

Revealing Reason

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Introducing Schelling's Argument

“The Kantian Critique as a whole was a great preparation geared towards finally answering the question as to whether the existence of God is proven. To this end, Kant had called together and interrogated all the different faculties that make up human reason as a whole, i.e., the investigation was entirely enclosed within the [conscious] subject.”¹ Schelling takes up Kant's project, but alters the subjectivity of human thought so as to base thinking on an objective, non-individual, common, preconscious ground. Schelling's modification of the usual ontological argument must therefore be understood *as* and *from* this new—already always prior—ground. In *The Berlin Lectures*, Schelling states a startlingly concise and apparently enthymemic argument for the existence of God:

If that which necessarily exists is *God*, then this and that consequence—we want to say, then *a, b, c*, and so on—become possible; but if according to our experience *a, b, c*, and so on, really exist, then the necessary conclusion is that which necessarily exists is *really* God.²

The formulation is that of a hypothesis which is verifiable in or by experience. It is important to note that it is not existence which is verified but the nature of the necessary existent, an essential quality that identifies God.³

¹ SW II/1, 373, my translation. I refer to *Schelling Sämtliche Werke*, ed. K.F.A. Schelling (Stuttgart-Augsberg: J.G. Cotta, 1856–64) as SW part/volume: page.

² Schelling, *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy: The Berlin Lectures*, trans. Bruce Matthews (SUNY, 2007), hereafter, GPP, 208.

³ “So that I make myself completely clear: not the absolute *prius itself* will be proved (this is above all proof, since it is the absolute and through itself indubitable beginning), thus, not it itself (the absolute *prius*) will be proved, but rather what the consequences are that follow from this, these must be *factually* proved, and only thereby do we prove the divinity of that *prius*—that it is God, and that *God* therefore exists.” Schelling, GPP, 180.

The initial clause in his argument is usually (mis)understood as “If God exists then certain consequences follow,” an argument which is obviously circular if the conclusion simply asserts that it is the consequence that prove the existence of God.⁴ According to Matthews, Schelling’s hypothesis, “the conclusion that consequences a, b, c, etc., are possible only if God exists,” might appear to be presupposed as the ground whereby the conclusion could be proved. “But the empirical dimensions of Schelling’s method do not do away with the fact that his method of demonstration is built on a hypothesis whose status questionable.”⁵ In defense of Schelling, Matthews then advances the *abductive* form of logical argumentation. There are two nuances here. The consequences do not depend on the existence of God but on his character. Schelling would classify as *necessary* any consequences that follow logically from simple existence, whereas the consequences he proposes are specifically contingent on the will of the *Prius*.⁶ Schelling does not argue from conclusion to cause (an abductive form) since the cause would then be a possibility, further a *potentia passiva* (GPP 132) a possibility ‘locked’ in the unchangeable past, and in the ideality of reason. In positive philosophy, the cause is dynamic acting, experienced and understood *through* movement. In all forms of logical argument, experience verifies concept as existential reality, thus moving thought to knowledge, from ‘potency to being’ whereas Schelling specifically intends to reverse the direction of thought. The move is now from experience to concept, the concept of ‘*Who*’ God is.

Bowie’s comments on Schelling’s ‘argument’ bring out the basic circularity in human comprehensibility (of the given as object): the object is *re*-cognized only though an immanent *a priori*. Rigorously pursued, this implies an

⁴ For example, Beach expands *potentia passiva*, stating “empirical data could at most serve to exemplify the nature of the Deity, insofar as they would show that the actual world does not contradict what is *a priori* necessary. But knowledge of God’s existence would be logically independent of the empirical facts. . . . Granting that *a, b, c* (the consequent), might be true, yet in principle there could be other possible causes leading to the same result; hence the desired conclusion (the antecedent) would not be deducible on these grounds alone.” Edward Allen Beach, *The Potencies of God(s): Schelling’s Philosophy of Mythology* (SUNY, 1994), 153. White also concludes that what is to be proven is the existence of God, thus a failed attempt. “Schelling’s syllogism is an attempt to ground the conviction that God exists by identifying specific sorts of features in the experienced world.” Alan White, *Schelling: An Introduction to the System of Freedom* (Yale University Press, 1983), 168. Bowie affirms Theunissen’s indictment of circularity: “Positive philosophy falls back into the proof of the existence of God. It falls back because Schelling has to begin by attributing a divinity, that is supposed to be proved *per posterius* by the so-called ‘consequence’ of the actually existing world, to that which supposedly ‘merely exists.’” Andrew Bowie, *Schelling and Modern European Philosophy: An Introduction* (Routledge, 1994), hereafter, SMEP, 165. Medri beautifully describes the movements of negative and positive philosophy but at the last assumes that the crisis is the famous “ecstasy of reason,” and the positive philosophy is based on this experience of reality. But this is not knowing of knowing. Schelling simply refused, throughout his career, even in 1795 (SW I/1: 310) to prove the existence of that which must (necessarily) indubitably exist. See Alessandro Medri, “The Ontological Proof and the Notion of Experience in Schelling,” *Idealistic Studies*, vol. 41 (2011): 69-82.

⁵ Matthews, Translator’s Introduction, GPP, 74.

⁶ GPP, 180.

absolute pre-determinability, a Spinozistic idealism⁷ which has no place for freedom, and the newness of creativity. However, a break in the circle, according to Bowie, entails a surrender of thinking, that is, incomprehensibility. Schelling addresses these requirements by his attack and defense of “negative” and “positive” philosophy. The negative philosophy is (or should be) concerned only with the possibility that is deduced by reason, and thus remains speculation (idea) until it is confirmed by experience. If that idea refers to a metaphysical entity, there can be no confirmation or proof. But Schelling realizes that is not the only way of thinking. The positive philosophy is a scientific method that concerns the formulation of a *concept* from experience. It is the hypothesis or concept that comes to be according to the perceived (experienced) phenomena. The metaphysical ‘object’ that is experienced metaphysically, consciousness of itself, or simply consciousness as such, the common basis of *all* thinking.

What is it that is Wanted?

The (unproven) assumption of the existence of God is generally considered purely irrational (a suicidal leap of faith). Positive philosophy is rejected, according to Bowie, because it *relies* on a surrender of thinking. Positive philosophy “can only begin from being which is *absolutely* outside thought . . .

absolutely transcendent being.”⁸ Getting to the origin of the potential within thought would entail the ability to recognize the origin when it is reached, but this is the problem we have repeatedly encountered: how could it *recognize* something which is *a priori excluded* from knowledge, by reflection?⁹

The crux of Schelling’s argument is that “that which necessarily exists” is (a) a requirement of reason, and (b) always presupposed as that which proves and can never itself be proven. Further, only the *a priori* concept needs proofs of existence which do not come from reason itself; the *per posterius* concept evolves from certainty. The argument is that the presupposition is not a mere static entity, that is, a logical possibility, a pure abstract, universal impersonal absolute, though it *could* remain an absolutely incomprehensible existent. For Kant himself is overcome by the unavoidable necessity of reason to assume some kind of groundless being [*eingrundlos Seyendes*]. “Incomprehensible—this existence is indeed that, if by incomprehensible one understands what is not comprehensible *a priori*. . . . But the positive philosophy concerns itself with this only in order to transform precisely that which is incomprehensible *a priori* into

⁷ Matthews quotes Schelling criticism of Hegel’s methodology: “At the end, we stand at that point where we already stood in Spinoza. *The entire system is Spinoza’s translated into idealism*. . . . I call the outcome a sad one, since if everything occurs as appearance, if the entire real world can be posited and grasped as a necessity of thought, then we find ourselves enclosed entirely in the sad circle of appearances, which the idea cannot breakthrough.” Matthews, Translator’s Introduction, GPP, 66.

