The Conspiracy of Life

Meditations on Schelling and His Time

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Contents

	Introduction	1
1	The Nameless Good	5
2	Theos Kai Pan	33
3	Nature	65
4	Direct Experience	101
5	Art	131
6	Evil	155
7	The Haunting	191
8	Puruṣottama	219
	Notes	235
	Bibliography	265
	Index	281

Introduction

What is Life?

Resembles life what once was held of light,
Too ample in itself for human sight?
An absolute self? an element ungrounded?
All, that we see, all colours of all shade
By encroach of darkness made?
Is *very* life by consciousness unbounded?
And all the thoughts, pains, joys of mortal breath
A war-embrace of wrestling life and death?
—Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1804)

In Alan Loehle's remarkable painting "Dark Room" (1998), mutton hangs from a meat hook while a large dog, toys at its feet, muscles rippling through its body, hunches over, surveying the territory. At first glance, the painting appears to contrast the vitality of the dog with the once living meat of a sheep. Upon closer examination, this is an unconvincing contrast. Everything in the painting, right down to the paint itself, sparkles with life. Even the dark background accentuates the vitality of the foreground and in this activity is itself somehow vital. Everything—even what we dismiss as dead—scintillates with life. I too endeavor to speak to a life beyond the illusion of living things and dead things.

In this book I want to capture some of the spirit of this life that conspires beyond and within life and death. This book is a series of eight meditations on the philosophy of F. W. J. Schelling (1775–1854), a great—and greatly neglected—philosopher of life. It is the hope of this book to reinvigorate the site of his philosophical thinking. In this sense, it would be best not to categorize this book as a history of philosophy. It is an attempt to think with Schelling philosophically, to rejuvenate some of the pulsating life that circulates through his philosophy.

Many have long thought that we are done with Schelling, that he is a "dead dog," so to speak. As a result, only the work of the curators of philosophy

remains. One dissects the corpus of Schelling into its various periods and phases, while another situates him in relationship to his contemporaries. Still others expose inconsistencies in his thinking, attach various isms to his arguments, or situate him in some narrative within the history of philosophy.

Spinoza was also once called a dead dog because it was thought that Christian Wolff and others had finally refuted his atheism and that his pernicious contagion had been removed from the proper conduct of philosophy. In the Pantheism Controversy at the end of the eighteenth century, occasioned by Lessing's insistence that Spinoza was not a "dead dog," Spinoza's thinking slowly came back to life. It was Schelling who most facilitated this resuscitation.

It is my hope then to do a little for Schelling of what Schelling did for Spinoza. Neither are dead dogs.

In the 1809 *Freedom* essay,[1] perhaps Schelling's most daring work and one of the treasures of the nineteenth–century German philosophical tradition, he spoke of a "unity and conspiracy," a *Konspiration* (I/7, 391). When something or someone falls out of the conspiracy, they become inflamed with sickness and fever, as "inflamed by an inner heat." Schelling used the Latinate-German *Konspiration,* which stems from *conspīro,* to breathe or blow together. *Spīro,* to breathe, is related to *spīritus* (the German *Geist*), meaning spirit, but also breath. *Geist* is the progression of difference, the A^3, the breathing out of the dark abyss of nature into form and the simultaneous inhaling of this ground, the retraction of things away from themselves. The conspiracy is a simultaneous expiration and inspiration, and each thing of nature is both inspired yet expiring. This is what I call the conspiracy of life, that is, the life beyond and within life and death.

It is the endeavor of this book to speak of this conspiracy.

In the following eight chapters one will find, to use the phrase that Heidegger employed in the *Gesamtausgabe* to describe his own paths of thinking, not "works" but "ways." They comprise eight meditations on different ways of entering into the thinking of Schelling. As such, they are more like monads, each reflecting the subject, but in its own unique fashion. They are eight ways of articulating a general economy of nature, the circulation of a superabundant subject (or nonsubject predicating itself through negation in the subject position) and innumerable and inexhaustible predicates (or partial objects). For Schelling, the way in to the circular movement of the conspiracy is always what is most necessary and most difficult.

It should be obvious from such language that I consider Schelling's concerns to be relevant to contemporary philosophical discourses. In what follows, I will rely on figures like Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Deleuze, Bataille, Foucault, Arendt, Levinas, Nancy, and the Kyoto School to help excavate the site of Schelling's thinking.

Although I proceed, roughly speaking, chronologically through Schelling's writings, this is a book about the circle of time, and just as a circle has no point

that can properly be considered the beginning, there is no point in Schelling's thinking that serves as his proper commencement. There are infinite beginnings and infinite endings—errors only emerge when such natalities and fatalities become clogged and trapped within themselves. Each of my beginnings, so to speak, endeavors to find a way into the circle of Schelling's thinking, indeed, into the circle of thinking and of nature itself. As such, none of these chapters are meant to be *the* proper way into an appreciation of Schelling's contribution. They are merely attempts to enter the circle in whatever way they can.

The first three chapters attempt to situate Schelling's project both within debates contemporary to Schelling and those that speak to our philosophical climate. The first chapter concerns the superiority of the question of the Good over the question of the True. Levinas and others have alerted us to the possibility of ethics as first philosophy. I argue that Schelling already had this concern. In so claiming, I also try to differentiate Schelling's concerns from those of his former roommate and friend, Hegel. The second chapter attempts to locate Schelling's early project within the so-called Pantheism Controversy. It begins by taking seriously Jacobi's analysis of the narcissism of reason. I then consider the limitations of Jacobi's approach and finally conclude with a sympathetic analysis of the miraculous appearance of Johann Georg Hamann, the precursor to Schelling. The third chapter concludes my analysis of Schelling's place within the Pantheism Controversy. Both the second and the third chapter argue that Spinoza is an important clue to appreciating Schelling's so-called Philosophy of Nature. In the third chapter I distance Schelling's reading of Spinoza from that of Herder. I also here take up the difficult question of Schelling's relationship to Kant and conclude with a discussion of the productive imagination.

In the fourth chapter I turn to the difficult question of the role of the intellectual intuition in Schelling's thinking. Critics have long considered this to be some kind of mystical shortcut and fancy bit of epistemic privilege that jumpstarts Schelling's project. I argue against this assumption. In so doing, I hope to show that the question of the propaedeutic for philosophical activity is irreducible to mastering intellectual gymnastics and reading copious philosophical texts. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the early philosophy of Nishida Kitarō, the patriarch of the Kyoto School. In so doing, I hope to suggest some affinity between Schelling's general economy of nature and the Buddhist account of the dependent coorigination of things.

The fifth chapter is concerned with Schelling's aesthetics in particular and the relationship between philosophy and art in general. For Schelling, who championed much of Kant's *Critique of Judgment,* nature was in some sense an aesthetic progression. Close attention is paid to tragedy as an acute mode of presentation of the conspiracy of life. The sixth chapter attempts to enter into the crises that mark Schelling's so-called middle period by analyzing his account of the nature *[Wesen]* of evil. It is a close reading of the *Freedom* essay,

and I argue that this is a text of decisive importance both for Schelling and for contemporary philosophy. In the seventh chapter I analyze Schelling's enigmatic and unfinished dialogue the *Clara* (c. 1810). If Hegel's *Phenomenology* was an odyssey towards spirit, the *Clara* is a journey from the spiritworld, an explication of the haunting of nature.

I conclude with a chapter that considers a small piece of Schelling's voluminous later writings on the *Philosophy of Mythology and Revelation*. Although for many critics the critical figure in this period is Jesus Christ, I attempt to offset this prejudice by analyzing Schelling's remarkable reading of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. In so doing, I hope not only to find another opening into the site of the conspiracy of life. I also hope to suggest some of the breadth, cultural plurality, and delicacy of Schelling's later thought. The *Gītā,* I argue, has much in common with Schelling's account of the conspiracy of life.

Although there is a clear continuity between the second and the third chapters, the rest of the book does not demand that one read the chapters in chronological order. Readers are invited to pick and choose, to roam through the book's terrain, following various lines of thought. What yokes this book together dwells within these chapters' subterranean depths, rather than in the result of any linear demonstration.

Historians may wish that I spent more time cross-referencing additional texts and the philosophically impatient may wish that I spent less time doing so. Schelling was a generous thinker, endeavoring to include rather than exclude and to widen and reinvigorate the parameters of philosophy, not to reduce them to his own particular perspective on things. I have endeavored to proceed in the same spirit.

Schelling's insignia was a sphinx that pointed to the wheel of time, as if such a wheel spoke to the sphinx's carefully guarded enigma about the being of nature and the human. Over three years after the death of Schelling's first wife, Caroline, he wrote a poem to her memory ("To the Beloved"). His insignia, which had sealed and signaled the mournful letters written in the wake of her death, no longer simply spoke to her loss. It also pointed to life itself, demanding that the love of life—all of life—be also the life of love. The sphinx "points me full of spinning not towards variability. It points me towards the constancy of inner love, blessed peace in the movement of the world, under the rotation of time."

It is time to resurrect a dead dog.

1

The Nameless Good

> One cannot say of the Godhead that it is good since this sounds as if the "good" were supplementing its Being as something distinct. But the good is its being *per se*. It is essentially good and not so much something good as the Good itself.
>
> —Schelling, *The Ages of the World* (1815 version)[1]

> *Wie soll denn der Mensch der gegenwärtigen Weltgeschichte auch nur ernst und streng fragen können, ob der Gott sich nahe oder entziehe, wenn der Mensch unterläßt, allererst in die Dimension hineinzudenken, in der jene Frage allein gefragt werden kann? Das aber ist die Dimension des Heiligen. . . .*
>
> How should the human of contemporary world history be able to ask at all seriously and rigorously if the god nears or withdraws when the human above all neglects to think into the dimension in which the question alone can be asked? But this is the dimension of the Holy. . . .
>
> —Martin Heidegger, *Letter on Humanism* (1946)[2]

In a striking passage in the *Freedom* essay, Schelling argued that the human is "formed in the mother's love" and that "the light of thought first grows out of the darkness of the incomprehensible (out of feeling, *Sehnsucht,* the sovereign mother of knowledge)" (I/7, 361). In this dark longing, in the paradoxically object-free striving of *Sehnsucht,* one finds, as the dark, concealed origin of the understanding, the "desire for the unknown, nameless Good" (I/7, 361). We are confronted with two aporias. In the first, the aporia of desire, *Sehnsucht*

strives, but it does not have a specific object towards which it strives. *Sehnsucht* is a ceaseless striving without a clearly delineated desideratum. In the second, the aporia of naming, in so far as this desire can be spoken of as having an object (which, *strictu sensu,* it does not), Schelling named this quasi object the "nameless Good." But what manner of name is the "nameless Good"? On the one hand, this quasi object is named the Good, and on the other hand, this Good is qualified as being nameless. What manner of naming is this that names without naming and, without naming, nonetheless names?

Furthermore, the desire for the nameless Good, *Sehnsucht* as the sovereign mother of knowledge, places the drive towards knowledge as more fundamentally the longing for the Good. The Good precedes the true and it is in such a priority that Schelling agreed with his Munich colleague Franz von Baader that the drive to knowledge is analogous to the procreative drive (I/7, 414). It is the production or birthing of truth as the aporetic longing for the nameless Good. The generation of truth, it must be here emphasized, is born from the primacy of the call of the Good.

When Levinas charged occidental philosophy for betraying the primacy of the Good by insisting on the primacy of the True (the Good as resolved or *aufgehoben* into thinking), thinking was brought back to the site of its founding crisis. In his genealogical critique of the value of values, Nietzsche also had a somewhat similar concern, namely that the reactive mode of thinking sought to make all that is outside a normative community into something compatible with that community and, to the extent that it could not do so, its *ressentiment* condemned the barbarian remainder to the category of evil.

Granted Levinas and Nietzsche's provocation, is it the case that the nineteenth century did not provide us with other models of articulating the primacy of the Good over the True? Are there other thinkers that might aid us in articulating this Copernican revolution in thinking and ethics? I am arguing, both in this chapter and throughout this book, that Schelling, unduly overshadowed by Hegel, provided one of the first and most extensive (and not simply dialectical) models of the disequilibrium between the Good and the True. In this respect, Schelling emerges, almost a century and a half after his death, as a deeply contemporary figure in continental philosophy, contributing directly to the current debate about the primacy of the Good (beyond good and evil) in the wake of Nietzsche and Levinas. Schelling, like Levinas, puts "forth the Platonic word, Good beyond being. It excludes being from the Good, for how could one understand the *conatus* of being in the goodness of the Good?"[3]

In this chapter, I contextualize Schelling's contribution by situating it in reference to the *System* fragment, Kant's *Critique of Judgment,* and Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. I will then turn to some critical texts in Schelling's middle period, as he is negotiating the relationship between his earlier negative philosophy and his later positive philosophy, sometimes called the *Philos-*

ophy of Mythology and Revelation. Schelling's middle period, in the wake of Hegel's *Phenomenology,* straddles both the negative and positive directions of thinking and tries to reconstruct these parts into a sense of the Whole. Of the middle period texts, which I consider to be Schelling's most remarkable, I will concentrate primarily on the *Freedom* essay (1809), that strange and startling unfinished dialogue, the *Clara* (c. 1809–1812),[4] and Schelling's never completed magnum opus, *The Ages of the World* (1811–1815).

I

The Oldest System Program fragment (c. 1797), written in Hegel's hand, but reflecting a complex cross-fertilization of the thinking of the Tübingen trio (Hegel, Schelling, and Hölderlin), immediately proclaims that the fundamental concern of German idealism is ethics. In fact, the very first words are simply the restatement of the title as "an Ethics *[eine Ethik]*." It is certainly not my concern here to ferret out whose voice, despite Hegel's physical writing of the fragment, predominates the fragment and hence which philosopher could lay claim to primary authorship. I find such a question of dubious value.[5] Rather, I simply begin by noting that all three implicitly agree that in some way the primary concern of thinking, the question that births philosophy's noblest endeavors, is not the True, but the Good. Long before Levinas claimed that the "correlation between knowledge and being, or the thematics of contemplation, indicates both a difference and a difference that is *overcome* in the *true,*"[6] one finds immediately in the *System* fragment a claim that implies that ethics, not epistemology or ontology, is first philosophy. "Inasmuch as the whole of metaphysics will in the future be subsumed under *moral philosophy [künftig in die Moral fällt]*—a matter in which Kant, with his two practical postulates, has merely provided an *example,* and has *exhausted* nothing—this ethics will be nothing else than a complete system of all ideas, or, what comes to the same, of all practical postulates" (OS, 8).

These claims are as straightforward as they are revolutionary. Following Kant, but claiming that Kant was only a beginning, that his thinking has not at all exhausted the matter at hand, the *System* fragment argues that all true ideas are fundamentally ethical statements and that this is so because the Good implicitly precedes the True. Indeed, in some way, one would only desire the true if somehow desire came to relate to the True as worthy of desire. For the True to become a desideratum, its goodness as such must already have announced itself. One values the True only insofar as it is good to do so; hence a relationship to the Good stands in advance of a relationship to the True.

Yet what does it mean to demand that the True follow from the Good? This is a question of decisive importance for all of German Idealism, indeed perhaps for all of thinking.

The fragment is quite clear about what this question does *not* mean. It is not a new state program, a new project for the civil servants of the truth. The idea of the Good is clearly equated with the idea of Freedom and this idea excludes the possibility of a mechanical conception of thinking. "I want to show that there is no idea of the *state,* because the state is something *mechanical*" (OS, 9).[7] A machine—at least in the sense intended here—proceeds from a preordained and clearly discernible first principle. It is a closed, synchronic system and is hence, so to speak, always up to something. Its movement is always on the way to getting something done. It is the reduction of the movement of freedom to the movement of some species of *work*. But what if freedom were not a thing but, in some way still to be thought, the first principle? And what if this principle were a "barbarian" principle, always outside the wall of any system that it inaugurates? Then its primary law of movement could always contradict the laws that it inaugurated because it would remain aloof from that which it propagates. The idea of freedom is the idea of sovereignty, of that which remains free from what it engenders, of that whose *ideatum* always exceeds its *idea*.

The matter of this excess, as I shall soon argue, remains of critical importance, but for now it shall suffice to say, "Thus we must proceed beyond the state!" In fact, variations of this prepositional construction, *über etwas hinaus* (through x in order to get beyond x), are often found in the early writings of Schelling that comprise what he later referred to as his "negative philosophy." In these texts, Schelling led each discursive project to the incomprehensible origin of its own discursivity, attempting to demonstrate that the first principle by which a discourse is founded cannot, in its turn, be founded. Hence, each and every one of these principles, themselves the progenitors of their respective systems, is brought face to face with the ruinous opacity of their own provenance, an opacity that evades all efforts at constituting it and which remains as the ground of all that exists. It is darkness as the ground of existence that disrupts all attempts at constituting it as, to borrow a phrase form the 1809 *Freedom* essay, *ein nie aufgehender Rest,* an indivisible remainder that cannot be resolved into the understanding but which, in contesting the understanding, remains the "incomprehensible ground of reality" (I/7, 360).

