distinct. But the good is its being itself, the godhead is essentially good, and in so far not only good but goodness itself. Likewise, God is not really eternal, but is himself his eternity. No activity different from its essence can be ascribed to pure godhead; such an activity would stand to its essence as possibility to actuality. But in

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the *via negativa* of the ancients, for the supergodhead is not God but the indefinable object of philosophy. The problem of positive knowledge for Schelling was how to make the indefinable definable, the unutterable utterable. When he proceeds to ascribe freedom to this indefinable object, he merely expresses the conviction of positive knowlege that that object may come to be defined. Positive character is but the fruit of ability ["Können"] and will; thus the indefinable *becomes* definite or determined. This is the eternal magic, which Schelling claims derives from the German *mögen*, wherein ability and will are united. Cf. *S.W.*, I, 9:217 f., 243 f., 10:265; II, 2:150; 3:231 f., 349, 362 f.

God there is nothing potential; he is pure actuality.[18] Thus, in a strict sense, the godhead cannot be called conscious, for this would presuppose a distinction of itself from something of which it is conscious, since it certainly is altogether pure consciousness and throughout nothing but just itself, and everything is absorbed in the nature of the godhead. According to this same doctrine, the godhead in itself cannot be called willing, because it is will, pure freedom itself, although just on this account it also cannot be called nonwilling. Finally that ancient proposition, which sounds strange only to the ignorant, also follows from this doctrine, that the godhead in itself neither is nor is not, or, in another, though inferior phrasing, that it is as well as is not. It is not in the sense that being belongs to it as something different from its essence, for it is its own being, and yet being cannot be denied it for the very reason that in it being is the essence.

If, therefore, it was to follow from just this unity of being and essence, by the so-called ontological proof, that God is a necessarily existing ["existirendes"] being, then that idea was really not understood.[19] For the concept of what is includes a

[18] Here, and frequently in his later work, Schelling uses the phrase "pure actuality." This is a scholastic concept based upon Aristotle, according to whom God is without passivity or potentiality, only *energia* without *dynamis*. For Schelling, this expresses the existence which is not deducible from the notion. "Indeed," he says elsewhere, "that which *is* 'what is' and which can be only pure actuality, is . . . not to be grasped with any notion. Thought proceeds only up to this; what is only actuality shuns the notion" (*S.W.*, II, 1:315–16 f.). Schelling reserves the use of the term almost exclusively for the negative description of God, i. e., the existence prior to conceptual description of the godhead. Thus he says: "In *himself* [God] is no *what*, he is the pure conjunctive *that—actus purus*" (*S.W.*, II, 1:586). In this sense, existence stands for absolute freedom.

[19] The ontological argument in any of its forms is no proof of existence, according to Schelling. For to argue from essence to existence, from the kind of existence to existence itself, is to repeat the error of philosophies leaving freedom, and hence what Schelling means by existence, out of account. Here is one further point at which he departs from rationalism. Properly understood, the ontological argument leads, as does the negative philosophy, to the conclusion that there must be a pure existent if positive knowledge is to be possible. But the positive philosophy is a critique of the ontological argument, since the former proceeds from the merely existing to the notion of it arising in human consciousness, while the latter inverts

distinction [*238*] from being, a distinction which is negated precisely in respect to the godhead, and, according to an old aphorism, that which is being itself, has no being (*ejus quod est esse, nullum est esse*).

God, with respect to his highest self, is not a necessarily real being, but the eternal freedom to be.

It is, however, equally evident that the unity of essence and being (that unity which here represents itself at once as the expression of the highest spirituality) in no way exhausts the entire concept of the living God. Science as little as feeling can be satisfied with a God who is not because he is being itself, who is not living because he is life itself, not conscious because he is consciousness through and through. Both knowledge and feeling demand a God who is present ["da ist"] specifically in a way distinct from his essence, who is not just essentially knowledge but who knows explicitly and particularly, who acts not merely in his essence but who operates in deed, that is, in a way distinguishable from his essence.

This observation, of course, places us in danger of anticipating what is to become evident only by gradual development. Only the following is to be noted at this juncture. How completely the thread of spiritual and doctrinal tradition has been broken recently, what ignorance even of long-extant concepts has spread, becomes evident from the fact that some people were persecuted because they asserted that being may not be ascribed to the godhead according to the highest concept, although this was taught from the earliest times. It is also evident from the fact that others thought they had to contest that unity of essence and being when it was again taught with entire strictness, and with the consequence that the godhead in itself neither is nor is not, whereas they had no idea that they contested in that unity the ancient foundation

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this procedure. While the *prius* of the positive philosophy is necessary existence, existence which cannot be doubted, the presence in human consciousness of this *prius* as God is not a necessary existence; Schelling thus leaves a place for revelation, which is the only way by which man knows that the presence of God in consciousness is more than representation, is what really *is*, exists. Cf. *S.W.*, I, 10:13 f., 64 f.; II, 1:261 f.; 3:45 f., 156 f.; 4:346 f.

of the spirituality of God, nor that the oldest doctrine is that God is what is above the actual, above being ["das Ueberwirkliche," "Ueberseiende"] (τὸ ὑπερόν), and is thus what is sublimely above being and nonbeing.[20]

But to return now to the continuity of the inquiry, it is evident from these observations that the concept of that [*239*] which, in itself, neither is nor is not, of that natureless condition which we place outside and above eternal nature, is one and the same as the concept which was always considered as the highest concept of the godhead.

By virtue of the mere necessity of his nature (this is established), real being ["Dasein"] does not occur either in God himself or outside of him. Thus, outside of and above God's necessity, which, in the three potencies, constitutes eternal nature, we came to discern something else, which is eternal freedom, pure willing itself. Or, in other words, we were obliged to recognize that there is a unity of necessity and freedom in the actual, living God.

But how the contradiction can now be reconciled by that which is higher, how the blind essence, contending with itself, can be delivered from necessity—it is incumbent upon us to present this next.

In the first place, the possibility of coming to be is given to the blind essence just by that higher, since, on the one hand, only with respect to something higher can the essence give up being what is, and, on the other hand, the latter has no being and thus can be only relatively—that is, only in so far as something else is being to it. For, although in itself it neither is what is nor what is not, it can stand toward everything else only as that which is—not that it is annulled as what

[20] With the term *das Ueberseiende* one must note the Plotinian influence on Schelling, for Plotinus used the equivalent Greek term as the principle of all that is and from which all emanates (cf. *Ennead* iii. 8, 10). In his later philosophy—as is clear already in *The Ages of the World*—Schelling rejects such a concept of monistic emanation. The term then means for him that freedom to be or not to be, the actuality or *prius* of the godhead, hence the primordial character of lordship over being. Thus by way of the concept of what is above or prior to conceptual being, the positive philosophy proceeds *a priori* to experience, where it is discovered that this *prius* is God (Cf. *S.W.*, I, 10:260; II, 2:58; 3:128, 151, 160).

in itself neither is nor is not, but that it is just as what neither is nor is not.

But in that eternally beginning life there lies the desire to escape from involuntary movement and urgency ["Drangsal"]; and by its mere presence, without any movement (for it is still pure willing itself), as if magically, what is higher awakens the longing for freedom in it. Passionate urge ["Sucht"] softens into longing ["Sehnsucht"], wild desire ["Begierde"] dissolves into yearning to ally itself, as with its own true or highest self, with the will which wills nothing, with eternal freedom.

Yearning nature has no other relation to that pure spirit than that the latter is the freedom to be, and in so far [*240*] that which in comparison to all else truly is (τὸ ὄΝ). On the other hand, yearning nature has in itself the possibility of becoming being, subject (the word taken in the genuine sense),[21] the stuff of realization, as it were, for that pure spirit.

But the following distinction occurs here. Nature is capable of immediate relation to the intangible spirit only by that in herself which is spirit, free, and equally elevated above what is not (A = B) and that which is (A^2). For only what is itself free of all antithesis can approach what is without contradiction. Now this power of nature (A^3) is in turn connected with the lowest (A = B) not immediately but only by the mediating (A^2). To be related to what is above being ["dem Ueberseienden"], therefore, eternal nature must assume that condition whereby what is free in it rises above the other [its necessity] and becomes the immediate subject of the spirit, which in itself is beyond [nature's] reach. But each of the two other principles settles in the place suitable to it, in such a manner that the first potency occupies the lowest, the second the middle, the third, however, the highest place.

This is the natural effect of all longing, namely, that what is similar to the higher rises, but what is less like it, that whereby the higher is hindered in its rising, precipitates and

[21] Schelling treats the term "subject" as equivalent to the Latin *subjectum* and *suppositum*, the Greek for substratum or foundation, the German *Voraussetzung* (*S.W.*, II, 1:319; 3:78).

settles down into the depths. Only in the sight of the highest does each principle learn to know the place suitable to it; the criterion is only in the highest. No lower nature, though it be responsive to the highest, can partake of the latter without a separation within itself, without a simultaneous degradation of its inferior part (which, because incapable by itself of a relationship with the highest, can come to be connected with it only by setting free the higher in itself) and the elevation of that part [in it] which by nature is destined to be in immediate relation to the highest. This separation, this inner parting, the work of true longing, is the first condition of all rapport with the divine.

This entrance of longing in eternal nature indicates a new moment, which we must therefore hold fast in our consideration. [*241*] This is that moment which the divining primitive world designated by the breaking apart of the world-egg, by which it intimated precisely that closed wheel, that impenetrable motion which could not be stopped. This is the moment when the earthly and heavenly separate for the first time.

The cause of this crisis involves no willing or action on the part of the most pure essence: first, because eternal nature espies, in that essence, that in comparison with which the eternal nature can become being, the merely utterable ["bloss Aussprechlichen"], and, consequently, can at the same time renounce, in all its powers, being the uttering ["das Aussprechende"], that which is; then, because this arouses in [what is highest in the eternal nature] the longing to escape from the eternal cycle ["Umtrieb"] and to attain stability and rest; further, because that highest is the criterion by which the lower principle discerns its inferiority, the higher its worth. But longing produces a mere beginning and only the first inner effort (*nisus*) toward separation. The separation is confirmed only when the relation to that highest really arises through this inner beginning. And separation becomes lasting only when eternal nature, set free by the confirmed separation, is itself able to *decide,* and now, by virtue of an eternal willing or determination, allies itself eternally and inseparably to that highest as its immediate subject, and becomes permanent being,

lasting substratum for it. On this account eternal nature does not become in itself any less vital or [cease] being, but rather is raised to true, blessed, ordered life precisely in that it becomes being with respect to the highest.

For each thing is sound only when it is in its own place. The lower, if it sets free the higher, also becomes free of it, and thus assumes its own due independence. On the other hand, the higher can now develop itself freely, because it rises above the inferior, and occupies the place proper to it.

The separation depends first of all on this, that the state of that inviolable yet inexpressible unity, wherein each should be that which is (and this in one place and in one point, as it were), is changed into the state of totality, and thus that blindly necessary [*242*] nature, which strove to be the one and yet could not be it, is degraded into the all.

Consequently, in that separation and subjection which happened not once for all, but which recurs eternally and even now in each moment, that dark, impenetrable, and unutterable nature becomes the all.

To speak more particularly, however, the highest part of eternal nature, that which in nature itself is free and spirit-like (A^3), is raised to being immediately subject to the pure godhead. But the two other potencies, which were primitively only a condition and way to the highest (to A^3), and thus far something different from the latter, obtain, by their sinking, and because what is higher arises, a footing in their freedom and independence as foundation and as at once the primary substance of everything different from the divine subject, as the resting- and dwelling-place (*mayon*, Psalm 90:1) of creatures from eternity, as what is eternally between God and the created beings. Furthermore, however, these two potencies obtain a footing as the external, the first visible aspect of God, as that glory and splendor in which, in the first instance, the divine subject (A^3)—but indirectly also, the invisible godhead itself—is clothed for creatures.

This is the lot of creatures from eternity, that those which could not live in the pure fire of the spirit have a substratum

passive in relation to it, a substratum which is nevertheless full of inward power and life. It is necessary to conceive such a first element, in a certain respect independent of God, unless it is to be said that the creature emanated or was created from the nature of the free, pure godhead—an opinion inadmissible both in itself and because it annuls the entire freedom of the creature in relation to God. But this primal matter must be conceived not as something which has been from eternity, but as something which has become this element (as we have just shown) in the eternal movement by subjection and degradation, whereby, when the process has been correctly understood, the difficulties which arise with reference to the idea of an eternal matter in other systems, where the idea of a succession of principles is lost, immediately disappear.

[*243*] But although the two first potencies are only material and substratum with respect to the highest (A^3), both take, with respect to each other, the relation suitable to them, so that the first potency (the eternal power of negation) becomes the lowest, but the opposite (in which the spiritual is evident and the negating power forced back) becomes the relatively higher.

It is, indeed, appropriate that just what seemed to be the negation of all revelation, that power of God whereby he denies himself and confines himself to himself—that just this is laid down as the ground of all revelation, and is henceforth really substantiated as the eternal beginning, the first degree and foundation of immortal life.

Therefore the deepest and lowest which is differentiated out of that unutterableness, and becomes disclosed, is that power of the beginning which draws the essence to or into itself and forces it back into concealment. The original text of Scripture calls heaven and earth the expanse of divine power, thereby indicating that the whole visible world once lay in that negation and has only been lifted out of it by a later development. But just for that reason the world still lies in negation; that original negation is still the mother and nurse of the entire world visible to us.

That power of beginning, when posited in the utterable and external, is then the primitive germ of visible nature, that from which nature is developed in the succession of ages. Nature is an abyss [22] of what is past, but the oldest thing in it is what is still the deepest, what remains even if everything accidental and acquired is taken away. But this is just that continual tendency to confine the essence and put it in darkness.

The true original and primary power of everything corporeal is the attracting essence which gives it form, limits it in position, and gives body to something that is in itself spiritual and intangible. To be sure, this latter continually contradicts the corporeal and makes itself known as a volatilizing, spiritualizing essence which is hostile to all limitations. But it appears everywhere [*244*] only as something issuing from the original negation, and, on the other hand, that attracting power appears as its mainstay, its real ground.

That tendency (to confine the essence) is even recognized in such common expressions as that nature shuns observation and hides her secrets, that she releases what develops from its original concealment only when forced by a higher power. Actually everything in nature transpires only by development, that is, under the continual contradiction of an enveloping, enclosing power, and, left to itself, nature would still return everything into that state of a total negation.

In itself, nature is like Penia appearing at Zeus's banquet. Appearing outwardly in poverty and extreme need, inwardly Penia contains divine abundance, which, however, she cannot disclose before she has been married to wealth, to superabundance itself, to that exuberantly and inexhaustibly communicative essence (A^2). But even then the product of her womb appears under the form and, as it were, under the pres-

[22] The German term which we translate as "abyss" is *Abgrund*, which literally means "without ground." Schelling often uses the term in contrast to that which is "ground," the German *Grund*. In the text he used the term to indicate the primal, therefore groundless character of necessity, i. e., the beginning of necessity. Cf. [*245*]. This use of the term has, from the rational point of view, an affinity with Kant's usage. Thus Schelling says, "Kant calls the necessity of being—the necessity which is unconditioned, preceding all thought—the true abyss for human reason" (*S.W.*, II, 3:163).

sure of that original negation—as a bastard child of want and superabundance.[23]

According to its ground, therefore, nature comes from what is blind, dark, and unutterable in God. She is the first, the beginning in what is necessary in God. The attracting power, the mother and vessel of all visible things, is the eternal power and strength itself, which, when put forth, is seen in the works of creation. Nature is not God; for it belongs only to what is necessary in God, and, taken strictly, God is called God only with respect to his freedom. And nature is also only a part, a single potency of this necessary [aspect]. God, however, can only be identified with the whole, and not even with this after the all has come to be out of the one and thus, as it were, has issued from the godhead.

The systems which wish to explain the origin of things by descent from above almost necessarily come to the thought that the emanations of the highest primal power at some time or other attain a limit [*245*] below which there is nothing, and which, itself only a shadow of reality, a minimal degree of reality, can only to a certain extent be said to be, but really is not. This is the meaning of nonbeing among the Neo-Platonists, who no longer understood the true meaning of Plato. We, following the opposite course, also discern a limit below which there is nothing, but for us it is not a last but a first, from which everything begins, an eternal beginning, and it is not merely a deficiency or lack of reality, but active negation.

Nature, however, attains explicitness in that great decision, not merely in so far as it enters its own potency, but also in so far as its inner contradiction, which until now was not noticed simply because we always had the whole before our eyes, becomes mitigated in nature itself solely by the relationship into which it now enters.

For that essence, restrained by the negating power, is not silent and dead in the degree we seemed to assume up to now. Alone it is imperceptible to itself, but when compressed and

[23] In Plato's *Symposium* (203 Bf.), Eros is born of Poverty and Abundance. Schelling refers later to the same relation of the first two potencies (*S.W.*, II, 2:50 n.).

taken hold of by the attracting power it perceives itself as spiritual, affirming essence, and the more it has been hemmed in, the more powerfully does it break forth according to its nature. But the negating power does not cease; if it could cease, then everything would revert, for it is the power of the beginning.

Consequently that first potency is not merely involved in the general state of contradiction, in which we have seen the whole to be, but the contradiction is also in that first potency itself, and the ground of a cyclical motion lies in it, considered by itself. It feels in itself the opposing essence and yet cannot give birth to it, for that first potency is still equipotent toward the essence. The law of that first potency is to remain, to make fast the spiritual again and again, and thus to maintain the ground of eternal progress. But the stronger that first potency pulls in order to bring the essence into the depths, the more this essence resists, as everything which is of an expansive nature strives the more forcibly to expand itself, the more it has been compressed.

[*246*] Since that first potency therefore unites in itself opposing powers, of which the one always longs for the outside, the other presses back toward the inside, hence its life is also a life of vexation ["Widerwärtigkeit"] and dread ["Angst"], since it does not know which way to turn and so falls into an involuntary, revolving motion.

But everything longs for constant being; nothing wants to remain in contradiction. So, too, that potency of the beginning. But it cannot by itself come out of contradiction, for it is its nature to be in contradiction. Only one thing could aid it, namely, if it passed from that alternating, mutually exclusive relation to the higher principle (the A^2) into an organic relation, which is impossible in that original equipoise, since both principles, so to speak, want to be in one spot, because both make the same claim to be that which is. But if the negating principle ($A = B$) discerns itself only as potency of the essence, and thus makes room for the other which is opposed to it (the A^2), then the latter can become helpful to it, and become that which liberates it from contradiction, for this

is by its nature unlocking and liberating. Therefore if there is this other principle, then the first must also remain, so that there may be something which it can open and liberate. And the relation of an originally excluding equipoise is transformed into that of a necessary concatenation, since, if there is the one principle, then on that very account there is the other.

If there were no potency of negation, then there would be no ground for the affirming, unlocking potency. But, on the other hand, the former comes to stability only by the latter, for the negating power can now operate steadily, and continually repress the essence. Antecedently (*antecedenter*) that which is, is still fettered, and it is liberated only subsequently by a higher potency. It is no contradiction that what was confined in a preceding moment may become free in a subsequent one; it must rather be confined so that it can be set free. The confining power is not annulled, but is rather substantiated, in that another [247] power following it liberates what is enclosed. Now for the first time there arises a before and after, a real articulation, and therefore composure. The attracting or indrawing power becomes perceptible to itself as the power of beginning only when it is overpowered by the principle following it. And, also, that essence which is now liberated recognizes the attracting power now for the first time as its necessary precedent (*prius*), as its first ground and support, and loves it as condition, and as the vessel, as it were, in which it unfolds.

A similar relation, which is nonetheless in the last analysis really just the same, may serve as an explanation of this relation. Long ago men sought to represent matter as the product of two powers, the same that appeared previously to us as the primal powers of all life, the attractive power and the expansive power. But, the two powers being taken as equipotent (of the same potency), it was never quite conceivable how something tangible and enduring could proceed from their collision. For if it is assumed that the two powers are equally strong, or that the one is predominant, then they would always have to annul each other mutually (like two equal weights on a lever), or else the stronger power would have to annul the weaker. In

the former case, nothing perceptible would anywhere remain, while in the latter case the stronger power would alone remain with its surplus, without anything material arising here either. This cannot in any way be changed, unless one here also assumes our precedence and consequence (a *prius* and *posterius,* a difference of potency) between the powers. But if the state of envelopment, of absorption of the expansive power by the attractive one, is the first state, and one which is only subsequently overpowered by another potency independent of the first, only then, because each power remains in its being and essence, must a product result which, like matter, stands, as it were, suspended in the middle between total contraction and complete expansion.

Thus it is that the potency of the beginning, which is inconstant and unstable by itself, is brought to stability only by organic relation to the higher potency. But it is placed in this organic relation |*248*| only by that separation when the original one becomes all, and each of the principles enters its own potency, enters the relation suitable to its particular nature.

Thus that other principle which is, as it were, the savior and liberator of nature, must in any case be outside and above this nature, and just for that reason stand to it as the spiritual to the corporeal. But only as something thus spiritual to which nature is the next step, and which is again capable of an immediate relation to nature.

The language of the people considers earth as the place where what is essential is suppressed and fettered, and calls that region where the essential dwells freely, and in its own essentiality, heaven.[24] Therefore, if that potency of the beginning, reduced to being and brought to stability, is the original germ of future, visible nature, we would not err in asserting that the higher potency, in which, on the contrary, the essence is evident and the negating power hidden, when reduced to being, is nothing but the element of pure, heavenly substance ["Wesenheit"], the foundation ["Grundlage"] and, as it were, the primal matter of the future spirit world. For even

[24] As Schelling said later, "heaven means nothing but what is general, universal, free of the fetters of the concrete" (*S.W.*, I, 10:390).

that higher potency, although like pure spirit and life with respect to the lower, indeed like the revealer of all its wonders, can yet sink in comparison with a higher one, become matter, and assume passive attributes. And strange as the expression may sound, that even the spirit world has a matter, a basis on which it rests, nothing can truly be ["dasein"] outside of God which was not created of a substratum different from its highest self.

The most lofty research, as well as daily observation, convinces one that there are heavenly influences by which all earthly life endures and is ruled, and that a stagnation of all powers, a retrograde motion of all life, would soon arise without these influences. Air, water, and all the elements are only unintelligent tools whose combination and compatibility can only be sustained by a primordial element ["Ur-Sache"] different from them and elevated above them. Therefore this primordial element was called the fifth essence by the ancients. [*249*] How impotent by themselves the subordinated powers are is clear from those years of general bad harvest which occur without special prior events in external nature, and without unusual wind, heat, rain, and weather. But these heavenly influences, which are, as it were, the continual medicine of our earth, from which proceed life and health, come at last, even if by so many intermediate links, from that first source of all life, and are direct or indirect influences of the spirit world, whose essence alone is the animating breath of all nature. Without this animating breath, nature would soon come into a retrograde motion and thereby into ruin, would at last fall again into that original contradiction and the initial instability out of which it was brought only by organic relation to the spirit world.

It is a common belief that the spirit world is closer to the godhead than nature, and, as the dying Socrates says that he goes to God,[25] piety still makes use of the same expression about pious people. Now this might depend on the following. The entire life which we previously described is only *the way to God*, the eternal motion of which nature is the beginning;

[25] Cf. Plato's *Phaedo* 80 D, 115 D.

its purpose is nothing but a progressive realization of the highest, where each succeeding step is nearer to pure godhead than the preceding one. Thus, the transition of man into the spirit world can indeed be called a going to God, provided that man has traveled the *way of life* (hence the term), not reversed the direction by his own guilt and changed from ascent to descent.

Generally the spirit world is also called eternity, in contrast to nature. For though eternally beginning, nature nevertheless beginning, and retains the nature of the incipient. But that which is in itself (A^2) is of the nature of the eternal. Eternity is not inconsistent with being begotten, for just as only the beginning can beget, so the eternal can only be begotten.

But has even this higher potency stability by itself? Is there [*250*] not also an antithesis in it, and thus a ground of contradiction and of that fatal movement?

We have assumed this higher potency as that principle in which the spiritual is turned outward, the dark, primordial power negated and placed within. But as the expansive essence in the potency of the beginning strives to escape negation, so does the darkening, primordial power in this higher potency. The second potency is independent, autonomous essence by itself; in it, too, there is a matter to be developed into a world of its own. But the law of the second potency is to repress the negating original power. Consequently a conflict of directions is necessary even in it; it, too, falls into that whirling movement which seems everywhere to be the beginning and first appearance of creative powers.