⁸ SW II/3, 127.

⁹ Bowie, SMEP, 166.

what is a posteriori comprehensible: what is incomprehensible a priori becomes comprehensible in God.”¹⁰

The absolute becomes knowable through a free, unnecessary act, hence is only understandable as an actor with will and desire, a real and specific, indeed unique, person. If the consequence (of act) exists, then so must the actor. Bowie assumes that only the *a priori* concept of divinity (excluded by transcendence) is verified by the finite experience of the finite world. However for Schelling, the concept of divinity is produced and revealed only by divine act: the consequence occurs in human consciousness as such.

The original, transcendent being, absolute identity, whose *existence* is necessarily necessary cannot be recognized in the same way as a natural object (by an *a priori* concept), first because it is pure identity, thus incomprehensible to reflection, and more importantly, because, as origin, it *grounds*¹¹ or enables all that follows, thinking as well as being, ensuring the correspondence between them thus grounding comprehension itself. By thinking thinking, negative philosophy eliminates all that is contingent and reaches a concept of God, which remains merely a possibility, and *as* concept, addresses the abstract essence or being in general.¹²

The “given being” (that unique being which necessarily exists) is the originator of consequences that are absolutely comprehensive. The *actus* has its unnecessary consequence in potency, not the potency of its own being, but the *potentia universalis* in which “resides his eternal divinity and it is through this that he makes himself knowable.”¹³ Potency is actualized as the principle (intelligibility, living essence, quiddity of being) by means of which the *actus* or *prins* is recognized. According to Schelling’s argument, the disclosure of the nature (identity) of God *becomes* possible consequent to that nature itself, a nature which does not remain concealed, the in-itself for-itself, but radiates into the light of revelation. Such an identity is “the concept of that which is capable of all things, of the absolute spirit—for what is an embodiment of the principles of

¹⁰ Schelling, GPP, 205.

¹¹ According to Matthews, Schelling “maintains that the ground of explanation, and thus of reason, cannot itself be immanent to reason’s operations. It must instead be *jenseits* of the series it grounds, so that this ground can be neither reflexively appropriated or conceptually articulated, since *per definitum* it must precede our discursive analysis of it. Such a reading of the transcendental ideal dovetails with Kant’s own demand that this *ens realissimum* must serve reason as its *ground* and not as its *sum*.” Matthews, Translator’s Introduction, GPP, 39.

¹² Schelling describes the movement of reason in the “negative philosophy,” the pure thought about thought, from 1804 onwards. In the Berlin lectures, he says, “reason has none other than a *negative* concept of that which being itself is. . . . It has no concept for the being that is other than that of what is not nonbeing, of that which does not pass over into otherness, that is, a negative concept . . . through the successive elimination of everything that is not being and that lies *implicit* or *potential* in the general and indeterminate concept of being.” Schelling, GPP, 137. Negative philosophy establishes that (the absolute) being cannot not-be: being which *must* be, in which there is no possibility to not-be, being whose existence (=essence) is absolutely necessary.

¹³ Schelling, GPP, 211-2.

being can only be spirit, and what is the embodiment of all principles can only be *absolute spirit*.”¹⁴

To start simply from an experience of existence, is empiricism for Schelling. Empiricism is not philosophy but a particular science, which can cognize (not recognize) an object. Philosophy demands a grounding principle, must address the whole, and perceive the whole as living and active subject. Thus the thinkable *a priori* principle must accommodate simultaneity, freedom and creativity as well as necessity.

Producing the Concept of Being

The absolute cannot be thought as object. As absolute origin, one of the consequences of the absolute in Schelling’s argument is thought itself (consciousness as a whole). The principle (identifiable as existent essence of the absolute identity) as ground of thought cannot itself be thought. As supremely active, original principle, this single basis or ground is always dynamic, generative and constitutive, but how shall it appear in consciousness? Schelling proposes a dynamic *way* of seeing¹⁵ which determines the *act* of seeing itself as or in its object.¹⁶ As the first and ground of all thought, the principle is derived in Schelling’s philosophy through metaphysical empiricism, the knowing of knowing (being).

To have the principle itself, not only through the being [thinking subject], but free from beings, this is no longer a matter of pure thought, therefore a matter of going beyond the simple and immediate thinking; thinking beyond thinking could probably be called just thinking about thinking, but not as has been misunderstood, not about thought itself, but thinking about the—of course, completely empty—wanted beginning [origin] of thinking. With the principle, as it is in pure thought, i.e., held by the beings, we could *not*, so to speak, *start*, because it is not in us [thinking] *as* principle.¹⁷

¹⁴ Schelling, GPP, 212.

¹⁵ “Way” here refers to the scientific or systematic guiding principle. An example is the etymological word method = meta + hodos, the way beyond (an inclusive totality) of all ways. This method would be meta-noia if understanding itself is derivable from the principle. Totality in method indicates wholeness of sight, the “sound eye” (Matt. 6:22, Lk. 11:34).

¹⁶ In *Bruno and Further Presentations*, light, produced by heavenly beings, is the radiating centrum or omnipresent energy or “*self-reflection* in the sense of an ‘eyesight’ (*Augen-Blick*) that is self-related and thus constitutive of being.” See Werner Beierwaltes, “The Legacy of Neoplatonism in F.W. J. Schelling’s Thought,” *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, vol. 10, n. 4 (2010): 393-428, at 404, where eye-sight is the (in)sight of the eye that sees itself, that ‘being’ which is identical with its reflection. In the *Ages of the World*, divine vision “designates: the glimpse and what passes by in the glimpse.” SW I/8: 289.

¹⁷ SW II/1, 364-5, my translation

In his last works on the pure rational philosophy, Schelling says: “To know the truth about the principle . . . is *Nous*, and to know what follows from the Principle is *science*.”¹⁸ Schelling did not ‘define’ the consequences in the argument. In this context, “consequences” cannot be, as White put it, “identifying specific sorts of features in the experienced world”¹⁹ but the *whole*, something so characteristic to his own philosophy that it needed no explanation. The comprehension of the origin, absolute identity, divinity is truly comprehensive.