This excess, the incessant sovereignty of all beginnings, is, for Schelling, the power of life, the life of freedom, which, if subsumed by the machinery of the state and its bureaucrats of the truth (the Good whose *ideatum* is resolved in the idea), always leads to the necessity that the state "treat free human beings like mechanical cog wheels" (OS, 10). German Idealism, at least as expressed in this fragment, would be opposed to all totalitarian modes of thinking as an unacceptable betrayal of the Goodness that engenders thinking.

If the Good and the True resist—even contest—each other, how can they be brought into relationship with each other? In the *Critique of Judgment* (1790), Kant had named the space between the region *[Gebiet]* of the True,

that is, concepts of nature, and the region of the Good, that is, concepts of freedom, *eine unübersehbare Kluft,* an inestimable, even unsurpassable, gulf, and hence for Kant no transition *[Übergang]* between the two is possible.[8] The Good and the True fundamentally oppose each other. Nonetheless, Kant goes on to argue, the region of the Good *should* have an influence on the region of the true. If the region of the Good is the region of ethical imperatives, this region commands reason to bring the True under the influence of the Good. Hence there must be a "ground of the unity *[Einheit]* of the supersensible that is at the ground of nature and with the supersensible that the concept of freedom contains in practical way" (KU, 11). This ground, shared by the supersensible origin of the sensible and the supersensible origin of the categorical imperative, does not produce knowledge *[Erkenntnis]* pertaining to either region and hence would have no region of its own, but rather roams between the Good and the True, and in its errancy rests in the region of neither.

Kant's unified ground is the reflective faculty of aesthetic judgment. Insofar as the Good moves towards the True, judgment, proceeding without prior interest, finds pleasure in the grace or *Gunst* of the beautiful and the nonpurposive play of the purposive, that is, in the free play of form. It is not form [the True] *per se* that animates our delight and grounds taste, but form as an expression of freedom's formlessness. Kant gave remarkable examples as evidence of this. Say that while one was wandering through the forest, taking delight in the spontaneous outbursts of bird song, "which we cannot bring under any rule of music" (KU, §22, 86), one learns that these songs had been mechanically created. What once was the source of pleasure becomes a source of irritation. Curiously, it is perhaps worth mentioning that such a problem confronted the designers of Disney World in Orlando. If they did not eradicate or at least control the mosquito problem, visitors would find their dream vacation ruinously harassed. But if they destroyed the mosquitoes, then there would be no food for the birds to eat. Without food, there would be no birds and without birds, Disney World would lose some of its magic. Not wanting either to make its visitors suffer the banes of nature or to lose the charms of nature, they decided to pipe in recorded bird songs. Little did Kant know that he had inadvertently anticipated the coming of the land of totalitarian kitsch, that is, the land in which nature is made to appear as if it had lost its sovereignty.

But why this insistence in reflective judgment that the reign of mechanized beauty, that is, kitsch, the denial of incomprehensible forces like death, is an assault on taste? Why not just say that if some people take pleasure in mechanized birds sounds, let them have their aesthetic druthers? Why does Kant insist that taste must refuse kitsch, much in the same way that the Tübingen trio refused the state's totalitarian usurpation of freedom?

In the disinterested pleasures attending to aesthetic judgment, it is freedom at the ground of law, its "reference to the *free lawfulness* of the imagination *[die*

freie Gesetzmäßigkeit der Einbildungskraft]" (KU, §22, 82) that grounds taste. In another remarkable example, Kant takes exception to William Marsden's claim in his *History of Sumatra* that when among the wild and opulent profusion of forms of "free beauties" in the Sumatran forests, he found them to be too much, too wild, too prodigal, but when he discovered, amidst this extravagance, an orderly pepper patch, it reminded him that orderliness was the key to aesthetic pleasure. To this Kant proposes the following thought experiment: if Marsden were to look at this pepper patch continuously, would he not become bored and would his eyes not eventually turn back to the opulent forest? Was not the pleasure of discovering a pepper patch in a forest not found in the pleasure that one takes in pepper patches or any other orderly arrangement *per se,* but in the surprise in having found such an oddity in the midst of such extravagance? That one could stumble upon a pepper patch in the middle of a Sumatran jungle attests to the extravagance of nature more broadly construed. Is not the pepper patch but another one of the innumerably mysterious forms found in the jungle and therefore itself not evidence that it is the prodigality of nature that produces pleasure, not the nature of any one of its possible forms considered in isolation from the jungle of Being? When one finds oneself attracted to a campfire or a babbling brook, is not the source of their attending pleasures based on the inability of the understanding to fix upon a principle governing their unpredictable array of forms (KU, §22, 85–86)? One has no idea what the next lick of flame will do, what it will look like, as if each of them were an expression of that which gave rise to form but which had no form of its own. As Nishida Kitarō, the seminal Japanese philosopher and patriarch of the Kyoto School, was later to argue, "When we feel beauty in a work of art, it is not merely that we have a pleasurable feeling with regard to it, but that we feel objective life in it."[9]

The pleasure specific to beauty reflects the movement of freedom within nature. When nature refers more directly to freedom, certain forms, viewed from a safe distance so that the issue at hand is not by default one's own safety, suggest an indwelling freedom that contests its own dwelling place. Sublime forms verge on eclipsing their formality and assault any possible "interest" on the part of the observer. One might even say that, in assaulting interest, they take us beyond the pleasure principle and beyond our exclusive preoccupation with ourselves. Such contestation seizes one with *"die Verwunderung, die an Schreck grenzt, das Grausen und der heilige Schauer,"* "the amazement, which borders on terror, with horror, and with the holy shudder" (KU, §29, 116). Here freedom, wearing the mask of nature, reminds us of its proscription against graven images (KU, §29, 122). The sublime reminds us that the True was merely the proxy of the Good and that the latter is wholly otherwise than the former. Yet this shudder and awe, this *Schauer,* is holy, albeit not holy as measured by our interests. Our relationship to it is always a twofold attraction and repulsion, much like the horror that one might feel at one's own desire to jump to one's death.

This idea clearly informs the *System* fragment. After a discussion of the political threat to freedom, and implicitly its threat to the very possibility of art—for kitsch is to art what dogmatism is to truth, namely an unacceptable betrayal of the Good—the fragment turns to a discussion of art.

> At the close, the idea that unifies all, the idea of beauty, the word taken in its higher, Platonic sense. For I am convinced that the supreme act of reason, because it embraces all ideas, is an aesthetic act; and that *only in beauty* are *truth and goodness* of the same flesh *[verschwistert]*.—The philosopher must possess as much aesthetic force as the poet. Those human beings who are devoid of aesthetic sense are our pedantic philosophers. The philosophy of spirit is an aesthetic philosophy. . . . Poesy will thereby attain a higher dignity; in the end she will again become what she was in the beginning—the instructress of humanity. (OS, 10–11)

In beauty, the True and the Good somehow come together and in the above fragment this coming together, this being of the same flesh, is literally to be *verschwistert,* to be siblings, not to be the same, but to belong together by sharing blood and the same incomprehensible foundational principle. In beauty, the True and the Good are seen as animated by the same principle of life. Beauty, as we saw with Kant, brings together the ground of the True (what Schelling called the "indivisible remainder") with the Good as ground (or even *Ungrund,* the nongrounding ground).

I turn now to two accounts of this ground, namely Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit,* which, even by Schelling's account, is a strong presentation of the negative philosophy and Schelling's initial responses to his own as well as Hegel's negative philosophy.

II

The enormous sweep of Hegel's *Phenomenology* (1807) defies any effort to arrive at quick generalizations and renders such attempts somewhat foolish. Rather than unduly caricature this odyssey of Spirit, I will attempt simply to locate a tension between Hegel and the Schelling of the middle period by taking note of a couple of important statements that Hegel makes about the relationship between the Good and the True.

In his justly celebrated introduction to the *Phenomenology,*[10] Hegel notes that if consciousness "entrenches itself in sentimentality *[Empfindsamkeit],* which assures us that it finds everything to be *good in its kind,* then this assurance likewise suffers violence at the hands of Reason, for, precisely insofar as something is merely a *kind,* Reason finds it *not* to be good" (PG, §80). When

Empfindsamkeit shackles itself to the reduction of the Good to the True, that is, when the Good, which manifests in kinds, is limited to those very kinds, then the Good itself resists its own categorical delimitations. The Good can only be thought in kinds, but at the same time it also resists those very kinds. The Good and the True are in disequilibrium, with the Good resisting the very truth of its appearance. The True is the proxy of the absent Good but, as such, these proxies are also the life of the Good, its ceaseless dialectical display of progressing kinds.

It was in this sense then that Hegel claimed "The *living ethical* world is Spirit in its *truth [Die lebendige sittliche Welt ist der Geist in seiner Wahrheit]*" (PG, §442). The dialectical odyssey of the Good through the seas of the True continuously yields the stages of *Sittlichkeit,* a community's historical relationship to the Good. An ethical relationship cannot be fixed because its expression is rife with the vital dialectical spark of its truth.

Yet, despite the vitality of the Good as the dialectical unfolding of the True, the latter always remains in a continuing relationship with the former. The Good, so to speak, is always *aufgehoben* as the True. The negative resistance of the Good never causes the True to collapse altogether, to shatter upon the Good, to die of its own antinomies. Spirit, with great cunning (the implacable movement of its Odyssean μῆτις), always finds a way to profit from its losses.

This is because something has happened and the journey home, the νόστος, has in some fashion been successful. Spirit has accomplished something, namely, the beauty of its own self-reflection, despite the fact that such a self-reflection does not allow the True to exhaust the Good. "The realm of spirits which is formed in this way in the outer world constitutes a succession in time in which one Spirit relieved another of its charge and each took over the empire of the world from its predecessor. Their *goal* is the revelation of the depth of Spirit and this is the *absolute concept. . . . The goal,* absolute knowing, or Spirit that knows itself as Spirit, has for its path the recollection *[Erinnerung]* of Spirits as they are in themselves and as they accomplish the organization of their realm" (PG, §808). These are the relics of the Good, preserved in the pantheon of the True. In the end, Spirit will have something to show for itself and truth will not have withered away altogether in the solar abundance of the Good. Spirit will have itself to show for itself. Spirit will not have died because it has an ongoing relationship with a Good that demands regeneration but never annihilation.

III

In the works that Schelling wrote in the immediate wake of Hegel's *Phenomenology,* one does not find Hegel's name even mentioned, although there

is detectable some concern not only with the latter's implicit and perhaps inadvertent dismissal of Schelling ("the night when all cows are black"), but also with the result of the *Phenomenology* or—better put—with the Result per se. For what is a result if not also a clotting of the conspiracy of life? In *The Ages of the World* Schelling acknowledged that thinking begins with the dialectic but insists that it does not conclude with it. "Hence the view, harbored from age to age, that philosophy can be finally transformed into actual knowledge through the dialectic and to regard the most consummate dialectic as knowledge itself, betrays more than a little narrowness. The very existence and necessity of the dialectic proves that it is still in no way actual knowledge" (AW, 202).

What, if anything, results from dialectical thinking? Can the Good be co-opted to accompany the historical life of Reason and the natural history of the True? "Therefore all knowledge must pass through the dialectic. Yet it is another question as to whether the point will ever come where knowledge becomes free and lively, as the image of the ages is for the writer of history who no longer recalls their investigations in their presentation" (AW, 205). What then is the free or good use of one's own, to use Hölderlin's phrase, if, on the other hand, the Good transcends its historical availability? The idea of the Good demands that the Good itself transcend its own idea. No matter how necessary the idea may be, it nonetheless stalls the infinition of the Good itself.

Yet one does not simply leave Hegel behind, as if he could be refuted. As Schelling confessed, "All knowledge must pass through the dialectic" (AW, 205). Yet we must finally abandon everything, even the dialectic. Nonetheless, the success of this passage, the wealth of this poverty, assumes already the power of the dialectic. Simply to refuse Hegel is to vindicate Hegel, for the refusal of the dialectic is to take recourse in the negative moment that is the very engine of the dialectic. As Foucault, whose own discourse "was pretty disloyal to Hegel," argued:

> But truly to escape Hegel involves an exact appreciation of the price we have to pay to detach ourselves from him. It assumes that we are aware of the extent to which Hegel, insidiously perhaps, is close to us; it implies a knowledge, in that which permits us to think against Hegel, of that which remains Hegelian. We have to determine the extent to which our anti-Hegelianism is possibly one of his tricks directed against us, at the end of which he stands, motionless, waiting for us.[11]

If I were to delineate the relationship between Hegel and Schelling from the perspective of the latter's thought, I would say that Schelling's critical relationship to Hegel is ultimately his critical relationship to the lopsidedness of his own early tendency to emphasize the whole of philosophy as if it were just

a negative philosophy. Schelling never outright dismissed Hegel but instead continually stressed the proximity of their projects. In fact, Schelling found himself so close to Hegel that not only did he sometimes praise Hegel's work, but also credited him with being among the best readers of Schelling's early negative philosophy. As Schelling commented on his predecessor in the 1841 inaugural Berlin lecture, "I see how Hegel alone had rescued the fundamental thoughts of my philosophy in the latter years; and these thoughts, as I have gathered from his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy,* he knew until the end and he held to them in their purity."[12]

Hegel, however, completed Schelling's formal systematic model by allowing it to come to a conclusion. Despite the fact that the work of the dialectic is never done, it is done insofar as it has come to know itself as *work,* as the serious business of the life of the dialectic. The alterity of the Good, the inscrutable ground of historical existence, the irreducible remainder that evades all thinking, even dialectical thinking, becomes the negative moment of the dialectic and thereby diminishes the extent to which it can resist thinking. Hegel, Schelling charged, "made the *Identitätsphilosophie* itself to positive philosophy and with that elevated it to the absolute philosophy that leaves nothing outside of itself" (PO, 122). Hegel's negative or formal Good, despite touching the Good, nonetheless inhibits its barbarian life and continuously makes it labor in its sullen factories of the truth.

This, Schelling confessed, was a danger that he himself had not successfully avoided in avoiding in his own early writings. Reflecting in 1827 on his earlier Philosophy of Nature, Schelling confessed that

> One can admittedly say: "God exposes Himself to Becoming precisely in order to posit Himself as such" and one really *must* say this. But as soon as this is said, one can also see that one must immediately either assume a time when God was not *as* such (but this again contradicts general religious consciousness), or one denies that there ever was such a *time,* i.e., that movement, that happening is explained as an *eternal happening*. But an eternal happening is no happening at all. Consequently the whole idea *[Vorstellung]* of that process and of that movement is itself illusory, nothing has really happened, *everything* happened only in thoughts and this whole movement was only a movement of thinking. [The *Naturphilosophie*] should have grasped this; it put itself beyond all contradiction thereby, but precisely because of this it also gave up its claim to objectivity, i.e., it had to confess to being a science in which there is no question of *existence [Existenz],* of that which *really exists*.[13]

Negative philosophy, despite its dialectical concept of history, is still blind to its own history. It curiously lacks the historical ingredient, the proximity to the

opacity of nonabstract existents, to historical singularities rather than abstract positions. In a sense the early Schelling and the mature Hegel had both attempted to make too much sense of the Good. Hegel, for example, could announce Spirit's self-recovery only by privileging the *idea* of Spirit itself. Hegel had decided to favor the moment of speech and hence was not silent enough about silence. This sovereign silence exceeds both image and word, and its history is not governed by any law but is, rather, if you will, in some way the "mystical foundation of law." The negative philosophy is what Schelling later renamed a poem about freedom. The positive philosophy, on the other hand, is reason growing silent before the mystery of its origin, contenting itself with the a posteriori transfigurations of divine silence. It is an absolute respect for the facts of history and a refusal to read history as a continuity, as governed by law. When "Hegel meant that the given system is philosophy" (PO, 122), philosophy consequently clotted, forgetting philosophy's relationship to the "true *prima materia* of thinking" that "cannot be a thought in the way that a single figure is a thought. It is simply the fundamental matter which relates to thinking only as 'that which is not-not-to-think' *[das Nicht-Nichtzudenkende]*" (PO, 122). The *prima materia* eludes all that it engenders.

As Schelling contended with the one-sidedness of his negative philosophy, he realized that a philosophy that leads all discourses back into the immense ocean of silence out of which they were generated loses a concrete sense of the specificity of things. One paradoxically loses the Good by sacrificing things back into the silence of the Good. The positive philosophy would move in the opposite direction, from the Good to the True, transfiguring the manner in which the True is affirmed. In other words, the silence of the Good is no longer silent when the din of generalities about silence silences its force. Schelling was clear about this in the justly celebrated 1809 *Freedom* essay. "If freedom is the positive concept of the In-itself over all, then the investigation of human freedom is again thrown back into the general, since the intelligible, upon which freedom alone was grounded, is also the being *[Wesen]* of the things-in-themselves. Hence, mere idealism is insufficient for indicating the specific difference, that is, the distinctness of human freedom" (I/7, 352). Simply to bring all things to the brink of silence, to raise all particulars to the highest and anihilating level of generality, sacrifices the specificity of things. There is something obstinately and singularly specific about human freedom.