Even the second potency cannot help itself; it, too, can only be helped by something higher. But in that first, [mutually] excluding effort, when each by itself wanted to be that which is, the second potency discerned no relation to another outside itself. Consequently, in the great separation it, too, is not merely disentangled from general contradiction, but also is liberated from internal contradiction and brought to stability. For while it takes its proper place, discerns itself only as a potency, and recognizes something higher above itself, it

becomes [mere] being in comparison with this higher, so that the latter can operate in it as in its own matter or immediate element. Now, since the second potency in itself always remains what it is, that is, the eternal Yes, holding in itself and hiding the negating power, there is no contradiction if that higher (A^3) liberates the negating power in the second potency, and thus deliberately and intentionally develops the latter into another world. For the nature of the second potency is only that it is originally the affirming principle which confines the dark primordial power. All that is required is that this may be the ground or beginning of the second potency. But what happens subsequently does not annul that first ground, but rather confirms it by presupposing it.

As long as that spiritual essence was at variance with the negating primordial power, it was forced to operate inwardly, contrary to its nature, which is outflowing, outpouring; and thus, too, that spiritual essence could [*251*] not assist nature, which requires its aid. Now since the affirming essence is liberated from the negating power by a higher potency, the spirit world can flow out freely and operate below or in nature. The most perfect harmony finally arises in this way, since the third [potency] is to the second just what the latter is to the first, and the whole is animated, as with one breath, only by the third [potency].

But even this third is by itself incapable of stability. For as long as blind necessity ruled, since there was no separation of powers, and that pure essence (A^3) without antithesis could be something which is only in conflict with the others, this third had to turn back against these as consuming fire. As unity excluded antithesis, so antithesis excluded unity. But the ground was just thereby given for that alternating movement, the continual reviving of the antithesis, the continual recommencing, since there should be neither unity nor antithesis alone, but unity as well as antithesis.

If the unity (A^3) could rise and be outside the antithesis, then the antithesis could also subsist external to the unity and there would be no contradiction. But this was impossible in that original equipollence and inseparateness of the principles.

Consequently, since the principle which is by its nature free, but born of necessity, was not able to tear itself away from the subordinate, and the free, living progress from the lower to the higher, and from the higher to the highest, was stopped, that which was not able to go forward had to react. And thus a retrograde process had to arise which ended as always with the consumption (by fire) of what was previously formed. It is like spontaneous self-combustion which occurs in organic bodies when what is subordinate becomes so increased that its opposition against the higher, and thus the freedom of the latter, is annulled. But that universal life always renews itself again from the ashes, like a phoenix, because it is in itself the immortal which simply cannot not be. And thus the eternal circle arises which we have described in the preceding part.

[*252*] Therefore, as the first [potency] acquires stability only by its organic relation to the second, the second only by a similar relation to the third, yet the third cannot rise by itself, cannot attain actuality ["Actus"] as that which it is (as highest potency), hence the whole again sinks back into itself and into instability, unless the third is helped so that it can dwell in its own purity freely, and outside the antithesis, as quiet, calm unity.

But to the essence which has risen from below out of necessity, this aid cannot be brought by a potency which in turn itself belongs to eternal nature. For eternal nature has attained its highest in that essence, the child of eternity which never-resting time wanted to bear right from the beginning, in order to rise to eternity by means of this essence. Here, then, is the boundary of nature and freedom, of the natural and the supernatural. If there were nothing except that blind necessity, then life would remain in this dark, chaotic condition of an eternally and therefore never-beginning, eternally and therefore never-ending, movement. But the sight of eternal freedom raises that highest [power] of nature to freedom, too, and all other powers together with the highest come to stability and reality, since each power attains the place proper to it. And thus each shares the higher influence of which it is in immediate need, while indirectly all share the divine influence.

If then the first ground of nature is to be discerned in that first potency, by virtue of which the necessary essence confined itself and denied itself externally, and if the spirit world is to be discerned in the second potency, opposed to the first, then we can scarcely have a doubt concerning the meaning of the third potency. It is that universal soul whereby the universe is animated, which by its immediate relation to the godhead is now mindful and possessed of itself, the eternal bond between nature and the spirit world as well as between the world and God, the immediate instrument whereby alone God works in nature and the spirit world.

[*253*] Thus that initial wild fire is here for the first time subdued to a tranquil state of materiality ["zu ruhigem Stoff"], which nevertheless is perhaps destined to be taken up again later and put in a still higher cycle of life. The one becomes the all in relation to a higher one, the unutterable becomes the utterable in reference to what is for it the Word. From "before" and "after," a relation of exclusion, comes an "at once," a conjoint subsisting [for all] through one another, and, specifically (which should not be overlooked), what was the beginning or first in the movement now becomes lowest; what was the middle here also becomes the intermediate; what was the end and third becomes the highest. Previously there was no space, the three principles were not apart. Now, since they give up being one and the same (that which is), there comes to be space and a true "above" and "below." The reader, who must always keep his view fastened on our progressing steps, will notice how here for the first time something with form ["Figürliches"] grows out of the formless ["Unfigürlichen"]. In that wild movement there was only the one distinction, which we indicate by "right" and "left" in the corporeal, only one direction—namely, that of the negating motion, which we call that from right to left in the visible, for the movement was one turning and retrogressing into itself, which only arose to regress anew, while the affirming movement only regresses in order to rise again. This is a difference which even becomes clear from the circumstance that in the latter movement the stretching (that is, positive) muscles effect the rising, the

bending (that is, negative) muscles the descending motion. In the opposite movement, however, the reverse takes place.

As life has thus voluntarily assumed organic constitution and become capable of relation to what is highest, it therefore descends and actually becomes being for the pure godhead. But the pure godhead, which unto or in itself neither is nor is not, just thereby achieves being with respect to the life subordinated to it and standing in relation to it. The pure godhead now rests on eternal nature and remains over it just as the sun over the earth, the bird over its brood. Whoever may find this simile ignoble, [*254*] let him compare it with the expressive word which is in Genesis 1:2, according to its basic meaning. In everlasting nature the godhead now recognizes its own eternal nature, and is from now on, although free with respect to nature and neither bound to nor grown together with it, nevertheless inseparable from it.

It is at this point to be expected that the objection, which has long weighed heavily on the reader, will burst forth: Then that condition of contradiction precedes the God who is; God is not from all eternity, as he surely must be and is according to common belief; something—and, indeed, a chaotic, contradictory condition in the divine nature—precedes the God who is. It would appear very bad for the entire basis of our doctrine, if these consequences were admissible. Therefore we reply: God can never *come* to be, he is from eternity. But what follows from this? Nothing except that that separation has likewise happened from eternity. The necessary is subject to freedom from eternity. The primordial state of contradiction, that wild fire, that life of passion and desire, is posited as past by the godhead which is, by that supernatural essence of freedom. But because the godhead, which is from eternity, can never come to be, that primordial state is posited as an eternal past, a past which did not first become past, but was the past primordially and from all eternity.

If we wanted to travel the pure way of historical, that is, of scientific representation, then what God has in himself as his eternal past had to be treated also as the first, as what really precedes God. The observation, that what God has in himself

is his *eternal* past, could not be allowed to hinder us in this. God himself recognizes that life as what is past through him and therefore also in relation to him. That that life is something *eternally* past, is only the final determination which we add to the entire, large concept, the knowledge of which is the prize of the whole previous investigation.

For we have really achieved nothing but the complete concept of the godhead, which unto or in itself is neither what is nor is not, but which eternally is, through the eternal relation to its nature, to [*255*] what is relatively external to it. How should we penetrate this concept, grasp its fullness, unless we went to work piecemeal, with the proviso that we show in the end the entire, complete concept at a single glance?

It is well enough known how most or all who began this task before us took a quite different way out. They all proceed from this, that the godhead in itself is an eternal stillness, totally self-absorbed, self-contained, and thus far they at least speak intelligible words. If, however, they then proceed farther, they speak words which are unintelligible to themselves and others, when they say that the godhead, in itself natureless, the eternal freedom, has taken in its revelation the form of nature, or else that the essence has come forth or has brought forth something out of itself, and—with this coming or bringing forth—life, movement, and revelation begin. For how that which is in itself natureless, and without any passion and desire, has *assumed* nature, or how that which at first was completely self-contained, can by itself come forth out of itself in a following moment or act (for it surely cannot be conceived differently), without ground or inducing cause, how it could itself annul or interrupt its eternal unity and stillness —this is not at all to be made conceivable by any kind of thought.

It has already been proved in the preceding part that the highest and purest concept of the godhead, which is generally accepted and also lay at the basis of the ontological argument—that that concept, by virtue of which essence in it is also being, and being essence, necessarily leads to the other, that the godhead is that which in itself neither is nor is not. But now it is

demanded as with one voice that the godhead be. Reason and feeling are not satisfied with a God who is a mere *it*. They demand one who is *he*.

Now this was the question of all ages, how the pure godhead, in itself neither being nor not being, can be. The other question, how the godhead, in itself unrevealed, self-absorbed, can become [*256*] manifest, external, is basically only another expression of the same question.

Whatever answer human wit was able to devise, in no case could the answer be such that God, in being that which is ["seiend-Sein"], should cease to be he who is in himself above being ["der an sich selbst überseiende"]. In God there is no change and turning. God cannot become a revealed God from being a hidden one, in such a way that he would cease to be a hidden one. From his superbeing he cannot become one that is, in such a way that he would cease to be the one in himself above being. That highest spirituality and ineffability of God cannot be changed into intelligibility and comprehensibility, as water was changed into wine at the Galilean wedding.

Therefore all attempts which seek to answer that question by any kind of movement, even if it were an eternal kind, in God himself, are in themselves inadmissible. For suppose there were either a necessary or a voluntary movement by which he passed over into being as distinct from essence. Then, in the first case, he would be unfree at the very first, not, as he is and must be, eternal freedom. But in the other case he would come into being not as what in itself neither is nor is not, because he would already be active in the movement, that is, actual and being. Consequently in both cases he would be not as pure willing, as eternal freedom, that is, not as that which he is. But it is impossible for anything to come to be at the cost and, as it were, by the loss of what it is.

There is absolutely only one solution to that question. Since God in himself neither is nor is not, and also cannot come to be by a movement in himself, but must always remain in himself what is above being ["das Ueberseiende"], even when actually existing ["existirend"], so he cannot anywhere be or come to be (in an eternal way) in himself, but only in relation

to something else. And even this is true only in so far as that "other" is being to him, or such as can stand only in the relation of being to him.

This in itself is now clear enough so that no one will easily contest it. But whence now that other? This question [257] is also difficult on account of the nature of the other. For since it should only have the role of being in relation to the godhead, therefore it seems by its nature to have to be what *is* not, and that not because, like the highest, it is over, but because it is below that which is. And yet it cannot be anything which is not at all. It must consequently be something that is not what in itself is not, but *becomes* what is not only in reference to the highest.

Whence then this mysterious other? The attempts which have been made from the earliest times to shed light on this are well known. The oldest seems to be the doctrine that the primal matter of everything different from God emanated from the godhead, although it is certain that much is now called emanation doctrine which had a totally different meaning. Little as such an emanation doctrine explains and is explicable, it certainly has the advantage that it leaves the godhead in its original stillness and freedom. It is but an unfortunate compromise between this and the usual doctrine [to say] that God, before the beginning of things, placed "something" (even himself, according to some) out of himself, a something which contained the foundation for the future creation. Thus that still godhead, before it separated itself, as it were, was laden right in the beginning with the primal matter of the future world.

The idea current among theologians is still closest to the truth—that God is the motionless cause of the first foundation of what is different from him, not by an external action or movement, but by his will alone. These theologians have seen something of the truth, but again misrepresented the right concept in expressing it, since they distinguished that will from God. For it may be an eternal will (as several expressly teach) or not eternal. Then, in the first case, it is not clear how this willing is to be distinguished in pure eternity from the god-

head itself, especially since the most intelligent have always taught that all that is in God is itself God, and the will of God is nothing else but the willing God himself. In the other case, however, they assume a genesis in eternity, a transition from nonwilling to willing in the pure godhead, [*258*] which is wholly inconceivable without an intervening cause.

The truth is that God himself is essentially a will at rest (pure freedom) and that if the latter is, then necessarily and immediately the "other" must be. Accordingly, the doctrine of the theologians could be expressed thus: God is the primal cause ["Ur-Sache"] of that other, not the efficient but the still, essential primal cause. Nothing but that being which is enclosed in the essence is needed for the other to be. For since that being, as such, cannot be, and yet cannot remain in this abstraction, hence just *by* its purity it immediately, and without any movement, posits that other, which is being to it. For as that pure electrical fire, which by its nature is radiating and communicative, cannot be such for a moment without its antithesis, indeed, only is when it awakens this antithesis, and as this fire, without special action, causes its counterpart by its purity and abstraction itself; or again as a fire, which cannot be real without some material, if it necessarily became real, would immediately and without movement posit the material by its nature alone—so only the godhead itself as a spirit, pure and abstracted from all being, is needed for that other to be.

But according to this idea, which would be similar to the old doctrine of a thesis upon which the antithesis automatically follows, that first concept of the godhead in which nothing is conceived but pure spirituality is changed. For since God is cause of the other, not by a particular volition, but by his mere essence, this other is something which, though surely not his essence, is yet something which belongs to his essence, and indeed in a natural and inseparable way. It thus follows that if the pure godhead = A, and that other = B, the complete concept of the living godhead which is, is not merely A, but A + B.

Consequently it seems that in the other way also (where one proceeds from pure spirituality) one can come to just that con-

cept of the godhead. [*259*] But this way or this relation could at most be a dialectical and never a historical, that is, a really scientific one. We cannot revert to that abstraction with our thoughts. We do not know God at all other than in that relation to an eternal nature subordinated to him; this synthesis is our first, our oldest way of thought. We know of no other than a living God; that connection of his highest spiritual life with a natural one is the original secret of his individuality, the miracle of indissoluble life, as one of the apostles significantly expresses himself (Hebrews 7:16).

But when we want to produce the thought of that synthesis scientifically (as it needs must be), we must proceed from what God himself posits in this synthesis as his eternal past, and which cannot be posited in him under any other form than that of the past.

The past—a weighty concept, known to all and yet understood by few. Most people do not know any but that past which enlarges itself in each moment by just this moment, which still becomes, but is not. Without a definitely determined present, there is no past; how many enjoy such a present? The man who has not conquered himself has no past, or rather never comes out of it, lives continually in it. It is beneficent and serviceable to man to have put something behind him, as they say, that is, posited [it] as past; the future becomes bright to him only by this, and it is also easy then to undertake something more. Only the man who has the power to tear himself loose from himself (from what is subordinate in his nature), is capable of creating a past for himself. This same man alone enjoys a true present, as he looks forward to a real future. And it would be clear even from these moral considerations that no present is possible except one which rests on a determined past, and no past is possible except one which lies at the basis of a present, as something conquered.

Metaphysicians, indeed, act as if there were a [*260*] concept of eternity completely free of all admixture of concepts of time. They may be right, if they speak of the eternity which is completely ineffectual toward all outside it, which is, as we have shown, like a nothing in relation to all else. From this

kind of eternity the concept of the present, as well as that of the past and the future, is excluded. But as soon as they would talk about a real, living eternity, they do not know better than that this eternity is a continual "now," an eternal present; as there is indeed no other concept for time, the counterpart ["Widerspiel"] of eternity (even for that eternal time), than that it is the eternal nonpresent.

But if a present cannot be conceived which does not rest on a past, then also no eternal present can be conceived which is not grounded in an eternal past.

True eternity is not that which excludes all time, but that which contains time (eternal time) subjected to itself. Real eternity is the overcoming of time, as the significant Hebrew language expresses victory (which it places among the first attributes of God) and eternity by one word (*naezach*).

There is no life without simultaneous death.[26] In the very act whereby being that is (existence) ["ein seiend-Sein"; "Existenz"] is posited, one [being] must die in order that the other may live. For that which is can only rise as such above something which is not. At the moment when an organic body is to come to be, matter must lose its independence and become mere form for the real essence.

Every kind of life is a succession and concatenation of states, since each preceding is the ground, the mother, the bearing potency of the succeeding. Thus natural life is a step to the spiritual life. Sooner or later, natural life comes to a point where it cannot remain, and yet also cannot go farther by itself, and needs a higher in order to be raised above itself. As the life of nature in man, when it cannot find the higher spiritual potency, falls back into inner unrest, that back-and-forth movement without meaning or purpose which is the characteristic of madness,[27] so, on a large scale, the earth seems

[26] Böhme had said, "Death must be a cause of life, in order for life to be mobile" (*De signatura rerum*, VIII, 7; cited in Jankélévitch, *L'Odyssée de la conscience*, p. 42 note 4).

[27] In his philosophy of mythology, Schelling considers Dionysus before he becomes a god as that power within consciousness which drives man to madness when there is no free relation to God (*S.W.*, II, 2:276). The power of understanding is exhibited not when madness is absent but when it is mastered (*S.W.*, II, 3:299).

to have found its organization, the harmony of all its creations, and [*261*] thereby rest, for the first time after what is natural in it was raised by man to contact with the spiritual. But even in natural life there is a succession of states such that the preceding always becomes past to what follows. Health and perfection of life depend only on continuity of progress, the unhindered succession of potencies, and, as all sicknesses are consequences of impeded progress (sicknesses of development), so all deformities are only consequences of interrupted, impeded advance to higher forms ["Steigerung"]. For if nature cannot find the potency helping it, transfiguring it into the higher, then it must indeed unfold into a malformed life, because the impulse of progress does not cease, because nature cannot stand still, and yet cannot go any farther.

There is movement, progress, even in the divine life, as in all others. The question is only how this divine life again distinguishes itself in that respect from every other, particularly human life.

First by this, that that succession and concatenation, dissoluble in human life, is indissoluble in the divine life. God is in continual exaltation ["Erhebung"]; the ways of the Lord are just, as Scripture expresses itself, that is, the ways are straight, everything retrograde is against God's nature. Therefore he can have that life which rotates in a continual circle only as an eternal past within him.[28]

The dissolubility of life, or the possibility that the continuity of transition from the lower into the higher potency may be annulled, is the cause of sickness and of natural as well as spiritual death. Therefore God alone is called the imperishable, who alone has immortality.

A second difference is that that succession in God is a real one, and yet not therefore one which has occurred in time. In one and the same act (the act of the great decision), 1 (the first potency) is posited as what has preceded 2, 2 as what has preceded 3, and so again the whole (1, 2, 3) as what has preceded 4, that is, even *in* eternity a succession, a time, is [*262*]

[28] In *S.W.*, II, 3:276, Schelling speaks of the same contrast of the lineal and the circular with respect to God, and refers to Hos. 14:9.

included. It is not an empty (abstract) eternity, but one which contains time conquered in itself.

The all is before the one, necessity before freedom, nature before what is beyond and above all nature; and yet surely there is not time here, because everything is included in that same indivisible act. There is no life without the overcoming of death, and as every presence ["Dasein"] as a present ["Gegenwart"] depends on a past, so particularly does that presence which consists of being present unto itself, presence conscious of itself.

An eternal *being* conscious ["Bewusst*sein*"] cannot be conceived, or it would be like unconsciousness. To be sure, that highest being, which is here also the essence itself, must in itself also be purest knowledge ["Wissen"], because that which is ["Seiendes"] and being ["Sein"] (subject and object) are completely one in that highest being (the well-known equation pertains here: the highest being = the highest knowledge). But what is pure knowledge is not yet therefore of itself what knows. Only in relation to something else which is being for it can the highest being stand as that which is, can that pure knowledge stand as what knows and thus be raised into actuality ["Actus"].

There is no becoming conscious ["Bewusstwerden"] (and therefore no consciousness either) without positing something as past. There is no consciousness without something which is at the same time excluded and yet attracted. What is conscious excludes that of which it is conscious, as not itself, and yet must also attract it again precisely as that of which it is conscious, as itself after all, but in another form ["Gestalt"]. That which is at the same time excluded and drawn into consciousness can only be what is unconscious ["das Bewusstlose"]. Therefore all consciousness has what is unconscious as ground, and, just in coming to be conscious, this unconscious is posited as past by that which becomes conscious of itself. Now it is certainly not conceivable that God has been unconscious for a long time and then become conscious. But it is quite conceivable that the unconscious and conscious in God were com-

prehended in the same indivisible act of becoming conscious, the conscious as what is eternally present, but the unconscious with the character of what is eternally past.

[*263*] Consciousness consists only in the act of becoming conscious, and thus in God, too, there may be conceived not an eternal being conscious, but only an eternal becoming conscious. And thus, too, that rapport into which eternal freedom enters with nature is nothing but the eternal coming unto itself ["zu-sich-selber-Kommen"] of the highest. The pure godhead, in allying itself to nature, does not come to something strange. It comes into its own (εἰς τὰ ἴδια) and recognizes nature as its own eternal nature. And thus also what is in itself eternal beginning recognizes in that pure spirit not a God different and distinct from it, but only its own highest self.

Most people begin by wanting to explain a revelation of the godhead. But what is to give itself must first possess itself, what is to express itself must first come to itself, what is to be evident to others must previously be evident to itself. But everything which is to come to itself must seek itself; consequently there must be something in it which seeks and [something which] is sought. The former, however, cannot be the same as the latter, and as to their roots the two must always remain independent of each other, in order that there may eternally be something which is sought and something which seeks and finds, and an eternal joy of finding and being found. Only thus may a consciousness be conceived which is eternally living. This consciousness, which depends on the breaking through and overcoming of an opposite, is not one which is standing still, dead, but one which is eternally living, always rising anew.

Although most people skim over it, the explanation—how the eternal can be conscious of its eternity—has a special difficulty, however, for one who would think more deeply. Consciousness cannot be conceived at all in empty, abstract eternity. Consciousness of eternity can only express itself in the word: I am he who was, who is, who will be. Or, more intimately, in the untranslatable name which the highest God takes in addressing Moses, and which expresses the different meanings

in the original language by the same words: I am who I was, I was who I [*264*] shall be, I shall be who I am.[29] Consciousness of such an eternity is impossible without a distinction of periods. But how should the eternal, which does not find them in itself, distinguish them except in something else? To the spirit of eternity, this other is nature, to which this spirit is related. In nature, the spirit of eternity discerns itself as he who *was*, because it posits nature as its *eternal* past. Consequently the spirit of eternity discerns itself as he who must eternally be ["ewig seiend sein musste"], since nature can be past only in comparison with him who is. Thereby the spirit again gives eternity as the ground of its own eternity, or rather it posits eternity as a completely groundless one which again only rests on an eternity. It recognizes itself in nature as he who *is*, as the eternally present in contrast to what is before as something eternally past. It recognizes itself in nature as he who *will be*, because it beholds itself as eternal freedom in comparison with nature, and thereby beholds nature as the possible outline ["Vorwurf"] of a future willing. It recognizes itself not only as he who was, is, and will be, but as he who is also *the same* as he who was, is, and will be, because it *is* only as the very same being absorbed in essence, which it was eternally, and also because in the entire future it can only be as what it is, namely, as that essential being.

For the spirit of eternity is still that which in itself neither is nor is not. As such it is only in comparison with what is being to it, not in itself. It is still eternal freedom in comparison with being, the eternal power to realize itself in and by means of being. But it has still not declared itself; it is still will which rests, which does not really will.

Because that nature is the first external and visible [aspect] of God, it is a very natural thought to consider it as the body of the godhead, but to consider that which is above being ["jenes Ueberseiende"] as the spirit which rules this body.

[29] Schelling here attempts to give significance for consciousness to the divine revelation according to Exod. 3:14. He uses the same "name" to designate consciousness of unity in mythology (*S.W.*, II, 2:383; cf. *S.W.*, II, 1:171; 3:269). Schelling's discussion appears to be made in contrast to the changeless eternality of Plato. Cf. *Timaeus* 37 Df.

But in the first place, eternal nature is a totality which is made up of body, soul, and spirit. And then these three are linked to one another, and in their unfree, unseparated state together constitute that wheel of nature which in man, too, is what is really inward. The spirit of eternity, however, is not bound to nature, but remains in eternal freedom in comparison with it, although it cannot separate itself from nature. For the spirit of eternity, as the [*265*] eternally healing, reconciling potency, as eternal beneficence itself, can only become perceptible to itself in this relation.