Schelling produces the “concept of being” in consciousness as that original principle of identity which enables thought itself and thus remains the preconscious ground of consciousness. He describes the concept of being many times,²⁰ as modes, moments, potencies or attributes of being. The recognizable pattern is what Schelling describes, in broad terms, as dialectic, his own *Potenzienlehre*: the pattern is repeated at every stage, in nature and history, in every level of knowing, “in everything!”²¹

In form, the argument supersedes all forms of argument (deductive, inductive and abductive) by being common to all, for it is based on the original basis of thought. Identity ($a=a$) is transformed through the rift between being and thought, that is self-consciousness, into the separated and jointed proposition “subject is predicate.” *Absolute* identity is presupposed in every assertion (the emphasis, ‘isness’ of truth) of the type s is p .

Schelling’s argument moves from a given existent, x , to the demonstrated essence of x through y (revealed through the objective act), which is in the process of being grasped. The subject here is the given original being: not a possibility or concept but the “that-which-is,” the *Daß*, or the ultimate reality that is necessarily presupposed in every propositional statement or Aristotelian judgment; the predicate, its “whatness.” This predication cannot be any specific or individual “consequence” or result, but an initiation—the ‘becoming possible’ of movement itself, not only of existence as such, but its continuation in the whole of human consciousness or thought over all time.²² The final recognition *will be* the ‘being’ who is pure and original actuality, the ground of thinking itself, the *actual* “principle of all principles,” the entirety of thought and being, the ‘universal’ individual, the ‘that’ which or who *is* everything that is.²³ The method is inductive in that the nature of the given being is continually conceptualized as a hypothesis, an evolving hypothesis that is formed through experience as such. To this extent, there is a certain circularity, which is inevitable in the formation of any basic concept. Such a basic concept of personal

¹⁸ Victor Hayes, *Schelling’s Philosophy of Mythology and Revelation* (Erskineville, Australia: Australian Association for the Study of Religions, 1995), hereafter, SPMR, 167.

¹⁹ White, *Schelling*, 168.

²⁰ See Schelling, GPP 143ff; Hayes, SPMR, 154ff.

²¹ Modified wording from Hayes, SPMR, 164. The pattern can be seen in the whole of Schelling’s philosophy.

²² “History as a whole is a progressive, gradually self-disclosing revelation of the absolute.” *System of Transcendental Idealism (1800)*, trans. Heath, 211, Schelling, SW I/3, 603.

²³ From Schelling, GPP, 211-2.

character is the foundation of a real relationship—for example through promises made, kept or broken—between human beings in real life situations. The result is the personal identity of the given being.

The living identity of an actor is both cause (motive) and effect of the act, visibility, and predication. “What is this or that individual but the very man who carried out this or that particular action? There can be no other definition of the individual.”²⁴ As self-caused, the act is free, as predication, it is self-revealing, the self becoming knowable (only) in the act. Self-caused entails having one’s own origin within oneself. Only the self-caused self-transformation is act, that is, movement which originates freely and thus, being free of all cause except itself, *truly* appears, shows *itself* as what it truly is. As predication, it is self-revealing, the self becoming knowable only through the act.²⁵ This must not be simply understood as Creation, implying an act that realizes an *a priori* idea of a (passive) other, which would reveal the actor as intelligent designer.

Moving Being

The first part of the hypothesis, the hypothesis or conditional clause, concerns the divinity of “that which necessarily exists,” and the second part, the conditioned result which confirms the hypothesis, is the “becoming possible of the consequences.” From this wording, it is valid to assume that Schelling considers the first to be the transcendental condition of the possibility of the second. Neither the unconditional act of “that which necessarily exists” that results in “consequences” *becoming possible*, nor the consequences themselves can be considered intelligible through external (physical or logical) law i.e., a mechanical or necessary movement.

The transcendental condition or grounding is the intrinsic *principle* of becoming which is a self-forming activity. Activity is common to both that which grounds and the grounded. The ground *is* not the consequent, for the ground “must be of a different order than that which it brings into being.”²⁶ However in a statement of identity although the “existence” of the ground, as condition, is necessarily of a *higher*²⁷ order than the conditioned consequent that comes to be,

²⁴ F.W.J. Schelling, *On University Studies*, trans. E.S. Morgan (Ohio University Press, 1966), 87.

²⁵ “Therefore it is easy to see that either the concept of revelation is meaningless and should be abandoned altogether, or it is necessary to admit that the content of revelation is such that it not only would not but could not be known unless it were revealed.” Only a free act establishes such a content. It can only be said of a God who acts that he reveals himself. Only a will can be revealed.

“A will is not revealed except through its act.” Schelling, cited in Paul Tillich, *The Construction of the History of Religion in Schelling’s Positive Philosophy: Its Presuppositions and Principles* (Associated University Press, 1975), 138. See SW II/4:5, 10.

²⁶ Bruce Matthews, *Schelling’s Organic Form of Philosophy: Life as the Schema of Freedom* (SUNY, 2011), hereafter, OFP, 53, referring to Hahn.

²⁷ The term “higher” is to indicate both priority and greater stability. Against the logical superiority of the antecedent from which the consequent is derived, in existence as we know it, the enabling power of the prior ground is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the emergence of the posterior stage, the posterior manifesting newness and a ‘moreness’ that Schelling terms “the same

there must be something recognizable as common in both. This is more evident when there is a sequence of consequents, when the consequences, *a*, *b*, *c*, are to be recognized *as* consequences. The common, the “same,” is activity, “subject” a subject of movement and of progress, understood as that which moves and progresses, and about this subject two assumptions are made: (a) It is only *one* subject that proceeds through everything. For if there were one subject in *b* and another in *c*, then *b* and *c* would be completely separated and there would be no connection (but this does not imply that *b* is the same as *c*, particular as there is an increasing potency, an exponential movement of the series in time). But (b) “This one subject must proceed through everything and cannot remain in anything . . . *Proceeding through everything and not being anything*, namely not being anything such that it could not also be something else—this is the requirement.”²⁸

The subject—that is, grounding activity—is not exhausted in any one predicate. Therefore only the entire sequence, the infinite series in many dimensions, taken as a single (systematic) whole expresses the inner nature of the subject.

Schelling stresses that the whatness of the primary one is itself a free, unnecessary consequent of its thatness.²⁹ He “is the sheer totality of all possibility

. . . the cause of being (*αἰτία τοῦεἶναι*), for the very reason that he is this.”³⁰ As self-revealing, the nature of this primary consequent is integral (indissociable) to the nature of the primary subject. The primary consequent relates to the secondary consequences like the inexponible whole relates to the unraveled, visible and intelligible series. An inexponible representation is inconceivable by definition, since it cannot be reduced to an exponent and is thus indeterminable. As inexponible measure, the whole is an explosive generative power, original chaos as “the inconceivably placeless force of an eternal beginning”³¹ To recognize and understand the absolute, then, the inexponible whole is transformed into the sequenced graded evolution—the time series of nature and

at a higher power.” However the later depends on the former so that it appears relatively necessary against the contingency of the later stage.