In fact, it was Hegel who was too abstract, who did not account for the irreducible specificity of the Good. Schelling took this up by posing two rather terse questions in his 1827 lecture course, *The Grounding of the Positive Philosophy*.

> What this [Hegel's] argument concerns, it could be conceded, is that everything is in the logical idea and therefore the Meaningless *[das Sinnlose]* can exist nowhere; but

1. Is a necessary question: why is there meaning at all, why is there not meaninglessness instead of meaning? *[warum ist Sinn überhaupt, warum ist nicht Unsinn statt Sinn?]*
2. The logical represents itself as the negative, as that without which nothing could exist—but like in the sensuous world, for example, where everything can be comprehended in measure and number, yet certainly still not for this reason being the explanation of the world. The entire world, as it were, lies caught in reason, but the question is: How did it come into this net? (Therefore there is still in the world something other and something more than mere reason—even something that strives beyond these boundaries *[etwas über diese Schranken Hinausstrebendes]*.[14]

All beginnings, like all endings, resist the meanings that they produce. "The pure, abstract 'that *[daß]*' is not a synthetic axiom." It allows for no result (II/1, 563). In the positive philosophy one hears the ringing of the silent Good in history's discontinuities, of the *actus purus,* the *reines daß,* which originates in the inscrutability of the ground of existence.[15] As Schelling commented on Hegel and the Hegelians at the end of his life:

> Just as many people imagine a beginning without any presuppositions at all, they would also not be able to presuppose thinking itself and, for example, also not deduce the language in which they are expressing this. But since this itself could not happen without language, there would remain only the growing silent *[das Verstummen]* that the helplessness and faint audibility of language really seek to approach. The beginning would have to be at the same time the end. (*Philosophical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology,* II/1, 312)

If Schelling's reading of Hegel is at the same time a confrontation with his own negative philosophy, then it is, as we shall see in the next two chapters, in part a confrontation with his own elevation of Spinoza. "There was a time in which I dared to present this succession of possibilities of a Being that is from the outset still futural *[eines vorerst noch zukünftigen Seyns]* only in an image *[nur bildisch]* of another. But, as it appeared to me and still appears to me, there is a fully parallel succession" (II/1, 294).

Schelling cast this reading of Hegel around a figure that, as we shall see in the next chapter, had animated his own earlier work: a revitalized Spinoza. In claiming to be *the* work of philosophy from the standpoint of freedom, the reign of freedom articulated universally, Hegel did not have a rigorous enough sense of his own locality (a nineteenth-century German) and hence he inadvertently inverted Spinoza's dogmatism. *The* philosophy of freedom

(Hegel had insisted that Schelling's philosophy was not universalizable because it was inherently elitist) is the universalization of freedom or Spinozism rewritten as idealism:

> In the final idea all actual process resolves itself *[hebt sich auf]* and idealism in the last moment falls back quite obviously and without any inhibition into subjective idealism. We stand there at the end where we already stood with Spinoza. The entire system is Spinozism rewritten in the idealistic *[ein ins Idealische umgeschriebener Spinozismus]*. (GP, 234)

Hegel's negative philosophy is too concept-driven and too unaware of its own historical contingency to account for the possibility of a positive philosophy. In fact, Schelling claimed that Hegel, in pursuing a science of logic that leaves nothing outside of itself, ends up de facto pawning itself off as a positive philosophy. For Schelling, a positive philosophy has always left something outside of itself, some kind of untamable and barbarian remainder. This remainder leaves even the most successful accounts fundamentally incomplete. Hence, Schelling was to claim that Hegel "completely threw himself into the methodological discussion in such a way that he thereby completely forgot the questions which lay outside it" (HMP, 143/147). "What" lives outside the system, outside the logic, is precisely the question for Schelling. In the 1827 lectures on the *System of the Ages of the World,* Schelling argued that "everything is only the work of time and we do not know the absolutely true, but rather just what the time in which we are ensconced allows. We begin to conceive that the eternal truths are nothing but propositions abstracted from their contemporary situation. Basically there are no eternal truths in the sense that we formerly wanted to describe them."[16] Not even the elastic truth of spirit's dialectical self-recognition would escape the simultaneous structures and strictures of time.

Hence, Schelling considered Hegel's philosophy to be an "episode" (HMP, 128/136) because in Hegel's *Logic* "one finds every concept which just happened to be accessible and available at his time taken up as a moment of the absolute Idea at a specific point" (HMP, 139/144). Schelling insisted on pressing the question of the irreducible barbarian remainder: "What if concepts can be shown which that system knows nothing about, or which it was able to take up into itself in a completely different sense from their real sense" (HMP, 139/144)? But this could not happen within Hegel's system, which drives to appropriate all difference, all alterity, within itself. As a result, God knows no Sabbath, and there is no discontinuous series of radically new beginnings, no natality, for God is perpetually occupied with the same activity. "He is the God who only ever does what He has always done, and who therefore cannot create anything new" (HMP, 160/160). Hence, Joseph

Lawrence argued with good reason that Hegel "yearned for that absolute reason which articulates and determines itself, but his own system was nonetheless precisely that, his own system and he himself remained blind to that fact."[17] Schelling, on the other hand, never argued that his articulations were the only way to articulate the relationship between thinking and the absolute. Nor did he claim that he was the first to speak to this relationship. In fact, the *Philosophy of Mythology and Revelation* is, in part, an attempt to locate historically specific testimonies to this relationship, each in its singular way ensconced within the capabilities of the locality within which they were articulated.

For Schelling thinking is agonistic (*kämpfende* or *ringende*) and in this instance, Schelling's struggle with Hegel is also the aporetic struggle that a revitalized Spinozism demands: the eternal oscillation between dispersal and gathering, the Many and the One, the Good and the True. There is no proper result, only the various potencies of the conspiracy of life. When the respiratory circulation stops, it becomes severed from the conspiracy, becomes sick, and eventually dies. Within Hegel's negative (idealistic), and, by implication, within his own negative philosophy, Schelling struggled with such an inhibition. This struggle aimed not to destroy with polemic, but to unleash and heal sclerotic stoppages. This emancipatory task is the eternal dialogue with freedom and its self-multiplication into an infinity of new beginnings and endings.

Schelling's confrontation with his former friend was conducted primarily through lectures in Munich and Berlin. His early essays were written before Hegel's ascent to academic glory and the only text published in Schelling's lifetime in which he explicitly spoke of Hegel was the so-called 1843 *Paulusnachschrift,* a transcript of and polemical commentary on Schelling's inaugural Berlin lectures (1841–1842). It was published against Schelling's wishes and his attempts to suppress it failed.

At times, Schelling expressed rage at his former friend. Almost a year after Hegel's death, for example, Schelling wrote in a letter to Christian Weiße (September 6, 1832) that "I can only consider the so-called Hegelian philosophy for what it really is: an episode in the history of modern philosophy and only a sad one at that."[18] At other times, however, Schelling confronted Hegel's work with more composure. After meeting Schelling, Caroline had written to Friedrich Schlegel (October 14, 1798) that her future husband "is a person to break through walls. He is a real fundamental nature *[rechte Urnatur]*. Considered as a mineral, he is granite."[19] Schelling had something of Cato's imperturbable stoicism and granite resoluteness that he had praised in the *Freedom* essay. Accordingly, he struggled to read Hegel's work without polemic but rather with immanent critique: drawing attention to its power, its proximity to his own project, and to the points where the power of this discourse stall and threaten to ossify. His aim was not to dispense with Hegel but to loosen any sclerotic arteries. Schelling's granite disposition

emerged from his philosophy of total affirmation and a joy that could not be altogether destroyed by its ineluctable implication with sadness. (At this point I would like to distance myself as far as possible from a long and silly tradition of interpreting the famous 1850 daguerreotype of Schelling as depicting a rancorous man destroyed by Hegel and unable to complete his system.) For Schelling, the movement of thinking has no One beginning and no One conclusion, just discontinuous and infinite series of potencies and valences, eternal beginnings and eternal endings.

Martin Heidegger, along with Walter Schultz, Paul Tillich, and Karl Jaspers, was among the first twentieth-century commentators to insist that Schelling, although overshadowed by Hegel, was not exhausted by the supposed triumph of the Hegelian dialectic. "Even today, the judgment of Schelling still stands under Hegel's shadow. Schelling himself suffered a great deal under this in his later life."[20] Heidegger claimed that for Schelling, freedom never allowed him to complete his thought but rather "supported, fulfilled and carried away this life again and again to new attempts" (SA, 8/7):

> When Schelling's name is mentioned, people like to point out that this thinker constantly changed his standpoint, and one often designates this as a lack of character. But the truth is that there was seldom a thinker who struggled so passionately ever since his earliest periods for his one and unique standpoint. On the other hand, Hegel, the contemplative thinker, published his first great work when he was thirty-seven years old, and with its publication had gotten both his philosophy and standpoint straightened out. What followed was elaboration and application, although certainly in grand style and with a rich certainty. (SA 7/6)

For Hegel, Schelling's complication of ever new beginnings was not the mark of Schelling's strength, but his immaturity. Schelling had conducted his philosophical training in public. Hegel's efforts, despite their proximity to Schelling, found some measure of completion or reconciliation and hence universality:

> Hegel . . . always acknowledged the great accomplishments of his former friend who was younger and had become famous before him. This was not difficult for him, either, for he knew that he was in possession of the absolute system of absolute knowledge and could easily allow those views validity, which he thought were subordinate from this standpoint of all standpoints. (SA, 15/13)

The crux of Hegel's tactical, perhaps even cunning, displacement of Schelling is found in paragraphs 15–19 of the Preface to the *Phenomenology* in which Hegel spoke of the "monochromatic formalism" (PG, §15) and "monotony

[Eintönigkeit]" (PG, §16) of the A = A that confuses "an abstract universal for the absolute" (PG, §16). When one goes around applying the "One, immobile form of the knowing subject to everything at hand," the brute facts lose their "self-originating richness and the self-determining differentiation of forms" (PG, §15). In this empty absolute, there is the "dissolution *[Auflösung]* of *differentia* and determination." Everything is one (PG, §16). At first glance, any reader of Schelling would think that Hegel, at this point, is in full agreement with Schelling. Nowhere does Schelling ever argue for an empty absolute. He was, after all, a natural scientist and a student of medicine, and his work involved him in studies of the most detailed kind. Schelling was an ardent defender of the minutest details of nature. Like William Blake, infinity is not found in the flight to the heavens, but in the palm of your hand.

Yet, as one reads these four paragraphs, it seems that Hegel must have in some way wanted readers to associate this critique with Schelling. Although Hegel did not mention Schelling by name, the association of the intellectual intuition with "the night when all cows are black" (PG, §16) and a philosophy of identity in which "everything is the same in the absolute" (PG, §16), would have lead many readers to assume that Hegel had Schelling in mind. Second, Hegel speaks of the intellectual intuition by name when he then asks if it "does not again fall back into a lethargic simplicity and presents actuality itself in an ineffective way" (PG, §17)? The intellectual intuition is a "simple negativity," lacking the "self-reproducing sameness *[sich wiederherstellende Gleichheit]*" within itself. It is not an "immediate unity" (PG, §18). Using another of Schelling's symbols, Hegel claimed that "the life of God and divine knowledge may therefore well be expressed as a play of Love with itself; but when the seriousness, the pain, the patience and the work of the negative are lacking within it, this idea sinks down into devotionalism *[Erbaulichkeit]* and even to insipidity" (PG, §19).

Hegel doubts the effectiveness of the philosophy of identity because it a) does not clearly articulate the relationship of the absolute to *differentia* and b) precedes with an immediate (intellectual) intuition and does follow the phenomenological labor of the Spirit's self-revelation at the end of history.[21] The absolute emerges in the intellectual intuition, as if shot out of a gun, lacking its slow journey, its piecemeal, dialectical trajectory towards self-discovery.

No serious reader of Schelling, however, could countenance such inferences. This is not to suggest that Schelling did not learn anything from Hegel and that Hegel in his brightest moments merely stole from Schelling. There were no doubt misunderstandings between the two, and Hegel's sense of the daring developments in Schelling's later thought is conspicuously absent.[22] On the other hand, Schelling himself acknowledged a profound debt to Hegel. Schelling's positive philosophy, chiefly the *Philosophy of Mythology and Revelation,* emerged, in part, when Hegel's work compelled Schelling to develop further his own sense of history. Without eliminating the force of negative

philosophy, Schelling also reversed the direction of philosophy, tracing the descent of the ideal into the real (positive philosophy). This is the discontinuous history of Truth as avatars, so to speak, of the Good.[23] These avatars are the discontinuous singularities of history. Just as a person with a proper name is not just a concrete example of an abstract idea, positive existents are non-substitutable events, not just concrete instantiations of abstract positions. Their concretude also defies the abstraction that would sublimate them.[24]

Nonetheless, Hegel's destructive critique crippled Schelling's career. Lev Shestov once called this assassination a "frightful treachery" and the "supreme crime . . . done quite openly in the light of day" as "Hegel, this dull and loose man, this thief and murderer, had conquered the whole world by treachery while noble Schelling was left to himself and the consolations of metaphysics."[25] Shestov's language is no doubt extreme, but Hegel's critique is nonetheless all the more curious when one reflects, as Karl Jaspers astutely noticed in his *Schelling: Größe und Verhängnis* (1955), that four years prior to the *Phenomenology,* Schelling had already made the exact same criticism: "Most people see in the being of the absolute nothing but a pure night and are unable to know anything in it; it dwindles away for them into a mere negation of multiplicity *[bloße Verneinung der Verschiedenheit]*."[26]

Puzzlement over Hegel's inferences about the dark night of the intellectual intuition becomes even more pronounced when one examines the exchange of letters between Hegel and Schelling around the time of the publication of the *Phenomenology*. In a letter from Bamberg (May 1, 1807), Hegel is careful to mention that the criticisms in the Preface are not aimed at Schelling, but at the misappropriation of his ideas. "In the Preface you will not find that I have been too hard on the shallowness that makes so much mischief with your forms in particular and degrades your science into a bare formalism."[27] Schelling wrote back, asking that Hegel clarify in the next edition that he was not specifically criticizing Schelling.

> Insofar as you yourself mention the polemical part of the Preface, given my own justly measured opinion of myself I would have to think too little of myself to apply this polemic to my own person. It must therefore, as you expressed in your letter, apply only to a further bad use of my ideas and to those who parrot them without understanding, although in this writing itself the distinction is not made. You may easily imagine how happy I would be to get these people once and for all off my back.[28]

Hegel never responded to the letter and this "distinction" was not made in public.

Furthermore, for Schelling, the commitment to a science of absolute reason strips nature and art of their singularities and their magnificence. The

philosophy of nature can neither replace nature nor can it reduce nature to the "agony of the concept" because the philosophy of art cannot replace or sublimate art. Schelling explicitly took issue, for example, with Hegel's aesthetics during his 1832–1833 winter semester course on the *Grundlegung der positiven Philosophie (The Grounding of the Positive Philosophy):*

> Art only has meaning so long as people have to struggle with it. Spirit *[Geist],* conscious of itself through and through, can no longer "lower itself down" to art. Hegel, according to the assertion of his followers, has also ended the history of art. After him there can be no more poetry and no more art. Instead of all this magnificence in history and art, there is but only a single surrogate: this philosophy ends with the deification of the state. . . . In this deification of the state this philosophy shows itself as fully immersed in the great error of the time. The more the state includes the positive in itself, the more it belongs on the side of the most negative against everything positive, against all appearances of higher and spiritual and ethical life. The state is only a support of a higher life. . . . Therefore whoever makes the state the absolutely highest is one whose system, is already essentially illiberal because they subject everything that is higher to the state. (GP, 235)

Hegel, unlike Schelling, no longer attempted to abandon the mechanics of the state apparatus, although Schelling was careful not to argue that Hegel contended that a particular state is justified in arrogating all power and subjecting all of its members. Hegel's Prussian State is not a figure of "servility." The state, according to Schelling, is one of Hegel's figures of the negative or formal structure of Spirit. As such it represents perhaps the greatest of negative philosophies as it claims to at last become aware of the formal structure or "logic" of the Absolute such that it returns to itself as "the self-possessing subject *[das sich selbst besitzende Subjekt]*" (PO, 128–29). Returned to itself, as Schelling elaborated in his inaugural lectures in Berlin (1841–1842), "it is from now on in process or is itself the process. It is the God of eternal doing, but It only always does what It had done; its life is in the circulation of figures in which it always alienates itself and comes back" (PO, 133). There is no absolute alterity in the dialectic. God, stripped of Its sovereignty, becomes the prisoner of the rule of its own logic, i.e., "that Reason *[Vernunft]* is becoming aware of its own content as the content of all Being" (PO, 122). In this sense, Hegel makes the same "mistake" with the state that he makes with language and with art: he claims to have located them in a triadic figure, and, in doing so, fails to realize that, in their irreducibly differential character, they are differential expressions of an absolute that exceeds them and which thereby is not exhausted in this result.[29] The absolute is a debt that cannot be

repaid. The "mistake" lies in the "deification" of or fixation with the state or any other figure. Schelling again made this point at the end of his life, succinctly alluding to Hegel without naming him, in a footnote at the beginning of his discussion of the state in the *Philosophical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*. Here the absolute, a "living law," comes neither from this world nor from people and hence its "natural existence" is not, as in the *Rechtsphilosophie,* "in the family" (II/1, 533).