Therefore, if one wanted (as is indeed just) to look for a human parallel for this relation, it would be this. Eternal nature in God is that which in man is his own nature, in so far as the whole, consisting of body, soul, and spirit, is conceived under the latter nature. When left to itself, this nature of man, like the eternal nature, is a life of vexation and dread, a fire incessantly consuming and producing itself anew. The nature of man, too, requires reconciliation, for which the means does not lie *in his nature* itself, but beyond and above it. Only by the spirit of God, which is therefore called the spirit from above, can the nature of man be reborn, that is, escape the old life, posit it as something past and go over into a new life. Consequently not as spirit or soul is related to the body, but as that divine spirit, which does not belong to man, is related to the entire nature of man, as the Leader, as he was already called in the old mysteries, stands to life, so does that which is above being ["jenes Ueberseiende"] stand to nature which is related to it.

But as eternal spirit, free and bound to nothing, keeps above nature, so also nature is not coercively but voluntarily subject to the eternal spirit. The sight and presence of that essential purity have no other effect on nature than to liberate it, so that it can yield to the separation, or resist it and fall anew into the life of passion and desire. By this voluntariness of [its] submission, however, nature truly proves itself as divine nature, as nature which already in itself, outside of that relation to the pure godhead, was divine. Nature itself, when liberated, gains a victory over itself by the power of the highest, and

posits its own life as past in so far as it is something peculiar, different from God.

Thus nothing should rest on mere necessity, and the highest voluntariness, even in the first beginnings of life, should witness to the unlimited freedom of God.

[*266*] Consequently nature yielded right at the outset, not by virtue of its own or natural will, but compelled by need (this is the meaning of the οὐχ ἑκοῦσα, Romans 8:20, where, however, the discussion concerns a *later* submission). Although of course nature yielded for the sake of him who subjected nature, and with the hope that it, too, should thereby become free, and be raised from the servitude (blind necessity) of that eternally transitory, self-consuming essence, into an imperishable glory.

But just because nature is only voluntarily subjected, it always contains in itself the possibility of deviating again from that order, and of returning into a life of its own which is turned away from God. In [its] submission it has not renounced being, but only its own life independent from God, and it has given this up not with respect to its root or possibility, but only with respect to reality. Therefore even in this submission it preserves its own ground of self-movement, a source of freedom which does not come to effect (to actuality) ["Actus"] but always stays in mere possibility (potentiality).

Even if the godhead were not unenvious, as Plato says, it still could not annul the powers of this life, because it would thereby have to annul its own vitality, the ground that it is being ["den Grund ihres seiend-Seins"].

Indeed, if that relation, whereby alone God is the living God, is itself not a dead but an eternally live relation, we must even conceive that life, now subject to the godhead, in continual readiness to proceed on its own account, in order that there may be not a blind submission but an eternal rapture, an alleviation of seeking (of passion), an eternal joy of finding and of being found, of conquering and of being conquered.

In the sound body there is a feeling of health only in that the unity presiding over the body continually suppresses the

false life, which is always prepared to step forth, suppresses the movement deviating from harmony and opposing it. Similarly there would be no life or joy of life in God, if the powers now subordinated did not have [*267*] the continual possibility of arousing the contradiction against the unity, and were not also incessantly quieted and reconciled again by the feeling of that beneficent unity by which the powers are suppressed.

And here we come upon a new or rather upon a heightened concept of that which is not. That original life of blind necessity could not be called one that is, because it never really attained stability, being, but remained in mere striving and desire for being. Now this desire is quieted in so far as it has now really attained stable being in that subordination. But this desire is only quieted to the extent that that life has submitted, that is, in so far as it has recognized itself as an inferior order of something that is, as something that, relatively speaking, is not.

Now we assert the possibility that just this, which now is not, could withdraw from this state of potentiality and again try to rise to that which is. Through this there arises a heightened concept of what is not, which we are often enough forced to acknowledge in nature and life, and which plainly convinces us that there may indeed be something mediate between what is and "nothing," namely, what is not, and moreover should not be, and yet tries to be. It is not, because it only tries to be, and it is not nothing because in a certain way it must be in order to desire.

No one will assert that sickness is a real, a truly vital life (*vita vere vitalis*). And yet sickness is a life, only a false one, not one that is, yet one which wishes to rise from nonbeing ["nicht-Sein"] to being ["Sein"]. Error is not a true, that is, real knowledge, and yet not nothing; or, indeed, it is a nothing, but one which strives to be something. Evil is inwardly a lie and devoid of all true being. Yet evil *is* and shows a terrible reality, not as something which truly is, but as by nature something which strives to be so.

That original blind life, whose nature is nothing but strife, dread, and contradiction, [*268*] if it were ever alone, if it were

not absorbed from eternity by a higher life and returned to potentiality, could not on that account be called either a diseased or an evil life. For these concepts only become possible after that life is subject to the appeasing unity, but at the same time is free to come forth, to withdraw from the unity and enter its own nature.

If an organic being falls ill, those powers appear which previously lay hidden in it. Or if the bond of unity is totally dissolved, and the powers of life, previously subject to something higher, forsaken by the ruling spirit, can freely follow their own inclinations and ways of operation, then it becomes clear what a terrible thing, about which we had no preception during life, was suppressed by this magic spell of life. And what was but now the object of reverence or love, becomes an object of fear and the most terrible horror. When the abysses of the human heart open up in evil, and those terrible thoughts come forth which should be eternally buried in night and darkness, only then do we know what lies in man with reference to possibility, and how his nature in itself or left to itself is really constituted.

If we consider all that is terrible in nature and the spirit world, and all the rest which a benevolent hand seems to hide from us, then we cannot doubt that the godhead sits enthroned over a world of horrors, and, with reference to what is in him and is hidden by him, God could be called the awful, the terrible, not in a figurative but in a literal sense.

Thus in itself that life, which was posited by God as past or put in concealment, is still what it was before. The powers of that consuming fire still slumber in that life, only quieted and exorcised, as it were, by that *word* whereby the one became all. If one could take away that reconciling potency, instantly that life would fall again into the life of contradiction and of consuming desire. But nature captures itself, as it were, and overcomes its own necessity by the power from above, yielding voluntarily to the separation, and thereby to [*269*] the eternal delight and joy of life of the godhead, which in itself neither is nor can be conceived.

Until now we have steadily followed the incessant course of

the inquiry, which admitted no interruption, because the one and the whole, of which we wanted the concept, was completed only with the definition just added. For everything up to now was, to speak in conventional language, nothing but the complete construction of the idea of God, which cannot be comprehended in a short explanation or limited like a geometrical figure. What we were describing (so far as possible) up to now, is only the eternal life of the godhead; the actual history which we intended to describe, the story of that series of free acts whereby God resolved from eternity to reveal himself, can begin only from this point on.

But before we give ourselves up to the course of this history, let us dwell a little longer on what has been found up to now. Everything depends upon comprehending that unity in God which is at the same time duality, or, conversely, the duality which is at the same time unity. If God were identical with his eternal nature or bound to it, then there would only be unity. If both [God and his eternal nature] were completely external to each other and separated, then there would only be duality. But the concept of that unity, which, because it is a voluntary one, just on that account encloses a duality, is completely foreign to our era. This era wants only unity and wants to know of nothing but spirit and purest simplicity in God.

Now it has certainly been clearly shown that the godhead, in and for itself, or as purest spirit, is superior to all being. From this it follows automatically that the godhead could not be without an eternal potency—not a begetting one, but one which bears, brings the godhead into being—consequently that the godhead's vital, real being ["Dasein"] is not something stationary and dead, but an eternal birth into being, whose means and instruments are therefore in the most real sense called the eternal *nature* (the bearing potency) of God.

But we know how scientific reasons at the moment can do little [*270*] against an inveterate manner of thought, especially if the latter is bound to illusions of higher spirituality, like the now prevalent so-called purely rational religion, which thinks it places God all the higher, the more entirely it has taken all living power of movement, all nature, from him.

Now it might easily be shown how altogether modern this kind of view is. For our entire recent philosophy is only as of yesterday. Since the originator of modern philosophy, Descartes, completely destroyed the vital connection with earlier culture, and wanted to build philosophy entirely anew solely according to the concepts of his time, as if no one had thought or philosophized before him, it is only a coherent and consistent development of one and the same basic error which has spun itself out in all the different systems up to the latest times. It is wrong in itself to apply this completely modern standard to that which has broken off all connection with the latter in order to ally itself again with the truly ancient and oldest.

It is in itself desirable for everyone who as a scholar talks about first beginnings to associate himself with something long venerable, some higher attested tradition on which the thoughts of men depend. Even Plato, in the highest points and climaxes of his utterances, gladly calls on a word handed down from antiquity or on a holy saying! The reader or listener is thereby brought back from the prejudicial opinion that the author sought to spin the whole out of his own head and only to communicate a self-contrived wisdom. The effort and strain which such an opinion always calls forth leads to a calm mood, which man always feels when he knows that he is on solid ground, and this mood is very advantageous for inquiry.

Such a union is doubly desirable for him who does not wish to enforce any new opinion, but only to make valid again the truth which was present long ago, even if concealed, and to make it valid in times which have really lost all definite concepts.

[*271*] Where could I sooner find this tradition than in those unshakable records which eternally depend on themselves, and which alone contain a world-history and a human history that reaches from the beginning to the end? This may serve as an explanation, if expressions of those sacred books have frequently been brought to mind up to now, and if perhaps it happens still oftener in the future. For if the author had referred just as frequently to the Orphic fragments or the

Zend books or Indian scriptures, then this could perhaps pass for learned attire, and might appear to many less strange than reference to those writings for whose complete explanation in respect to language, history, and doctrine all the science and learning of the world would have to coöperate. For no one will want to assert that current doctrine has exhausted the riches of Scripture; no one will want to deny that the system which would explain and bring into perfect harmony all expressions of Scripture has not yet been found. A mass of very perplexing passages must still be left in or returned to obscurity. Therefore, though one finds the most important doctrinal points in our systems, they are rigidly, dogmatically posited without the inner connection, transitions, mediating links which alone would make them into an understandable whole that would no longer demand blind faith but would receive the free consent of the mind as of the heart. In a word, the inner (esoteric) system, the consecration of which teachers especially should have, is lacking.

But what especially hinders teachers from attaining this whole is the almost indecent subordination and neglect of the Old Testament, in which they (not to discuss those who give it up altogether) retain as essential only what is repeated in the New. But the New is built on the basis of the Old Testament, and evidently presupposes it. The beginnings, the first great points of that system which develops into the farthest members of the New, are found only in the Old. But just these beginnings are the essential things; whoever does not know them can never attain to the whole. [*272*] There is a coherence in the divine revelations which cannot be comprehended in the middle, but only from the beginning. The New Testament shows us everything in the light of later times and conditions which presuppose those earlier ones. But only the individual flashes of lightning, which start from the cloud of the Old Testament, illuminate the darkness of primordial ages, the first and oldest relations in the divine essence itself.[30]

[30] For Schelling, Judaism is not a part of but the end of mythology and the beginning of revelation. He considered Israel chosen as the bearer of divine revelations. Further, he treats Hebrew religion—and particularly the

It is so with that unity in duality and duality in unity which we discerned as the essential [character] of the divine individuality. The two names of God, appearing now separated, now connected, have always struck all investigators. That the word Elohim, which indicates a plural, is generally connected with the verb in the singular, was explained in the good old days by this: that the three persons are to be signified in one substance. This opinion was given up long ago. Indeed, all reasons of analogy oppose it.

But what would there be to object to the interpretation that by Elohim is indicated the divine substance, that (first one, then) all of primordial powers, that which is itself unutterable, but is actually uttered by the pure, spiritual godhead? Right from the outset Jehovah is added to Elohim in the relation of the uttering, the *name* or word. "What am I to reply to the children of Israel," asks Moses, "when I tell them, the Elohim of your fathers sends me to you, and they ask me: What is his name?" and Jehovah answers: "You are to speak to them thus: Jehovah, the Elohim of your fathers, sends me to you. *This is my name* forever" (Exodus 3:15). Here it is evident that Jehovah is to be the name of Elohim, but Elohim is the uttered which receives the name. Therefore Jehovah is also explicitly called the *name* (the uttering), as in Leviticus 24:11: "Someone blasphemes *the name*," and in Deuteronomy 28:58: "If you will not fear the *glorious name*," where, in an explanatory manner, there is added: "And this terrible one, Jehovah your Elohim." It was always noticed how this name, whose true pronunciation is unknown, consists of pure aspirates. And it was concluded therefrom that the name indicates that of [*273*] the godhead, which is pure breath, pure spirit, and that it is, as the Jews expressed themselves, the name of the essence, while Elohim is the name of the divine effects. Others noticed that it consists of nothing but so-called mute letters (*literis quiescentibus*); even this accords with the nature of

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sacrifice—as the prototype of Christianity; this, in the Schellingian conception of process, means that the confirmation and validity of the former is to be found in the latter, while the understanding of the latter depends upon the recognition of the former as ground. Cf. *S.W.*, II, 4:142 f.

that which is pure will without real willing. Also, the sacredly observed unutterableness of the name shows that the name was to indicate [that aspect of] the godhead which utters and therefore is not itself to be uttered. Also, that the name is the tetragrammaton (as, moreover, the name God is in all languages) may certainly not remain unconsidered in the case of the most artful and purposeful Hebrew language, and indeed it has always been noticed. Even a preserved trace of the movement progressing from 1 to 4 might be shown in the individual letters, if we wanted to go into such detail. It is no mere fabrication of blind Christian investigators that the meaning of the holiness of the quadruple in the whole of antiquity has proceeded from a knowledge whose copy is contained in the name יהוה . Pythagoras must have known that one must count up to four, that 1, 2, 3 in themselves are nothing, and that nothing attains stability without having entered the fourth degree of progression. Indeed, four is the highest stability of God and of eternal nature. The Pythagorean oath, by him who transmits to our soul the quadruple, the *wellspring of eternally flowing nature*—if this oath did not have this meaning, it had none at all.[31]

When this is presupposed, the doctrine of the unity of the divine essence in duality shows itself deeply woven into what is innermost, even into the language of the Old Testament. In the first place, the verb in the singular is connected with the plural of Elohim, where the meaning, for example, of *bara Elohim* is: he who created is Elohim. Then in the frequent connection of Jehovah-Elohim. But the doctrine of duality in unity has just as clearly penetrated the language of the Old

[31] Schelling refers to the so-called Pythagorean "golden words":

"The gods immortal, as by law disposed,
First venerate, and reverence the oath:

. . . . .

These things perform; these meditate; these love.
These in the path of godlike excellence
Will place thee, yea, by Him who gave our souls
The number Four, perennial nature's spring!"

—From C. M. Bakewell, *Source Book in Ancient Philosophy* (New York, 1907), pp. 40, 41.

Testament. Thus in the places where the verb in the plural is connected with Elohim (in the sense of the [one and] only, true God) as indication that the Elohim do not cease to be as such because of the unity with Jehovah. [*274*] Again, in the places where Jehovah swears by his soul (A^8) as something different and separable from him, for unquestionably many a thing which sounds too natural to the modern interpreters is said or recounted in respect to Elohim without being extended at the same time to Jehovah.

The most striking phenomenon in the last regard is after all the angel of the presence or, as he is openly called, the angel of Jehovah. The angel of Jehovah, who is in so far distinguished from Jehovah, appears to Moses in the burning bush. But Elohim calls to Moses from the bush (Exodus 3:2). Soon afterwards he who speaks to him is Jehovah, from which it is evident that, in the opinion of the narrator, he who is the angel of the presence is also he who is Jehovah, and yet both are distinct. The meaning of the story is perhaps just this, that Moses was vouchsafed a vision of that highest vitality, that inner fire consuming yet always reviving again (and thus far not consuming), which is the nature of the godhead.[32]

These few suggestions may suffice to convince some of the recent philosophers who would gladly present their rather empty concepts as divine revelation, and also the theologians who for a long time have been thinking in accord with the philosophy of the time, that, according to the oldest records of religion, quite different secrets lie in the divine individuality

[32] Schelling here used Luther's term, *der Engel des Angesichts,* which the Authorized Version translates "angel of the presence." Cf. Is. 63:9; Matt. 18:10. This concept of the angel of the presence is for Schelling the beginning or ground of the future revelation in Christ. The word "angel," he points out, means "messenger"; here the second potency operates in consciousness through the first potency, and the latter is the preparation for the fuller revelation which the former will bring. This external character of God, the principle of the first potency, has two aspects: one of consuming anger, the second of compassion, which presupposes the former. The former, Schelling indicates, is the *Angesicht,* which no man can see, and live (Exod. 33:20). In yet another connection he calls the confrontation of Moses, when God spoke to Moses "face to face" ["Angesicht zu Angesicht"], the first revelation, which must be personal. Cf. *S.W.,* II, 3:289 f.; 4:26, 123 f., 279 f.; *B.,* III, 229 f.

(how would this be possible without "dividuality"?) than they imagine in their theism, which calls itself enlightened. The conception of a duality beyond the trinity of persons in the unity of the divine essence, the doctrine of an eternal present and an eternal (or eternally becoming) past, is woven into the innermost fibers of the language of the Old Testament writings. The New Testament presupposes such a conception and doctrine, however, and only refers to them in some passages.

Yet the reader may now not stop even at this gain. One situation immediately links itself to another. There is not even a momentary lull. Pain, dread, and vexation of past life are released, as was shown, by [275] that crisis or differentiation of powers. But at no moment can an indifferent conjunction of the latter occur. From the life that has perished a new one immediately arises. What before was to be one, and could not be, is now the all or whole. But this whole depends solely on the inner affinity of its powers. It is a quiet, merely passive whole, not an actual one which might be expressed as such. Therefore it is indeed always full of life in the individual members, but, considered from without or as a whole, it is completely ineffectual.

But in the differentiation itself all powers retain the feeling of their unity. The necessity of being one is overcome but not destroyed; it remains, but as a necessity tempered by freedom. Compulsion becomes love. Love is not freedom and yet also not compulsion. Indeed, just because separated and differentiated, the powers long all the more fervently to perceive themselves as one, and by voluntary, inner harmony, to feel themselves a living whole, which unity is an image of that truly inner unity to which they hope to be raised—by God.

The separation now depends on this, that the higher is raised above its lower, [while] the latter, referred to the former, declines. Thus the natural movement, decisive immediately after the entrance of the crisis—indeed, in the very moment of its entrance—is the general attraction, the elevation of the lower with respect to the higher, and thus a new movement, new life. As eternal nature as a whole attracts the spirit of eternity, so each subordinated potency attracts the one next above it.

At the outset, therefore, the lowest potency seeks naturally to attract its higher potency to itself; for the beginning of movement is necessarily in it, as the most deeply degraded potency.

But as the entrance of longing in eternal nature was the first beginning of the inner separation, so the longing to be one with its higher now becomes the impulse of a similar crisis for nature lowered to the first degree. This nature, too, expands [*276*] longingly in all its powers, and what previously slumbered, awakens to individual life.

For even the nature now posited as the beginning, although originally only one potency of the divine life, is nevertheless in itself a complete essence and equivalent to the whole (eternal nature). It is not a part of the divine substance, but in it there dwells the whole godhead, in so far as the latter first contains itself, confines itself within and outwardly denies itself. A divine unity, although hidden and still, originally lay at the basis of the antithesis (A and B) which is in nature. The negating power in it is what precedes and consequently stands as the first potency. The essence (A), which is inwardly posited by it, is what follows, and hence is the second potency. But what is innermost of all in this nature, the true essence, was neither the first nor the second potency, but the secret bond, the hidden power of this nature's unitary being, what is A^3 in it.

If we may now consider the essence which hovers above nature and the spirit world as universal soul, as the artistic wisdom dwelling in the whole, then it naturally follows that that most hidden part of nature, because akin to that universal soul, is also itself a soul-like essence, and that something similar to that artistic wisdom (*pars divinae mentis*) also originally and properly inhabits the lowest potency. Who could doubt this, who ever observes how completely nature works from the inside out, like the most deliberate artist, only different in that here the material is not outside of the artist, but grown inwardly one with him? Who could doubt, who notices how, even before nature develops the real soul, each shape and form in so-called dead matter is an impression of inner reason ["Verstand"] and knowledge? Who could not recognize the inde-

pendent soul, who has seen the art, inwardly bound, yet at the same time free, indeed arbitrarily at play, in the great scale of organic beings, yes, even in the gradual development of individual parts? To be sure, nature necessarily needs an external aid, inasmuch as it [277] produces its wonders only as it is itself an organic member of a higher whole. But exclusive of this help, which only serves to liberate it, nature derives everything from itself and can be explained purely and completely by itself alone.

Now just this very innermost, soul-like essence is that by which nature is capable of immediate relationship to its higher. Generally everything higher is the prototype of the lower, or, to say the same in popular terms, its heaven. But to participate in this higher, the lower must first develop the germ enclosed within it. When the lower brings to its higher what in the lower is heavenly and similar to the higher, then it attracts this higher as by irresistible magic, and an immediate relation, an inner blending, arises.

But just this heavenly, soul-like essence, which was previously concealed and slumbered, awakens in nature for the first time with that crisis which enters nature. It is the same result of which we become aware as often as a higher unity, to which different powers were subject, frees itself. Remarkably enough, and as though driven by divination, the first observers of mesmeric sleep denoted the entrance of the latter as a crisis.[33] But

[33] Mesmeric sleep ["der magnetische Schlaf"] or hypnosis was named after Franz Anton Mesmer (1733–1815), who, in 1775, began his experiments which led to the subsequent discovery of this phenomenon. After trying, without success, to persuade the scientific world to investigate his experiments and being rejected as a fraud by scientific academies throughout Europe, Mesmer, at the age of eighty, was finally invited to come to the Berlin Academy in 1812.

The phenomenon of induced sleep and the access which it offered to the unconscious level of man's mental life gradually captured the imagination of literary and philosophical writers in Germany after the French Revolution. (Cf. Stefan Zweig, *Mental Healers*, New York, 1932, pp. 79 f., 91 f.) Schelling was one of many interested in it; doubtless the rising fortunes of mesmerism in Berlin in 1812 heightened his expectations as to what might come from the thorough investigation of this phenomenon. He again mentions mesmeric sleep in his later lectures on mythology (*S.W.*, II, 2:574).

Throughout *The Ages of the World* Schelling's interpretations of

every sleep is a crisis in the sense in which we previously used the word. Consequently, just as that mental life which dwells in the subordinated organs (especially in the ganglion system) first arises when sleep enters, and awakens from the depths in which it had till then been sunk by the general and higher mental life, so nature, liberated and established in its own potency, develops now for the first time that soul-like substance hidden in it, by virtue of which nature is a self-sufficient and self-creating being. As the stars of night only appear when the great star of day has gone out, so the subordinated organs enter the scene of life only when the universal life, to which they belonged and before which they were speechless, has set.

Thus it is essential that a peculiar source of self-movement, independent of the highest godhead, remain to eternal nature and to each of its organs. [*278*] As liberation in eternal nature depends on the soul having been raised above everything (being really posited as the highest potency), so the crisis of external nature can only consist in this, that that soul which lives in nature, and is related to the universal soul, subordinates all the other powers to itself and is really brought to the highest place. But the soul is aware of itself only as the soul of the subordinated potency, the potency of the beginning which is destined to remain eternally. And, awakened from inactivity, the soul does not hate the enclosing power, but loves this confinement in which alone it becomes aware of itself, and which furnishes it with the material and, as it were, the means by which alone it can arise. Consequently, the soul surely does not want to annul the negating power, either in general or as what precedes it. On the contrary, the soul demands and confirms this power, and wants explicitly to arise and become visible in it alone, so that the soul, even when developed to the

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psychic crisis, the unconscious basis of consciousness, the levels of dream life, symbolization, the feelings of fear, vexation and dread, the love and death impulses, conscience, etc., unavoidably remind one of the work of Sigmund Freud. Both received an initial stimulus from Mesmer's work—Schelling immediately, Freud later through J. M. Charcot. A curious, if not important likeness, might even be traced between Schelling's use of the three potencies in psychic life and Freud's threefold description of personality in terms of the id, the ego and the superego.

utmost, may still be encompassed and held by it as by a vessel.

Therefore the soul does not wish suddenly and, as it were, with one blow, to conquer the negating power. Rather does its artistic desire now begin, since it finds pleasure in gently, gradually overcoming the opponent, and finally with deliberation, without offense to the power containing and, as it were, nourishing it, the soul delights in subordinating all powers through a gradual progression, thus disclosing its own mother, in whom it was first conceived and fostered, as a universally animated being.