²⁸ F.W.J. Schelling, “On the Nature of Philosophy as Science,” trans. Marcus Weigelt, in *German Idealist Philosophy*, ed. Rudiger Bubner (Penguin, 1997), hereafter, NPS, 215, Schelling’s emphasis.

²⁹ “The diversity of things must rather be considered as the perfect *consequence* of the original being.” This would mean that God is related to the world as antecedent to consequent. The *idea* of God is the idea of an individual, necessarily existing, all-perfect Being, who is not the aggregate of finite realities but their unconditioned condition and cause.” Hayes, SPMR, 148, quoting SW II/1,

287.

³⁰ Schelling, GPP, 211.

³¹ “The fundamental intuition of chaos itself lies within the vision or intuition of the absolute. The inner essence of the absolute, that in which all resides as one and one as all, is primal chaos itself. Yet precisely here we encounter that identity of absolute form with formlessness, for that chaos within the absolute is not *mere* negation of form, but rather formlessness within the highest and absolute form, and, in a reverse fashion, absolute form within formlessness.” From F.W.J. Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, trans. Douglas Stott (University of Minnesota Press, 2008), § 65, p. 88.

history—that discursive reason can grasp. As attributes or appearances expressing God’s freedom or active selfhood, *these* consequences must also be freely self-activating and self-activated. The entire predication is therefore a *real* idea, an ideal, which is made visible (predicated), through its *own free act* of self-realization, as “the existent,” *by itself*.³² Thus the *essence* of identity is *potentia universalis* (idea) which actualizes itself as the other-than-God which is *like* God.³³ Thus essence itself is split into knowability (likeness as essence, that which is seen) and knowing (active ability to know or see), while its own essential identity enables all unification, an ‘is-ness’ that actually and eternally establishes the identity-in-difference.³⁴

The God Within

A divine act is needed if we are to come to know what or rather *who* divinity is. But the problem is that divinity is unknown before a divine act which can only be dimly divined or surmised but cannot be categorically determined *as* divine. According to Plato, the primary divine cause is “self-identical form, ungenerated and indestructible, neither receiving into itself any other from any quarter nor itself passing any whither into another, invisible and in all ways imperceptible by sense, it being the object which it is the province of *noesis* to contemplate.”³⁵

The essence of identity according to Schelling,³⁶ is its likeness only to, thus its recognizability only by, *itself*. Divinity is recognizable as divine, only *by* the divine. The distinction is between the external world that is physically sensed and the inner condition of possibility of sensing itself, that is, knowing itself. As

³² “Otherwise, *although eternal freedom would know itself, it would not be known by man.*” Schelling, NPS, 233. Thus it is the grounding idea that eventually enables primal being as free will to know itself, and through this knowing, understand the essence of divinity. In his *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*, Schelling states: “God can only reveal himself to himself in what is like him, in free beings acting on their own, for whose being there is no ground other than God but who are as God is.” F.W.J. Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*, trans. Jeff Love and Johannes Schmidt (SUNY, 2006), hereafter, EHF, 18.

³³ The metaphor is from Plato’s *Timaeus*, but the interpretation is Schelling’s. Reflectively the sequence is God-idea-world. In existence however, the essence (pure existence) of God is contradicted by the idea (pure potential, world) so that only the absolutely absolute (actuality, is-ness, real truth) of God can hold such absolute opposites together.

³⁴ The idea therefore mediates between the original necessary existent, pure and incomprehensible absolute identity, and the derived—grounded and contingent—existence of the *universe* (cosmos, or world) whose *unity* expresses the one. The ideal is therefore the common link: *das Band*. In his early writings, Schelling adopts the Platonic notion of the world-soul to denote the whole, the primary idea. “The true infinite element—from the point of view of reality—is this *absolute bond* (*das absolute Band*) between finite and infinite (infinity and finiteness). The true absolute exceeds the absolute in itself, and inhabits the intersection of the two terms of the opposition. This essential relation can be understood only if it is actually realized, that is, only if the two terms are concretely bound together (*Verbundene*).” See Leonardo V. Distaso, *The Paradox of Existence: Philosophy an Aesthetics in the Young Schelling* (Springer, 2004), 145.

³⁵ Matthews, OFP, 108.

³⁶ Schelling, EHF, 10.

primary, this inmost condition cannot be known but since it enables knowing itself, (my) knowing in every instance is a *result* or outcome of activity. Thus in order to grasp the universal knowing *in* individual knowing, a reversal is needed in the direction of knowing. As Matthews puts it, “Schelling here describes an epistemological trajectory in which the *knowing comes to—not from*—the knowing subject. . . . The ideas of this intelligible class of *arche* can instead only be known in a manner analogous to the way in which the poet creates his poem: through a modality of cognition that does not use predicates or images taken from the empirical world, but instead utilizes the divine element *within* the knower to ‘apprehend by thought itself the nature’ of the divine cause ‘in itself.’”³⁷

Divine predication³⁸ therefore has two aspects—the act of generation by the transcendent god, the god outside, and an act of comprehension by the immanent god. The immanent god unifies all that is generated through the comprehension of the common origin, thus revealing the character of the origin by establishing it. In order for anything to *be* knowable, it must appear as passive, unthinking object in relation to the thinking subject. In order that the original ‘itselfness’ of subject itself be known *as subject*, not object, *this* object must become knowable as subject.

As absolute it is beyond all knowledge; as object it is not in itself. Only in one way can the absolute subject, nevertheless, be known *as* such. It could be known if, after being an object, it were restored as subject. Then it would no longer be *merely* subject, or object such that it would be lost as subject. Then it would as object be subject and as subject be object, without therefore being two. . . . Eternal freedom would come to know itself in the way it was known.³⁹

The process moves from incomprehensibility to comprehensibility in two stages Schelling expresses the dynamism of the basic identity, subject (antecedent, *thatness*) as predicate (consequent, whatness) through the *Potenzienlehre*. If the absolute identity is $a=a$, then s is p or s is really, absolutely, p . Then the non-absolute consequences arise which re-enact the same pattern, the

³⁷ Matthews, OFP, 110, emphasis mine.

³⁸ The divine essence, logos, operates in both stages but is invisible (an unconscious influence) in the first and conscious in the second. The end result is revelation, the opening eye (which is first blind, unconscious). Truth is the living center from which life must be lived in order that it may become visible: thus, revelation *is* becoming visible of the invisible unchangeable reality.

³⁹ Schelling, NPS, 225. As Grant notes, (*Philosophies of Nature after Schelling*, 16), in the 1794 essay “Of the I as Principle of Philosophy” Schelling considered the self as principle is the *itself*, the *to auto*, of the unconditioned (*das Unbedingte*) which cannot be a thing. This early idea (“the absolute *I* is ascertained as *that which can never become an object at all*.” SW I/1:167) is not rejected, but investigated throughout Schelling’s career. In 1821, he writes God’s freedom is above natural freedom (from thinghood, necessity) and so remains free even when through enabling necessity itself. Such a freedom is manifested in un-necessary commitment, such as fulfilling a vow.

sequence of which as a whole expresses p . This is the form of the first half of the argument.