When, like Orpheus, Reason turns to the Absolute to gaze upon it as if it were Eurydice, it too loses her. As Schelling articulated this in the second version of *The Ages of the World:*

> God is the begetter *[Zeugende]* as well as the begotten *[Gezeugte],* but one can stop nowhere and say, "Here is God in particular." God is incomprehensible and inconceivable but not in the customary sense that no concept of it whatsoever would be possible (this itself is a concept of God: that it is eternal life, the eternal movement of self-production *[Selbsterzeugung]*). Rather only that there is no static *[stillstehend]* one. God is inconceivable in an actual sense, incoercible, indefinable, and not to be included in any determinate boundaries; like the wind that blows where it wants and you hear well its sigh—but you know not from where it comes and to where it goes. . . . It is the spirit of this eternal life and wherever you arrive, you find already only its footprints, not God itself because it is the most nimble and goes through everything on account of its purity.[30]

Hegel's God, having made it home to Ithaca, has become weary from the journey and thereby no longer nimble. Such a God is born of the Good, but it asserts itself by reacting to and refusing the Good. It does so by denying its own contingency. The dialectic is, in a way, the most cunning form of the *conatus,* consuming all that is not itself and is hence unable ever to perish. The immortalization of Spirit has everything to do with its systemic denial of what Hannah Arendt later called natality. Spirit moves to assimilate exceptions—indeed, the exceptional per se—within itself, thus barring the possibility of radically new beginnings. For Schelling, in contrast, history is not just the history of Spirit's dialectical accomplishments. History also marks the discontinuity of new beginnings, of exceptions to the prevailing rules, of movements of freedom that emerge outside the range of any idea.

IV

Yet Schelling strained to hear these gifts as well as the "faint audibility of language," neither allowing specificity to drown in the great sea of silence, nor

asserting that it could adequately account for itself. All things emerge from silence, but not in the same way. History does not in the end move in accordance with laws. It moves as mysteriously as the appearance of grace. It proceeds discontinuously by jumps and starts, reflecting the infinite amount of beginnings and the infinite amount of endings.

Hence, the very contradiction of the title of the *Freedom* essay, which speaks of the human freedom, speaks of a volatile antinomy.[31] On the one hand, freedom itself, the great Ocean of the Good, is exhausted in no kind or no word. Yet the human embodies this Goodness in a specifically human way. There is a human truth about Goodness, even if human truth in its humanness is also as such a betrayal of Goodness.

So what is specifically human about human freedom? Schelling's answer is as elusive as it is startling. The "real and living concept of freedom," as opposed to the "on the one hand most general and on the other hand merely formal" freedom that idealism offers, the "point of profoundest difficulty," is that the concept of human freedom, the *Wesen* that holds together opposite forces, is the "faculty for good and evil" (I/7, 353). On the surface this seems like a collapse into nostalgic theology. What is this strange faculty or *Vermögen* that holds together the antinomy of the human and the free, the specific and the utterly and infinitely general? Schelling named this faculty the *Zertrennlichkeit der Prinzipien,* the divisibility of principles, the separability of forces (I/7, 364) or *die Scheidung der Kräfte,* the cision of forces (I/7, 361) or a *Zwietracht der beiden Prinzipien,* a discord between both principles (I/7, 392).

This faculty is specifically human, marking the *Wesen* of the human. "Blind obsession *[Sucht]* and desire," Schelling argued, govern other animals. Only the dark principle is in effect and they are not yet born into the light. Perhaps they are gods, but they are not philosophers and they are not self-consciously governed by ideas. This is not to say that animals are illogical and incapable of discernment. Rather, animals do not proceed from an idea of themselves. As such, the dark ones do not have the *faculty* for the Fall *[der Abfall],* that is, the specific force requisite for the separation of forces (I/7, 372). It is not that humans are born higher than animals, for there is advantage for the dark principle, for the Good, to hold sway. "Animals can never step out of the unity whereas the human can capriciously tear apart the eternal band of the forces. Hence Franz Baader correctly states that it would desirable that human depravity only go to the point of becoming animals; but unfortunately the human can only stand under or above animals" (I/7, 373).

Animals live in unity with the Good because, lacking understanding or *Verstand,* they cannot come to believe that they understand themselves and in having so constituted themselves remove themselves from continuity with the life of things and the band of the living, antinomic potencies of the Good and the True. The human, however, in attempting to know and preserve their own,

can and do sunder themselves from the nexus of life forces and pursue their own will as against the universal will. The *conatus,* the Fall of the human in the sundering of the living connection of forces, is the birth of the particular will as it sets its own agenda and endeavors to be itself and promote itself and elevate its ego. The "unity that is inseparable in God must therefore be separable in the human—and this is the possibility of good and evil" (I/7, 364). The human in self-reflection and self-assertion is the particular will of the *conatus,* the Spirit detached from the center, demanding from the periphery of the nexus of forces its own desires. Only in dying to itself, in self-mortification, in the *conatus'* self sacrifice before the alterity of the Good in a center that is never reducible to a human center, in a Good that is never reducible to *my* good, or even a human good, can the human rise to the heaven of the centrality of the Good. "In the human are the deepest abyss and the highest heaven, that is, both centers" (I/7, 363).

The human is the animal that can paradoxically learn that it is an animal and is thereby the place in which the band of living forces can know its own vast animality. An animal is a combination of the manifest (a specific body) and the nonmanifest (the soul) and hence animality is a spirited combination of the two. It is the life force of *anima,* soul—which in its vitality externalizes as form (body). The animal human (the soul of humanity as freedom in its specifically human form) is the self-reflective animal in which nature comes to affirm its own prodigal animality. The human animal is therefore the conscience of nature, the *Mitwissenschaft* of nature in which nature continuously comes to awareness of its own inexhaustible animality. "In the human alone God loved the world" (I/7, 363–64). The human can stand at the center of the cision of the conspiracy of life.

This faculty for the Fall, for the sundering of principles, for the alienation of the light from the dark and the rational from the mad, is a necessary condition for the very possibility of the Good to transfigure itself into the True. As Tanabe Hajime later reflected in a slightly different context, this is a "web in which even the absolute cannot disentangle itself":

> The contradiction comes down to this: being is nothingness and nothingness is being insofar as being becomes nothingness and nothingness becomes being. One may try to elude the contradiction by distinguishing between the essential and the actual: evil is that which ought not to be in essence but is unavoidable in actuality, while the good is that which ought to be in essence but cannot exist in actuality. But even here there is no escaping the contradiction that essence can never be separated from actuality, because the former is the essence *of* the latter and the latter is the actualization *of* the former. Hence the contradiction that what ought to be is not, and what ought not to be is, is everywhere in evidence.[32]

The Good aporetically and ironically *is* as the True. But the True never should have been the True. The True should have been the Good. There is no escape from this aporia, from the living contradiction that *is* all life. There are rather only two possibilities. There is flight from the aporia or affirmation of the life of the aporia. The individual will is born from the movement within God that gives rise to creatures, that is, from the moment within creation in which creatures, in order to be creatures, must be refused the plenitude of the Good. The particular or creaturely will is born of divine disequilibrium, of the wish of absolute ground for *die Ungleichheit,* disequilibrium, for the self-differentiation necessary for it to become sensitive *[empfindlich]* to itself (I/7, 382). The ground of creatures, therefore, "necessarily reacts to freedom as the super-creaturely *[das Überkreatürliche]* and awakens in it the desire for the creaturely" (I/7, 382). Within freedom, then, there arises the creaturely will, the will for the creaturely, the tendency of the creaturely to affirm and demand itself as such. This awakening of the *conatus,* of the endeavor of the creaturely to preserve itself, of creaturely desire, of *ipseity* and *Eigenheit,* is reactive. It shuns the abyssal Good of its birth, although, Schelling continued, its anxiety before the Good is audible vertiginously. Perhaps one is "seized by dizziness on a high and precipitous summit" and "a secret voice seems to cry out that one jump." Or perhaps it is like that "old fable" *(The Odyssey)* in which "the irresistible song of the Sirens ring out from the depths in order to attract the passing sailors down into the whirlpool" (I/7, 382). In anxious flight, one does not know whether one is coming or going, whether one wants life or death. As we shall see again in chapter six, evil, the moral equivalent of sickness, refuses the general economy of forces and demands itself. "What causes illness other than a churlishness towards development, other than the individual strength not wanting to continue with the whole, not wanting to die away with the whole, but obstinately wanting to be for itself" (C, 36)?

For Schelling, the necessary loss of divine freedom marked not only the creature's proclivity to egoism, but when lost freedom, the irreducible remainder in every effort of the *conatus* to take possession of itself, returned, it sung vertiginously of freedom as a call to one's own death. It is the temptation to leap from the very height upon which the human creature had attempted to elevate itself above all other creatures. The freedom of the creature's ground is to each particular will "a consuming fire" (I/7, 382). Hence the particular will is anxious before the Good, which, if encountered in itself, is the death of the creature, a continuity that in its pure form is like Elohim's fire, ready to consume all that is discrete, all that is creaturely. It is a fire before which all creaturely self-reflection and self-possession is exposed as idolatrous. Evil, on the other hand, is the life of the *conatus* on the periphery of the Good, "hungering" for itself as it anxiously reacts to the center. "The anxiety *[Angst]* of life itself drives the human from the center out of which it was created" (I/7, 382). The creaturely is born out of the specifically human proclivity to flee from the ego-consuming fires of the Good.

Schelling does not thereby advocate some kind of frenzied return to the great Ocean of the Good. This is the utter madness of the A^2, the *Schwärmerei* that Kant warned against, or what Schelling here called the inability to find the "reconciling and mediating basis" that results in the "gloomy and wild enthusiasm that breaks out in self-mutilation or, as with the priests of the Phrygian goddess, auto castration, which is achieved in Philosophy as the renunciation of reason and science" (I/7, 357). This utter collapse into madness is the first eruption of Dionysus, arriving behind a carriage of ferocious panthers.[33] Schelling is not glibly advocating the mad rush into the night when all cows are black and all specificity is washed away in a great tsunami of nothingness.

Against the narcissistic strivings of the *conatus,* Schelling called for a real "mortification *[Absterben]*" of egoism, a kind of death that absolves the creaturely of its inclination towards evil, that is, from its endeavor to hold on to itself and enhance itself, and demand itself. In the turning towards the Good, the *conatus* and its doctrine of self-interest and self-reference are refused. They are not refused by the *conatus* because that would merely entail the paradox that a lack of self-interest is in our self-interest. The *conatus* dies before the Good. The self and its truths are the truths of the Good, and the self itself is extended to include all of nature. One does not make room for oneself but rather turns towards that which is not oneself and which was never primary to oneself. This turning is not a choice, for in mortification there is no longer the one who would choose, who would act. The illusion born of the great veil that is the mask of nature is that action begins or depends on an agent when, in the end, there was never such a beast. I am not the subject that brings about good and bad things. The Good was an absolute subject, or better, a nonsubject acting in the subject position, and its actions manifest as the True, even though the Good is always otherwise than the True. The Good holds sway only when that which would demand to be its own center dies to a center that it can never own.

Hence, Schelling refused the *aequilibrium arbitrii,* moral voluntarism, altogether, calling it the "plague of morality." In its place Schelling spoke of a "supreme decisiveness for the right *[das Rechte],* without any choice" (I/7, 392). If the True follows from the Good, then good action, beyond the illusions of free will and responsibility, is acting in the true sense of "religiosity." Like the Roman Stoic Cato, one "could not have acted otherwise" (I/7, 393). If one has to ask whether one should be ethical or should do right, then one is already unethical and already self-absorbed on the periphery of the Good. Religiosity is therefore understood in the original sense of the word. It is not the idle brooding or empty sentimentality of the fideists. It has nothing to do with the desire to find God in the *"Fühlen-wollen"* or conation to feel (I/7, 392) that characterized the fideists and other exceedingly enthusiastic Romantics and misologists. It is *Gewissenhaftigkeit,* conscientiousness. This

term preserves, both in the German and the Latinate English, the root meaning "knowledge *(Wissen, scientia)*." One knows in a good way, in a way in accordance with the Good. It is "to act as one knows and not to contradict the light of knowledge in one's deeds" (I/7, 392). It is, to use Havel's phrase, to live in truth.

This is a kind of faith that is not knowledge *of* the Good, but knowledge always in the *wake* of the Good. Unlike Kant, there is no deontology, no duty, for this implies obligations that bear upon an individual will that holds itself to be autonomous. "He is not conscientious who," as Schelling already argued in the 1805 *System der gesammten Philosophie Nachlaß,* "in a given case, must first hold the command of duty before himself in order to decide to do right because of his respect for it" (I/6, 558). Freedom robs one of choice, of agency. Freedom is not *my* freedom. In this sense Schelling spoke of faith, contrary to Jacobi's sentimental fideism (as we shall see in the next chapter), as *Zutrauen* and *Zuversicht,* "trust" and "confidence," "in the divine that excludes all choice" (I/7, 394). One is assigned by the Good, held hostage by it, such that the illusion of the *conatus'* egotistical freedom is destroyed, as Levinas was much later to argue. *Gewissenhaftigkeit* is something like what the Buddhists called *bodhicitta,* enlightened consciousness, which is, at the same time, the falling away of the ego and the commencement of the Great Compassion, the *mahā karunā,* the love of all beings. There is no longer the need for the *Vinaya-piṭaka,* the code of monastic behavior, no longer the demand for the safety valve of morality.

In this fashion, Schelling spoke of *Gewissenhaftigkeit* as a *strenge Gesinnung* (I/7, 394), a strict enculturation or ethos or a stern character or, alternatively, "a steadfastly serious character" (I/7, 395). In one sense, this is Schelling's response to Schiller's attempt in *Über Anmut und Würde* or *Concerning Grace and Dignity* (1793)[34] to base ethics on an aesthetics in which the "beautiful soul" had no other obligation than simply to be, as if this indolent New Age aesthetic feeling exhausted the question of the Good. As I shall argue in chapter six, the problem of evil, like the problem of sensation (chapter four), is too demanding for leisure types like the "beautiful soul" and other slacker aesthetes. On the other hand, *Gesinnung,* character, also speaks to *Sinn,* to sense, to a becoming "sensitized" to the life of that which one cannot understand in advance. A stern sensitization is not automatically a glum disposition. It is, rather, the difficult struggle to remain sensitive to what has always left one in the lurch. Schelling was, as Caroline observed, like granite.

Or, as Schelling concluded his Berlin lectures on the *Philosophy of Mythology,* philosophy should not only "be considered as a study for beginners" or as a propaedeutic for cultural literacy or a preparation for future state examinations. Rather, "it refreshes and renews the spirit" and makes one "capable" of "standing before the tear *[Riß]* and to cower before no appearance . . ." (II/2, 673). The apparent primacy of the True is supplanted by the

superiority of the Good. It is almost as if one became a kind of sage who dwelt in a general economy in whose prodigal generosity nothing True was bad, nothing Good was reducible to my or our good, and religion was, as Nishida later put it, an absolute respect for the facts. "In the true Dharma there is nothing strange" (AM, 101).[35]

One would, however, never read this granite philosopher, who stood before the cision in his later years often in isolation, for laughs. There is a strain of melancholy running through the *Freedom* essay in which the source of one's joy (the proximity of the Good) is also the source of one's mourning (the absence of the Good). "Humans never receive the condition within their power, even though they strive to do so in evil. It is only loaned to them and is independent of them. This is the mourning that clings to all finite life" (I/7, 400). Since humans are God writ small, God too cannot complete Itself. Therefore there is in God, too, the "source of mourning," and "hence there is the veil of melancholy that extends over all of nature, the profound indestructible melancholy of all of life" (I/7, 400). As Schelling wrote a book linking sickness in the natural world to evil in the moral world, one might find it hard to forget that Schelling's spouse Caroline was dying. In the *Clara,* likely written in the months after her death in the autumn of 1809, Schelling attempted to take up the question of death directly. The dialogue itself begins on All Soul's Day, as mourners walk over the earth separating the living from the dead—an earth that they themselves will one day cross.