The innermost of all, the soul, however, can become manifest only in the degree to which the self-opposing powers are brought into mutual freedom and independence, or into a living, mobile antithesis. For this reason, the soul begins with an awakening of that inner division which penetrates all nature. Undifferentiation of the powers covers up the essence; differentiation lets it appear. Naturally, however, there is still the greatest indecision in the beginning, since the darkening essence, the negating power, still covers up what is within, until discreet art has first brought it into equilibrium with the spiritual, and finally begins to subordinate it to the latter and thus gradually to make it altogether subservient, raising the spiritual completely, |279| so that finally, conquering over all powers, it steps forth as the true essence and heaven of nature itself.

But the separation of powers can never become a complete one, because the limit is to be saved, the first negation and confinement retained. Because a certain unity always remains, a view of unity arises in the separation, a view which can become evident to what is higher (the A^2) by virtue of its kinship to it, and which thus appears as the circumscribed, the bounded, the spiritual image, as it were, of a creature.

Therefore nothing limitless can ever appear in this progressively ascending formation. Even in its highest liberation, the spirit, like the creative soul, is still contained and enclosed in a determined unity or form which becomes evident by the spirit, just as the spirit becomes evident by the unity. Consequently in this manner the whole course of nature, liberating itself

from inside out and striving toward light and consciousness, is marked by definite formation, just so many children of its desire. Each formation is only the exterior of the artist grown one with her material, and shows to what degree of liberation the innermost of all has attained. And in this way the art of creation, always ascending, passes through the entire scale of future creatures until it attains that foremost of all creatures, once to be the mediator between it and the spirit world—until it comes, that is, to the fair human form in which that heavenly germ at last completely develops, where the highest potency is placed above all, and where creation's artistry just on that account celebrates the victory of its liberation.

But the soul, awaking from the depths of unconsciousness, does not complete its gradual passage without higher guidance. For already in its first awakening it is struck by the dim premonition that its real model is in the world of spirits, and the more it prospers, the more clearly it sees into that which is above it (into A^2), and discerns all the possibilities contained in it, possibilities which the soul, as an artist who is one with her material, seeks immediately to express and incarnate. For the prototype of everything which becomes real in something subordinate [*280*] is in that which is next higher. And, vice versa, what in something higher is only prototypic, is real and ectypal in that which is subordinate.

But in the degree to which the soul realizes in itself what was in the higher merely as possibility—in this degree the soul as by magic draws to itself this higher (A^2). For this is the nature of all that is a prototype, to be drawn by a natural and irresistible inclination toward its ectype. But, further, while the higher (A^2) is drawn toward nature, it is drawn away in the same proportion from its higher (the A^3). Herewith the indifference in conjunction is annulled. For as the middle is led away from the uppermost and toward the lowest, the higher for the first time discerns in that middle what is immediate subject (basis, substratum) for it. Only now does that which is drawn away become projection or objectification ["Vor- oder Gegenwurf"] in which the higher can behold itself and in which it has sight.

But those forms, which arise from the subordinated matter, reach up into or illuminate the middle (A^2) because of their relationship. For just these forms are the magic whereby the middle is attracted. Since at the same time the middle in this attraction becomes object ["Gegenwurf"] for the highest (A^3), and the latter is completely one with the godhead (is but the godhead's subject turned toward the outer world), it is clear how the forms arising from below become evident through the middle even to the highest (A^3), and through the latter to the godhead, which is still concealed.

In this state, consequently, everything which was to become real in nature passed before the eye of the eternal, and he saw as at a glance, or in a vision, the entire scale of future formations, up to that creature which, alone of all natural beings, was eventually to be capable of immediate relation to him.

But all these forms and formations have by themselves no reality. For nature itself, from which they arise, has returned into potentiality in comparison to the godhead, which alone truly is; [*281*] *it has returned into the relation of what relatively is not, and also keeps this state voluntarily* (not to mention that the separateness of A^2 is only potential). *To be sure, this entire life is not therefore absolutely and completely void. But, in comparison with the godhead, it is like a nothing, a mere play which does not claim reality.* This life stops in mere figurativeness. And, in comparison with the godhead, those forms are only like dreams or visions which could indeed become real if God called them into being. But that will is still turned inward upon itself, still indifferent toward being, and takes no interest in the latter.

Therefore when that life ascending from below has reached the top, but the last link in which it is completed is not closed nor raised from nonbeing, that life sinks back into itself again, into its own nothing. But it does this only to rise again and again and, in untiring, inexhaustible desire, to show to the next higher, and indirectly to the highest spirit, as in a mirror or vision, what is once, when the time is ripe, at the pleasure of what is highest, to become real in this external world.

It is self-evident that the general condition of nature cannot

be a fixed and static one during this occurrence, but only an eternal becoming, a continual development. Yet this development has its goal, and for nature this goal is that it attain a perfect spiritual-corporeal status. But although nature can only attain its highest unfolding in the last degree of development, nevertheless in each moment of the same, it is, within and in itself, not a corporeal but a spiritual-corporeal nature which, although subsiding and completely giving itself up to the higher (A^2), and thus becoming material, matter in relation to the higher, is yet a matter which is like pure spirit and life with respect to present matter.* In the progress [*282*] itself, since the negating power (really the only incarnating power) becomes ever more subjected to the spiritual, and the inner heavenly germ becomes more and more visibly developed, nature unfolds itself more and more into a substance which is not merely corporeal and not merely spiritual but is between the two, into the moderated light-essence ["Lichtwesen"] in which the harsh, darkening power, conquered by the mildness of the other and absorbed in light, only serves to give measure and fixity to the essence which in itself is intangible. And in return the essence's light, which in itself is irresistible, is softened until it may be endured. This seems to be the meaning of that glorious radiancy, which, according to the expressions of Scripture [34] and the unanimous conception of all peoples, is the outermost aura of the invisible godhead.

That the present constitution of corporeal matter is not an original one, is evidenced by facts in the evolution of nature itself, as by phenomena of the inner formation of individual bodies which are inexplicable under the presupposition of the now commonly assumed quality of impenetrability. It is evidenced also by the persistent ability of matter to be brought to a state (as in the well-known but not at all sufficiently considered

* Consequently, relatively spiritual in contrast to the ponderable, impenetrable, inert matter, but not, however, spiritual, therefore not πνευματικόν. (It is not πνεῦμα. This it becomes only in actuality. It is only ψυχή.)

[34] E. g., Exod. 24:16–18; 40:34–38.

electrochemical experiments) [35] where it disappears with respect to all bodily qualities. Even he who is satisfied with the so-called construction of matter merely out of forces, must recognize that the inner essence of all matter is spiritual in the broad sense, since forces are undeniably something spiritual, inasmuch as they are noncorporeal; that, consequently, the character of present matter is not explicable by means of those inner spiritual forces merely by themselves. But how it happened that that contracting, darkening essence, which was conquered right at the outset, again arose, is a question whose answer belongs to the further course of this narrative. Let it suffice that matter is still conquerable, that even now it shows the ability to approach that primordial condition and perhaps to become completely transplanted into it once again, although this must naturally happen by a much more complicated and slower process.

[*283*] If we consider the wonderful changes to which matter is subjected in the organic world, up to the human eye, out of which shine mind, intelligence ["Verstand"], and will in a way which is inconceivable and yet perceptible to the senses, then it is indeed permissible to consider all matter as mere appearance, namely, as only a displaced image of the essence really lying at the basis, and all bodies only as clothes or disguises which hide that inner point of transfiguration from us. Without the presence of this latter, transition from inorganic nature into organic nature would be inconceivable; and, moreover, this point of transfiguration often lies almost sensuously perceptible in the most corporeal things.

Whoever has to some extent trained his eye for the spiritual contemplation of natural things, knows that a spiritual image, whose mere vessel (medium of appearance) is the coarse, the ponderable, is really the life in the latter. The purer this image,

[35] The electrochemical experiments ["Ueberführungsversuchen"] referred to by Schelling doubtless are those of Sir Humphry Davy (1778–1829), English chemist, whose epoch-making electrolysis experiments became known after 1807. Schelling again mentioned Davy with respect as well as with surprise that his electrochemical experiments were not better known (*S.W.*, I, 9:440).

the healthier the whole. Always ready to overflow and yet again always restrained, this intangible but not therefore unnoticeable essence, which alone gives to all things the full charm, splendor, and appearance of life, is at once what is most evident and most concealed. Because this essence appears only in a continual mutability, it attracts [attention] all the more as a glimpse of the real essence which lies hidden in all things of this world, and which only awaits its liberation. Among the most corporeal things, metals, whose peculiar luster always enchanted men, were chiefly considered as individual points where the light of this essence shone out of dark matter. A universal instinct divined its proximity in gold, which seemed most akin to a being which is spiritual as well as corporeal, because of its more passive qualities—the almost infinite malleability, softness, and fleshlike tenderness which gold combines with the greatest indestructibility. By one of those seemingly accidental associations which we often have an opportunity to notice, gold was even used to designate the earliest age of the world, when the glory of nature still remained.

[*284*] But this essence approaches liberation especially in organic nature. It is the oil by which the green of plants is fed, the balsam of life from which health has its origin. It is discernible in the transparence of the flesh and of the eyes, in that undeniably physical effluence whereby the presence of the pure, the healthy, the charming, beneficently liberates us, indeed, unquestionably even in what is ineffable, which overflows as gracefulness into transfigured corporeality, and by which the barbarian, too, is involuntarily moved. Thus the joyful astonishment into which perfect beauty transports cultured people has its main basis perhaps in the feeling that beauty presents us visibly with matter in its divine and, to a certain extent, its primordial condition. Indeed, as if it were the object of original love, this essence still draws love to itself as in primordial times, and, because it always just shows itself, but is never to be apprehended nor possessed, it is the goal of an inclination which is always active but never satiated.

The intercourse between the corporeal and the spiritual, upon which human wit has so often been exercised, is and re-

mains explicable only by the assumption that one and the same substance on the one side, namely, the lower, assumes corporeal properties, but above or on the side turned to the spirit, passes into a spiritual being. All other systems, however ingeniously conceived, allow the thorn of doubt to remain. The only notion conformable to natural thought is that despised idea of so-called *influxus physicus*, which of course had to be deserted as soon as matter and spirit were placed in that fatal (incurable) Cartesian dualism.

The whole life process depends on this double-sidedness of what we call matter, whose inner side, averted from our senses, we indeed divine but do not discern. From the corporeal itself there continually arises an image or inner spirit of life which is embodied again and again by a reverse process.

The belief in the general ability of matter [*285*] to be raised again to spiritual properties has maintained itself through all ages with a constancy which alone would let us infer its deep basis, and is so entwined with the dearest and ultimate hopes of man that it probably can never be destroyed. The usual concept of alchemy must be left to the rabble. But what happens in the digestion and assimilation of food, when from the most different substances the same thing is always prepared throughout, and when each part [of the body] attracts just what is suitable to it? What happens in the first formation of the foetus? Everything that goes on around us is, if you will, a continual alchemy. Indeed, every inner process is an alchemy when beauty, truth, or goodness, freed from adhering darkness or impurity, appear in their purity. (The alchemist, of course, begins again *from below—a prima materia,* which he would like to conduct *ad ultimam.*) [36] Those who understood what they sought did not seek gold but, as it were, the gold of gold, or what makes gold into gold, that is, something far more general. If matter had been brought to coagulation by an external effect, as milk is by sour rennet, then there must be a potency opposed to this whereby, if it were in the hand of man, the effect

[36] Schelling later discussed the three superstitions—magic, alchemy, and the attempt to lengthen life—as man's attempt to reinstate his primordial or essential relation to nature (*S.W.*, II, 3:361 f.).

of that coagulating power could either be annulled or to a certain degree overcome. Now if all matter is one with respect to inner essence, and the diversity between corporeal things of the same grade depends only on more or less concealment of that original essence, then it would surely be possible to transform the less precious into the more precious, by gradual overcoming of the darkening potency, although this would only be a very subordinate application of a far more general possibility. And, in any case, the assertion of this thought is no approbation of the actual experiment. For the realm of the idea is unlimited. But what in itself may be possible and what relatively feasible, what may further be advisable or in other respects reasonable—these are quite different questions.

[*286*] Many have always longed to penetrate this silent realm of the past prior to the world, in order really to get behind the great process in which they as members in part participate and which they partly undergo. But most have lacked proper humility and self-denial, since they wanted to take hold of everything at once with the highest concepts. And if anything even now hinders the reader's entrance into this past age, it is just that hasty disposition which prefers right at the outset to dazzle with spiritual concepts and forms of speech, rather than to descend to the natural beginnings of life.

What is there, moreover, in corporeality that offends spiritual arrogance, which regards it as of such mean descent? In the end it is after all only the humility and external lowliness of corporeality which so offends. But just what is lowly is highly esteemed in the eyes of him according to whose judgment alone the worth and worthlessness of things is determined. And just that [corporeal] imperturbability shows perhaps that something of the properties of that primal matter is still inherent in corporeality, of that matter which is outwardly passive but in itself is spirit and life.

It is not difficult to observe that the main fault of all modern philosophy lies in the lack of mediary concepts, so that, for example, all that *is* not, is nothing, all that is not in the highest sense spiritual is material in the crudest sense, all that is not morally free is mechanical, all that is not intelligent is senseless.

These mediary concepts are, however, just the most important, indeed, the only really explanatory ones in all science. Therefore whoever wants to think according to the (misunderstood) basic principle of contradiction, may be clever enough, like the sophists, to dispute for and against everything; but to find the truth, which does not lie in excessive extremes, he is totally unskilled.

But in that nature attracts the essence of the spirit world and thus pulls it away from its higher, nature also awakens in it a longing to be one with and to attract its higher. By this, consequently, that [attracting] movement, proceeding (as always) from nature, finally spreads into what is highest.

[*287*] That the same creative powers lie in the essence of the spirit world which lie in nature hardly requires any proof after the previous explanations. In that essence, too, there is an inner duality which therefore has a basic hidden unity, which must come forth and become evident in the degree to which the self-opposing powers separate and enter active antithesis. The longing to attract what is higher (A^3) becomes the ground of development and expansion of powers in the essence, too. Not the affirming principle, however, but the negating power is the enclosed and hidden power in it. Therefore it is not the outflowing and self-communicating essence which is here freed from limitation. On the contrary, here it is that hidden power of darkness which is called forth from the innermost depths and gradually set into operation. Not that this power transcends the affirming principle—but [it operates] in such a way that, even when most efficient, the power of selfhood and of darkness is nevertheless encircled by light and love. For just as in the highest development of external nature the negating principle always remains what is external and enveloping, while the spiritual principle, even when liberated to the highest degree, remains enclosed by the negating principle, so also, in the development of the spirit world (which is only a higher nature), the negating principle is surely to be awakened from its ineffectiveness, but is still in its effectiveness to remain within and submissive to the gentle light-essence. The whole creation aims at the raising of the Yes over the No. But, as in nature the

negating is subject to the affirming principle by remaining an external one, so in the spirit world the negating is subject to the affirming principle by remaining an inner one. Here the affirming principle, too, becomes enhanced. But because it is already free in itself, it is only indirectly or mediately enhanced, in that its antithesis is called forth.

This difference has the most important consequences for the entire history of nature and of the spirit world. Much that is mysterious in their relationship and difference only becomes clear in that the former has arisen by the elevation of light, the latter by the awakening of darkness. And here it is already evident that [*288*] a higher degree of freedom is demanded in beings of the last kind than in beings of the first.

But again this development of the darkening power out of its entire depth and obscurity could not happen suddenly, but only gradually. Yet because here, too, a certain unity always remained, there could likewise be only certain forms or patterns through which the creative power ran. These forms or patterns were by their nature spirits, as would already be made clear by the old explanation that everything which has its limitation (negating power) external to it, is corporeal or a body, but everything which has its limitation (the power of its subsistence) within or in itself, is a spirit.

Here, too, the creative power can ascend only from the lower to the higher, until it gradually has raised up the very innermost and most hidden power of darkness from the depths. Such [powers] are then the purest, keenest, and most godlike spirits.

For as much as the spirit world is closer to the godhead than nature is, so much does that which is the highest (A^3) in the spirit world surpass in purity the highest in nature, and so much more is the highest in the spirit world like that soul (the absolute A^3) which hovers over the whole. The spirit world stands to this absolute A^3 as nature stands to the spirit world.

Consequently, as the spirit world is the prototype of nature, and all things of this external world are copies of that which nature has seen in the inner world, thus again that universal

soul is the immediate prototype of the soul creating in the spirit world. And what is produced in the latter is only the ectype or reality of what lay in the universal soul as prototype or possibility.

But in that this higher nature actualizes the thoughts of the universal soul, it irresistibly attracts the latter. And thus this entire movement is nothing but a universal magic which extends to what is highest.

For, as that universal soul is drawn toward the lower, it is, in like degree, drawn away from the very highest with which it was previously completely united (as its immediate, external subject). [*289*] But, by just this attraction and withdrawal, that universal soul becomes for the spirit of eternity a projection or objectification (object) in which that spirit can see everything. And since those spiritual forms arise in the universal soul as images or visions, the spirit of eternity must also see them in the universal soul, as in a mirror where, as it were, the most hidden thoughts of the spirit's own subject become evident to it.

The visions of these innermost thoughts of God are thus the visions of the future spirits which are destined for creation along with natural creatures. And thus in this free play of eternal nature, disporting with itself, as it were, the eternal saw first everything which was once to become real in nature, and then what was to become real in the spirit world. So eternal nature showed him the way on which he could lead her, when it should please her, from darkness into light again, from baseness to glory. But everything passed before the eye of the eternal only as a glimpse or vision—as a glimpse, because everything only momentarily appeared, as it were, in this delicate medium, as a vision, because it all had no reality in comparison with him, but vanished again in becoming, and there was nothing which remained, nothing which was fixed, but everything was in incessant formation. For this life, which in itself is only dream and shadow, still lacked divine empowering.

The word idea, which came to us from the Greeks, really means, according to its original signification, nothing more than

our German word *Gesicht* [vision], and of course with both meanings, since it signifies the glimpse as well as what passes by in the glimpse.

The doctrine of these divine ideas or visions before the beginning of the world is lost, with respect to its origin, in the deepest night of antiquity. When it first appears, this teaching is already only a fragment of a great doctrine belonging to the early-lost true history of the world. The Greeks already know it only as tradition, and even Plato is to be considered only as an interpreter of this doctrine.[37] After the original meaning had been early lost, the ideas or visions were understood in part too supernaturalistically, in part much too vulgarly. They would have been conceived more vitally long ago, if, instead of supporting them on general grounds of reason, |*290*| the natural course (physical process) of their production had been sought.

The origin of such prototypes or visions is a necessary moment in the great development of life. And although these prototypes or visions are not to be considered as physical substances, yet they are certainly not to be conceived as being without something physical, nor like empty class concepts, nor like forms which are ready made, without movement and, as it were, static. For they are ideas just in that they are something eternally becoming and in incessant movement and generation.

The generation of such prototypes is a necessary moment. But they neither vanish after this moment nor remain. But the moment itself remains eternally, because each succeeding one retains or comprehends in itself the preceding one. And thus these prototypes gush forth from within creative nature, forever just as fresh and living as aforetime. Even now nature appears as thoroughly visionary, and it must be so, because in what precedes it already looks at what is future. Without this property, that which is undeniably purposeful in the individual and the whole, nature's general and special technique, would be completely incomprehensible.

[37] Schelling later repeated this equation of idea and vision (*S.W.*, II, 3:293 f.).

Indeed, nature has reserved to itself the continual renewal of that moment in the present, and, to be sure, by the simplest devices, since nature in woman attracts the spirit of man, the latter, again, attracts the universal world-spirit. And so also here that leading connection and chain of mutually independent links is provided, whereby what is last becomes capable of working in what is first, and what is highest in what is lowest. For no being can begin its course of being ["Dasein"] without immediate divine empowering. Each new life begins a new self-subsistent time which is linked immediately to eternity. Therefore an eternity immediately precedes each life, and, as in the original generation, so also in the temporal one, everything external is only a part or link of a chain which extends up to what is highest.

The return of that moment in generation would become credible even through the external appearances, which are those of a decisive [*291*] crisis (in that sense of the word assumed by us), wherein each principle is again liberated, and where, with the dissolution of the external bond which subdues and rules men, the voluptuous inner development of all powers begins. Hence the similarity to death and mesmeric sleep. We venture to link a matter open to the greatest profanation with a high and holy situation. But the most terrible distortion of a great natural arrangement must not prevent its primal significance from being recognized. On the contrary, if ethics does not wish to recognize, in the operations of natural impulses which it subjects to a higher law, something also holy in itself, it will always miss its purpose. For what in itself is something unholy, completely vile and contemptible, will also be something indifferent in the eyes of most people. But a matter of which it is known that it meshes in the wheels of the universe, indeed, in its innermost and highest relations, in itself commands holy awe.

Everything divine is human, and everything human divine. This phrase of the ancient Hippocrates, taken from the depths of life, was and still is the key to the greatest discoveries in the realm of God and nature. For this reason we tried to consider

the last-mentioned phenomenon particularly in the present connection (unquestionably in the highest connection of which it is capable).

It has become self-evident that that entire situation, inwardly most full of life, depends on the mutual freedom and independence of the links which at the same time form a continual series from the lowest up into the highest, similar to that ladder which one of the patriarchs in a dream saw reaching from heaven to earth.[38] If the potency of the beginning were not free with respect to the higher potency, then it could not exercise any attracting effect on the higher, nor hold before it, as in a mirror, the possibilities contained in it. If the middle potency, again, could not be withdrawn from the highest, then it would be impossible for it to become for this highest potency a projection and objectification in which it discerned its own innermost thoughts. If that pure spirit, the [*292*] real self and highest ego of the whole essence, had grown together with the latter and were not free with respect to eternal being, then the latter could not become the mirror in which the spirit sees the wonders of the future world. This life of vision, this inner clarity, would immediately be annulled if that mutual freedom of the members were annulled.

Two different, and in a certain respect opposed, states are to be distinguished in human life. The man who is awake and the sleeping man are inwardly quite the same person. None of the inner powers which operate in wakefulness is lost in sleep. From this it is clear that it is not a potency lying in the interior of the organism, but one which is external in respect to this whose presence or absence determines the alternation of those states. All the powers of man are evidently ruled during wakefulness by a unity holding them together, by something which simultaneously expresses them all (or is their exponent), as it were. But if this bond is loosened (however that may happen), then each power returns into itself, each instrument now seems free to operate for itself and in its own world. A spontaneous sympathy takes the place of the exterior, binding unity. And while the whole is outwardly as if dead and

[38] Jacob's ladder. Cf. Gen. 28:10 f.

ineffective, the freest play and intercourse of powers seem to develop within.

If now in the usual course of life the effect of that external potency ceases and returns in regular alternation, in extraordinary circumstances an unusual suspension of the external bond appears possible, indeed, the power is lent to one man to act upon another, unfettering, liberating him. It is probable that what liberates the subordinated nature becomes its higher (A^2), with respect to which nature sinks. A relation which was in the beginning only weak and undecided, develops more and more as the state is continued. For here, too, the effect is reciprocal. In the degree to which the one sinks (to A = B), the other is raised by it to A^2. Only this can be the reason for that [*293*] altogether peculiar weakening which is harmful with prolonged practice, a weakening which he who causes this [mesmeric] sleep experiences. The development of visionary talent in general, and of a relation to the spirit world, which has appeared in several who have long practiced this therapy, agrees with the same explanation.

Now as soon as this relation is well developed, that separation (crisis) and liberation of all powers, that deformation (disorganization), as the first discoverers with correct instinct called it, occurs in the subordinated nature.

If now each organic and human being is subject to pain, in the physical as in the psychical sense, only under the rule of that exponent of the external life, then it is indeed understandable how, with the suspension of the latter, the complete painlessness and that rapturous feeling arise by which the crisis just mentioned is accompanied, and how the sudden and momentary suspension of this exponent overwhelms one with the highest delight.

The external appearance of this crisis is sleep, of whose nature we would probably never have obtained sufficient knowledge without those [mesmeric] experiences. For many reasons, it seems to me as if the so-called mesmeric sleep has been distinguished much too sharply from ordinary sleep. For since we know only little or almost nothing about the inner events in ordinary sleep, so, too, we cannot know whether they are

not quite similar and like those in mesmeric sleep, of which likewise no recollection passes over into wakefulness, and of which we would have little or no knowledge without the special relation of the sleeper to the person who causes the sleep.