The Negative or First Interpretation

The ordered *sequencing* of the consequence is implied within the moments. The succession is originally eternal and intelligible. When the sequence is not visible, time as historical epoch does not move. The movement of the noetic moments “is a process which is proto-typical of the actual process of progressive emergences (*Entstehen*) which we observe in Nature.”⁴⁰

The antecedent has the consequent in itself as mere possibility. Therefore, in the whole ascending series, each member demonstrates that it does not exist for its own sake precisely by virtue of the fact that it is absorbed by a member higher in the series. This fact can be established even by a fairly superficial glance at the phenomenal world [where] we see] the pure material, the stuff and the elements, gather themselves together . . . into bodies, and . . . rises to the organic level in the plants, followed by the animals and then by man.⁴¹ “Man is not merely the end of nature, he is also the beginning, the starting point,⁴² of a different and completely new world, a world which rises above and goes beyond Nature, the world of *knowledge*, of *history* and of the *human race*.”⁴³ The goal of all becoming, concludes Schelling, is God in his pure ipseity.⁴⁴

Thus the first interpretation of the ‘consequences’ is: A = real productivity of nature, expressing movement from s to o , where predication is achieved by the entirety of what is, as object (o), B = the self-transformation of human consciousness in history, movement from o to s , and C = the entire movement, resulting in an intensified (knowledge of) identity, i.e., God.⁴⁵

But in stark contrast to the second half of Schelling’s argument this is *not* how the consequences are experienced. That is to say, rather than experiencing God’s goodness or perceiving his presence as truth, love and life, what is experienced is the anguish and agony of evil, and churning emotions associated with hatred, resentment bitterness, fear and shame.

Evil is a positive force. It manifests itself most clearly, not in small and mean spirits, but in the greatest and most dynamic. In these spirits evil does not flow from cowardice and trepidation, but from a terrible strength and a genuine

⁴⁰ Hayes, SPMR, 164, Hayes is quoting from Schröter edition of Schelling’s works.

⁴¹ Hayes, SPMR, 176.

⁴² As end *and* beginning, destiny and origin of movement, humanity is mind, the middle, pivot, or turning point (*μετανοιας*).

⁴³ Hayes, SPMR, 174.

⁴⁴ Hayes, SPMR, 176.

⁴⁵ “In the one itself . . . [character, personality] is indestructible, for it can contain nothing possible, since it is an invincible and indissoluble individuality, an individual essence (*Wesen*) like no other.” SW II/1, 317, as quoted by Hayes, SPMR, 156.

enthusiasm. The terrible reality of the demonic shatters the identity of the Absolute.⁴⁶

According to experience, humanity is not a unified whole that is, in the consequence B, consciousness is based on individual ego. Therefore C, the unified sequence A and B results in individual ego hostile to the other and thus the idea of a jealous and counterfeit God, a God who does not exist, let alone exist indubitably. Schelling admits 1) an aetiological monism: the ideal world is the perfect expression of the divine nature, and therefore it is the basis of his personality; 2) a teleological monism: in the world as it should be, God is all in all; his nature [seen through the Other as whole, as likeness] is in conscious unity with his self [the incomprehensible identity]; 3) an empirical dualism: *the world as it is is determined by an anti-divine principle*.⁴⁷

Therefore finite individual consciousness cannot be B which in general, is a reversal of A—but part of A. A, the first consequence corresponds to the natural or real determination, the real relation to mythic powers in first human consciousness, to negative philosophy in free thought and finally to the anti-divine principle at the level of spirit. A is thus potency grounded in the materiality of idea, pure potency, blind driving force, the indifference and chaos of primal nature actualizing itself in human consciousness as the anti-divine (inverted or perverted) principle.⁴⁸

Moving Eternity

The error of equating A to nature and B to history is a Hegelian understanding of nature as object against the thinking subject. For A to *ground* B, A deliberately withdraws or contracts itself in order to (give) ground or enable the consequent, B, to *be*, and this is balanced by the dependency of B on A. It also rests on a misunderstanding of the notion of eternal act, a notion which is not natural to reflection which works in and with time. The profundity and dazzling originality of Schelling's *Potenzienlehre* is then completely missed. The obvious assumption is that event or sequence A must be completed before the sequence B starts, and B before C. This is typical of a logical concept (*potentia passiva*, which is incapable of self-generation). For instance, "Kant's epistemology is incapable of

⁴⁶ Fackenheim, *The God Within: Kant, Schelling and Historicity*, ed. John W. Burbidge (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 96-97.

⁴⁷ Tillich, SPP, 171, n. 24, my emphasis and insertion.

⁴⁸ The first potency, A as B, is pure individual will which seeks to establish itself by rejecting wholeness, the universal principle, A2. In refusing to subject itself to A2 (A1 as ground, condition of possibility of A2), A1 establishes itself as the existent instead of A2, thus an inversion or perversion of order. Beach, *Potencies*, 132. "This inverted potency would [has] become an unruly substance, opaque to the penetrating light of reason." In human consciousness, the passive resistance of unconscious nature activates potency into the self-forming principle—the *anti-divine*. See Beach, 133. "The actualized first potency transforms into a positive [actual as real action] force for disorder [destruction], disruptive and tumultuous in the extreme . . . "blind" [unreasoning] existence, this principle would ceaselessly work [for itself] *against* all that is systematically ordered and rational [the harmonized and beautiful whole] . . . the world."

processing that which is simultaneously the cause and effect of itself⁴⁹ In an organism, “the reciprocal interaction of distinct parts can only be comprehended if they are simultaneously thought of as belonging within the same whole, that is, the ideal of reason.”⁵⁰

[Schelling] employs Kant’s logic of organism to generate this [active] concept, wherein the whole of this idea of being must be presupposed in order to enable reflexive understanding to articulate, after the fact, the constituent members of being . . . he lays out, in a timeless succession, the emergence of: 1) the subject of being, 2) its object, and 3) their coupling “as one inseparable subject = object.”⁵¹ The progression of this emergence is thus heuristic: since only all three make up the original unity, Schelling’s sequential account of their emergence must be understood as the only order in which the clarity of reflective thought can present their simultaneous emergence.⁵²

What is equally important is the equi-possibility of the oppositions that simultaneously arise from the same identity, oppositions which cease when one follows the other as B follows A. In the *Potenzienlehre*, Schelling describes evolution as graded—a stepwise increase in transfer of power within the individual, as potency, freedom and individuality. Thus original chaos does not decrease with increasing order, but increases also, for the same potency underlies both. The past is not an event that occurred long ago in time, but the eternal act that underlies the present, that is ever present *as* past. The concept of being, the pattern of potencies therefore recapitulates itself at an ever increasing intensity of force, an explosive “orgasm of forces.”⁵³

The divine act reveals primal—inmost, own most—being which is *will*. The identity of thought and being, is the is-ness of absolute truth, a living principle. God therefore *exists* as Spirit, absolutely free willing that exists as absolutely necessary principle, universally recognizable living essence. Accordingly likeness lies in *personality* or personal identity, where selfhood raised to spirit is personality.⁵⁴ The corresponding primal act of the self-formed Idea is an act of will.