Death, in disciplinary mortification as well as physical expiration, is a crossing, a confrontation with the cision, the tear that is the disequilibrium of the circulation of the dark night of the Good and the bright day of the True, that pushes the extent to which the ego could ever claim to know mortification. It is the limit case by which one judges the smashing of the mirror and the interruption of the mirror stage, which is the birth of thinking. John Martin Wagner in his autobiographical notebooks from the year 1809 reported visiting Schelling shortly after the death of Caroline: "Schelling's condition became more critical with each day. He was near death. I had to fetch him a priest and take down his Final Will. Furthermore, I had to promise him to burn after his death a trunk containing writings that he pointed out to me."[36]

Schelling himself spoke of this great cemetery of thinking in a letter written shortly after Caroline's death.

> I should have rightly written immediately to you and to some other friends. But the unspeakable pain of the severance *[Trennung]* of so loved a being *[Wesen]* whose life shared with mine a thousand roots, overwhelmed my powers. Only complete internal and external loneliness, the exclusive contact with her and with things of another world could preserve me in that moment. . . . Nothing can either occupy or console me more than contact with the objects of a higher

> world through which alone I can resolve *[aufheben]* this painful severance. . . . I now need friends who are not strangers to the real seriousness of pain and who feel that the single right and happy state of the soul is the divine mourning in which all earthly pain is immersed.[37]

Yet the dialogue does not end with mourning. Clara herself, who will later die an early death, leaving behind a note which, curiously enough, is not part of the extant dialogue, exemplifies the soul in both its singularity (there is no other Clara) and its life amidst the seasons of Being—its circulations of death and life. In fact, there is note of defiance before the opacity of the Good in the epigram that Schelling had inscribed on Caroline's tombstone:

> *Gott hat sie mir gegeben*
> *Der Tod kann sie mir nicht rauben.*

> God gave her to me.
> Death cannot steal her from me.[38]

The question with which I began—what does it mean to demand that the True follow from the Good?—returns in a new guise as the question: Is death not the most thorough thief? Does not the Good giveth *and taketh away?* Was it ever good to have spoken of *having* the Good? In the end, *what* do we *have?*

In the *Clara* Schelling certainly does not turn to a naïve faith in an eternal soul. As we have seen, the soul is not at all a thing, but the *prima materia* of being, which, in its turn, has no being of its own. According to the *Clara,* in death the soul is uncoiled from form and returns to the nothingness of the *prima materia*. Nonetheless, in some vague way, it apparently retains some nebulous trace of its former form. In the dialogue, the narrator, himself a priest, finally argues: "For the drop in the ocean nevertheless always is this drop even if it isn't distinguished as such. So too the single spark from the fire or the single ray of the sun (if there is such a thing) always is the spark or that single ray even if they aren't seen as particulars" (C, 72).

To be a drop in the ocean, however, is not to retain one's earthly identity in the spirit realm. To die is the final and most complete mortification, and to what extent did it ever make sense to have spoken of retaining any kind of individuality amidst a sea of overwhelming generality? The priest for his part argues for what amounts to a subtle theory of reincarnation in which rebirth is not predicated on the retention of identity. "And doesn't it seem that those who make out that they fear the destruction of their individuality in that perfect unity with the Divine are actually afraid only of that rapture and complete surrender, just as even they are afraid of all drunkenness—even spiritual drunkenness" (C, 72)?

How could one answer the priest's question? By merely asserting that death shall not rob us and by denying that death is the only form of mortifi-

cation that was not cheating? Schelling himself did not seem able to write Clara's own death note, thereby concluding her own odyssey into a thought of death whose beauty was also a solace. Perhaps there would really only remain the *Verstummen,* the growing silent before the Good. As Schelling himself admitted in the first draft of *The Ages of the World* (1811),

> I would like, if it were not too immodest, to take this opportunity to say what I have so often felt, . . . namely, how much closer I am than most people could conceive to that growing silent of science *[Verstummen der Wissenschaft]* which must necessarily emerge if we know how infinitely personal everything is, that it is impossible really to know anything. (WA, 103)

The earth is one great ruin, a vast graveyard of relics with no narrative to restore their particular intelligibility.

Yet there remains the gift of Clara herself, the irreducible singularity of the Good in each of its manifestations and its demand of absolute respect for all facts. This is the gift of those symbols of the Good, which do not have an exclusive hold on the Good. Rather they teach the goodness of all things, the divine disequilibrium of the Good painting the picture and singing the song of the True.

2

Theos Kai Pan

Right from the beginning, Spinoza was a decisive philosopher for Schelling. This may now sound like yet another dusty little truth in the museums and archives of philosophy, but in Schelling's day, to embrace Spinoza was to dance with the devil and pantheism was the witches' brew served at this demonic party.

Deleuze once wrote of Spinoza that "No philosopher was ever more worthy, but neither was any philosopher more maligned and hated."[1] Now as bored college students sleep through class lectures and discussions on Continental Rationalism, it seems hard to imagine why Spinoza feared for his life were he to publish his *Ethics,* or why people were punished for reading it, or why records were kept of those who had read it in a way not altogether dissimilar to the way the FBI now keeps records on terrorists or even its own citizens. In the late eighteenth century, the German philosophical community was so galvanized by the so-called *Pantheismusstreit,* the Pantheism Controversy, and its scandalous claim that the theologically liberal Enlightenment star Lessing had been a dreaded Spinozist, that some of its participants eventually became so worked up that they died.

What is it about the very notion of pantheism, or some version of it, which was so exciting and so dangerous then and so dull now? As for now, the lassitude that these questions breed is more a function of our inability to read well. The inert prophylactic force in our philosophical habits keeps these questions from emerging with any force as questions.

As for the late eighteenth century, pantheism was a difficult question, and not just in terms of the cerebral demands of the problematic. Spinozism, despite its frequent talk of *Deus sive natura* (God or nature), bore the specter

of atheism, fatalism, nihilism, and moral decadence. If God is the same thing as nature, then God is material, and hence without a principle of transcendence, it makes no sense to speak of a God. If everything follows from the ineluctable nature of God, from what Leibniz once called "monopsychism," or a single all-encompassing spirit or substance, then all things are fated. If there is nothing but fate, there is no freedom, and if there is no freedom, there is no free will, and without the assumption of free will, there can be no coherent doctrine of moral responsibility.

This anxiety is not allayed when one simply substitutes an incomprehensible darkness or emptiness for substance. If all things are swallowed up by this dark night, if the clarity of day simply hides its foundational darkness and if light is led back into the darkness in which the concrete is no longer discrete, then the dark, incomprehensible specter of substance leads to what Hegel rightly called a "monochromatic formalism," a dark night when all cows are black. This dark night, this hippy heaven in which one has escaped the *facta bruta* of the quotidian, is not unlike the common misperception that Buddhism counsels escape from the concrete into the free and detached night when all Buddhas are black and nirvana is just another narcotic by which one simply drops out of a life that one can no longer bear. In fact the word *einerlei,* the sameness of things, a word that Schelling's own *Identity Philosophy* most wanted to stay away from, also denotes "monotony." (Nietzsche, for his part, called this death of the camel, of the capacity to bear life, European Buddhism.)

To the anxious, either substance is something and hence everything is swallowed up in the implacable movement of fate, or it is nothing and everything is lost in this nothingness. As Hegel reflected in the Preface to the *Phenomenology:* "If the conception of God as the one Substance shocked the age in which it was proclaimed, the reason for this was on the one hand an instinctive awareness that, in this definition, self-consciousness was only submerged and not preserved. On the other hand, the opposite view, which clings to thinking qua thinking, to *universality* as such, is the very same simplicity, is undifferentiated, unmoved substantiality" (PG, *Vorrede,* §17).

The anxieties now start to mount. If there are no independent, transcendent values, then there is no morality. As Father Copleston famously argued on the radio with Bertrand Russell against Russell's ethical emotivism: "But the possibility of criticizing the accepted moral code presupposes that there is an objective standard, that there is an ideal moral order, which imposes itself. . . . It implies the existence of a real foundation of God."[2]

Moreover, the lack of a transcendent teleology is the lack of an inherent meaningfulness to the world and to our lives and actions. If God, bound by the goodness of its nature, had not provided for us by creating according to design with some final goal, if God was just playing around, so to speak, then who could object, as *King Lear* has it, that we are to the gods as flies to wanton boys, killed for their sport? Against Spinoza would stand what Nietzsche

once called the ascetic ideal, which is an "expression of the human will, its *horror vacui,*" its horror before emptiness, which, in turn, leaves the will feeling needy and impoverished. Hence the will "needs a goal."[3]

Furthermore, the Pantheism Controversy began as an intramural debate largely within an enlightened and chiefly Christian milieu. (Although Mendelssohn was Jewish, he was an Enlightenment thinker, advocating a position that could not be characterized as Jewish in any specifically religious sense of the word.) In the background of the Controversy loomed other manifestations of the People of the Book, namely the tacit threat of more extreme and revolutionary forms of Judaism (like the *Kabbalah*) as well as Islam (what Leibniz had already characterized as "Turkish fate"). At times the Pantheism Controversy resonates with the force of a crusade.

Finally, the viability and value of reason itself came to be at stake. Long before the more contemporary Rationality Debate, a forerunner occurred in which the stakes were even higher and the interlocutors more dramatic. Prima facie, it is not obvious how Spinoza, whose *Ethics* and its method of geometrical demonstration, could lead to a position in which the sovereignty of reason was overthrown. Yet if all were rational, if all were in the concept, then reason does not have an outside, an Other, a contesting force otherwise than Reason, a *nie aufgehender Rest* or "indivisible remainder" as Schelling later put it in the *Freedom* essay. As the early F. H. Jacobi (1743–1819) already knew, if everything is rational than rationality becomes a prison and human thinking strives to escape its snares, to abandon ship, to liberate itself. Hence, the very force of reason as it strives to articulate freedom and the Good becomes the very thing that stymies the realization of freedom and the Good. Jacobi counseled the *salto mortale,* the leap out of reason's claustrophobic tyranny.

All these things come to the fore with Spinoza, the Jew unacceptable even to the Jews of Amsterdam, and *pantheism,* this strange term, came to bear the weight of the possibility of philosophy itself. It is not my intention to provide here a history of pantheism, or to detail exhaustively every move of the debate over pantheism. There are others better suited to this task. My aspiration here is to begin to think with Schelling by first getting a general sense of the debate that had been raging immediately prior to his philosophical development and thereby gain an appreciation of how Schelling, in situating himself in this debate, comes to encounter and revitalize Spinoza amidst the anxieties that fueled the Pantheism Controversy. Schelling found the general thrust of this supposed archdemon to be liberating and inspiring. That Spinoza aroused such fear and loathing in Schelling's immediate predecessors and contemporaries and that Schelling was, in a way, with some careful reservations, to side with Spinoza, already suggests the daring of Schelling's thinking from its inception.

This is not to say that Spinoza, especially the Spinoza of the Pantheism Controversy, is the only or even the best way to enter in an appreciation of

Schelling's philosophy. It is certainly not to say that Spinozism and the Pantheism Controversy are the secret keys that reveal Schelling's fundamental doctrinal commitments. In the end, he did everything he could to have no such commitments. I would like to make a few, somewhat programmatic comments about my reading of Schelling as well as Schelling's reading of Spinoza and the Pantheism Controversy and, by extension, about his manner of reading and thinking in general.

Foundationalism (an admitted pleonasm—all isms are foundational) hides its own capacity to examine critically its own foundations, let alone the questionability of foundations per se. I take Schelling to be a thinker of non-asphyxiating life, of the openness and inexhaustible richness of being. Schelling's discourse on nature, for instance, does not collapse the field of being into disciplinary distinctions or philosophical categories, but endeavors to define and judge in such a way as not simply to delimit but simultaneously to reopen, liberate, expand, revitalize, and de-asphyxiate life itself. Human living is the site where life itself can know the richness of its own life. It is true that there was and is always more to say, new angles to take, new relationships to found, new friendships to cultivate, new encounters to facilitate, new valences to activate, and forgotten possibilities to unleash. To think in the wake of Schelling is to do precisely such things. In this respect, I would ally Schelling with Hannah Arendt, who, in her critique of the totalizing imperative nascent in any ideology, claimed that "Ideologies are never interested in the miracle of being."[4] Schelling is fundamentally, more so than Hegel and his invulnerable dialectic, a thinker of new beginnings, of the miracle of being.

Nietzsche once commented in the *Anti-Christ* that the "disciple's love knows nothing of chance,"[5] nothing of life. One knows nothing of Schelling or his manner of thinking, when the question is simply, "Why did he not say this?" and "Why did he omit this?" The better question is always: And what more can we say, and what other paths have been opened up for us? Schelling was a philosopher *des ewigen Anfangs,* of the eternal beginning.

Schelling has always been a thinker of the whole, and hence it is finally unsatisfactory to content oneself with the following kinds of discourses:

a) a discourse of starting points: it is true that thinking must always start some place, but no start is the proper start—each start is an entry into a dynamic, irreducible whole, the "absolute contradictory identity" that is always out of the reach of any start. Each start has its advantages and disadvantages. Thinking is cursed never to be able to begin at the beginning.

b) a discourse that places too much emphasis on Schelling as a thinker of Copernican turns, as if he were starting over from a failed earlier attempt. No start can completely succeed and each, in its own way, must fail. Each commencement pays attention to a particular aspect of the whole, and each start, as such, is trumped by the force and complexity and inexhaustibility and infinite life of the whole.

c) a discourse that attempts to find in Schelling any committed attempt to find a foundation for philosophical discourse. The start that relies on the foundation is simply to find in the position of the foundation, the absolute subject of nature, which, inhabiting the subject position, overturns the workings and pretensions of the subject position. Schelling struggled to get philosophy—a discipline rife with foundationalist language—to speak without foundations. The absolute subject is a subject that overcomes subjectivity within subjectivity and is thereby a form of immanent critique.

d) a discourse that speaks of Schelling's basic philosophical position. It is better to speak of accents, stresses, and to characterize the rich variations of Schelling's thinking as changes in emphasis and as experiments with new modes of thinking and new modes of speaking. As Wieland argued, Schelling attempted, especially in the various drafts of *The Ages of the World,* "to let possibilities of thought stand as possibilities."[6] Schelling changed the ways in which he enters into a thinking of the Whole but never his commitment to it.

With this in mind, I turn to this strange term, *pantheism,* and note that both Schelling and Spinoza endeavored to rethink, to revitalize, if you would, nature itself. Spinoza's famous subject line, *Deus sive natura,* God or nature, seems to equate God with nature and hence elevating nature, even if the price of so doing is, as Spinoza's scandalized critics were quick to object, the de-elevation or degradation of God. What do you mean God is just a rock or a piece of fecal matter? Surely fecal matter, indeed the contaminated realm of being itself, the delight of which Saint Bernard in his medieval *Apologia ad Guillelmum* once likened to shit ("for us all bodily delights are nothing but dung"[7]), knows nothing of empyrean purities! Pantheism equates God with nature (God = nature), and Spinoza, arguing that all things are different modes of divine attributes, surely is not simply equating them. Hence, the cumbersome term *pan-en-theism* is often carted out to insist that all things are in God, that they are all modes of divine attributes.

This explanation complicates but does not vitiate the nervous objection that shit is a mode of God. This still, as Mendelssohn argued, "degraded the Godhead to human weaknesses."

I shall return to these questions shortly. For now let me say that it shall be a desideratum to understand Schelling's contention that there are always at least four things to think regarding the relationship between God, θεός, the ἕν (or one), and the many (πάν, the ἕν καί πάν or what I am also calling here the θεός καί πάν). There is the πάν, the θεός, the "and" or καί (the relationship or conjunction or what Schelling called the *Band* or link), and finally, that of which the relationship is expressive (the Good beyond Good and Evil, the Godhead beyond God).

Is this Schelling's brand of Pantheism? Certainly not if by that pantheism holds that the πάν = θεός. Is this then a kind of Pan-en-theism? Not if the θεός is a foundation, a subject, *substantia* through which and in which the πάν

is granted its intelligibility (a principle that explains all other principles, a ground that, once understood, allows all that it grounds to be understood). Nor is this emanationism in which the θεός simply transcends that which it creates. Rather this is a model of expressivity, which, when thought through, becomes for Schelling the histories of the system of freedom. If I were to formulate this in terms of Schelling's doctrine of the potencies of being, the A^1 denotes the eternal birthing or generation of the πάν, while the A^2 marks the reemergence of the sovereignty of its origin, as if it were the explosive and annihilating force of death or madness. This is Dionysus being led by its omnidestructive panthers or Śiva the destroyer as *kāla,* time, the world destroyer, whose manifestations include the feminized form, Kālī, with her collections of human heads. Higher than either is the conjunction of the two, this ever so difficult καί, which Schelling calls the A^3. Note too that these are marked by A, demanding that we somehow think here some kind of coincidence of opposites or what Nishida called *zettai mujunteki jikodōitsu,* "absolute contradictory self-identity."[8] In a sense, this καί names something like what Heidegger called *die Lichtung,* the clearing into presence of the nonpresent. As Schelling was later to claim in *The Ages of the World,* "All life must pass through the fire of contradiction" and "The contradiction that we have here conceived is the fountain of eternal life" (AW, 321). Hardest of all to think is what Schelling later called the A^4, historical revelations (a pleonasm for Schelling) of the potencies of being.