As is well known, the inner events of mesmeric sleep are not always the same. There are gradations of that inner life of which we see, as a rule, only the lowest, more rarely the middle, probably never the third [level]. If we were to undertake to specify the possible rungs of this ladder, then it would be approximately as follows.

The lowest rung would be that where the crisis occurs, where the material of human nature is set free. Here the [*294*] indwelling soul of matter, the soul which is ordinarily bound by the higher life and which forms and cures everything, can develop itself freely. Here there can enter the free intercourse between this soul and what is higher, that spiritual essence, the general medicine of nature and the cause of all health, the tincture whereby harsh nature is always softened. Each subordinated nature, whose guiding connection with its higher [life] is interrupted, is sick. But just this guidance is always restored, at least temporarily, by mesmeric sleep. Suppose that what has been unnaturally enhanced sinks into deeper sleep by this magic, is returned into its potency (therefore also into potentiality with respect to what is higher), or else that life, weakened and restrained unduly by what is higher, becomes momentarily free and breathes again—in both cases the healing power of that sleep would depend on the restoration of interrupted control between what is higher and what is lower.

The second degree would be that [level] where the spiritual in man becomes free with respect to the soul and attracts the latter in order to show to it as in a mirror the hidden facts of the soul's interior and what lies still enveloped in the soul itself (as belonging to what is future and eternal in man). This gradation would unquestionably be the highest one known of mesmeric sleep, namely, the stage where he who is placed in the crisis, quite dead to everything external, is completely cut off

from the world of sense, and where just on that account, too, the signs of a higher relation appear.

Finally we would have to seek the third gradation in conditions which lie completely outside the ordinary human ones, and about which it is better to be silent than to talk in the present connection.

But if gradations of mesmeric sleep occur, and if, on the other hand, even in ordinary sleep degrees of depth and inwardness are distinguished, then it is impossible to know to what levels of mesmeric sleep even ordinary sleep rises.

The ancients already distinguished two kinds of dreams, of which only one was considered by them as being God-sent. But different as dreams may be with respect to persons and circumstances, |295| it is certain that dreams of higher degrees of inwardness would be just like visions of mesmeric sleep of which no recollection remains to the awakened person. That dreams are a continual (constant) phenomenon of sleep, but that we do not remember most of them, is to be more surely assumed since we know, that of many dreams, only the general recollection of their having been present remains to us and that others are preserved only in the moment of waking (often not remaining even then). But it is probable that the more external dreams are often reflections of deeper, more inward ones, and that these, even if troubled and confused by the medium through which they pass, nevertheless reach us.

If one also wanted to follow up here a retrospective application to something earlier, then one could consider as a possibility that, with regard to other things, a power belongs to man similar to that which he has toward his fellow-being. If he could again liberate the interior of corporeal things, then only would he bring forth that true and real crisis, which our chemistry still strives in vain to effect, and would introduce a series of completely different phenomena than those of ordinary experimentation.

Yet we hardly dared touch these great secrets so superficially, since all the specified phenomena are in all ways so much connected, and extend into such different ramifications. If we

succeed some day in continuing this history up to the time and to the manifold conditions in and under which human life subsists, surely we will then find much in our thoughts still to expand and correct, or to represent in a higher light.[39]

Let only one question therefore still be permitted, whereby the basic idea may attain greater clarity. Why do all higher doctrines call so unanimously to man to separate himself from himself, and give him to understand that he would thereby be capable of everything and would be effective in all things—why otherwise than because he thereby [*296*] alone establishes in himself that Jacob's ladder of heavenly powers? Self-centeredness ["In-sich-gesetzt-sein"] hinders man. Ecstasy ["Ausser-sich-gesetzt-werden"], as our language splendidly designates it, helps him. And thus we see, to dwell now only upon spiritual results, how inner freedom and independence of the mental powers also condition all spiritual creation and how repressed people, in the degree that they are so, become more and more unfit for spiritual production. And only he who knows how to preserve for himself that divine duality in unity, and unity in duality, also participates in that playful delight and sure freedom of creation which mutually demand and condition one another.

The Orientals have indeed recognized that playful delight in the original life of God. They expressively call it wisdom, representing this as a radiance of eternal light, a spotless mirror of divine power and (because of the passive properties) an image of God's goodness. It is surprising how they everywhere ascribe a more passive than active nature to this essence, wherefore they do not call it spirit, nor word (or logos), with which *wisdom* later was often, but incorrectly, confounded. And they give a feminine name to it—meaning by all this that, compared to the higher, this essence is only a passive, receptive essence.

In that book which is accounted divine, and which is truly divine, which introduces wisdom as speaking,* wisdom is compared to a *child.* For, as a child is to be called selfless when—

* Prov. 8.

[39] That history is, in part, contained in Schelling's philosophy of mythology and philosophy of revelation. Cf. Introduction, Chapter III.

in earliest youth, to be sure—all inward powers mutually excite each other in natural operation and sweet interplay, but still no will, no character, no unity holding them together and ruling them appears, so is that first exterior [aspect] of God in itself a merely passive, unexpressed unity, and without will. Therefore even that creating or generating of images is only play or delight.

[297] Wisdom *played*—not on earth, for this was not yet, but—on *God's* earth, on what is basis and ground *to him.* But wisdom's paramount delight was, already in this early age, that creature, which, being the first bond between nature and spirit world, really mediated the transmission of the attracting movement up into what is highest. Man is really the connection point of the entire universe, and one can thus far indeed say that really everything was envisaged in him.

It would be superfluous to recall that in the former passage wisdom is understood to mean that universal soul (A^8) which, inherent in nature and the spirit world, and, again, hovering above both, is the leading chain of general sensibility between what is uppermost and what is lowest.[40] Consequently, in so early an age, this universal soul played before what is highest, as in a youthful dream of the golden future, what would some day be. Yet, as the times of innocence do not tarry, as the games of childhood, in which later life previsages itself, are fleeting, so, too, that blessed dream of the gods could not last. All life that is merely in germ, is in itself full of longing, and yearns to be raised from mute, ineffective unity into an expressed, effective one. Thus we see all nature full of longing, thus earth fervently sucks the power of heaven into itself, thus the seed

[40] Wisdom, for Schelling, has the Baconian character of power, but its power lies in the fact that it is the beginning of all that comes to be. The signification "child" merely expresses its primordial eternality; wisdom is not God, but is the possibility for him of all else that can be. When the power of wisdom enters human consciousness, it represents the possibility of knowing all that is, hence of knowing the essential nature or beginning in God. Thus wisdom, the science of all being, lies at the basis of consciousness, and man has, indeed, a co-knowledge of creation. Schelling thus calls the power of speculation "wisdom"; wisdom stands for the pure, free process of creativity which prefigures the existential process of creativity. Cf. *S.W.*, I, 9:223 f.; II, 3:295 f.

strives toward light and air in order to find a spirit for itself, thus flowers wave in the sunlight in order to reflect the sunshine as fiery spirit, as color. Just that disporting life, therefore, calls to the invisible, and the higher it develops itself the more inwardly it calls, so that the invisible may take its part, attract, and discern it as its own. And the wisdom which ascends and descends the chain of beings, like a musical scale, complains forlornly about the fate of its creatures and that the children of its desire do not remain but are in a perpetual struggle and vanish again in the struggle.

This movement of eternal nature, continually repeated and forever beginning again, may thus be considered as an incessant theurgy. The meaning and purpose of all theurgies is nothing else than to draw down the godhead toward what is lower (*coelo deducere numen*), [*298*] and to establish the leading chain, as it were, whereby it could operate in nature.

We have already seen how the movement arising from below communicates itself to the soul of the whole (A^3), as the middle (A^2) draws it toward itself and thus away from what is highest. Unquestionably it is only when that which is the immediate being of the pure godhead is withdrawn from the latter, that the godhead feels this being as such—just as we have what seems inseparably one with us, as if we did not have it, but when it is taken from us, then for the first time are we sensible of it as ours. It does not follow from this, however, that the godhead is thereby induced or at all compelled to manifest itself or to draw being to itself. If this were so, the godhead would not be eternal freedom.*

* The following words are on the margin here as a note for the purpose of further elaboration: "Here by all means belongs an explanation of *Sein* [being], *Dasein* [being or presence], *Existenz* [existence]." Moreover, several similar notes are to be found in the manuscript. Ed.

The marginal note quoted here by K. F. A. Schelling needs explanation, for in connection with *The Ages of the World* it is advisable to keep the following distinctions in mind. Schelling had early distinguished between "what is present" (i.e., is in space and time) and "what is" (i.e., is independent of all temporal determination). Cf. *S.W.*, I, 1:309; 2:376. "Being" and "what is" continue to be used for eternal relations; "presence" and "what is present" usually indicate the apparent relations of finite existence, the character of whose appearance to man (i.e., the character of objectivity, of "being *there*") he himself has incurred by

Up to now the natureless godhead was considered as will which does not will. And it could always be considered thus, since in any case it acted as such in relation to being. But just *because* it is this highest purity, and without suspension of the latter, it acted toward something else (toward being) necessarily in an opposite way. To make this clear is therefore the next requirement.

There is no becoming in the pure godhead. The latter remains what it is in itself. But, just in so remaining, it is necessarily of two kinds with respect to external being. For in so far as the godhead is neither what in itself is nor is not, by its essence, its very nature, it negates all external being. To be sure, it does this at first only tacitly; but if such a being is added to it, and if the godhead is to recognize it, then it necessarily does this explicitly or actively. The godhead is always the No to all external being; but that it now operates as such and becomes evident, [this alone] constitutes external being. Only the relation is thus given in which it appears as what it is. This is a becoming; not, however, a becoming with respect to the godhead itself, but only in its relation to being. Becoming as such is |299| to be assumed of the pure godhead only relatively (σχετικῶς, as the ancient theologians say), not absolutely or with regard to itself.

Immediately, therefore, with reference to external being, the godhead, without mutation or change in itself, is toward such

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the denial of God or the fall (i. e., by making immediate knowledge into mediate knowledge). "Existence" is the focus of Schelling's later philosophy. It indicates the character of displacement (as the Greek and Latin roots indicate) of the eternal relations. Cf. *S.W.*, I, 10:181, 308.

Up to this point Schelling has confined himself to what he later called negative philosophy, which finally comes to the concept of what is above "what is." That is, we have come to "what itself is" ["das Seiende selbst"], individual *existence* beyond conceptuality. The problem from this point on is to show how existence can be known, i. e., how it can "be present" to us in universal or scientific terms and yet be individual existence. This is the task of the positive philosophy. Cf. *S.W.*, II, 3:148 f. Although Schelling did not use the terms negative and positive philosophy when *The Ages of the World* was written, his note at this point indicates that he felt that a new development now begins which should be clarified by a discussion of the terms "being," "presence," and "existence." [Translator.]

being a consuming No, the eternal power of wrath which does not tolerate any being outside itself. This may also be expressed inversely: this power of wrath is not merely a property, a principle or part of the godhead, but the entire godhead in so far as it subsists in itself and is the most essential being. For it is self-evident that this essential being is something unapproachable for everything else, an irresistible poignancy, a fire in which nothing can live. The godhead, as what in itself neither is nor is not, is *necessarily* consuming No in relation to external being. However, as what in itself neither is nor is not, [it cannot be a No unless] it is also necessarily eternal Yes, empowering love, essence of all essences. To be sure, the latter necessity is not as original as the former, yet the godhead must necessarily be eternal Yes. (For otherwise the godhead would be—not the will which does not will, but—the negating will willing nothing, and therefore definite will.) The godhead is this [Yes] without mutation or change in itself, not because its purity is annulled, but just because it is this highest purity and freedom. It is this without any movement, in deepest calm, immediately by virtue of itself. Again, this love is thus not a property, a part or a mere principle of the godhead, but *the godhead itself*, whole and undivided.

But just because the godhead is the whole and undivided, eternal Yes and eternal No, it is also neither the one nor the other, and the unity of both. Here is no real trinity of separate principles, but the godhead as the one, and just because it is the one, it *is* the No and Yes as well as the unity of both.

In this Yes and that No lie that repulsion and attraction which we earlier demanded as necessary for consciousness. As No, the godhead is a fire attracting and drawing into itself. As Yes, however, it is the cause of that loving deference whereby [*300*] duality is retained in unity, and, in this attracting and repelling, it raises itself to the unity of both, that is, to the highest consciousness.

Just because it is eternal freedom, the godhead can stand to being only as No, as Yes, and as the unity of both. For it must be explicitly remembered that these differences are not differences of essence but only of relationship, of the relation

of the one essence to being. But also inversely, only because it stands thus to being, is it eternal freedom. If the godhead were merely Yes or No, then it would have to take the part of being in one way or another, to affirm or negate it. That it is both, and both with equal essentiality, is the reason why it is the highest freedom. All this had to be so, in order that a necessary ground of the world would never be found, and that it would become evident that everything which is, is only by the most free divine will.

Here, too, therefore, is the turning-point between necessity and freedom. Up to this point the progress of life was a necessary one. If life progresses from here on, this progress is only by virtue of a free divine resolution. The godhead can persist peacefully in that equilibrium between attraction and repulsion. Nothing compels it to annul that equilibrium, or to come forth from itself in the one way or in the other.

Consequently, if the godhead took the part of being, actually revealed itself through being (which we must recognize as really having happened), then the resolution for that could come only from the highest freedom.[41]

But if it is now supposed that the godhead really did take the part of being, how, in what way, could it do so? Was it to draw being into itself, negate it as external being independent of the godhead, or to affirm it in independence of itself? Neither in the former nor latter case would the godhead reveal itself as what it is, as equally eternal No and Yes. And yet, if the godhead freely decided to reveal itself, the purpose of its revelation could be no other than to reveal itself as that which was free to reveal or not reveal itself, as eternal freedom itself.

It was therefore impossible for it to become active as the eternal No, [*301*] if not also as the eternal Yes, and conversely. And yet it is just as impossible for one and the same to be as Yes and as No. It is absolutely necessary for the godhead to decide either to be the one, and then not to be the other, or to be the latter, and then not the former.

Here, consequently, is the highest conceivable contradiction,

[41] This concept of freedom marks the beginning of the positive philosophy. Cf. *S.W.*, II, 3:271 f.

which is surely not to be resolved [by supposing that] God is already naturally subordinated as one of the two (as Yes or as No) and therefore can assume the state of the nonactive with respect to the other. For God is both with like essentiality; thus he must, of course, also be active as both.

How is this contradiction to be resolved? Unquestionably only by closer definition. If God is, is active (exists) as the eternal No, then he cannot also be active as the eternal Yes. Or, more briefly, and in order to apply here, too, but in a higher case, the already customary signification: if B is, A cannot be, namely, *as the same*, as what B is; that is, by hypothesis it cannot be as something presupposed, preceding. This, however, does not hinder A from being as something following. And thus conversely, too, if A is (which up to now is not decided, which is only assumed—therefore in case A is), B cannot be *as the same*, namely, as something which is at first and now. But this does not prevent it from being something following, from being in the future.

Yet it is not sufficient that, when B or A is, then A or B can be. But, because God is both with like essentiality, the relation must be of the kind that when God is posited as the one, he is just on that account necessarily also posited as the other, except that the existence of the one is the ground of the existence of the other. Expressed in general terms, the state of contradiction is therefore resolved by the relation of the ground, according to which God is as No and Yes. But the one is as something preceding, as ground, the other as something following, as grounded.

Hence it will always be true that when the one is, the [*302*] other cannot be *as the same*, that is, it follows that both exclude each other with respect to time, or that God as Yes and God as No cannot be *in the same time*. We express ourselves thus intentionally, for the relation surely cannot be of the kind that when what follows, perhaps A, is, then what precedes, therefore B, is annulled or absolutely ceases being what is. Rather does that which is, necessarily and always, remain this *at its time;* and if A is posited, then B must still subsist only *as something preceding*, therefore in such a manner that they nevertheless are, at once, *in different times*. For different times as such (a

concept which, like many others, has been completely lost from modern philosophy) can well be at once; indeed, to speak precisely, they must necessarily be at once. Past time is not annulled time. What has passed can, to be sure, not be as present, but must be as something past at the same time with the present. What is future is, to be sure, not as something that now is, but is simultaneously with the present, as something that is in the future. And it is equally absurd to consider being past as well as being future as a complete nonbeing.

Thus it is only the contradiction at its climax ["in der höchsten Steigerung"] which breaks eternity, and, instead of one eternity, posits a succession of eternities (aeons) or times. But just this succession of eternities is what we commonly call time. Therefore eternity opens out into time in this decision.

Such a decision was impossible in that earlier contradiction in the first necessary [nature] of God. For no essence was there which was free to be completely the one (for example, B) and not the other. Blind necessity was there, and all powers were already in operation. There it was a question of bringing the powers, mutually oppressing and excluding one another in a continual rotation, from succession to simultaneity. This was possible only when they all mutually, in comparison to something higher, sank to something expressible, to totality. Here, on the other hand, the discussion concerns the highest self [*303*] of the godhead, the self which can never become being in relation to another. In each of its forms (let this expression be permitted), as Yes, as No, and as unity of both, this highest self can only be, and be active. And only through the concept of different times can this be conceived, given the decided contradiction between Yes and No. Here, consequently, it is rather a question of suspending the simultaneity between the different forms and changing it into a succession.

So much then of what would have to happen if a decision were to ensue. But the "how" is not yet explained.

Of course in general, and without having yet developed the deeper grounds, it is indubitable what would be the beginning or the first, whether God as eternal No or as eternal Yes. For the discussion here concerns God's birth, even according to the

highest self or in so far as he is eternal freedom. Now, to be sure, just *as* this freedom, God is the eternal No of all external being. He is this, however, not freely, but necessarily. This negation of external being is again the necessary [nature] of—or in—eternal freedom itself. However, not the necessary, but the free [nature] of God (that is, of eternal freedom) is what should come to birth. Consequently, the necessary [nature] can only act as ground of this birth, and therefore as something preceding in it. Everywhere, what is necessary has proved itself to us as the first (*prius*), freedom as what follows; or, to say the same thing, freedom appears everywhere conquering necessity. If God were first the Yes of external being and later the No, then, on the contrary, the necessary would conquer over the free. This would be a completely retrogressive process. But there would be a progress from darkness into light, from death into life, in the opposite sequence.

In the same act, therefore, when God determined on revelation, it was then determined that God as eternal No was to be the ground of existence of the eternal Yes. And thereby it was determined at the same time that God, as the eternal negation of external being, should be conquerable by love.

[*304*] But no compulsion may be considered anywhere in the godhead; everything must depend on the highest voluntariness. Consequently God, in so far as he is the eternal No, cannot be overpowered, he can be compelled only by goodness to give way to love, to make himself love's ground. We must conceive the course of events thus, and yet this may not be considered as having actually happened. For God as Yes, as No, and as the unity of both, is only one; there are no separate personalities. Therefore the whole thing can only be considered as having happened in a flash, since it is conceived as something which happened without having really (*explicite*) happened. This resolution [**"Ent-Schliessung"**], coming from the innermost unity, is comparable only to that incomprehensible primordial act in which the freedom of a man for the first time becomes decisive. Of the man who hesitates to be completely one thing or another, we say that he is without character. Of the resolute person in whom a definite expression of [his] entire being manifests itself,

we say that he has character. And yet it is acknowledged that no one has chosen his character according to reasons or deliberation. He did not take counsel of himself. Yet each person judges this character as a work of freedom, as an eternal (never ceasing, continual) act, as it were. Consequently, general moral judgment discerns in each man a freedom which is ground, fate, and necessity unto itself. But most people are afraid of this abysmal freedom, just as they are afraid of the necessity of being completely one thing or another. And where they see a ray of freedom, they turn away as before an all-consuming lightning flash, and feel cast down as by a phenomenon which comes from the inexpressible, from eternal freedom, from where there is no ground at all.

That is unconditioned freedom, which is not for the single act, but which is an ability to be completely the one or the other of contradictories.

It had to be recognized in one and the same indivisible act that, if God wanted to reveal himself, he could do so only as eternal No, [*305*] as eternal Yes, and as the unity of both. It was recognized in the same act that this revelation could only happen in different times, or in a succession, and that just that would have to be posited as beginning which had just been overcome, the necessary [character] of God's freedom, the No of all external being and thus far of all revelation (for without an overcoming there is no beginning). All this was contained in one and the same resolution, at once the freest and most irresistible, by a miracle of eternal freedom which is sole ground unto itself and is therefore its own necessity.

This much may be said about the process of that great decision in which God, as eternal No, as eternal rigor and necessity, was placed at the beginning of his own revelation.

From now on the history of the realization, or of the real revelations of God, begins. The eternal being, where God for the first time comes to be in respect to eternal nature, we called an eternal birth. But God was posited in this birth not as something which is, but as what in itself neither is nor is not, as pure ability to be ["Seinkönnen"], as eternal freedom with respect to being, as he who, if ever real, would have the ground and be-

ginning of his reality only in himself, and, if ever beginning, would not be necessarily and eternally but freely beginning.

Without a free beginning, there would be no real history of the world. Those who did not understand the free beginning, were also not able to find the entrance into history.

It is now a customary idea to regard the entire history of the world as a progressive revelation of God.[42] But how did the godhead come to that, or how did it go about revealing itself?

The answer, that God is by his nature, and thus necessarily, a being revealing himself (*ens manifestativum sui*), is brief but inconclusive. It is difficult to consider the creation of the world as something forced, when, according to common feeling, it has always been regarded as a work of pleasure and of highest voluntariness. But since we already regard in man only what is exuberantly free as his [*306*] true self, we will not make a merely necessary being out of God, and will consider in him, too, what is ineffably free as his true self. But the discussion concerns just the revelation of this highest self of the godhead. Now a being is free in that it does not have to reveal itself. To reveal one's self is to act, just as all acting is a self-revelation. The free, however, must be free [either] to halt at mere ability, or to pass over into act. If it necessarily passed over, then it would not become real as what it is, namely, as the free.

Others, however, proceed from this, that God is spirit and the very purest essence. But they must, to be sure, confess knowing nothing about how this spirit has been able to reveal itself, except that they make a virtue out of ignorance, as was formerly done in the case of necessity. The reason for this not knowing is clear. For if the godhead is an eternal freedom to be, to realize, reveal itself, then actual being or self-realization can surely not

[42] Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803) was among the first in Germany to consider history as the progressive revelation of God; he advanced this concept in his *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte* (1774). Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–81) developed somewhat the same idea in his *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts* (1780). Schelling himself, in his *System des transcendentalen Idealismus* (1800), said: "History as a whole is a progressive, gradually self-disclosing revelation of the absolute" (*S.W.*, I, 3:603). But it was doubtless Hegel's *Geistesphilosophie* which later exerted the greatest influence in behalf of such a concept of divine immanence.

already be posited with the eternal ability to be or realize oneself. Between possibility and [executed] act there must be something, if the act is to be a free one; this even the most ordinary intellect comprehends. But in the pure eternity in which these people conceive God, there is no interval, no before and after, no earlier and no later. Therefore, even the mere idea that there must be something between possibility and actuality, loses meaning for those who want to recognize nothing but the pure godhead.

If the godhead were eternally actual (in the sufficiently defined sense of "externally manifest"), then it would not be the power to realize itself. But since it can only realize itself out of its free eternity, so, in order that the latter remain free and untouched, there must be something between free eternity and the act of realization, something which separates the latter from the former. This can only be time—not time in eternity itself, however, but time coexisting with eternity. This time outside of eternity is that movement of eternal nature where the latter, ascending from the lowest, always attains the highest, and from [307] the latter returns anew to ascend again. Only in this movement does eternal nature recognize itself as eternity. By this clockwork, the godhead counts and measures—not its own eternity (for this is always complete, perfect, indivisible, above all time, and no more eternal in the succession of all times than in a moment)—but only the moments of the continual repetition of the godhead's eternity, that is, of time itself, which, as Pindar said long ago, is only the image of eternity. For eternity must be considered not as those moments of time *taken together*, but as coexisting with each single one, so that eternity sees only itself (the entire immeasurable eternity) in each individual moment.