Ambiguity: Joint and Break

Likeness is pure ambiguity since it is the mediation, the reciprocal relation between the original and copy. Ambiguity is compounded when likeness is essentially freedom or self-hood. Thus the (Platonic) idea is simultaneously

⁴⁹ Matthews, Translator’s Introduction, GPP, 17.

⁵⁰ Matthews, Translator’s Introduction, GPP, 44-5.

⁵¹ SW II/3, 77.

⁵² Matthews, Translator’s Introduction, GPP, 35.

⁵³ *Ages of the World*, trans. Wirth, 90, SW I/8, 320.

⁵⁴ EHF, 38.

God's idea of the world (entirety of creation: universe, cosmos) as the self-formed ζῶον ἔννοον ἔνψυχον that *most resembles* him,⁵⁵ and the world's idea of God.⁵⁶ As God's idea, idea is grounded in the actuality or identity of God. The other-than-God who is the presentation of the whatness or likeness of God is the *universal* individual who *is* the actualized idea—the living principle of all principles, wholeness, unity.⁵⁷ *This* existent is grounded by pure identity, exists as actual idea i.e., spirit, unassailable truth and life itself. This is the ideal, the identity, what-ness or true appearance of God.

The middle member between the pure idea of God and the real (chaotic) world of becoming relates to world (as ideal, goal of becoming) in the same way as God relates to his essence. This middle member is the world-soul.⁵⁸ This middle member, the ambiguous point where divine and non-divine meet exhibits the *likeness* (divinity as a goal) for which every member of the world, and the world as a whole strives. The soul seeing in itself the likeness of God assumes it can become (as) God. The separation is that the God-in-process⁵⁹ is the other-than-God who becomes *like* God, but can never *be* God. The immediate supposition that divinity (absolute knowledge) is a possibility which is attainable by *human* knowledge, which rejects the prior grounding power of God, is an inversion of the position whereby identity is negated as ground and posited as

⁵⁵ In 1794 Schelling studied the *Timaeus*. The Platonic deity out of his own *goodness* desires that creation be as “like unto himself” as possible (*Tim.*, 29e). The identifying characteristics of the creature are: 1. Ζῶον 2. ἔννοον: As ἔννοον a being is essentially intelligent (in itself, that is, by nature), and as νοῦς, mind is *within the whole*. That it is ζῶοννόητον can be determined only by *in* sight as against sight. 3. ἔνψυχον since only through ψυχή can νοῦς *become present in anything*, where ψυχή is the capability of movement: self transformation. 4. Beautiful as a whole (single unified characteristic encompassing the above 3, describing the complete being, organism or animal). These characteristics are essential, belong to quiddity of the creature. In other words, “living” is not merely an adjective that happens to describe the creature: in its innermost and own most essence, this creature comes to be as that which *lives*: it is “animated,” and in and through this animation, comes to be recognized as what *it* is, distinct from all else. *It* is like God.

⁵⁶ Where “world” is object in “idea of world,” God is subject in the “idea of God.” God can never be simply object (passive ‘thing’ subject to natural law as noted above, see footnote 32). This is a reversal of thought.

⁵⁷ “This concept [of God], the concept of that which is represented absolutely, is to be that of the universal essence, the *potentia universalis* . . . this one who is not (ἡ ὄν), who is the sheer totality of all possibility, and who is the cause of being (αἰτία τοῦεἶναι), for the very reason that he is this [internal power, own principle, not external cause]. In this the being of being [*das Seyende-seyn*] (as we earlier called being [*das Seyende*] the embodiment of all principles) resides his eternal divinity, and it is through this that he makes himself knowable.” GPP, 211-2.

⁵⁸ Hayes, SPMR, 177. See also Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, 15 and 12. “For as the essence of God consists of absolute, solely unmediated reality, so the nature of the soul consists in cognition that is one with the real, ergo with God.” In *The Ages of the World*, Schelling introduces the soul as *Mitwissenschaft* which Wirth and Vater translate as “con-science,” and Bolman as “co-knowledge”—this knowledge is essential and divine, not existential and finite cognition.

⁵⁹ The becoming of the world was first assumed by Schelling to be the becoming of God, an error which he corrected only in the positive philosophy. God cannot be a result (neither his being nor his thought can *evolve* from possibility to actuality). Schelling, *History of Modern Philosophy*, trans. Bowie, 133.

goal.⁶⁰ This false identity is recapitulated as endlessly as the true one, thus the “totality of the existent,” the whole as world soul is shattered and only held together by the divine act. The break between the primary and the derived or secondary consequents that reveal the absolute identity is an eternal act, and has been described as the “ungrounding” or the fall. It is therefore the equal (counter) action of the Absolute that overcomes the break that actually posits and affirms an irreversible sequence that ends in self-revelation.

The Fall

That the false identity is not *recognized* as false is due to the ambiguity between incomprehensibility of absolute identity and the incomprehensibility or original chaos—ground and unground (*abyss*) *appear* the same. The deception or unrecognizable error, the Fall is already sketched briefly early in Schelling’s career (*Philosophy and Religion*, 1804) and described in the Berlin Lectures.⁶¹ In the immediate content, (self-consciousness, Soul), the infinite potency of being appears = possibility of becoming, thus eventually, being infinitely perfect, absolute = God. This is an actual impossibility since potency must become actual (energized) that is, possibility is separated from actuality, therefore is only appearance or form. In actuality, even if potency is completely actualized, only the essence, not the existence is realized—the becoming God cannot be God himself. God, unlike the soul has a being of his own, “a being which is independent of the existent. Whereas the soul does not have a separate and independent existence: its being consists purely in being the [potency, material of the] existent.”⁶²

Given this “dual relationship of the soul—potentially God yet possessed of a standpoint independent of God by virtue of its relation to the [totality of the] existent,”⁶³ the soul is imbued with a double will. Either it can relate to God as dependent material, derived potency, thus subject itself to the original existent =

⁶⁰ In general, evil or perversion of principles is seen as correctable by human effort. Once evil, i.e., error, is removed, the self is to be Absolute, the other-than-God who is also God. Habermas sees Schelling in a materialist tradition: “My claim is that the construction of this *alter deus* is the true theme of the *Ages of the World*, even though the individual fragments do not reach their intended systematic goal—the point at which creation *praeter deum* turns into creation *extra deum*. . . . In a peculiar perversion of the ‘true’ relation, the outer has gained power over the inner, the lower over the higher . . . a false unity” which Schelling relates to theogony, and Marx relates to sociology. Habermas, “Dialectic Idealism in Transition to Materialism: Schelling’s Idea of a Contraction of God and its Consequences for the Philosophy of History,” in *The New Schelling*, ed. Judith Norman and Alistair Welchman (London: Continuum, 2004), 57, 79.