I will take up the question of the potencies of nature later in the book. For now, however, I turn my attention to some aspects of the Pantheism Controversy in order to begin articulating a few ways in which Spinoza offers an opening into Schelling's project.

I

> Spinoza, it seems to me, has an identical fate as the good old Saturn of the fable. The new gods pulled down the sublime one from the lofty throne of knowledge. He faded back into the holy obscurity of the imagination *[das heilige Dunkel der Phantasie];* there he lives and now dwells with the other Titans in dignified exile. Keep him here! Let his memories of the old mastery melt away in the song of the Muses into a soft longing. Let him put away the militant attire of systematic philosophy and share the dwelling in the temple of new poetry with Homer and Dante, joining the household gods and friends of every god-inspired poet. Indeed, I barely comprehend how one can be a poet without admiring Spinoza, loving him, and becoming entirely his. . . . In Spinoza, however, you will find the beginning and end of all imagination, the general basis on which all individual creation rests; and especially the separation of the original, eternal aspect of the imagination from the individual and the typical must be very welcome to

> you. Seize the opportunity and observe. You are granted a profound view into the innermost workshop of poetry. . . . Try for once to see the old mythology, steeped in Spinoza and in those views which present-day physics must excite in every thinking person, and everything will appear to you in new splendor and vitality. . . . I could demonstrate by this example [Spinoza] in a most striking and illuminating way my ideas about the value and dignity of mysticism and its relation to poetry.
>
> —Friedrich Schlegel, *Dialogue on Poetry* (1800)[9]

So speaks Ludovico, Schlegel's persona of Schelling. But what is one to make of this prima facie unlikely alliance between the abstract rigors of Spinoza's geometric method and the mystical foundation of poetry, indeed, of truth? Was not Schelling already written off as *schon aufgehoben,* already sublated, by Hegel? Is not mysticism that express lane to imbecility and fanaticism? Are we not done with Schelling, and was not Spinoza, as Kant and Fichte both contended, an epitome of precritical dogmatism?

These words, however, suggest someone very different than the thinker that Hegel in the *Phenomenology* implicitly accused of promoting a mystical and epistemically privileged concept of the absolute that dissolves the concrete, relegating thinking to *Schwärmerei,* to a night when all cows are black. Tradition holds that Hegel was referring to Schelling when he made this famous critique, and many readers of the *Phenomenology* held (and still hold) this. Hegel's language, as we have seen, is very misleading in this respect, and he said little in public to discourage this reading. This interpretation not only injured Schelling's credibility and severely damaged his career, it still provides many contemporary readers with a reason not to read Schelling. He can be dismissed as the objective counterpart to Fichte's subjective spirit and, as such, a moment now completed, now *aufgehoben,* by the return of Spirit to itself in 1807.

Despite the influence of this interpretation, Schelling has not always been read this way. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who struggled with the mutual coincidence of their thought,[10] was an early champion of Schelling's work, claiming that "with exception of one or two fundamental ideas, which cannot be withheld from FICHTE, to SCHELLING we owe the completion, and the most important victories, of this [Kantian] revolution in philosophy. To me it will be happiness and honor enough, should I succeed in rendering the system itself intelligible to my countrymen, and in the application of it to the most awful of subjects for the most important of purposes" (BL, 163–64). Coleridge was not the only notable appreciative reader of Schelling, yet Schelling still seems to languish under the sentence pronounced upon him by Hegel. As I discussed in the previous chapter, we are still standing at a crime scene.

That a crime had been committed should be evident to the apparently rare reader even of the early Schelling. Yet some of Schelling's contemporaries

did not yet have their eyes obscured by Hegel's death sentence. Friedrich Schlegel saw in Ludovico, whom he seems to have based on Schelling,[11] a seminal unification of "present day physics" and a "profound view into the innermost workshop of poetry." Furthermore, a striking feature of this portrait is Ludovico's enthusiastic embrace of the allegedly dogmatic philosophy of Spinoza. It is a way to think the mode of presentation *[Darstellung]* of the poetic imagination itself. But wait a minute! Was not Spinoza a dogmatist *de rigueur?* Did he not make the absolute an object adequate to the thinking subject? Is he not the very epitome of the human hubris to comprehend God, to assimilate the wholly Other, and does his thinking not furthermore lead to the fatalistic derivation of all things from God's nature?

Adding to this initial confusion, one finds that Friedrich Schlegel characterized Schelling's negative philosophy three years earlier in an *Athenäum* fragment as anything but objective but rather as a "criticized *[kritisierter]* mysticism," a mysticism, so to speak, recast in the mold of critical philosophy, which ends, "like the *Prometheus* of Aeschylus, with earthquake and decline."[12] Schlegel's contrasting "presentation" is remarkable because it stressed Schelling's emphasis on the mystical element in critical philosophy and because it resonates with Schelling's insistence that the authority of reason has, to echo a recent formulation used by Derrida (following Pascal and Montaigne),[13] a *fondement mystique*. This is not to say, as I shall argue in chapter four, that Schelling is at all interested in the lugubrious epistemic privileges of the mystic or the overly enthusiastic theosophist, who, as soon as they speak, contradict themselves by the very fact that they are speaking (HMP, 187/181). One cannot have an experience of the ineffable and then go ahead write books about it. Either it is ineffable or one can write about it.

Schlegel's description also links Schelling's very mode of presentation with tragic poetry, a connection that Schelling had suggested, three years before the appearance of Friedrich Schlegel's *Dialogue on Poetry,* in the tenth and final letter of his *Philosophical Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism* (1797). Greek poetic reason was equipped with the capacity to think what appeared to philosophy to be an inadmissible contradiction. If one attempted to link the 1797 description of Schelling's presentation of mysticism in the critical mode through tragic poetry with the 1800 presentation of Schelling (Ludovico) as the champion of a Spinoza who, once stripped of his pretense to systematic mastery, becomes a symbol that presents the aesthetic or productive imagination, a combined presentation of Spinoza appears as a tragic thinker who is structurally able to present the irresolvable aporia of the productive imagination.[14]

Or if Andrew Bowie is correct in his assessment that for Schelling "the demand is to think something unthinkable,"[15] and I hold this to be Schelling's concern throughout all of his thinking, then the presentation of a Spinozism in the tragic mode, both mournfully joyful and joyfully mournful, emerges as one of Schelling's earliest attempts to think this problematic as a Whole.

II

In 1797 Schelling first associated himself with the "secret society" known as the Jena Circle (with, among others, August and Friedrich Schlegel, Dorothea Mendelssohn-Veit, Novalis, Ludwig Tieck, and August's then—and Schelling's future—wife, Caroline). He had received a call to come to the University of Jena partially through the influence of, among others, Goethe, who sympathized with Schelling's *Naturphilosophie*[16] and who shared Schelling's conviction that Spinozism—without "the militant attire of systematic philosophy" and beyond its ensnarement in the Pantheism Controversy—offered a powerful model for the chiasmic forces of the I as akin to the chiasmic forces of Being. Schelling was among the first to present a reading of Spinoza that is only now beginning to be realized as a powerful model for critical philosophy, a model in which Antonio Negri in his provocative reading of Spinoza, *The Savage Anomaly,* called the "return of the system on itself, the joy of the utopia."[17] Schelling, who insisted that the concern of philosophy was freedom, that a friend of wisdom is a lover of freedom, and who attempted to allow philosophical activity to be led to the glory of absurdity rather than clot in metaphysical constructions, anticipated, for example, Negri's reading of the political operations which result in the sclerosis of the body and thinking such that illusion becomes constituted as truth and the expansive movement of physical and mental energies turn in upon themselves and ossify:

> The imagination justifies its confused and indeterminate being by molding itself in the natural *potentia,* in the development and increase of the human *operari*. Therefore, two levels can be identified: a first, static level on which the imagination proposes a partial but positive definition of its own contents and a second, dynamic level on which the movement and effects of the imagination are validated as a function of the ethical constitution of the world. The political raises the theological to the level of truth. And here the problem of 'false consciousness' is posed in modern terms![18]

Political circumscription—and here we find a profound consensus between Spinoza, Schelling, and Nietzsche—is a species of *cathexis* in which the circulation between the finite and the divine clogs and human operations remain at the first level, confusing their images for the freedom of utopia and, to paraphrase Spinoza, fighting for their slavery as if it were their freedom. Dogmatic metaphysics, an admitted pleonasm, in which all of the body's energies reactively converge upon a single point, a kind of will to knowledge, is antithetical to a Spinozistic and Schellingian ethic, or perhaps better, ethology,[19] of freedom in which activity affirms its membership in a dynamic web of local and restricted arrangements that each in their own way arch back upon the

unrestricted energies of their origin. This activity marks a membership in an irresolvable and "living" tension between freedom and necessity, criticism and dogmatism, the unthinkable and thought, the *Ungrund* and *Existenz,* silence and *logos*. This tension, furthermore, cannot be exhausted in a concept. Rather this membership presents "us" on the one hand with the possibility of evil and on the other hand with the inexhaustibility of "our" freedom.

III

The Pantheism Controversy produced widespread philosophical anxiety within the newly secured fortress of the Enlightenment. Accusations of implacable Muslim fate and the relentless force of Allah's will as well as Kabbalistic emanationism were in the air. Radical Jews and Muslims are among us! For Jacobi and Mendelssohn, the chief protagonists in this crusade, this was an intramural squabble as the Enlightenment's impact on religion was being assessed. Schelling, who incidentally already knew both Arabic and Hebrew, did not join any such Crusade.

The task at hand is to trace the militant dismissal of Spinoza that set the stage for a later and radical reappropriation of Spinoza. Theophron, in Herder's dialogue *Gott, einige Gespräche über Spinozas System* (1787),[20] draws attention to this massive reaction against this abject thinker when he argues with Philolaus, whose views reflect the widespread condemnation of Spinoza that has prevailed since his death: "Bayle has fixed the conception of Spinoza for the light troop of readers, while for the heavy phalanx, it has been done mainly by militant philosophers and theologians" (G, 739/78). Pierre Bayle, in his large and influential 1696 *Dictionaire,* a work of popular and often glib philosophical skepticism that, as is obvious to readers of Leibniz' *Theodicy,* argues for the incompatibility of faith and reason, helped inaugurate the militancy mustered against Spinoza. In his wake the heavy phalanx attacked, and the Jew banned by his own people even from the scandalously tolerant city of Amsterdam was deemed variously as Maledictus, the fatalistic, the atheistic, the nihilistic, the heretical, the dangerously pantheistic, even the satanic. Frederick Beiser reports that "by 1710 so many professors and clerics had attacked Spinoza that there was a *Catalogus scriptorum Anti-Spinozanorum* in Leipzig. In 1759 Trinius counted, probably too modestly, 129 enemies of Spinoza in his *Freydenkerlexicon*. Such was Spinoza's reputation that he was often identified with Satan himself."[21] Spinoza was the abject enemy, the scapegoat for all that is disagreeable to thinking, and the magnet for *ressentiment*.

The German wing of the attacking force included notables like Johann Sturm, Theophil Spitzel, and even Leibniz who, despite some admiration for Spinoza but anxious to separate his own thought from the cold and uncompromising necessity of Spinoza's "monopsychic" *substantia,* considered the

Ethics "dangerous for those who took the pains to master it" (FR, 49).[22] Christian Wolff helped deal an especially severe blow with his review of the *Ethics* in his widely influential *Theologia naturalis* (1737), calling it "even more harmful than atheism."[23] Critics argued that Spinoza had allegedly made God the prisoner of its own nomadic necessity, from which it follows that creation is ateleological and amoral. God, and, *mutatis mutandis,* the world, was a machine following the impersonal and ineluctable laws of its nature without the capacity for goodness. In this sense Spinoza represented, if one takes Leibniz' critique as emblematic, the perceived threat of the Muslim world (as well as any other account of blind fate) with its implacable "*Fatum Mahometanum,* fate after the Turkish fashion, because it is said of the Turks that they do not shun danger or even abandon places infected with plague. . . ."[24] This is an obviously parochial and ignorant account of the Muslim tradition, but it reflects the anxiety that God would lose both His omnipotence and benevolence.

Without any intelligible possibility of human agency, there is no possibility of moral accountability. Rather, "all has to come from the first cause or from primitive Nature by a blind and geometrical necessity, with complete absence of capacity for choice, for goodness and for understanding in this first source of things" (T, preface, 67). Nor can God, according to such an account, be held morally responsible, as Leibniz insisted that, according to God's nature, He should be. The truly sovereign God has no plan and is bound by nothing outside of itself and hence by no independent, moral laws. Creation "follows" meaninglessly from the sheer force of God's geometric necessity—without the guarantee of divinely instilled meaning that divine final causality provides and without innate moral strictures that belong to God's nature and that restrict His actions from including evil. For Leibniz, Spinoza "appears to have explicitly taught a blind necessity, having denied to the Author of Things understanding and will, and assuming that good and perfection relate to us only, and not to him. . . . He acknowledges no goodness in God, properly speaking, and he teaches that all things exist through the necessity of the divine nature, without any act of choice by God" (T, §173, 234). The blind God would be a kind of libertine whose capricious necessity interrupts our best laid plans and tears asunder established trajectories of human meaning. God would not be a gentleman, bound by His own internal law of goodness. Leibniz feared in Spinoza a truly sovereign God whose freedom could not be externally delimited or whose freedom could not be internally delimited by a principle of the Good that was intelligibly good. If freedom = the Good, then the Good is not intelligibly good. Such goodness appears Satanic, a sovereign and awful Good, and an unimaginable and incomprehensible power beyond all intelligible measures of good and evil.

The status of Spinoza became even more volatile during the so-called Pantheism Controversy, a long and heated verbal dispute beginning in 1783

between Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi and Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1786) and perhaps not ending until 1813 with Schelling's critique of Jacobi's misologist *Von den göttlichen Dingen und ihrer Offenbarung*. Upon learning that Mendelssohn was about to begin a biography extolling the Enlightenment thinker Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–1781), Jacobi (no friend of the *Aufklärung*) intervened, writing that he had a conversation with Lessing three years earlier in which Lessing had proclaimed his allegiance to Spinoza, disavowed belief in a personal God, and confessed his pantheism. This turn in the conversation began after Jacobi showed Lessing a then unpublished poem by Goethe entitled "Prometheus" in which the title figure, suffering under Zeus' vengeful wrath, rebels against the gods. "I know nothing poorer under the sun as thou, Gods. You nourish miserably on offertory taxes and prayer incense."[25]

Prometheus, despite his contempt for the Gods and his miserable lot, refuses to resign himself and condemn his life. Rather, he celebrates it as the prototype for the consequent birth of human life that "in accordance with my image is a generation like me to suffer, cry, enjoy, be pleased and not respect thine—like me!"[26] Not only does Prometheus' defiance of traditional religion seem important for Lessing, but, foreshadowing a later generation of thinkers, the tragic situation allows a force even greater than the gods to come to be seen and felt: Moira, the goddess who apportions our allotments, the creative and destructive movement of destiny as the apportioning and measuring of time to whom even the highest gods are beholden, the force of forces, the Whole of which all parts are expressions, "omnipotent time and eternal destiny, my and thine Lords" (P, 204).[27]

Promethean life does not bear the mark of what Spinoza had called "empty religion" in which images of the divine are confused with the divine. Rather it is a life marked by the impossible play of human freedom (Prometheus' capacity to defy the Gods) and necessity (the omnipotence of Moira's decrees). Human freedom, furthermore, symbolizes the relationship between freedom and necessity within Being itself. Moira spontaneously apportions necessity. As her apportionments are the very essence of necessity, they do not restrict her spontaneity (self-generation). The ruler of Being rules freely and hence freedom *is* necessity. Moira, like the Vedic *Māyā,* weaves fate (the measured necessities of time) from out of herself yet retains a sovereign distance from her own expression. The *Bhagavad-Gītā,* for instance, expressed this by claiming that all things are in Viṣṇu, but Viṣṇu is in no thing.[28] This distance, however, is the distance *from* nature already *within* nature. This is also the contradiction or aporia that Greek tragedy presented but would not resolve. It is perhaps already worth noting that the Pantheism Controversy began with an image (the exaltation of the Promethean tension between freedom and necessity without recourse to a moral God) that Schelling was going to attribute to a revitalized Spinoza that had been cast within this tragic chi-

asm. In the *Philosophy of Art* (1802–1804), for instance, Prometheus would emerge as the "archetype of the greatest human inner character, and thereby also the true archetype of tragedy." For Schelling, Prometheus was able to affirm that he was Moira writ small, that the affirmation of her spontaneous self-production as necessity was also an affirmation of human freedom.