Here is a question which is so natural that even childhood proposes it: What kept God busy before he created the world? But, regarded more closely, all thoughts vanish with the concept of a *duration* ["Dauer"] of that unexpressed situation which is surely necessary if creation was to be a free act. Since eternity by or in itself has no duration, and only time has this in respect to eternity, that eternity prior to the world disappears imme-

diately into nothing, or, which is as much, collapses into a mere moment. Pedagogues usually help themselves by avoiding this question. But leaving unanswered such questions, which, as was said, occur even to a child, is just the cause of general unbelief. If pedagogues knew Scripture, they would indeed find the answer, since Scripture tells in what intimate proximity wisdom was about and with God, even in those primordial times, when she, as his favorite, dwelt in the sweetest feeling of bliss, but also became the cause of joy for him, since in anticipation he saw through her in that time the entire future history, the great image of the world and all the events in nature and the spirit realm.[43]

That decision of God, to reveal his highest self in epochs, came from the purest freedom. Just for that reason, God has the power to determine, as it were, the time and hour of this revelation, hence also to begin, solely according to his pleasure, what was completely the work of his freest will. The doctrine that God created the world in [*308*] time, is a support of true faith. The labor of the present essay would be sufficiently rewarded if it made only this one point comprehensible and intelligible. For since there is no time in God himself, how is he to create the world in time, if there is no time outside of him? Or how would a determination of this time be possible, if there is not outside of God, even before creation, a movement according to whose repetition time is measured? [44]

With respect to his highest self, God is not manifest; he reveals himself. He is not real; he becomes real, just that he may appear as the most free being of all. Therefore, between free

[43] Schelling probably had in mind certain of the Proverbs, where wisdom is given such a role, e. g., Prov. 3:19; 8:22 f., etc. This theme is found elsewhere, too, e. g., Jer. 10:12.

[44] We saw (in Chapter III of the Introduction) Schelling's concept of true time to be a series of epochs or aeons, of which "the present" is but one epoch. Thus he insists upon the concept of creation in time. He later said: "In that sense in which there surely is a time before creation, one can say that the world has arisen *in time*, namely, that the world is only the link of a time which transcends the world. In so far as this time before the world for itself is still non-time, one can also call it eternity. But not absolute eternity. It is eternity only because it is still non-time, not yet *actual* time but yet *possible* time" (*S.W.*, II, 3:307).

eternity and act something else enters, which has its root independent of that eternity and is, although eternally, a beginning (something finite). For thus there may always be something whereby God can approach and communicate himself to the creature, and pure eternity may always remain free with respect to being, and the latter never appear as an emanation from the eternal ability to be, and thus there may always be a difference between God and his being.

In science, as in life, men are governed everywhere more by words than by clear concepts. Thus, on the one hand, they explain God in an indefinite way as a necessary being, and, on the other hand, they become angry at a nature being ascribed to God. They would like thus to give the appearance of saving God's freedom. But how little they understand—or, rather, that they understand nothing at all concerning this, is clear from the preceding, since, without a nature, freedom in God could not be separated from act, and would therefore not be real freedom. Thus they reject, as is reasonable, the system of a universal necessity, and yet appear just as eager [to do the same] with respect to any sequence in God, although, if there is no sequence, only one system remains, namely, that everything is simultaneous, everything necessary with the divine being. In this way, as one notices in life, too, they reject, like blind men, just that which they (without an understanding of it) most zealously seek, and attract just that which they really want to avoid.

Whoever has attentively followed the preceding must [*309*] himself have observed how, in the assumption of being or of life on the part of the highest, the same sequence again occurs which took place among the principles in eternal nature. For here, too, what first enters being (what assumes being) is a negating, strictly necessary will, which, however, makes itself the ground of a higher will. The latter, although not really free (being love's pure will), is nevertheless intelligent will. Finally, above both rises the conscious and free will which is spirit in the highest sense, as the third principle was soul in eternal nature.

We can therefore also consider this sequence of revelation as

a succession of potencies through which being passes to its perfection ["Vollendung"].[45] Indeed, it will be necesary from now on to make the following distinction. The powers in being, in so far as they have ceased excluding each other and have become expressible, have also ceased being potencies, and we shall therefore in the future call them principles. As potencies, opposites necessarily exclude each other; and as it is impossible for a number to be in different powers at the same time, but surely possible for the number to be placed in the second power, then, in a further sequence, raised to the third power, thus, too, what is of being ["das Seiende des Seins"] can be only one thing at a time—for example, negating power. But this does not prevent what is of the same being from being something else in a succeeding time, indeed, from being just the opposite of the former. Therefore, from now on we shall indicate that which is of each single epoch by the name of a potency.

To be sure, the harmony between the objective and subjec-

[45] At this point Schelling is laying the ground for what we have termed his existential dialectic. It may appear that he has in mind an optimistic concept of development which leads to the idea of an inevitable progress not only in nature but in human history as well. Against the latter, as well as against Hegel's optimism, he later makes clear that he does not believe in inevitable human progress. For example, the perfectibility of the state lies only in its ability to provide for the individual that freedom whereby he, as individual, can attain his higher goal—the ascent from piety through art to contemplative science. Cf. *S.W.*, II, 1:534–60. The state continually fails to find or to embody that center of its being by which it can be progressively ordered and unified; at most it can only consciously recognize its quest and its failure, that is, the perfect state can only be a rational idea of negative philosophy. On the other hand, mythologic consciousness would seem to have elements of progress in the quest for such a center of being. But here, too, Schelling finds man frustrating himself. Cf. *S.W.*, II, 2:343. There is no final achievement by human consciousness, for the latter can progress only so far as to become dimly aware of a goal which ultimately must be revealed to it. This is the meaning of Schelling's discussion of the mystery religions and the beginning of revelation. Consequently he denied not only moral but intellectual human progress, in order to bring the greatest possible emphasis upon the significance of divine revelation and providence. His reaction to the idea of human progress appears to be conditioned by the notion of a transcendent God whose revelation in history is the result of pure freedom.

From this point on in *The Ages of the World*, Schelling struggles to bring together his concept of freedom and natural law. The manner in which he accomplishes this has led us to distinguish his earlier and later thought by the terms rational dialectic and existential dialectic.

tive life of a being cannot in general be extraordinary. What a being is within or according to being ["Sein"], that it must also be manifestly or according to what [it] is ["Seienden"]. The same powers which in simultaneity make up the being's inner reality ["Dasein"]—these (not according to number but surely according to [their] nature) manifesting themselves in a sequence, are again the potencies of the being's life or becoming; they are what determines the periods or epochs of its development.

The inner part of every organic being depends on and consists in three [*310*] main powers. The first (briefly by way of mere example) is that whereby the being is in itself, continually brings itself forth; the second, that by which it strives toward the outside; the third, that which, as it were, unifies the nature of both. Each of these is necessary for the inner being of the whole. If any were taken away, the whole would be annulled. But this whole is no static being. If the essence is posited as being, then there immediately appears something which is. Since, however, the same powers which are in being, are in that which is, and since that which is in each epoch can only be one, the same powers which operated in the interior (the same according to [their] nature) now decisively stand out as external. Thus in succession they become the potencies of the being's external life-periods, just as they were principles of its persistent being in their simultaneity. This is the meaning when, for example, it is said that in the first period of life the vegetative soul rules, in the succeeding period the activating soul, finally the sensitive soul. The meaning is the same when, for example, it is said (with what foundation we shall not investigate) that the original period in the life of the earth was the magnetic period, from which the earth passed over into the electrical period, although it is well known that all these powers were requisite for the inner stability of the earth in all epochs.

The sequence of potencies (this word being taken in the sense just stipulated) stands therefore also as a succession of epochs. This law alone is capable of unfolding the organism of epochs.

The proper grandeur of the antithesis, and how antithesis is as unconditioned as unity, is exhibited only by this law. Unity

(although in the moderated form of connection) remains predominant in being, but the unconquerable freedom of the antithesis, and how the latter subordinates unity to itself again, appear in that which is.

The eternal exists only by his will. Only by free determination does he make himself into that which is in being ["zum Seienden des Seins"]. But this being presupposed, he was bound in respect to the sequence of his revelation, although he was at liberty not to reveal himself. The decision to reveal himself, and to posit himself as the superable eternal No, was only one and the same decision. Therefore, as this decision is a [*311*] work of the highest freedom, so it is also a work of the highest love. What precedes in revelation is in no way what is in itself subordinate; rather, it is posited as subordinate. What follows in revelation is not in itself more real, more divine, but is voluntarily recognized as the higher in comparison with the former. Priority stands in inverse ratio to superiority—concepts which can be confused only by that blindness of judgment which distinguishes our times.

Here, too, the customary concepts again fit in. Creation, according to general teaching, is an externalization, a descent. What the eternal makes into a beginning is not something of himself which is in itself superable, or less important, but that which he voluntarily regards—wants to regard—as superable, that wherein he is the very strongest and most inward power. Insuperable if it remained inward, this power becomes superable when in it he makes himself into that which is in being ["zum Seienden des Seins"].

The negating, confining will must precede in revelation, in order that there may be something which supports and raises aloft the benevolence ["Huld"] of the divine being, a benevolence which otherwise could not reveal itself. There must be strength before mildness, severity before gentleness, first anger, then love, in which the angry really for the first time becomes God.

In the nocturnal vision in which the Lord passed before his prophet, there first came a powerful storm which rent the mountains and cleft the rocks, after this an earthquake, finally

a fire. The Lord himself, however, was not in any of them. But there followed a still, small murmur in which he was.[46] Thus must power, force, and severity precede in the revelation of the eternal, until he himself can appear for the first time as himself, in the gentle wafting of love.

All development presupposes envelopment. In attraction, the start and the contracting power are the real original and root power of all life. Each life starts from contraction. For why does everything proceed from the small to the large, from the narrow to the wide, since it could also be reversed, if it were a matter of mere progression?

[*312*] Darkness and concealment are peculiar to the primordial era. The farther we return into the past, the more powerful the contraction. Thus it is in the mountains of the primeval world, thus also in the oldest formations of the human mind. The same character of concealment meets us in the mute gravity of the Egyptian, in the gigantic monuments of India, which seem built not for any epoch but for eternity—indeed, even in the quiet greatness of the exalted repose of the oldest Hellenic works, which still bear the power, although softened, of that noble age of the world.

From now on, therefore, we tread the path of epochs. The contradiction has been decided by an exuberant act similar to that in which a man decides to be completely one thing or another. From now on God is only one—only negation with respect to being. As this negating power, God is a fire drawing being into himself, a fire which thus completely unites with itself what is attracted. Until now duality still continued. There was the all and the one, but now both are blended into one being. What is attracted or drawn in is eternal nature, the all. What attracts or draws in is one. Therefore the whole, which we can signify graphically by $\left(\frac{A^3}{A^2 = (A = B)}\right)$ B, is the one and all (ἓν καὶ πᾶν) in intimate connection.[47] In this, however, it

[46] Schelling here refers to the appearance of the Lord to Elijah, I Kings 19:11 f. He later used the same incident to show that only to man is the irony of existence—the storm, earthquake, and fire—meaningful (*S.W.*, II, 3:305).

[47] Schelling always was fond of using symbols and used them freely.

must not be overlooked that the one, or the potency drawing into itself is, with respect to nature, a highly spiritual power, indeed, pure spirit, although not acting with freedom and deliberation. For the negating power, which God, by virtue of his purity, is with respect to being, he is, as shown, not according to his freedom, but by the necessity of his nature. In that original undifferentiation where one and the same [thing] were one and the same eternal Yes and eternal No, and above both there was deliberate spirit, there, too, that severity and necessity of the divine being was also raised up to deliberation and consciousness. Now, since God decided to be mere No, he enters into his blind, dark nature which was hidden in him and could only become evident by separation. [*313*] Has life, which in the previous moment was raised to freedom and intelligence, thus returned to the stage of blind necessity? But how does this sinking back agree with the asserted impossibility of any retrograde movement? Whoever solves this question thoroughly will understand well how to solve yet many others in the history of nature and of humanity also. It is necessary that, as often as life enters a new epoch, it make a new beginning, where then it is inevitable that this beginning, or first stage of the new epoch, should appear as a retrogression in comparison with the last and highest of the preceding stages. Potency compared with potency, the succeeding one stands lower than the preceding, because the preceding one in its period is necessarily a higher potency than the succeeding one in its period. But period compared with period, epoch with epoch, the succeeding one stands decidedly higher. Such apparent retrogressions are therefore necessary in the history of life.

Something is bound up with nature in the present unity which was not bound to it in the preceding epoch, namely, the essence

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He claimed that they had no special significance except to serve for brevity and clarity (*S.W.*, II, 1:391). His usage is often strained and tends to confuse the reader. In the present instance, the schema of symbols enclosed in parentheses represents nature and spirit (i.e., spirit world) brought to unity under the power of the world-soul. This is a schematic representation of the ultimate unity of God. Cf. the same schema in *S.W.*, I, 7:483. The B outside the parenthesis stands for the way in which the one is enclosed in the power or ground of the all.

of that most pure spirit, although this spirit operates only as passion and desire drawing [all] into itself—that is, it operates as nature (yet more than as inner, blind natural power) and thus it again constitutes the beginning of a higher life.

Hence if we can conceive only the very highest freedom and intelligence as God, then this spirit, although the purest, yet active only as nature, is surely not to be called God. If it (B) were God, then the entire unity would act as the now completely realized God.

If this unity is not God, then what is it?

We have shown how the pure godhead is indivisibly eternal Yes and eternal No and the free unity of both, from which it automatically followed that this godhead can be eternal No (= B) only in so far as it is, as such, at the same time the ground of itself as eternal Yes. From this the reverse, too, necessarily results, that as B, or eternal No, it is the godhead only in so far as it is at the same time A, that is, posits itself as eternal Yes. Here there is precisely the same relationship which, [*314*] according to the Christian doctrine, too, is in God, since the first person is God only as Father, or is God only in so far as he is Father, that is, in so far as the Son also is, and again, the second person is God only in so far as he is Son, that is, in so far as there is also the Father.[48]

But now, that is, in the moment we are now considering, the negating power (= B) is as yet in no way what posits A. To be sure, because of the insight attained earlier, we know that, with reference to being, God is negating power only in order to make a ground for himself as eternal love. But this negating power

[48] Schelling's philosophy of revelation is the elaboration of this dialectical relation of the Father and Son of Christian doctrine. The Son is the second power of the godhead, operative in creation, which becomes Son at the end of creation. The redemption of the world by this second power after becoming Man is the processive return of historical factuality to the sovereignty of the godhead. The work of this redemption is continued in history by the third power of the godhead, the Spirit. Throughout the analysis, Schelling interprets his threefold division of time as the age of the Father, which is the past, the age of the Son, or the present world, and the age of the Spirit, which is future. In his characterization of ages, he was cognizant of, and probably influenced by, Joachim of Flora (c.1130–1202), the late medieval mystic. He also refers to the Book of Revelation and to Angelus Silesius. Cf. *S.W.*, II, 4:72, 298, note 1.

does not know itself, therefore also not its own state, does not know the freedom of decision, by virtue of which it is what alone is active. It had to be thus. This higher life had to sink again into unconsciousness of itself, in order that there might be a true beginning. For just as it is the law in man that that primordial act, which precedes all individual actions and never ceases, by which he is really himself, recedes into unfathomable depths in comparison to the consciousness that rises above it, in order that there may be a beginning which is never to be annulled, a root of reality unattainable by anything, so, too, in its determination, that primordial act of divine life extinguishes the consciousness of itself, so that what was posited in that act as ground can in the sequel be again disclosed only by a higher revelation. Only thus is there a true beginning, a beginning which does not cease being beginning. The decision which is to make a true beginning in some act must not be brought before consciousness, *re-called*, which rightly means as much as to be retracted. Whoever reserves to himself [the liberty] to draw a decision into the light again and again, never makes a beginning. Therefore the main condition of all morality is character. Characterlessness is in itself immorality.

Here, too, it holds that the beginning must not know itself. This means it must not know itself as beginning. Nothing is or discerns itself at once as merely ground or beginning. Whatever is a beginning must regard itself not as beginning but as essence (something which is for its own sake), in order to be a true beginning.

[*315*] Therefore that power of negation, as [that in] which God is now alone active, does not discern itself as ground, as the positing of the eternal Yes. Not only does the negating power not posit this eternal Yes, it must definitely negate A (consequently also the higher unity, which is spirit), exclude and completely expel A from the present. There is in it that power of anger tolerating nothing, the power which the jealous Jewish God manifests toward other gods. In such exclusion and solitude this power must also remain until its time is fulfilled, and it must persevere with all its strength, so that life may [eventually] be raised to the highest glory.

This power of negation displaces, we said, the will of love and that of the spirit, yet only from the present. It posits these wills as not *being*, yet in no way therefore as nonbeing, but as future, and, as such, to be sure, also as being (only concealedly).

This power of negation is therefore only possibly, but not yet actually, what posits the eternal Yes, that is, it is God only with respect to possibility, not in actuality. Consequently the entire unity, too, is not yet the real or realized God.

Then what is this unity? The answer: It is the eternal seed of God which is not yet an actual God, but only a God with respect to [its] powers. Therefore it is the state of possibility (of potentiality) in which God has voluntarily placed himself, and which must necessarily precede the actual God (revealed in reality) if there is to be a becoming, a sequence, a gradation in this revelation or birth of God into actuality.

Perhaps some will say that therefore there is no God at all during such a period. By no means! For the whole of God already is, with respect to the possibility (of becoming manifest). The negating potency now active is the power (that is, the possibility) to posit the affirming potency. The latter, like the higher unity, is, of course, definitely not posited as being, but posited as not *being* (as future). Now no one will want to assert that what is something possible, or according to mere possibility, on that account is not at all. It certainly *is*, but simply in the state of possibility. Here, too, [*316*] the distinction presented earlier[49] between being which is not ["nicht-seiend-Sein"] and nonbeing ["Nichtsein"] must be asserted, only in a higher instance. "Therefore God is not" can mean two things: "God is non*existent*"—this is conceded and asserted; "God is not at all, or he is utterly nonexistent"—this is denied, for God also *is*, precisely in that he is not [*qua*] being ["seiend"]. He is only as not being, [that is, he is] in a state of envelopment (*implicite, in statu involutionis*), which is a transition (means) to real revelation. Those at least should not regard this as unworthy of the godhead who, in accordance with the words of Scripture, ascribe the power to God of withdrawing himself even from the ordered course of things, to hide his countenance,

[49] Cf. [*221*].

that is, his real self, hence to return again for a while into a state of involution, to operate in certain cases as mere nature, and not according to his innermost self and heart.[50]

The discussion here concerns not the essential being of God (his being outside of and above nature) but only the existence, that is, the external revelation, according to our use of the term, of the godhead, already posited as being by its relation to eternal nature. But for us to repeat all this will seem almost unnecessary, since it is explained clearly enough and even explicitly by the course of the entire history up to now.

Nothing at all difficult or deceptive can lie in this whole matter, even for the most apprehensive person, if he but grasps in their precision, and makes completely clear for himself, these concepts and the definitions supplied each time. To be sure, this requires purity of intention, earnest will, and honest effort, which are hardly to be expected in times when, on the one hand, the convenient doctrine, that one can know nothing, has disaccustomed most people to all precise thinking, while, on the other hand, those who strive toward the higher [view], in a matter which partly depends on the most subtle and delicate qualifications, believe they can stop at the mere [doctrinal] content of ideas picked at random and from everywhere, although this procedure has often resulted in such monstrosities [as they hold].

But as the entire view expounded above is, therefore, the more important, [317] the more will we try to make it clear in still another way.

The question can arise, for instance, what is now really negated by that negating power? Unquestionably only what was posited by the preceding moment, the independence of being, the separation and withdrawal of the powers. Now, surely that free movement of nature cannot be reversed by this negation. Thus only what is already posited in another respect is negated by the attracting power. Here, too, is indifference, undifferentiation, but active undifferentiation—not one free of all difference, but one negating such difference. But only separated-

[50] The concept of the *deus absconditus* which Schelling here has in mind is repeatedly the subject of the psalmists, e. g., Ps. 13:1; 27:9.

ness and mutual freedom are negated, so that those whose separatedness is negated are affirmed as unseparated, and that power which is the new in all freedom, is what affirms the whole in its nonfreedom. Since that power can nevertheless only negate what is there, it thus recognizes separatedness through negation and affirms it by negating it.

Thus is it clear, first of all, how the negating power assumes being just by negating it, posits being as its own precisely in negation.

But as separatedness is again posited by the negating of separatedness, so must everything which would be posited actually or in a developed manner (*explicite*) without the negation, be posited likewise only in an enveloped manner (*implicite*) by the negation.

Unquestionably, if the godhead assumed being and there were also separatedness, then this would be the most developed, most fully expressed existence. For a spirit attains the fullness of its existence when it has a living soul (A^3) as its immediate subject, and this soul again has its counterpart in an external spiritual-corporeal being. Now this free relation is not affirmed, but negated; it is, however, just thereby posited in a negated or enveloped way. We can therefore say, the unity indicated above is, at least in an enveloped way, the first real being ["Dasein"] of God. But does not |*318*| every existence, just because it is existence, presuppose envelopment? Is there any being ["Dasein"] which was not first in an enveloped state, any free life which was not delivered from a state of negation? Accordingly, we may well assert that that entire unity, as it is only a new or second beginning, is thus only a new and higher nature, which is nevertheless completely (*toto genere*) different from the first of the kind. There is now really only one being, of which the attracting potency is the spiritual, the attracted or indrawn potency the relatively corporeal one. Like an active passion or desire, that spiritual potency penetrates all eternal nature, and, once naturalized ["vernaturt"] in this way, it is by itself no longer separable from that nature. The powers of eternal nature are its powers, in which it senses itself as in its tools. The whole is a truly indivisible one (*Individuum*). Yet we must not forget

the original difference, when considering this unity, since that negating potency in itself is pure spirit, and is to eternal nature always as something being [“Seiendes”] to being [“Sein”]. This spirit operates, to be sure, as nature, because it is unconscious, and it can therefore not be called intelligent in the real sense, although it is not at all therefore unintelligent, utterly without intelligence. It is substantial spirit which has become substance, a spirit which does not have intelligence but is itself essentially intelligence, only not intelligence which is conscious, withdrawing into itself (reflected), but a blind, unconscious, necessary, and, as it were, instinctive one.

The negating will as such a power, and of such independence and omnipotence, draws together the previously mute essence in all its principles and powers. But by this it is immediately raised from passive into active unity, and for the first time all the powers of being are not only brought into one, but are also alike active in one and the same being. For, brought under one and the same potency, the principles necessarily will all have the same power (become equipotent). That [previous] subordination of the one under the other is annulled. Each is rendered unto its own life, and a binding, constraining unity takes the place of the previous voluntary attachment.

[*319*] Now these principles were mutually agreeable in that subordination of the one under the other, only because one became a balm to the other, as it were. Thus, too, each principle was quieted in itself only by that organization where one power was the ground, or that which is not, for the other. Since the principles are now raised, as is each power, to like efficacy with every other, there thus necessarily arises among them all a mutual intolerance and aversion, so that, hardly brought together, they want to separate again.

We saw that in man, as a disposition takes possession of him, everything takes on the color of that disposition, even sweetness is turned into bitterness, gentleness into fury, love into hate, because even in sweetness a root of bitterness lies, in love a root of hate, a root which is only hidden but is necessary for love's support. Thus here, too, when severity is the ruling potency, in the gently outflowing principle (A^2) the negating power is brought

out, and in the originally self-confining principle (A = B) [it] is raised from its depths and concealment, so that therefore only hostile powers meet in both. But since the unity no longer has the antithesis outside itself, but is united with it and can no longer rise as free, peaceful unity, it feels itself dying, as it were.

Here is the first source of the bitterness which is, indeed must be, the inner [character] of all life, and which immediately bursts forth if it is not always soothed, since love itself is forced to be hate, and the quiet, gentle spirit cannot operate, but is suppressed by the enmity in which all the powers are displaced by the necessity of life. From here comes the deep discontent lying in all life, without which there is no reality, this toxin of life which has to be conquered, yet without which life would slumber.

For as soon as the powers of life, now collected into active being [zum thätlichen Sein"], have tasted their bitterness, they desire as a whole, and as individual principles, to depart again from this strict unity, and each one wants to be in its own nature. This is the [*320*] fate of all life, that it first desires limitation, and wants to go from breadth to closeness, in order to perceive itself. After that, if it is in constriction and has felt constrained, it again desires to go back into breadth, and would like to return straightway into the peaceful nought in which it was before, yet into which it cannot return, because it would again have to annul its self-incurred life, and, as soon as it was back, it would yearn again to be out of this situation, and by this longing would incur some being anew.