⁶¹ “The potency that moves within being, to the extent that it has not moved, is still the subject of being; it is still equal to that *which Is*, but it has only the appearance of being, for it presents itself as that which is not as soon as it becomes something different. Indeed, for becoming in general, for the very reason that it *becomes*, is not that *which Is*. It—the immediate potency—is thus only materially, only essentially, that is, only contingently, being so that it can also not be that *which Is*.” GPP, 136.

⁶² Hayes, SPMR, 178

⁶³ Hayes, SPMR, 178.

ideal, or it can refuse to so relate and take for itself the potency which belongs rightfully to the original ideal = existent [*potentia universalis*], thus becoming independent of God, an extra-divine being who is *as* god, but not God himself. Since it does not however, possess existence in itself, this move is simply self-annihilation: the becoming *alter deus*, the false idea of God. In the realization of the individual ego that opposes the universal in its *blind* effort to copy the only actual one, the mediating idea is literally blown apart. The idea of the whole therefore is shattered in existence and recedes into obscurity, the presupposed past which is present in every one, but potentially or materially, not as a determinate idea.

In God himself, there is no chaotic primal nature but the absolute identity of *eternal* nature (power, freedom energized through actual, necessary and perfect principle). In this identity, the ideal aspect is not possibility as such, but *potentia universalis*, idea. Due to the immanence of the idea (I-ness) as ground, the world-soul or copy assumes itself to be self-generated, thus, as origin of movement, God.⁶⁴ Finitude of existence is not a bar to its identity with itself. The ideal self achieves identity or personality when its energized potential (selfhood in active behavior) becomes an unconditional principle, when its own character is independent of circumstance. What is the goal of the striving, the movement of this world, both unconsciousness and consciousness?

It is God in his pure ipseity. Everything which is becoming, every member of the series, seems to have impressed upon it a feeling of the vanity of its being-for-itself, and is filled with a desire to attain that which exists by and for itself. “That to which all becoming aspires is not a general principle . . . but an absolutely individual being, i.e., one which is as such pure actuality (*Wirklichkeit*), unmixed, excluding all potentiality, not entelechy but pure energy, not something immaterial like the soul, but the supra-material.” The whole world of becoming, every thing and every soul, aspires after God as such, and they do so “without knowing or willing it but simply by nature.”⁶⁵

In the dark womb of matter, longing does not yet know *what* it longs to be but is simply the will that wills itself. This will is therefore indifferent, pure power that is only aware of its own lack of being. In the blind becoming, the difference between the true and false likeness is at first indistinguishable, positing the mythic gods. The true in-forming Idea breaks in on the darkness as God’s act. As light grows, so does darkness. The will of the ego can submit and accept its dependence on the whole as its goal or else the drive actualizes itself as blindness of blindness, a determined rejection of light, thus the destructive anti-divine principle. As conscious self-hood grows, possibility expands and the self as appearance of God becomes clearer and brighter. The horror of the deception

⁶⁴ The existence of God is finally not verifiable by the senses because ‘the act’ is ‘behavior’ which needs understanding and insight to be grasped. The act reveals primal—inmost, own most—being which is *will*, not mere existence physical or otherwise. The identity of thought and being, is the is-ness of absolute truth. God therefore *exists* as Spirit, and accordingly likeness lies in the *personal* character of selfhood.

⁶⁵ Hayes, SPMR 176, quoting from SW II/1, 412.

is that the greatest evil is actualized when the being appears to be (is, in form) *most* like God but is, by its own self-determined nature, God's adversary. The essence of *deception*, the break or lie, is the likeness that *appears* as God but *is-not* God. The Fall is the primeval act of the original being, who was *like* God, i.e., appeared in the form of God, and thought and sought to *make* herself *God*. This original human⁶⁶ is not a past concrete being but simply the essence of egoity. The Fall is therefore occurring in every being, as long as it is not actively counteracted, by that being.⁶⁷ This is the first consequence, A, that in some sense must be reversed by B.

Metanoia⁶⁸

The pure ego, the will that wills only itself must be transformed and actualized as the will that wills the common, i.e., universal idea: wholeness, harmony with every other. Through the accomplished inner unity the inner identity of God will be seen. This means an unconditional (limitless) loss of ego, self-identity—a refusal to use power for oneself but only for the sake of the other's well-being. This entails facing (counteracting) the actuality of the anti-divine principle with the divine actualization of the divine principle. Every actual and hostile opposition, the unlimited viciousness of evil, is counteracted with a resolute refusal to destroy the other, to maintain a loving relationship with the hateful and contemptible other: a divine acting out of the divine principle that will *naturally* end in death. However if the spirit or actualized principle of the being has come to be as an appropriation of the divine principle, the being as spirit is grounded in the necessary existence of the divine being.

The refusal to *be* God in order to be *like* God is the inversion of the actualized inverted potencies—the establishment of the right relationship: mediation with God. The single whole individual is termed the Son (the unnecessary self-revelation, proceeding from God, the ambassador, representing one “who is sent out” *praeter* divine becoming *extra* divine), that is, the pre-

⁶⁶ The human being is the center of the generative idea, where the center is the point of highest activity, ideally, a perfect balance of right proportion that orders and harmonizes every activity. In another metaphor, the human is potentially the whole, since all other beings are comprehended or properly identified—put in place—by the human's power to grasp the whole and the part. See Gen. 1 and 2.

⁶⁷ Tillich, SPP, 18, 19. Humans fall “by attempting to arrogate God's freely creative powers exclusively to themselves. But their fall does not occur all at once. It occurs as a process in which they increasingly posit the world “outside God, not simply *praeter*, but *extra Deum*.” Rather than perceiving that it is God's activity (through the real evolution of nature) that enables self-hood, the presupposition in the Fall is that the thinking self can become absolute, transcending nature by its own efforts. Schelling says of Fichte: “In the last analysis what is the essence of his whole opinion of nature? It is this: that nature should be used . . . and that it is there for nothing more than to be used; his principle, according to which he looks at nature, is the economic teleological principle.” SW I/7, 17.