Nonetheless, the Promethean image would first have to undergo the wrath of the Pantheism Controversy. Jacobi had Lessing read the poem:

> I: You know the poem?
>
> LESSING: I have never read the poem but I find it good.
>
> I: In its way, me too; otherwise I would not have shown it to you.
>
> LESSING: I mean something else. . . . The point of view, out of which the poem is taken, is my own point of view. . . . The orthodox concepts of the Godhead are no longer for me; I cannot bear them. *Hen kai Pan!* I know nothing else. The poem is also about this and I must confess that I like it very much.
>
> I: Then you would seemingly be in agreement with Spinoza.
>
> LESSING: If I should name myself after somebody, I know no other.[29]

Normally the mere equation of Lessing with Spinoza would have been enough to discredit Lessing, but Jacobi persisted and attempted to dismiss formally Spinozism, that dirty secret of the Enlightenment, which Jacobi regarded as a way of thinking that could only consistently result in atheism, fatalism, and moral vacuity. In an exchange of letters with Mendelssohn, Jacobi took this as an opportunity to discuss his own philosophy which he contrasted to one that proceeds according to rational demonstration (like Spinozism, which Jacobi regarded as the most complete and rigorous presentation of the Enlightenment project) and which, as a consequence, subsumes God and the world under a rational principle. "As long as we conceive, we remain in a chain of conditioned conditions *[bedingte Bedingungen]*."[30] The rational first principle, once comprehended by the intellect, grounds the system and *determines* all that shall follow from it. The only way out of reason's self-constructed labyrinth was a *salto mortale,* a leap of faith, into an acceptance of a realism that extends beyond reason's facility to comprehend, i.e., into an unquestioning faith in the manifestation of things. Religion (and for that matter, thinking itself) cannot, according to Jacobi, follow from rational principles, but rather from a sentiment regarding God and faith *(Glaube)* in God. Faith must abide by its feelings and leap out of the snares of rationality, which simply revolve endlessly in all possible directions around their own concatenations. Such an emotivist foundation to thinking, however, threatens to eradicate the place of rationality all together. Should we just go around feeling everything, perhaps even, like many students today, feeling our preferences

into existence? This leads to the tyranny of sentiments in which the dictates of feeling are not corrected by the limits that a rational consensus reaches. The establishment of the legitimate range of rationality serves as the tribunal, so to speak, by which the claims of feeling are not allowed to run amok.

Jacobi eventually realized this and recast his claims, beginning in the dialogue *David Hume on Belief or Realism and Idealism* (1787). Jacobi clarifies that he is not opposed to reason, but rather that the faith born of sentiment is what establishes the legitimate domain of reason. Left to itself, reason cannot reach nature but rather spins endlessly in its own chain of conditioned conditions. Thinking begins with the leap not just to God, but to the world that gives reason its extrarational grounding. Jacobi vainly but decisively tried to ground reason in a principle other than itself. Hegel's devastating critique in the *Phenomenology* of sense certainty, for example, would leave little positive to say about this attempt to establish the domain of reason in a belief in the obvious. (German Idealism was greatly successful in demonstrating that the obvious was not at all obvious.) Schelling's last published complete work,[31] his angry and enervating 1813 critique of Jacobi's *Von den göttlichen Dingen und ihrer Offenbarung, Of the Divine Things and their Revelation,* as a pernicious form of misology, demonstrated that Jacobi was not able to resolve the very aporias that he helped uncover. Jacobi, if honesty were here to prevail, was a mediocre philosopher at best and was unable to save reason from the very place that he had condemned it. Nonetheless, Jacobi marked a critical opening because, unbeknownst to himself, he had stumbled upon a critical issue: the origin of reason is itself not reasonable. Reason cannot ground itself in itself.

Mendelssohn, on the other hand, attempted to counteract Jacobi's charge by clearing Lessing's name from its association with Spinozism. In doing so, he also contrasted his own rational philosophy of religion with Jacobi's faith-based sentiments and attempted to separate polemically his own and Lessing's respective rational religions from Spinozism. Mendelssohn ceased his work on Lessing's biography and dedicated his new book, *The Hours of the Morning or Lectures on the Existence of God, Morgenstunden oder Vorlesungen über das Daseyn Gottes* (1785) to these projects. Upon learning of Mendelssohn's plans, Jacobi moved to counter this by publishing a version of his own correspondence, *On Spinoza's Doctrine in Letters to Moses Mendelssohn, Über die Lehre des Spinozas in Briefen an Herrn Moses Mendelssohn* (1785). The so-called *Spinoza-Büchlein,* or *Little Spinoza Book,* appeared a month before *Morgenstunden*.

The initial round of the Controversy concerned the canonical contest between reason and faith—the stakes being the a priori meaningfulness of life. Both assumed that this could only be done through some kind of commitment to its divinely instilled significance. Enlightenment practitioners feared that if faith were to win, *Schwärmerei, Sturm und Drang,* fanatical mysticism, and all of the other tyrannies of sentiment that kept emerging, often violently,

in German political life would eclipse reason. If reason were to win, feeling and faith would be eclipsed through a reduction of the real to the implacable rules of the rational that did not and could not admit an outside or Other that resisted its omnivorous domain.

Mendelssohn, a star of the Berlin *Aufklärung,* longtime friend of Lessing (he was the inspiration for the title character of Lessing's play, *Nathan der Weise*), and bridge between the Hebrew tradition and Continental (primarily Wolffian) Rationalism, sought a rationally defensible religion. The *Aufklärung* had fought hard to establish the priority of reason over superstition and fanaticism. At stake for him was not only the reputation of his friend, but the sanctity of reason itself. Reason had been the Enlightenment's chief weapon against dogmatism and its consequent close mindedness and *Schwärmerei*. Now Jacobi was linking reason to the very things that it had struggled so hard to eradicate! How could reason, the supposed friend of freedom, all along have been its tacit enemy? Although Mendelssohn found it impossible to deny altogether Jacobi's assertions about Lessing (despite attributing Lessing's comments to his penchant for irony), he attempted in the second to last chapter of the *Morgenstunden* to argue for Lessing's "purified *[geläuterter]*" or "improved *[verfeinerter]*" pantheism,[32] claiming that Lessing, among other things, would not have denied a creation imbued with God's final causality nor have equated the world itself with God. Although the world may be subsumed under God's efficient imagination, God is not, in toto, the world. The world is but an ordered effect of God's providential wisdom and goodness. As Mendelssohn had Lessing claim:

> The inner, always efficient activity of the divine Power of Imagination *[Vorstellungskraft]* produces in itself everlasting images of contingent being *[unvergängliche Bilder zufälliger Wesen]* with the eternal series of all of its alterations and variations that follow from one another. This is what we, together with the material world outside of us, are. Imagined from this side pantheism appears . . . fully to stand on its feet again. (MO, 405)

According to Mendelssohn, Lessing's alleged Spinozism was a variation of Leibniz's supreme substance and its plentitudinous and continuous "fulgurations,"[33] the divine or continuous imagining itself in discrete monads (or, for Lessing, "images"). Once again, Leibniz is the prophylactic against the absolute sovereignty of Spinozistic substance. In the struggle between Spinoza and Leibniz to articulate the relationship between the discrete (Spinoza's attributes and Leibniz's monads) and the continuous (supreme substance), Lessing, by Mendelssohn's account, opted for Leibniz, but called it a "refined" Spinozism in that supreme substance committed one to some kind of pan-entheism, i.e., to a fulgurating Divine Imagination, bound by the independent

law of its goodness, birthing images within itself. Lessing may not have thought through the issue of transcendence, but at least this was still the best of all possible worlds because God was, by the necessity of His nature, intelligibly good.

Although this argument freed Lessing from the charge of atheism (Spinoza's God whose blindness disallows final causality), it also occasioned Mendelssohn to separate himself from Lessing. Again, it is the problem of articulating the relationship of the continuous and the discrete (the ἕν καί πάν). For Mendelssohn, it contradicts God's continuity if it can be said that God contains within itself its discrete fulgurations. God must be utterly transcendent because if the world, as an imperfect and finite arrangement, were a part of God, itself perfect and infinite, then imperfection and finitude would be a part of perfection and infinity, thus qualifying or limiting infinity and perfection.[34] In making God closer to people, in transposing finite pictures for divine pictures, as, for example, imagining God as "witness and judge of human actions, there is from other side against it the mistake that it degraded the Godhead to human weaknesses" (M, 415–16). For Mendelssohn, God is the perfect, necessary, and independent being that, as such, as *das Schranklose,* the Limitless, allows no limitations into itself (and hence allowed Mendelssohn to furnish this as an a priori and ontological proof for its existence) (M, 434–443). In God's radical separation from the finite, Mendelssohn's position is closer to a kind of Plotinian emanationism, in which the One remains responsible for but utterly separate from its creations. Pantheism would hold the doctrine that either A = A or the refined version that A was a species of A and thereby a modification of A but therefore, alas, also a corruption of A. The first position is absurd and the second violates the idea of God's transcendent perfection.

Jacobi, on the other hand, did not always consider himself a philosopher, writing what he dubbed an *Unphilosophie*. Jacobi shared with Kant a project of *Vernunftkritik,* of delimiting the legitimate capacities of reason. Without a radical leap from its own net, which is a perpetual chain of conditioned conditions, reason, if it is consistent enough to recognize the nature of its activity, is always some form of Spinozism.[35] As with Fichte, first philosophy, beginning with an all-encompassing first principle, enchains itself within itself because every consequent thought follows necessarily or geometrically from the first. Hence, according to Jacobi, Spinoza's *Ethics,* in which everything follows necessarily from the first principle *(substantia),* becomes the fate of every philosophy that is ruthless enough to admit what its nature entails. As such, all philosophy is Spinozism and Spinozism, being the machinations of cold analytic necessity, is fatalism. As the latter, Spinozism is atheistic because it denies a personal and free God. In contrast, Jacobi argued that a moral and free God, like the world itself, is not given in the dead end of reason, but in faith. Faith believes but does not know while every philosophical demonstration is at least tacit atheism.

In Spinozism, furthermore, the "polarization" between reason's perpetual chain and the simplicity of faith is unavoidable because, according to Jacobi's reading of Spinoza, there is no means of transit between substance and its attributes. Spinoza allegedly "rejects each crossing of the infinite to the finite, *causas transitorias, secundarias* or *remotas* and posits in the place of an emanating *Ein-sof [Ensoph]*[36] only an immanent *Ein-sof,* an indwelling, eternally in itself immutable cause of the world which, taken together with all of its consequences, would be one and the same" (BS, 24). Emanation assumes an unchanging God who bequeaths through emanation the transitory order of the finite while remaining separate from and not complicated by this donation. Emanation is the crossing between the polarized orders of the unchanging infinity of God and an ephemeral world. God remains unchanged, uncomplicated, and wholly other than its emanative generosity.

Jacobi's insistence, however, that thinking begin with that which it could not know, helped open the way to Schelling's revitalization of Spinoza. When Jacobi in the letters to Mendelssohn, for example, described reason as an endless chain of conditioned conditions out of which reason cannot emerge, he concluded that the chain could only "stop when we stop conceiving the interrelation *[Zusammenhang]* that we call nature. The concept of the possibility of the existence of nature would therefore be the thought of nature's absolute beginning; it would be the concept of the absolute itself in so far as it is "not the naturally connected but for us naturally unconnected unconditional condition of nature" (BS, 425). The origin of nature and the origin of reason are not nature or reason. For Jacobi, this absolute beginning was a personal, supernatural, arational God (BS, 427).

With this, Jacobi separated not only from the dogmatic rationalists, but also from Kant's critical project. The latter simply did not have a radical enough critique of the faculty of reason and wanted still to protect the investments of the *Aufklärung*—albeit in a far more modest package—by admitting that, although the well-mapped city of reason had become confused and hence degenerated into a multiplicity of seemingly unrelated units, and that the intellect *(Verstand)* had no access to things in themselves, reason could at least still be at home in the humbler quarters of its little intersubjective island of phenomena.

Jacobi opted for the more severe position, namely, to show that reason could not in any way bridge the gap between itself and nature. Reason, when it has recourse only to what legitimately lies within its domain, gets nowhere. It remains mired in itself, sundered from nature. One need only ask Jacobi, "How do you know this critique to be true?" to see that Jacobi was trying to have his philosophical cake and eat it too, i.e., that he was assuming the truth of reason in order to invalidate reason. Nonetheless, with this thought, Jacobi became perhaps the first thinker to introduce "nihilism" into the modern philosophical vocabulary. For Jacobi, nihilism did not demarcate the absurdity

of reason. When one begins with reason, one ends up with nihilism because nothing is true outside of reason. Since reason cannot move outside of itself and nothing is true outside of reason, one ends up with nothing. For Jacobi, the consequence of nihilism was deplorable enough for him to condemn philosophy in toto as the vain strivings of reason that will lead nowhere and result in nothing. "Pure understanding is an understanding which understands only itself."[37]

In fact, because of its nihilistic vanity, Jacobi considered the very activity of philosophy to be opposed to a life based on moral principles derived from fideism. In a *Letter to Fichte* from March of 1799, for example, Jacobi targeted Fichte (who, incidentally, already had to leave the University of Jena for Berlin because he had been charged with atheism) as symptomatic of the nihilism and consequent atheism that all philosophy by its nature necessarily entails. By reducing everything to an I = I, Fichte reduced everything to an all-encompassing principle for which there can be no outside. "The I is a science in itself, and the only one: it knows itself, and it contradicts its concept that it know or become aware of anything outside of itself . . ." (BF, 127). With Fichte, then, I only have the I, and the night when all cows are black acts so that "I have nothing against me but Nothingness" (BF, 136). There is no (personal) God outside of me. In fact, there is *nothing* but me. In this sense, Spinozism was nihilism par excellence: there was no outside to this hermetic system of geometric necessity. God was the prisoner of the concept's delimitation of it. In the end, one has nothing but an endless pile of concepts that cannot transcend their own narcissism.

Jacobi had, in a way, prophesied what someone like Max Weber was later famously to call the "iron-cage of reason." Or more to the point, Jacobi, in his naïve fashion, and Schelling, in a profound fashion, were reluctant prophets of what Hannah Arendt later identified, with terrifying clarity, as the totalitarian imperative of all ideology. The later are "isms which to the satisfaction of their adherents can explain everything and every occurrence by deducing it from a single premise" (OT, 468). Ideologies, when their totalizing impetus is not restricted by material limitations (Arendt gave the examples of National Socialism and Stalinism), move with the analytic force of their own subject position, deriving all predication from the ideas deducible from within itself and barring all exceptions, that is, any a posteriori predicates. This is the movement of an implacable logicality, the *conatus* not of self-interested subjects but of an idea. For Arendt, imperialism was the self-interest of the bourgeoisie disguised as politics, but a totalitarian movement disregards even self-interest. It is the *conatus essendi* of an idea. It is motivated from within itself, regardless of whether or not its expansion accords with anyone's interest. A total explanation, which accounts for all "historical happenings" through "a total explanation of the past, the total knowledge of the present, and the reliable prediction of the future" (OT, 470), is the implacable expansion of a mur-

derous alphabet. "You can't say A without saying B and C and so on, down to the end of the murderous alphabet" (OT, 472). If one is to read a system of geometric demonstration as the analysis of the predicates contained in a supreme subject, then Spinoza becomes the epitome of the pernicious and perverse movement of an ideology that, of necessity, tolerates no outside, no exception, no deviation, no new beginnings.

Hence, to Jacobi one must attribute an alarming and pivotal discovery, namely, reason's abiding narcissism.[38] Thinking with and yet beyond Jacobi, one might say that the ego of reason, the *I* think, so to speak, is a kind of *conatus* that struggles always to preserve itself. It always ends up with itself and does not perish of its own antinomies. Reason's self-obsession results in a kind death-defying attempt at immortal life in which the endeavors of reason always end up with some product of reason. This is a critical issue and, as I have argued in the first chapter, it is not clear that even Hegel freed himself from reason's speculative narcissism. Spirit, having lost itself, always finds itself in an odyssey completed by spirit gazing upon its own dialectical nature. The narcissist knows nothing of sacrifice because their self-love, the voracity of their ego, demands always to survive their own death.

Mendelssohn, a prodigy of the Enlightenment, seems to have learned little about what Schelling would later call *der fortwährende Umsturz der Vernunft,* the incessant overturning of reason (PO, 152). He would eventually die while his last attempt to include Lessing among the champions of the Enlightenment, *An die Freunde Lessings, To Lessing's Friends* (1786), was still at press. Jacobi at least intuits a crisis brewing within the Enlightenment, and although Jacobi stands on the brink of what the Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition calls the Great Doubt that leads to the Great Death, the dissolution of reason in its own antinomies, he flounders before it. In the wake of reason's discovery of its own incipient narcissism, Jacobi offers only critiques and feeble alternatives such as emotivistic leaps and faith in the obvious. With Jacobi, reason loses its capacity even to articulate its own collapse, let alone to produce and evaluate concepts. As Schelling lamented, Jacobi began in strong company but ended up "in the company of the most abject philosophical mediocrity" (HMP, 170/168).