Therefore, in the whole and in the part, integration by that indrawing spirit immediately effects the desire of the powers to separate. And indeed, they separate the more from one another, the more active each has become, that is, the more each was constricted. Drawing together therefore calls forth its exact opposite, and causes nothing but incessant tension, the orgasm of all powers. But hardly do they revert to the [erstwhile] germlike state and feel the common life die, before longing awakens anew. And as they cannot after all leave the desire for actuality, they fall subject again to the contracting potency.

Therefore there is no enduring life here but rather a continual

alternation of expansion and contraction. And the unity indicated above (the whole of this moment) is nothing but the first pulsation, the beating heart of the godhead, as it were, which seeks and does not find rest in unceasing systole and diastole. There is anew an involuntary movement, which always automatically begins again and cannot stop itself. For the powers become active again by each contraction, and the contracting will yields to their desire for expansion. Hardly, however, does this will become aware of dispersion and the beginning of ineffectiveness, before it is startled and fears that existence is about to be lost, and therefore contracts anew.

For the second time, therefore, life is placed in the moment of involuntary movement [but] by something completely different and higher than at first.[51]

By this we understand that in this moment that which is, together with its being, [*321*] is what is most contradictory. We understand that the first existence ["die erste Existenz"] is contradiction itself, and that, conversely, the first reality can consist only in contradiction, of which some say that it cannot be actual now or ever. All life must pass through the fire of contradiction. Contradiction is life's mainspring and core. Because of this, as an old book [52] says, all action under the sun is so full of toil, and everything consumes itself in labor and yet is not tired, and all powers incessantly struggle against one another. If there were only unity, and if everything were at peace, then truly nothing would want to stir, and everything would sink into listlessness, whereas now everything zealously strives on, in order to get out of unrest into rest.

The contradiction which we have conceived here is the fountainhead of eternal life; the construction of this contradiction is the highest task of science. Therefore, the reproach that the philosopher begins science with a contradiction, means just as much to him as it might mean to remind the tragic poet, upon hearing the introduction of his work, that after such a beginning only a terrible end, cruel deeds, and bloody events could ensue, when his intention is that the end come in just that way.

[51] Cf. [*228* f.].

[52] Schelling probably had in mind the Book of Ecclesiastes.

Therefore we, too, do not shun contradiction but rather seek, in so far as we are capable, to conceive it rightly, even in detail.

By the attracting potency, the whole, or system of powers, which constitute the original nature (A = B) also becomes something integrated, which, however, cannot be described as such, because in integrating it becomes in itself contradictory, and therefore does not persist for a moment at rest. For, by the inspiriting potency, even the two opposed powers in original nature are brought to equivalence. The power which was to be a stable ground from which the essence (A) might arise, becomes a power raised from its depths; that which is not (B) is elevated to that which is. Hardly, therefore, has that which is integrated felt the equivalence and conflict of powers, [*322*] before it wants to separate, since the powers are mutually intolerable in this relationship. But because it is held together by the strength of the attracting potency, and the latter continually raises the negating power from the depths, while the affirming essence (A) seeks to subordinate the negating power to itself, put it back into potentiality, there results only the pressure (*nisus*) of wanting to separate, whereby a rotary motion must then arise. But the attracting power does not cease operating. Thus finally, when the powers have been more and more inspirited, in the highest degree of antagonism, where they cannot really separate nor yet remain, it happens that something intermediate occurs, and matter, as if put into self-lacerating rage, bursts apart into single, independent centers which, because they too are still held and driven by contrary powers, likewise rotate about their own axes.*

It is futile to try to explain the manifoldness in nature as a peaceful unification ["Ineinsbildung"] of different powers. All that comes to be can only do so in discontent; and as dread is the basic feeling of each living creature, so is everything that lives conceived and born only in violent conflict. Who could believe that nature could have created, in rest and peace, or otherwise than in the most violent antagonism of powers, so

* The whole, B, because united with being, tears itself apart, as one says in discontent: I would like to tear myself to pieces. (Marginal note.)

many kinds of strange products in this terrible external confusion and chaotic inner mixture, where it is hard to find anything just by itself, but all are interpenetrated and ingrown with other things? Are not most products of inorganic nature visibly children of dread, of terror, even of despair? * And so, too, we see, even in the single instance in which we are to a certain extent permitted to be witnesses of an original creation, that the first foundation of the man to be is formed only in deadly conflict, terrible discontent, and often dread amounting to despair. [*323*] If this happens in what is individual and small, should it be different in what is great, in the production of the first parts of the world-system?

It is striking that in the whole of nature each unique, individual life begins by rotation about its own axis, therefore evidently from a state of inner antagonism. In the largest as in the smallest thing, in the revolving of planets as in the partly rotary motions of the world, discernible only to the aided eye, which Linné [53] ominously calls the chaos of the animal kingdom, circular movement appears as the first form of the separate, individual life, as if everything that closes itself off unto itself, and therefore from the whole, had thereby immediately to fall into inner conflict. At least from this observation it would already be evident that the powers of circular movement belong to the oldest potencies, which have been active at the first creation itself, and are not, as the prevailing opinion now is, powers only later added externally and accidentally to what has come to be.

In so far as the existence of such individual, rotary wholes

* Cf. here *The Philosophy of Mythology,* Part II, Vol. II, p. 582. Ed. The passage reads: "All quality in nature has significance only in so far as it is itself originally perception. The qualities of things may not be explained mechanically, externally, but only from original impressions which the essence of nature itself received in creation. Who can conceive that sulphur, the malodorous vapor of marsh gas and volatile metals, or the inexplicable bitterness of the ocean, exists only in consequence of a merely accidental chemical composition? Are those substances not evidently children of dread, of discontent, of despair?" (*S.W.*, II, 2:582). [Translator.]

[53] The reference is to Carl von Linné, also called Linnaeus (1707–78), the Swedish botanist; Schelling probably had in mind his *System of Nature.*

depends solely on the elevation and inspiriting of the negating power, thus far those wholes are to be regarded as works of a truly elevating, creating power, transferring [things] from what is not to that which is, and therefore those wholes are to be regarded as the first creatures.

If that inspiriting of the negating power could abate in them, then they would immediately sink back into universal being. That inspiriting is therefore for them an elevation to selfhood, the inspirited power from now on the root of their singularity, since they thereby have their own ground (their own B or egoistic principle) which is independent of the universal ground of nature.

Even now, however, raised to selfhood (to being-in-self), these wholes are still held by the attracting power. But just because they are now egoistic, and such as have their own point of rest (center of gravity) in themselves, they strive to avoid the pressure of the attracting power by virtue of this very selfhood, and to grow away from it by withdrawing on all sides from the center of this power. [*324*] Here, therefore, for the first time arises the greatest turgor of the whole, where each individual thing seeks to shun the common center, and eccentrically seeks its own center of gravity or point of rest.

With that first separation of primordial powers, where they sank into being in relation to what is higher, it was first noticed how everything passes more and more from the shapeless to what has shape.[54] There for the first time was an above and below. Yet that differentiation of powers merely gave an ideal separation (*expansum*), but a powerless one, which really expressed the mere absence of an actual (real) collecting and relating power. *Space* first arises when there is added that confining power, making *actual* the place or position which really belongs to each potency by the latter's nature, though merely in a *possible* way. Extension (*extensio*) already presupposes the power positing space, and is best explained by that phenomenon which we call turgescence in the members of organic beings.[55]

[54] Cf. [*253* f.].

[55] Schelling later related "turgor" to extension (*S.W.*, II, 1:427 f.) as well as to tension and orgasm (*S.W.*, II, 2:351 f.): "Every striving and

According to the conception now prevalent, space is an emptiness, poured out indifferently on all sides *ad indefinitum*, into which emptiness individual things are merely placed. But the true nature of space, or, more definitely expressed, the power really positing space, is that general primordial power contracting the whole. Were there not this power, or if it could cease, then there would be neither place nor space. Therefore space, too, cannot be indifferent, but only organic in the whole and in the individual. Whoever could assert such an internal indifference of space—that one point is like another, and that there is neither a true above and below, nor right and left, nor behind and before—must have disregarded the miracle of that ordering and placing power in the organic (where the position of each essential part is a necessary one, and each part in this whole can only be in this place) just as he has disregarded, for example, in the gradation of organic beings, how each part changes its position with the significance and worth which it wins or loses in the higher creature. Was such a power to dwell only in the individual organic body, but not in the great whole? Impossible! Space is not indifferent. There is a true above and below, a heaven [*325*] which is truly above earth, a spirit world which is in the real sense above nature, ideas which make this world-whole ["Weltganze"] more valuable again, for us just as for our fathers, than an indifferent expanse without a final goal of perfection, without true conclusion or significant end. For inconclusiveness is everywhere also imperfection, conclusiveness the real perfection of every work. Those ideas were not lost, as one might think, by the sincere doctrine of Copernicus, but only by the lifeless system of gravitation of later times.

That divine power, integrating the whole, embraces not merely nature, but also the spirit world, and the soul dwelling above both. Therefore these also receive a spatial reference by that integration; the old belief in a place, an abode of spirits, again receives meaning and truth.

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coming forth of something formerly hidden (latent), every growth of activity of something previously inactive, appears in nature as turgescence," he said (*S.W.*, II, 2:619).

This is the ultimate design, that everything as much as possible take shape and be brought into visible, corporeal form. Corporeality is, as the ancients expressed themselves, the aim of the ways of God (*finis viarum Dei*), who wants to reveal himself spatially or in a particular place as well as time.[56]

Conclusiveness, outward finitude * not only of visible nature but of the universe, already follows from this alone, that there is a power drawing the universe together from the outside inward, by which the universe became spatial for the first time. This power, therefore, since it surrounds and encloses the whole, is also the power that really posits bounds and limits, as it is expressed in the passage † already cited: "When he circumscribed the deep with his circle"; and, also, the expression, heaven and earth are the expanse of divine strength, surely does not merely refer to the attracting power lying in nature, but to the power of negation integrating the whole. But the eternal can only be finite unto himself, only he himself can |*326*| comprehend and circumscribe his own being. Therefore the finiteness of the world on the outside includes a perfect infinitude within.

The whole spatially extended universe is nothing but the swelling heart of the godhead. Held by invisible powers, it persists in a continual pulsation, or alternation of expansion and contraction.

By the elevation of that which is not, for the first time individual things are created which, by virtue of the selfhood aroused in them, now necessarily seek to flee from the attracting power, the common center. Hence the turgor, the eccentric evasion on all sides, which is the more violent, the more the principle of selfhood has been kindled in them. But in the degree to which they grow away from the attracting power,

* But not therefore finite in *space*. For space is just the spreading, which happened from the inside out, of the enclosing power. (Marginal addition.)

† Prov. 8:27.

[56] It is not clear whether Schelling had any of the ancients in mind. As we noted in our Introduction, he probably derived this concept of divine corporeality from Oetinger (1702–82). Cf. Leese, *Von Jakob Böhme zu Schelling*, pp. 28–30.

they also feel the principle of selfhood, which has been awakened in them, pass away, and therewith their own life, which depends only on continual solicitation (calling forth) of just that principle. Therefore, while they again fall [subject] to the negating power, experience anew the sharpness of the attracting potency, they yet become kindled to ever higher selfhood by each attraction. For that dark power in them can, just because it is power (*intensum*), be brought to ever higher degrees of tension.

Thus this process must continue up to the point where the powers of being begin to balance that which is. The equipollence of what is attracted and what attracts, must finally be produced by continual intensification ["Steigerung"]. This is the goal and end of the process. God himself must experience the entire depths and terrible powers of his own being. It is even dialectically evident that eternal nature is as important as that in which the pure godhead itself operates only as nature. Here, therefore, is the moment in which, according to Plato, God can be conceived as in battle with a wild, unruly matter or nature.[57] But the God of whom this can be said is only the possible God, or God in so far as he is merely nature, therefore not actually God.

The goal of the process, from this side, is therefore only an alternating [327] movement (*motus alternus*), an eternal inhaling and exhaling, systole and diastole, a movement which, as it is the first moment of all natural life, is also the beginning of spiritual life. For if, in the present moment, what in itself is natural has become natural for the first time, then, conversely, this moment is also for eternal nature precisely the first step of a spiritual life to which this nature is to be raised. Here, therefore, the heart of nature still lies bare and open, as in animal life [in the first steps of development] the heart (which has as a basic form in its highest development only that square ◇ which also expresses the original form of each celestial body) lies externally visible. In the next steps of development, it is already covered up and restored more and more into the in-

[57] Cf. *Timaeus* 30 Af.

side; and in the animal series as a whole, it also advances from the right side more and more toward the middle, and is at last brought entirely to the left side, that is, posited as past. In animal life that primeval movement is preserved by the blood, this wild, unmanageable matter, torn into globules (it even seemed probable to several naturalists that each globule in its progress moved about its axis at the same time), with which spirit, and the better will, only too often lie in combat. Nature, longing for rest, seems to seek nothing more zealously than to escape from that necessary, alternating movement which arises from a mutual intolerance of principles bound to each other, a purpose which nature first attains by the inexpressibly great miracle of articulation, by keeping separate the adverse powers in the system of extending and flexing muscles which, to be sure, still preserve one side of the rotary movement but, like divining rods obedient to the will, only strike either outward or inward.

In this steady alternation of outgoing and returning, expansion and contraction, matter is more and more prepared to be the external type of the indwelling spirit which, since it cannot bring forth the total unity (the negation of all plurality), tries to work architectonically to maintain the unity in this plurality, that is, to produce a system. [*328*] The universe at its first origin shows clearly enough the presence of an inner spiritual potency. But just as unmistakable is the participation, the collaboration, of a reasonless (irrational) principle, which could only be limited but not completely overpowered. Therefore the organic laws of the universe are hardly fathomable according to such simple relations as have hitherto been tried, and could in no case be developed from mere concepts, but only [on the basis of] reality itself.

But a lasting configuration is not at all possible in the present moment. For just in the degree to which the whole is brought to highest development, the orgasm of the powers increases in all [its] members, so that finally that attracting potency itself trembles for its being **["Dasein"]** and fears lest the chaos which is already present in the part take place in the whole.

For with the elevation of the principle of selfhood designed

to be at rest and in a state of potentiality, the passive properties of matter are more and more suspended—properties which, as has been shown, depended precisely on the dampening and suppression of that power which, when manifested (activated) or inspirited, is a consuming fire. As an organic member immediately becomes inflamed when what was to be only quiescent fire in it rises into activity; as even now we see fire burst forth from all violently compressed matter; as even the electrical fire in lightning is unquestionably only one that is released by violent pressure; as compressible matters (gases), which are jointly capable of producing a flame, catch fire by mere pressure; as every, even the lightest, pressure produces electrical fire, and it is hardly to be doubted that all matter would be capable of bursting into fire with proportionate compression—as it is in all these cases, so, in that primordial state [of the world], matter must be transposed with the increasing orgasm more and more into the state of a fiery dissolution.

From time immemorial, all naturalists believed they had to presuppose a state of dissolution in their explanations of the gradual formation of the earth, indeed, of all visible nature. But in our day, [*329*] when all similes and images began to be taken from chemistry, people were satisfied with [assuming] a fluid state of dissolution similar to that of metals in acids—as if what is fluid were in general a last term, at which one could stop, an unconditioned state not to be further explained. But we believe that we can prove in still another way that the oldest state of all matter, and of all celestial bodies in particular, is that of an electrical dissolution. For in electricity there actually appears that double fire which is really the inner [nature] of all matter, the radiating (+E) and the negating fire (−E) which draws into itself, which serves as ground of the former. For erroneous as it was to seek the ground of this electricity in a mere deficiency, it is just as erroneous to assume two equally positive electricities opposed to each other, as in the current view which is called dualistic. One of these electricities is actually of a negating nature drawing into itself, yet surely on that account just as little nothing at all (mere privation) as

the attracting basic power in nature is mere deficiency. The conduction experiments with the electric galvanic pile, already mentioned, but far too little regarded by the great mass of naturalists, give the most decided proof that matter is capable of an electric animation and dissolution, in which it is not merely unsusceptible to natural chemical relationships, but also lays aside all other corporeal properties.

In this state of fiery electrical dissolution we still see those mysterious members of matter's planetary whole, the comets, celestial bodies in process of becoming, as I expressed it earlier, but, which I would now like to say, are bodies as yet unreconciled, living witnesses, as it were, of that primordial time, since nothing prevents the earlier time continuing through the later in individual phenomena, or, conversely, the later period from having begun in some parts of the universe earlier than in others. In all ages, human feeling has regarded comets only with foreboding, as harbingers of a return, as it were, to a past time, harbingers of general disorder, of the re-dissolution of things into chaos. The particular center of gravity (the individual life) in these comets evidently is [*330*] not reconciled to the general center of gravity. This is shown by the directions and positions of their paths, deviating from those of the ordered planets, paths which, even if the planets cannot in any case travel back and forth in straight lines, as Kepler surmised, yet are curved so little, are eccentric to such a degree that their movement in them can be considered mere systole and diastole. But just these comets, in their approach to and withdrawal again from the sun, show such variations and changes as can be explained only by alternate expansions and contractions. In all significant comets, it has been perceived up to now how, on approaching the sun, therefore in the highest ardor of all forces, the outlines of the nucleus disappear more and more on the side turned toward the sun. The nucleus finally dissolves completely, that which one calls its atmosphere swells up in proportionate degree, and its tail lengthens. In the remarkable comet of the year 1769, its atmosphere was more transparent, the nucleus more clearly to be seen after its return from the

sun (in November of that year). But, moreover, the appearance of the whole was so changed that one of the observers * applies to it those verses of Hector in Virgil:

> . . . quantum mutatus ab illo!
> Squalentem barbam et concretos sanguine crines,
> Vulneraque illa gerens, quae circum plurima—solem
> Accepit . . .
>
> —*Aen.* ii. 274 *seq.*[58]

This dwindling and weakening at the return from the sun can only be the effect of the already recommencing diastole, and the approach to the condition of materiality. Since this was first written down (in the year 1811), the more exact observations about the comet then appearing in the heavens have become well known. This comet was remarkable for much—for example, for the double tail, for the greater brightness of the northern (more animated) side, but [*331*] especially for the tremendous rapidity of its changes, which nearly force one to the conclusion that it was in an alternation of expansion and contraction even in the approach to the sun. In the short time of one second, the light in the field of vision of the observer could stretch about two and one-half degrees, which must have amounted to almost a million geographical miles in actual extent. This was a phenomenon on the basis of which the admirable observer Schröter [59] himself feels forced to infer an immense primordial power similar to the electrical or galvanic.

By the foregoing presentation, we have attained what must always be our main objective in the effort to determine exactly

* Lambert's *Contributions*, Part III, pp. 234, 207.
Johann Heinrich Lambert (1728–77), physicist, astronomer, mathematician, and philosopher, was the author of various scientific works, including that referred to: *Beiträge zum Gebrauche der Mathematik und deren Anwendung* (Berlin, 1765–72). [Translator.]

[58] The translation of the complete passage is:
"Ah me! what aspect was his! how changed from that Hector who returns after donning the spoils of Achilles or hurling on Danaan ships the Phrygian fires! with ragged beard, with hair matted with blood, and bearing those many wounds he gat around his native walls." From the translation of the *Aeneid* by H. Rushton Fairclough (Loeb Classical Library, New York, 1920).

[59] Johann Hieronymus Schröter (1745–1816), astronomer.

the epochs according to which and in which everything gradually came to be. We discern that with respect to nature this first period was really the period of the creation of the stars as such. But who, having ever viewed this immense whole with his right senses, has not always felt that the great and terrible powers by which this whole first came to be, and which still keep it present [“im Dásein”], far transcend all the powers of later time? It is a much gentler power, the will of a milder period, which has produced plants and animals. These may be called works of nature in so far as that artistic wisdom indwelling in the universe itself is understood by this. But the stars far surpass all powers of formative nature. They are works of *God;* taken by themselves (without the succeeding epoch), they are works of wrath, of the fatherly—the very oldest—power.

In the beginning God created heaven and earth. In these simple words the world's oldest book [60] expresses itself about this period, which it thereby definitely closes off and distinguishes from the following time. However often they have been misinterpreted, indeed intentionally misunderstood, these words are invaluable to an intelligent person. In this passage, *In the beginning* cannot well mean anything but in the first, in the very oldest period. That this period is to be sharply distinguished from the following period the very next words show: *and the earth was*—surely not before creation, therefore, strictly, the earth became in the process of creation, or [*332*] after the creation—*waste and void.* It is clear that the narrative wishes to characterize this waste and voidness of the earth as something that lay midway between the creation which occurred in the *beginning* and the ensuing creation.

The text separates this period from the following by this [distinction of epochs] and by word as well. If the [first] creation, alluded to rather than described in these words, is the same as the succeeding one, then why is it stated here, Elohim (that which is, which was Elohim or the universe of powers) *created* (*bara*)? Why is it not at once stated here, as it always is in what follows, In the beginning Elohim spake, “Let there

[60] Gen. 1:1.

be heaven and earth"? Or why not, He *made*, as in the case of the two great lights, sun and moon (verse 16), which he indeed would no longer need to make if the creating of verse 1 was already a *making?* Either all interpretation is fallacious, or this production in the beginning, which is called a creating, is other than the later which is [called] a speaking. This one word, used only in the beginning, is the decisive proof that the holy book wanted to separate the very first creation—whose history it concludes with these few words, whose first result it only suggests in the next words—as a creation persisting by itself (as the creation of one, particular period) from the succeeding one.

The effort used by moderns to lessen the force of that word (*bara*), where possible, to the meaning of mere giving shape, is incomprehensible (one man uses the word *exasciare* in order to explain it). Even the etymology of the word has been obscured by such shallow explanation. We do not want to exclude any of the possible comparisons: with *bar*, son; even with the old German word *bären* (*gebären*), to give birth to; with the Greek βαρέω, the Latin *parare* and *parere;* also with the meanings of without, outwards, outward, foreign, which attach to the word *bar* and the words derived therefrom in most oriental dialects. In the last connection, the verb *bara* means to work ecstatically ["ausser sich wirken"] or without self-consciousness ["mit von sich (bewusstlos) Sein"]. But for all these different meanings a common bond is perhaps found when, according to the [*333*] original similarity and continual interchangeableness of the verbs in *a* and *ah*, one looks for the basic meaning of *bara* in *barah*, from which *berith* derives. As in German union, covenant ["Bund, Bündniss"] derive from the verb to bind ["binden"], in Latin *contractus* derives from *contrahere*, so *berith* from *barah*, which would therefore likewise mean to draw together, to attract (therefore also to *consume*, to eat, II Samuel 12:17).* Every external relation of God to man, indeed of God to all nature (see Genesis 9:12), is a

* N.B., Num. 16:30: *Im beriah jifra Jehovah*, that is, "If the Lord moves the primordial powers."

covenant (*berith*). The natural arrangement of alternating days and nights is a covenant of Jehovah with the day and the night (Jeremiah 33:20). The relation of the father to his son (*bar*) is a covenant. And the new covenant (ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη) means as much as a new creation (καινὴ κτίσις).

But whoever wants to discern completely the power of this word [*bara*], let him read the passage: "I, Jehovah, who *form* light and *create* darkness, *make* the good and *create* evil (*bore* both times)." * No one will assert that God creates darkness and evil according to his freedom and consciousness. But since the other words, indicating a conscious producing, stand in evident contrast to creating (*bara*), this word can only mean the unfree, unconscious creating in which, as in a producing of substance, there is no reason, but mere power and strength. (Yet this just shows that that creating, verse 1, was not the completion of creation). To make the thought clear, one may remember the old distinction: God is cause of the substantial (material) but not of the formal [nature] of sin.[61] That the word here, too, means the lowest degree of creating (just that of the involuntary) is quite evident from another passage of the same book (Isaiah 43:7) where a sequence is unmistakably indicated in creating, forming, making, by these very same words.

If, therefore, the concept of a first, unfree, and at the same time [*334*] chaotic creating does not suit prevailing ideas, it yet finds its attestation in the meaning of the word *bara* and the immediately following words of Scripture, when the earth (to which the account turns back after the first words) "became waste and void" after that creation. Luther translates it thus. But I do not know whether in the words of the original language—synonymous in the one respect, that both are, according to their origin, expressions of wonder and astonishment—there is not for that very reason a suggestion of those

* Isa. 45:7.