⁶⁸ In the context of Schelling's *Philosophy of Revelation*, *metanoia* is change of consciousness *as such*, a new level of awareness in humanity, and incorporates the Hebrew meaning of “turning point” (or “pivot”—see footnote 42).

existent Christ, the rightful Lord of being. “If God has his *prius* in *actus*, then he will have his divinity in the potency, in that he is the *potentia universalis*, and as this that which is above being, the *Lord* of being.”⁶⁹ The extra divine divinity, the Son as the central idea (*Mittelpunkt*, man), the balance or whole, has the freedom to either identify himself *as* God (*alter deus*) by virtue of the *potentia universalis* which *is* himself, or to pour out this potency (ability to appear as the whatness of God) and thus though cut off from God through the Fall as Man, become *like* God in his self giving, a copy of God but not God. As Lord, possessing in himself, the totality of creation (Logos, light, life, absolute comprehension of what-is, wisdom) the Son *could* exist as God: this means he could be the form of God (Phil. 2: 6) actually but not essentially since his nature would not be ‘the same’ as God’s if he took all power to himself.⁷⁰ That would have been the ultimate lie. “The Son, however, rejected *this* sovereignty which he could have had independently of the Father, and *therein* is he Christ. That is the fundamental theme of Christianity.”⁷¹ Schelling describes the act of the Son who renounces the *morphe theou*, and externalizes or empties himself.⁷² Since as discussed above, the form or appearance of God is mere possibility, not the essence or true character of God, authentic divinity is *revealed* by this act of kenosis.⁷³ The externalization or becoming-visible as human is thus a manifestation of true glory (John 1:14).

The divine principle is completely (absolutely) and unconditionally brought to life, that is, actualized, in the man Jesus. With Christ’s act (a) liberation from the will that cannot will anything except itself and (b) revelation of God’s character *become possible*. Thus, Christhood (Sonship) is identified with the *totality* of creation and is described by Schelling in terms such as the idea of God (both directions of meaning), *the* existent, divine principle, or the self-revelation of God. God is the one who is all and thus cannot be revealed in *individual* destinies but only in history as a *whole*, only history as a whole is a revelation of God—and then only a progressively evolving revelation. Although history represents only one side of the destinies of the universe, it is not to be conceived of as partial but rather as symbolic of those destinies that repeat themselves in their entirety and are clearly reflected in it.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Schelling, GPP, 202.

⁷⁰ These interpretations are based on Schelling’s Christology summarized by Hayes, SPMR.

⁷¹ Hayes, SPMR, 228.

⁷² SW II/4, 158f., quoted by O’Meara, “Christ in Schelling’s Philosophy of Revelation,” *Heythrop Journal* 27 (1986): 279.

⁷³ Understood as the act that enables divinity to appear, “kenosis” introduces the highest ambiguity. The interpretation that selfhood is sacrificed to gain absoluteness emerges from ego, for absoluteness (substantiality) is *given* to the *other* through kenosis. The Hegelian “self-negation at the foot of the Cross” (Vater, Translator’s Introduction, *Bruno*, 94) falls under the Kierkegaardian judgement that this synthesis of philosophy and theology “is for that precise reason the most dangerous attack on Christianity ever made.” Fackenheim, *The God Within*, 94.

⁷⁴ Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, 44. History is evolution of consciousness and therefore only a part of the overall movement from alpha to omega. But this part contains (the vision of) the whole and so does each individual movement.

The biography of Christ is therefore the history and destiny of the universe, and beyond. Christ, the all in all, is therefore self-caused consequent, that world-soul, the *potentia universalis* actualized as absolute spirit who discloses the inmost heart or fundamental essence of *God*.

Conclusion

Schelling's triadic "concept of being" provides the means of seeing that sees itself, the recapitulated pattern of self-caused/self-effect that approximates simultaneity and absoluteness. The *Potenzienlehre* presents the pattern as the powers in exponentially increasing tension, neither separated nor joined. The heart of the ambiguity is understood as will: it is, and is-not, capable of accord and discord with being. In knowing of knowing, being is ex-pressed, brings itself into light, *aletheia* in the Heideggerian sense, where *lethe* is chaos, ambiguity. Expression is an act of will that affirms the principle of identity, and concordance or unchangeable truth appears in reality. "Revelation is precisely this: the manifestation of the true God as such . . . [and] discloses the essential structure of all reality whether this is mind or history, the finite or the infinite."⁷⁵ Now, self-evident truth irreversibly changes consciousness as a whole, thus moves time as epoch. The meta-physical experience of this change, consciousness of consciousness of being provides the confirmation or correction of the hypothesis in Schelling's argument.

Freedom and substantiality is *lost* by the eternal act of primal nature. Schelling describes the vicious spiraling of the repressed⁷⁶ blind drives for acquiring being through rejection of original being. This drives the alienated self to the limit, the abyssal experience of falling; only in existential despair, consciousness of the experience of profound and utter futility will the self turn to God as the true, newly (re)established and only active principle within oneself. In this (re)turn, the self freely becomes *itself*. In turning, the human longs for and experiences "the existence of an active personal God (not an object of contemplation) who comes to meet the individual person; the active actual God who can oppose the fact of the Fall, the God who is Lord of Being."⁷⁷ Continual rejection ends in self-annihilation. The freeing of the original principle from deception and natural necessity, the real forces of mythology unleashed by the potency of the immanent idea of God, and its appropriation by the anti-divine force is the as-yet unfinished 'work' of the divine spirit. Although freedom is enabled throughout by grounding, to *establish* freedom, which was lost by rejection of the original proposition (principle), the consequences of the rejection (ambiguity, duality) is allowed to proceed until the utter impossibility of the

⁷⁵O'Meara, "Christ in Schelling's Philosophy of Revelation," 277.

⁷⁶Repression here is the suppressed consciousness of being which is thrust into unconsciousness. This darkness of unconsciousness is therefore different from the pre-conscious darkness of nature. It is willed darkness, inability to see being.

⁷⁷Hayes, SPMR, 195-6.

rejected, negated, inverted principle is experienced.⁷⁸ The true principle and consequently the true way of knowing = being can then be established without curbing freedom.

The comprehension of the incomprehensible identity is Schelling's quest, that which identifies his entire philosophy. It is the *Ur-Form*, the identity, the origin, the center, the balance, the common one, emphatic being, presupposed (inexponible) whole, the intensive magnitude, the *Band*, the *Mittelpunkt*, the absolute 'isness.' Platonically, being is perceived in becoming, the supra historical recapitulated through and in the historical. The supra historical consequences in Schelling's argument are: creation as fall, A, followed by creation as reversal of fall, B, resulting in the establishment of *what-truly-is*, C. Creation *is* reconciliation, *is* revelation. This is the consequent, the eternal divine act that is the unnecessary self-revelation of the original existent whose existence is necessarily necessary, *God*. Since God is the beginning and end of the (all) reasoning, *Deus implicitus* becomes *Deus explicitus* through divine act. The comprehension of this identity is the task of positive philosophy which joins in the accomplishment of consequences.⁷⁹ "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."⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Hayes, SPMR, 159.

⁷⁹ "The experience towards which positive philosophy proceeds is not just of a *particular kind*, but is the entirety of all experience from beginning to end. What contributes to the proof is not a part of experience, but all of experience. For precisely this reason, though, this proof *itself* is not just the beginning or a part of a science (least of all some type of syllogistic proof posited at the apex of philosophy), it is the entire science, that is, the entire positive philosophy—and this is nothing other than the progressive, strengthening with every step, and continually growing proof of the actually existing God." GPP, 181.

⁸⁰ Schelling's conclusion to his *Introduction to Ages of the World*, xl, SW I/8, 206.