[61] Schelling may have had in mind Augustine's distinction between *natura vitiata* and *vitium*, a discussion of which may be found in A. Harnack, *History of Dogma*, English translation (Boston, 1899), V, 210 f.

opposed states which we still perceive in comets, since a tremendous expansion as well as a sudden sinking or shrinking of what has been expanded is an object of astonishment.

Moreover, should everything in this presentation not be completely comprehensible to all people, then let them consider that the situation described is one that is past, completely different from that of the present which they have involuntarily placed at the basis of observation; it is not a situation which is conceivable in terms of the present one but rather one lying at the basis of the present.

Now, perhaps, the events in the spirit world should also be described. But it seems more commendable to acknowledge the limits of human powers. We are content to observe that the course of [such] events in general can only be the same as in nature, with a single difference, which arises in that the negating power which is external in nature is internal in spiritual being. One can therefore say that in nature the negating power is raised and led inward, in the spirit world it is drawn outward and lowered. As nature is spiritualized in attraction, so the principle of the spirit world is made corporeal. What is contraction in the former is expansion in the latter, and conversely. Here, too, in the spirits that tear themselves loose as individual vortices, as it were, from the strife of the fiery powers, the principle of selfhood is so enhanced by the attraction continuing to operate, that these spirits finally counterbalance the attracting potency. Here, too, the process stops in an alternating movement of systole and diastole, since the integrating power can no longer master the awakened powers of being, and [*335*] alternately conquers and is conquered. With regard to the spirit world, this period is the period of the first creation, still, to be sure, chaotic and arrested in the mere beginning, the creation of those primordial spirits which are in the spirit world just what stars are in nature.

But it is now time to consider that which truly is ["das eigentlich Seiende"], whose interior no less than its exterior must suffer and be torn by contradiction, as, in the violent and lawless movements of an organic being, its interior also participates in suffering.

We observe for the present only that that which truly is, is just that spirit which draws [all] toward or into itself, and which takes possession of the entire being. What was that which is highest ["das höchste Seiende"] in eternal nature (A^3), is now for that spirit the bond of its relation with what is subordinate. Both are therefore as one in the present process, and the universal soul is only to be considered as immediate subject (or, in the now customary language, only as the objective side of that spirit).[62]

Pain is something universal and necessary in all life, the inevitable point of transition to freedom. We recall the pains of development in human life in the physical as well as in the moral sense. We shall not shun representing even that primordial essence (the first possibility of the externally manifest God) in a state of suffering of the kind involved in development. Suffering is generally the way to glory, not only with regard to man, but also in respect to the creator. God leads human nature through no other course than that through which his own nature must pass. Participation in everything blind, dark, and suffering of God's nature is necessary in order to raise him to highest consciousness. Each being must learn to know its own depths; this is impossible without suffering. Pain comes only from being, and because everything living must first enclose itself in being, and break through from the darkness of being to transfiguration, so the being which in itself is divine must also, in its revelation, first assume nature and thus far suffer, before it celebrates the triumph of its liberation.

[*336*] But in order to represent everything as naturally as possible, here, too, moments must be distinguished. The active potency does not express itself immediately with complete power but as a gentle attracting, like that which precedes awaking from deep sleep. With increasing strength the powers

[62] Schelling's use of the term objective will lead the reader to think of Hegel's concept of objective spirit, i. e., the spirit which has come forth from its subjectivity and embodied itself in the world. Except for this sense of objectivation, there is no further significant relationship to Hegel's concept, for the latter introduces the discussion of abstract right, morality, and social ethics, while Schelling is concluding a discussion of the revelation of God in nature.

in being become aroused to sluggish, blind activity. Powerful and shapeless births arise, because the gentle unity of the spirit is strange to such [a state of] being. No longer in that state of inwardness or of clairvoyance, nor entranced by blessed visions foreboding the future, the nature existing in this conflict struggles as in heavy dreams which, because they are from [mere] being, arise from the past. With growing conflict, those nocturnal births soon pass like wild phantasies through that nature's interior, and in them for the first time it experiences all the horrors of its own nature. The predominant feeling that expresses the conflict of tendencies in being, when there is no knowing which way to turn, is that of dread ["Angst"]. Meanwhile the orgasm of powers increases more and more, and lets the integrating power fear total dissociation, complete dissolution. But as soon as this power yields its life, discerns itself as if already past, the higher form of its nature and the quiet purity of the spirit arise before it as in a flash. Now, in contrast to the blind, contracting will, this purity is an essential unity in which freedom, understanding, and discrimination dwell. Therefore the will, in contracting, would like well to grasp the flash of freedom and make it its own, in order thereby to become a will which freely creates and is conscious, which departs from vexation, and thus, overcoming the conflict of the powers, to communicate to its creations, too, that essential unity which is intelligence, spirit, and beauty. The blind will, however, cannot grasp gentle freedom; but the latter is a spirit, incomprehensible and of superior power, for this will. Therefore the will is frightened at this spirit's manifestations, because it indeed feels that this spirit is the will's true nature, and that, despite this spirit's gentleness, it is stronger than the will in its austerity. At the sight of that spirit, the will becomes as if senseless, and seeks to grasp that spirit blindly and inwardly, to copy it in the will's productions, in the hope of holding on to that spirit. [*337*] But the will operates only as with an alien intelligence, of which it is not itself master, an intermediate state between the complete night of consciousness and reflective mind ["besonnenem Geist"].

From these illuminations of the spirit originates everything

which, for example, is intelligent and ordered in the structure of the universe, according to which the universe appears really to be the outer form ["Typus"] of an indwelling spirit. The basic power of all initial and original creating *must* be an unconscious and necessary one, since no personality really flows into it. So, in human works, the higher the power of reality perceived, the more impersonally did they arise. If poetic or other works appear to be inspired, then a blind power must also appear in them. For only such a blind power can be inspired. All conscious creating presupposes another which is unconscious, and the former is only a development, an explication of the latter.

The ancients did not speak idly of a divine and holy madness. Thus we too see nature, engaged in her free development, become more and more tumultuous, as it were, in the degree to which it approaches spirit. For all the things of nature are, to be sure, in an unconscious state. But those creatures which belong to the period of the last combat between dissociation and unification, consciousness and unconsciousness, and which immediately precede man in the creations of nature, we see wander about in a state similar to drunkenness.* Not without significance is the car of Dionysus drawn by panthers or tigers, for it was the wild, ecstatic enthusiasm into which nature comes at the sight of the essence, which the ancient nature worship of prescient peoples celebrated in the drunken feasts of Bacchic orgies. Whereas that inner self-laceration of nature, the wheel of original birth, turning about itself as if mad, and the dreadful powers of rotary movement operating therein, are portrayed in other more terrible splendors of ancient cultic

* Cf. *Philosophy of Mythology*, p. 427. ED.

The passage reads: "From the first, at the basis of nature there is something which *genuinely* should not be, and it is necessary for this principle to flare up most violently where it is closest to being overcome. Whenever, in general, all things in nature are in a senseless condition, we see that highest class of animals wander about as in a state of continual madness, in which at first sight unspiritual nature attains the spiritual. The wrath, the anger with which the carnivorous animal tears apart the weak, completely inoffensive creature is the anger of its own death, the principle which feels its destruction, the final blaze of its fury" (*S.W.*, II, 2:427). [Translator.]

customs by actions of self-lacerating rage, like self-castration (whether it be in order [*338*] to express the unbearableness of the oppressive power, or its ceasing as a generative potency), by carrying about of the dismembered limbs of a mutilated god, by senseless, raving dances, by the overpowering procession of the Mother of all Gods on a car with brazen wheels, accompanied by the din of a harsh, partly deafening, partly shattering music. For nothing is more like that inner madness than music which, by the continual, eccentric digression and resolution of tones, most clearly imitates that primordial movement, and is itself a turning wheel which, issuing from one point, returns again and again, through all divagations, to the beginning.[63]

The greatest confirmation of this description is that that self-lacerating madness is still the innermost [character] of all things and, when ruled and justified, as it were, by the light of a higher reason, it is the real power of nature and of all its products. Since Aristotle it is even customary to say of man that no one accomplishes anything great without an admixture of madness. Instead of this we should like to say: [There is no greatness] without a continual solicitation to madness which, while it must be overcome, must never be completely lacking. One might profit by classifying men in this respect. The one kind, one could say, are those in whom there is no madness at all. These would be the spirits which are uncreative, incapable of begetting anything, those who call themselves sober and are the so-called men of intellect [“Verstandesmenschen”] whose works and deeds are nothing but cold works and deeds of the intellect. Some people in philosophy have quite strangely misunderstood this expression. For, because they heard talk of intellectuals as being inferior, as it were, or worse than others, and therefore themselves did not want to be such, they good-naturedly opposed reason [“Vernunft”] to intellect [“Verstand”] instead of to madness. But where there is no madness,

[63] In the philosophy of mythology, Schelling attempts to find the meaning of orgy: “The provocative cause of orgy is, indeed, the liberating god, but the *ground*, the subject of orgy, is the real principle which has become, as it were, reeling, giddy, no longer able to contain itself, having become powerless over itself (*S.W.*, II, 2:351).

there is, to be sure, also no real, active, living intellect (whence the dead intellect, dead intellectuals). For wherein is intellect to prove itself but in the conquest, mastery, and ordering of madness? Hence complete lack of [*339*] madness leads to another extreme, to imbecility (idiocy), which is an absolute absence of all madness. But there are two kinds of the other [type of people] in whom there really is madness. The one kind rules madness and shows the highest strength of intellect just in this conquest. The other is ruled by madness—people who are really mad. One cannot strictly say that madness originates in them; it only comes forth as something which is always there (for without continual solicitation to madness there would be no consciousness) but which now is not subdued and ruled by a higher power.

In the description of that primordial state, we had before us only the general fate of a nature developing itself from its own powers and completely by itself. For man helps man, and God also helps him. But nothing can help primal nature in its terrible solitude; it must fight through this state alone and by itself.

This then would be the description, although a feeble one, of that primordial state of the all and one from which those who have lately talked so much about pantheism may now see what the latter really is.[64] For most people who talk about the one and the all see only the all therein. That there is a one, a subject in it, they have not yet even noticed. But by the all they understand the selfless all, which that initial nature is. To this [group of people] belong also those who, with their eternally repeated assurances of the harmony and wonderful unity of the universe, already long ago became burdensome to sensible men. Both [groups of people] might find genuine pantheism terrible. But if they were capable of penetrating the outside

[64] Schelling doubtless had in mind what has come to be known as the Spinoza controversy, which began in 1783, between Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi and Moses Mendelssohn, regarding Lessing's supposed pantheistic interpretation of the Spinozistic ἓν καὶ πᾶν. It is important to notice that Schelling himself conceived pantheism to be the only true ground of theism, which he carefully distinguishes from rational theism or deism. Cf. *S.W.*, II, 1:372 f.; 2:35 f., 69 f.

of things, then they would see that the true basic substance ["Grundstoff"] of all life and being ["Dasein"] is just what is terrible.

Others, however, find the true prototype of pantheism in the teaching of Spinoza. Spinoza deserves serious consideration. Far be it from us to deny him in that in which he has been our teacher and predecessor. In him, perhaps, of all moderns, there developed an [340] obscure feeling of that primordial age of which we have just tried to give a conception.

Spinoza knows that powerful equilibrium of the primordial powers which he opposes to one another as extended (therefore surely originally contracting?) primordial power and thinking (surely, by virtue of the antithesis, extending, outspreading?) primordial power. But he knows only the equilibrium, not the strife arising from their equipollence; the two powers are in inactivity beside each other, without mutual excitement or enhancement ["Steigerung"]. Therefore the duality is lost in favor of unity. His substance, or the common essence of the two powers, persists therefore in eternal, immovable, inactive sameness. The unity is itself again pure being which is never transfigured into something which is, never manifests itself in activity (*in actu*). On this account, then, in virtue of the assumed antithesis, he can only be considered as a realist, although he is this in a higher sense than Leibniz is an idealist. Instead of having to treat mainly of the living strife between the unity and the duality of the two so-called attributes and substance, he concerned himself only with the two opposites, and, to be sure, with each for itself, without speaking of the unity as an active, vital bond of the two. Hence the deficiency in his system with regard to life and development.

Have those who thought they could straightway compare the unity asserted by us with the Spinozistic unity, never noticed the concept of potencies, which even by itself includes the concept of development, of movement? [65]

[65] To Schelling's *Of Human Freedom* (1809), Jacobi had written a reply, *Von den göttlichen Dingen und ihrer Offenbarung* (1811), charging Schelling with being a pantheist, incapable of understanding freedom,

Yet if one considers in what directions philosophy has split before and after Spinoza, and how all concepts have separated, then one cannot help recognizing in Spinoza the sole son and heir of true science throughout the entire modern period. Therefore it is no wonder that each new powerful movement first had to go back to him and proceed again from him.[66]

After Descartes, the originator of modern philosophy, had broken the world into body and mind, and therefore had lost unity for duality; [*341*] after Spinoza had joined them both into one, but into a dead substance, and had lost duality for unity; then, if unity and duality themselves were not brought into living antithesis, and thereby also again brought to unity, philosophy had with each step to become more and more one-sided, until in our epoch it came in each of the two divergent directions to ultimates which could not be further dissected.

Leibniz was an antidualist in a sense completely different from Spinoza. He was the first who undertook to eliminate being completely and to convert everything into representa-

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personality, and God, and hence of being a fatalist and atheist. Schelling retorted (1812) with his *Denkmal der Schrift von den göttlichen Dingen* (*S.W.*, I, 8:19–136). It was because of the urgency of publishing this latter work that Schelling postponed the publication of *The Ages of the World*. This paragraph would seem to refer to Jacobi. Because of its lack of vituperation, it may have been written after Schelling's smashing attack of 1812.

[66] Schelling always valued Spinoza not "as a dead dog" but as one of "the imperishable writers." In the Spinozistic system, he said after 1827, "are scattered the seeds of higher developments" (*S.W.*, I, 10:40). The major criticism which Schelling made in his works from *Of Human Freedom* on was that "the doctrine of Spinoza is in general a system of necessity" (*ibid.*, p. 47): "Spinoza," he said, "calls God *causa sui*, but in the narrower sense that he *is* by the mere necessity of his nature, therefore *only is* without being able to be retained as ability to be (as *causa*); the cause has vanished completely in the operation and stands simply as *substance*" (*ibid.*, p. 35). In his lectures on the science of reason he made a similar charge: ". . . in Spinoza's concept, which also receives this name [pantheism], we indeed see the *pan* because he has 'that which is'; but we cannot see any *theism* in it, since for him God is *only* 'that which is,' not that which is 'what is'" (*S.W.*, II, 1:372). The point which Schelling wished to make was that the duality which Spinoza posits in unity does not ground a real pulse or life. "Had he [Spinoza] posited the living substance instead of the dead, blind one, then that dualism of attributes would have offered a means of actually comprehending the finiteness of things" (*S.W.*, I, 10:44).

tion, so that even God was only the highest conceptual power of the universe. He had a unity, not, however, a two-sided but only a one-sided one. Yet in the ideality that alone remained, he retained the complete content of earlier systems, in so far as he denied the actual presence ["Dasein"] of bodies as such, but still left them as conceptual powers independent of our knowing and thinking.[67]

In the history of knowledge, hylozoism, revived at about this time, especially through Giordano Bruno, may be considered as corresponding to this first appearance of idealism, Leibnizian intellectualism. Like Leibniz, it, too, retains only one [part] of Spinoza's duality, but the opposite one. In so far as hylozoism considered matter in itself as living, something spiritual was at least included in this conception of being.[68]

But thought could not stop here in the course which the spirit of this new age had once taken. For the analysis was to be driven still farther. There was still something spiritual, an inner life, in being, in matter, which hylozoism had left [as the only reality]. [But] matter was yet to be changed into something absolutely dead, a mere externality without any inward-

[67] It is curious to note that Leibniz's doctrine of monads appealed to Schelling's earlier thought, whereas he later felt that "the *Theodicy* is the genuinely philosophical work of the famous man" (*S.W.*, II, 1:279). In this latter work Schelling seemed to see Leibniz on the boundary of a philosophy of freedom. But Leibniz failed to understand the principle of freedom and remained a rationalist: "That proposition," said Schelling, "which completely annuls freedom in God under the pretext of moral necessity, is the last stand of rationalism, which even assumes to be exclusively moral, and moreover, while it is [obviously] opposed merely to what is positive of revealed religion, it is really contrary to all that is positive even in philosophy" (*S.W.*, I, 10:58).

[68] Giordano Bruno (1548–1600). In 1802 Schelling published his dialogue, *Bruno*, in which his own views were expressed through the mouthpiece of Bruno, hylozoism by the character of Alexander (*S.W.*, I, 4:213–332). This allotment of parts appears to have been made so that hylozoistic materialism could be contrasted with Leibnizian intellectualism, while Schelling's synthesis of real and ideal, the natural and divine, could stand opposite Fichtean idealism. A similar treatment may be found in Schelling's *Propädeutik der Philosophie*, 1804 (*S.W.*, I, 6:85–88). Ludwig Kuhlenbeck, in his edition of *Die Weltalter*, note 34, doubts that Schelling knew very much of Bruno's work. Kuno Fischer in *Schelling* (1923), p. 598, indicates that Schelling's knowledge of Bruno derived from excerpts from the latter in the second edition of Jacobi's *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza in Briefen an den Herrn Moses Mendelssohn* (1789).

ness, into a mere accumulation of parts which were again distinguished not by anything inward, but by mere shape. And living nature, thought, the entire mechanics of human concepts, feelings, acts, were to be deduced from such matter—a doctrine in which [*342*] the nation which hatched it has laid down the truest and most striking expression of itself.

Another tendency was still left: to take away from the ideal, which intellectualism let stand exclusively, even the real which was conceived under the ideal. According to Leibniz, matter, bodies, were, to be sure, confused but nonetheless living and independent conceptual powers. Wherefore this superfluity, if everything is merely conceptual power? Why not be satisfied with that of which we are immediately certain, the human conceptual power? To be sure, when German idealism reached its climax through Fichte, the basic idea of the ego, that is, of a living unity of that which is, and of being, could awaken the hope of a higher, life-centered Spinozism. But only too soon it became evident, and was expressed so as to be clear to the common people, that the spirit of the age had intended differently: only man or the human race is present ["sei da"], namely, as conceptual power.[69]

[69] From the perspective of his later work, Schelling stresses two closely related positive influences of Fichte's thought upon the course of philosophy. In the first place, Fichte founded German idealism, by asserting that the matter as well as the form of knowledge belongs to the activity of the positing ego. (Cf. *S.W.*, I, 1:363–74). This meant that a system of freedom quite the opposite of Spinoza's system of necessity could be built; in place of Spinoza's immovable being, Fichte put the activity of the ego as absolute *prius*. (*S.W.*, I, 10:90, 92 n.; II, 3:54 f. Schelling had early contrasted Spinoza and Fichte in such a way. Cf. *S.W.*, I, 1:159, 170 f., 281 f.; 6:80.) "Since the times of antiquity," remarks Schelling, "the philosophical spirit has made no conquest comparable to that of idealism as this was first introduced by Kant. But its execution necessarily depended upon Fichte's word: 'That whose nature and being consists merely in that it posits itself, is the ego; as it *posits itself*, it *is*, and as it *is*, it posits *itself*.' And it seems to us that Fichte's importance in the history of philosophy would be great enough if his mission had limited itself merely to expressing this, if what he added, which surely always attested the subjective energy of his mind, did not, however, contribute anything to the matter" (*S.W.*, II, 1:466. Cf. *S.W.*, II, 3:55 f.). The philosophical freedom which Fichte thus gave to Schelling, the freedom to view knowledge as a process or dialectical development of self-consciousness, was of prime importance for his philosophy of mind, or transcendental idealism. But this freedom con-

As for the appearance of this idealism among us, it is only the expressed secret of the whole tendency which had been prevailing more and more for a long time in other sciences, in arts, in public life. What was the effort of all modern theology except a gradual idealizing of Christianity, an emptying thereof? As in life and in public opinion character, ability, and strength were ever less valued, but so-called humanity, for which those others must after all serve as a basis, counted as everything, so also only a God could suit this time from whose concept everything of might and power had been taken. A God whose highest power or expression of life consists in thinking or knowing, everything else being only an empty schematizing of himself; a world which is nothing but an image, indeed, an image of an image, a nought of nought, a shadow of a shadow; men who are also only images, only dreams of shadows; a people who, in the good-natured effort to attain so-called enlightenment, really arrived at the dissolution of all into thoughts, but who lost all their strength together with their darkness, and lost also that barbarous principle (let the right word be used here in any case) [*343*] which, when conquered but not annihilated, is the foundation of all greatness and beauty—such phenomena are indeed necessarily contemporaneous, even as we have witnessed them together.

How beneficent it is to know, amid such mobility and wantonness of thinking, a principle which is neither to be dissolved by the menstruum of the most acute concept nor to be volatil-

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tinued its import for him, and leads us to note the resultant or second positive aspect of Fichte's thought for Schelling's later work. This may be stated thus, that, after Fichte, the path was open for the development of a *complete, necessary, a priori* science. In that he "first completely emancipated himself from merely natural [i. e., accidental] knowing, which Kant had still held as foundation, and grasped the conception of *science to be produced* freely *by mere thought*, Fichte is justly ever and chiefly to be celebrated, and the later confusion into which he came by ill-sought self-improvement is not to be considered" (*S.W.*, II, 1:369. Cf. *S.W.*, II, 3: 51 f.). Schelling received his philosophical tutelage and many initial inspirations from Fichte; while some of the latter came to be rejected, the basic contribution of Fichtean idealism—the primacy of self-consciousness for dialectical development, and the consequent possibility of a complete, necessary, *a priori* science—were, even if reoriented in ultimate purport, always valued by Schelling.

ized in the fire of the most spiritual thinking! Without this principle that withstands thought, the world would already actually be dissolved into nothing. Only this unconquerable center preserves the world against the storms of the never-resting spirit. Indeed, this principle is the eternal power of God. There must be a principle resisting revelation in primal being [“Dasein”], for only such a one can become the ground of revelation. If there is a power which effects a revelation, must there not also be a power which counteracts it? How would there be freedom otherwise? An irrational principle, resisting differentiation, therefore also contrary to the creature, operates in primal being [“Dasein”], a principle which is the real strength in God, even as in the profundity of tragedy it is Strength and Violence, servants of Zeus, who chain up the philanthropic Prometheus to the rock encircled by the roaring sea. It is thus necessary to acknowledge this [principle] as the personality of God, his being in himself and for himself. In the language of ancient philosophy, personality is already explained as the ultimate act or the ultimate potency whereby an intelligent nature subsists in an incommunicable way. This irrational principle is the principle which eternally separates God from creature, instead of confounding him with the latter, as has also been supposed. Everything can be communicated to the creature except to have the immortal ground of life in itself, and to be of and by itself.

It cannot be said that such a principle is in itself unworthy of divine nature, because this principle is that by virtue of which God is he himself as he himself, the one and only, cut off from everything else. That, as an active principle, it is unworthy of the divine nature, involves a false presupposition. For, as active, the principle precedes the existent God. In the God who is present [“daseienden”], it is conquered. But were it ever to come forth into [*344*] action, then it would first have to be determined whether [this were] by divine will.

As regards age, realism doubtless has the superiority over idealism. Whoever does not recognize the priority of realism, wants development without preceding envelopment; he wants the blossom and the fruit growing out of it, without the hard

covering which encloses them. As *being* is the power and strength of the eternal itself, so is realism the power and strength of every philosophical system. And in this connection, too, it holds that the *fear* of God is the beginning of wisdom.[70]

Every [system] recognizes that the power of contraction is the really active beginning of each thing. The greatest glory of development is expected not from what is easily developed, but from what is enclosed and decides for development only with opposition. But many do not want to acknowledge that primordial holy power of being, and would like to banish it at the outset before, conquered in itself, it yields to love.

What holds of realism also holds of pantheism. As, therefore, realism has the precedence of antiquity before all other views, so unquestionable priority belongs to pantheism before its opposite, idealism and dualism. We can say that pantheism is the earlier and older system even in divine revelation. But it is just this pantheistic system of archaic times, this primordial state of all-oneness and total confinedness, which is more and more to be suppressed and posited as past by the succeeding age.

[70] Cf. Prov. 1:7; 9:10.

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