It is interesting to note that, for someone who intuited the narcissism of reason, Jacobi's polemics seem most often to discredit other positions so that he always ends up with his own, a venerable and still often practiced ruse of the bureaucrats of the truth. For such polemical self-aggrandizement, Deleuze and Guattari's words about narcissistic polemics, even about the narcissism of reason itself, are not too harsh: "But those who criticize without creating, those who are content to defend the vanished concept without being able to give it the forces it needs to return to life, are the plague of philosophy."[39]

In a way, Jacobi reflects the dangers of acquiring the dialectic before one has learned to deploy it in relationship to the Good. Without such a relationship,

Socrates warned in Book VII of the *Republic,* the young destroy and dismantle without the capacity to return anything to life or to liberate otherwise constipated forces. "Imitating those men by whom they are refuted, they themselves refute others, like puppies enjoying pulling and tearing with argument at those they happen to be near" (539b).[40] Not that Jacobi was young (he was in his early forties during the Pantheism Controversy) and not that Jacobi did not believe that he was acting on behalf of the Good. But he swung his sword broadly and childishly, and his inability to articulate the Good in the wake of his destructive critiques left one chiefly with a view of the blood on the sword. It is not enough to dismantle the dogmatic support of *Schwärmerei*. Terrorism takes many forms, including not only the ego's fanatically self-righteous destruction, but destruction that wreaks havoc for its own sake and hides this agenda under a sheen of moral indignation.

Schelling, in the decade after Jacobi's death, argued that Jacobi would ironically be a good introduction to the problematic of modern philosophy, but paradoxically not an introduction suitable for youthful beginners. "As such he is perhaps the most instructive personality in the whole history of modern philosophy, by which I do not mean to say that he will be this for everyone—for the beginner as well, for example: for his writings, however much value they may have for the expert, can really only confuse the beginner" contributing to a certain "slackness *[Erschlaffung]* of spirit in relation to the highest tasks of human understanding, a slackening which is not compensated for by ecstatic expressions of feeling" (HMP, 168/166).

Schelling is not arguing for an arid philosophy utterly devoid of the life of affects. He was a champion of philosophical ecstasy, noting, for example, in *The Ages of the World* that "Not only poets, but also philosophers, have their ecstasies" (AW, 203). Schelling is criticizing one of philosophy's great banes, namely, the slack ecstasy of wild flights of *Schwärmerei* and the little smiles and petty joys of the despotism of the wholesale critique. This is the spirit falling asleep, slackening, and becoming dopey. In a way, Schelling has already anticipated the emotive narcissism and dreamy self-importance of the New Age narcoticization of Spirit. These ecstatic outbursts are furthermore evidence of what Foucault once called the "fascism in us all," the predilection towards self-righteousness, great moral projects, and other investments of the ego on its grand marches. No march is grander and more troubling and further away from the Good than the ego's impatience to get to heaven. All marches are empyrean in focus, for nobody but the ego wants to go to heaven.

Nonetheless, despite the self-absorption of Jacobi's critique of reason's self-absorption, Schelling recognized Jacobi not as a philosopher but as the "involuntary prophet of a better era" (HMP, 182/177). Jacobi was no Moses because the Jewish lawgiver, although he did not reach the Promised Land, nonetheless had his eyes on the prize. Jacobi stood before the Promised Land, indeed opened up the possibility of it, but had also cursed it and blocked the way to it.

Jacobi stood "on the border of two times, one of which lay before him as a desolate, fruitless *desert,* which he in fact felt to be such, into the other of which he only looked as if into a Promised Land from a great distance" (HMP, 182/177). Yet the horizon towards which Jacobi pointed was the very Promised Land that he also contended was impossible to enter. Jacobi's opening beyond the desert of Enlightenment thinking was his dissatisfaction with its fruitless narcissism. His dissatisfaction in trying to save nature from the overvaulting ambitions of reason ended up sacrificing both nature and reason to a God born of sentimentality. Hence, Jacobi leaves us with an "Indian summer *[alter-Jungfern-Sommer]* of ideas" or an old maid's summer, as was the expression at the time. This summer is neither really summer nor really autumn, neither nature nor the divine, neither the depths nor the heights. It rather floats between them, reaching neither, like "those delicate threads which swim in the air in late summer, incapable of reaching heaven and of touching the earth through their own weight" (HMP, 177/174).

IV

> Nature works through the senses and the passions. But whoso maims these instruments, how can he feel? Are crippled sinews fit for movement?
>
> Your lying, murderous philosophy has cleared Nature out of the way, and why do you demand that we should imitate her?—So that you can renew the pleasure by murdering the young students of Nature too.
>
> —Hamann, *Aesthetica in nuce*[41]

Hovering in the background of the Pantheism Controversy, but not having Mendelssohn's anxiety or Jacobi's enervating critique that did not revitalize the concept after he had destroyed it, was the so-called Magus of the North, the perhaps sui generis Johann Georg Hamann (1730–1788). I turn briefly to a consideration of this miracle in German thinking in order to contextualize further Schelling's philosophical entrance.

Schelling separated Hamann from his ensconced reputation in the vague category of *Glaubenphilosophen* and thereby critically distinguished Hamann's project from Jacobi's excitable misology. Schelling, who often spoke of the maturity necessary to philosophize, did not recommend that the youth read Jacobi because it ran the risk of putting them in the express lane to *Schwärmerei* and, in a manner of speaking, replicating the capricious and arbitrary deployment of the dialectic that worried Socrates (537d). Schelling did not put Hamann on the young person's reading list for the opposite reason. Jacobi makes philosophy look too easy for the young while Hamann makes it look too difficult. Despite the prima facie frivolity of Hamann's writings, readers immediately encounter a daunting, almost opaque wall of literary, philosophical, and theological references and a dazzling and complicated prose

style, that shifts and reconfigures itself as it performs the very movements of thinking that it strives to present. Not only do Hamann's works demand erudition, but also, Schelling argues, they require "deeper experience to grasp them in their full significance" (HMP, 171/168). Once one has this experience, Schelling continued, one regards Hamann's oeuvre "constantly as the touchstone" of one's own understanding (HMP, 171/168). Hamann was, for Schelling, an *urkräftiger Geist,* a spirit of primordial force (I/7, 294).

Unlike Jacobi's "Indian summer of ideas," Hamann's thought held together opposing forces of thinking in what Schelling called a *wunderlich* way (HMP, 172/169). *Wunderlich* connotes the wondrous, the miraculous, but also thereby the strange, the unorthodox, the unexpected. Miracles are, after all, nature's crimes against its own supposed laws. This *wunderlich* holding together also suggests the vitality of what has not been seen before, what could not have been seen before.

For Hamann, to Schelling's approval, the contrary forces of thinking are not held together in a concept or by the intellect. There is not a conceptual tertium quid, not even reason's own concept of itself, that holds together these contradictory forces in a strange and miraculous way. Reason cannot get in front of itself and account for the web within which it finds itself. Everything, as many systems contend, does not hang together by virtue of reason (HMP, 171/169). To paraphrase Heidegger from *Der Satz vom Grund* (1957), it is not that nothing is without reason but rather that the *nihil* itself *est sine ratione*. The nothing by which things are granted to reason is itself without reason. Since, as Schelling argues, "that which *is* can only be understood *a posteriori*" (HMP, 171/169), there is no a priori understanding of that which gives itself to be understood only a posteriori, only, so to speak, in its having already given itself.

Or one could say that what holds these contradictory forces together is, from the ideal side, God, and from the real side, nature. But God does not thereby form the rational ground of nature, nor does it subsume nature into the dark night of continuity. God is the abyssal depth of nature. As Schelling said of Hamann and his "*wunderlich* holding together": "God in the Old Testament is himself called a *wunderlich* God, i.e., a God about whom one must wonder *[sich wundern],* and Hamann understands in *this* sense with his own peculiar wit the famous words which Simonides said to the tyrant of Syracuse, 'The longer I think about God, the less I comprehend Him'" (HMP, 172/169).

Despite their apparent fragmentation and lack of a rational principle to unify them, Hamann's writings nonetheless marvelously and strangely hold together in a way that Jacobi's thinking does not. In Hamann, unlike Jacobi, one finds that: "The power of the eagle in flight does not prove itself by the fact that the eagle does not feel *any* pull downwards, but by the fact that it overcomes this pull, indeed makes it into the *means* of its elevation" (HMP,

177/173). In a way strikingly similar to Zarathustra's flight of the eagle and the snake, Schelling and Hamann argue for a thinking that does not betray the heaviness of the concrete and the difficulty of its details, but which, in so affirming them, allows them to soar again, to dance again, to know also the joys of flight and lightness.

The flight of the eagle is, in a way, the opposite of the *salto mortale*. One leaps out of reason into sentimental realism and an emotively drunken fideism, the other embraces the world not only under the aspect of its heaviness (under the aspect of rationality and gravity) but also under the aspect of its lightness.

Jacobi's own insistence upon radically delimiting the power and provenance of reason did draw on an important paper written by Hamann, Kant's old Königsberg foil and sometimes friend. Although Jacobi is obviously not a good reader of Hamann (hence making it ridiculous to refer to them both simply as *Glaubensphilosophen,* as fideists), he was smart enough to recognize his importance. This paper, which was published posthumously in 1800, was titled the *Metakritik über den Purismum der Vernunft,* or *The Metacritique of the Purism of Reason*. Written three years after the publication of the first *Critique,* it criticized the ahistorical and hypostatized status of Kant's conception of reason. Private copies of the short paper circulated among Hamann's friends and Jacobi was said to have been in possession of one (FR, 38). This is not to say, however, that Jacobi understood his reluctant ally very well. In Hamann's short essay, anticipating more recent thinkers like the Wittgenstein of the *Philosophical Investigations,* Hamann argued for the "genealogical priority of language," insisting that 1) "not only does the entire faculty of thinking rest on language," but that 2) "language is the also the midpoint of reason's misunderstanding of itself."[42] Kant, in not taking the question of language seriously enough, that is, in not taking into account its historical and cultural specificity, failed to recognize that the alleged neutrality (and hence "autonomy") of reason is bound by the specifics of its linguistic practice. Kant "hypostasizes" reason, claiming to have "purified" it from the real condition of its possibility: linguistic usage or practice.

Hamann, as the title of the essay suggests, is performing a "metacritique," that is, delineating the conditions for the possibility of time and space, which, in turn, constitute the conditions for the possibility of experience overall. Hamann, operating at a level behind the first *Critique,* claimed that language is the "singular, first, and last instrument and criterion of reason," having no other "authority than tradition and use *[usus]*" (PV, 284). Language is bound to *usus,* a word suggesting both current use and traditional use or custom. This was already suggested in the *Sokratische Denkwürdigkeiten* (1759) in an aphoristic passage noting that "Like numbers, words derive their value from the position that they occupy, and their concepts are, like coins, mutable in their definitions and relations, according to time and place."[43]

Reason, then, is bound by the rules of a specific linguistic practice that provide the conditions for its very intelligibility. Reason itself, to borrow an argument from the *Investigations,* is inseparable from the particular language game in which it is practiced.

No word, furthermore, can claim, outside the context of its linguistic usage, to belong immediately to the impression *[Empfindung]* of the object (PV, 286). Rather *Empfindung,* an important word for Hamann, indeed a critical term still for philosophy, connotes the relationship of language and reason to their nonlinguistic and arational sources. The selection of sounds and letters is contingent and decided upon in linguistic practice. Language cannot be the origin of itself.[44] The claim that reason can universally deduce the conditions of its own possibility as being those of time and space (the pure forms of intuition) cannot itself claim to be pure. Rather, the spatial and temporal structure of reason depends on the mode of its operation in a particular practice. Noting, for example, that "the oldest language was music and then the perceptible rhythm of the pulse and breathing in the nose," Hamann suggested that this "corporeal and primordial image" could account for the necessity of all "measures of time and their numerical relationships" (PV, 286).

Space, on the other hand, might have something to do with the fact that the oldest writing "was painting and drawing" and, as such, concerned itself with the "economy of space" with "its limitations and determinations through figures" (PV, 286). Although these examples, it seems to me, do not by themselves adequately account for the recurring appearance of time and space as forms of intuition, they do, however, begin to draw attention to the possibility that time and space are not given, as Schelling shall develop extensively in *The Ages of the World,* as subjective conditions, but rather as the formless generator of the forms of nature. Nature is not *in* time. Nature *is* the aporia of time. That is to say, that things do not happen *in* time and space, but, allowing the Copernican revolution to continue revolving, that time and space happen as nature. To *be* a thing is to *be* historical and localized. Furthermore, the form of time, given that it is the source of times, is itself not really a form, but rather the formless form that forms the formal.

Hamann himself, while aware of the linguistic perspectivism that his claims entailed, did not, so to speak, lose faith. Rather, he attempted to defend a relationship between reason and its other that he called faith. For the *Aufklärung,* however, a movement towards the primacy of faith threatened to erode modernity's hard won defense of the primacy of reason. With this erosion came the threat of superstition, fanaticism, and, emblematic of all these ills, *Schwärmerei*. Luther had popularized the term *Schwärmer* or *Schwärmgeister* to denote certain overly enthusiastic and frenzied sects of the Reformation. The Pietists, for one, were often accused of privileging a giddy, rapturous, and immediate relationship with God. The *Schwärmer* were frenzied mystics, intoxicated with God, not altogether unlike the enthusiastic snake handlers

who speak in tongues at the Christian Revivals in the Southeastern United States. After the Reformation, the word was generalized to include all those too easily enthused—the implication being that they too quickly left behind the brute facts and were oblivious to concrete, material difficulties. *Schwärmer* privilege the irascibility of the emotional over the generalizable rules of reason. Hamann's influence on the nascent *Sturm und Drang* movement no doubt increased the anxiety of Hamann's critics that he was leading reason into the wild waters of *Schwärmerei*.

This anxiety was no doubt further fed by Hamann's self-professed conversion experience on February 8, 1759, in London. After a failed diplomatic mission and a consequent life of debauchery, Hamann, despairing, retreated to his study and began to study the Bible. He became struck with the impression *[Empfindung]* that he was responsible for the death of Jesus. An old friend and ardent defender of the *Aufklärung,* Johann Christoph Berens, fearing that Hamann had become a *Schwärmer,* attempted to reconvert him. Hamann returned to Königsberg and Berens followed, introducing him to a precritical Immanuel Kant. By enlisting Kant as an ally, Berens hoped to make Hamann a test case for the power of the *Aufklärung* and thereby to vindicate reason and the *Aufklärung* from this looming and disruptive other beginning.

Kant and Berens were not successful. In the *Biblische Betractungen* (1759), written on the heals of his London conversion and before his return to Königsberg, Hamann wrote that "Reason discovers nothing more for us than what Job saw—the misery of our birth—the advantage of the grave—the uselessness and inadequacy of human life."[45] Before such an insight into the impotence of reason in terms of the redemption of human suffering, Hamann moved towards a way of knowing that he called "faith," a way of knowing otherwise than reason and typical of his own London mystical conversion experience. It is Job's mode of knowing when Yahweh comes to him while Job is still covered with boils, abandoned by family and friends, left desolate in a pit, pleading for death. Job's encounter with God did not leave him understanding the ways of God or the meaning of his own experience.

The *Aufklärung,* with its emphasis on rational understanding, would not only be of no use in such an experience, but, if considered as thinking's only recourse, leaves it bereft of what Nietzsche later called in *Die Geburt der Tragödie* (1872) "the wisdom of Silenus." The "folk wisdom" of the "Olympian world of the gods" was not a rational theodicy. Retelling a story found, among other places, in Xenophon's *Anabasis,* Nietzsche described the discovery of King Midas who, in hunting Dionysus' "wise companion" Silenus in the forest, finally lured him into a fountain flowing with wine and captured him in a net. Midas demanded that his captive articulate the secret of his exuberance and at last confess the truth of the Good *[das Allerbeste und Allervorzüglichste]*. At first Silenus, the daimon, was silent until Midas coerced him to speak. Silenus laughed, warning Midas that wisdom was not

for him, a hunter for truth, because the "Best is for you not at all to be had: not to be born, not to be, to be nothing. But the second best is for you—to die soon."[46] The one-eyed Socrates of theoretical reason, hunting for the first principle with which to understand the good of life, cannot "see" the wisdom of Silenus, the wisdom that protects the eyes from the failure of reason. Left with reason alone, one is hemiplegic, half-paralyzed, and unable feel the daimon life surging through nature. Although this is certainly not Hamann's reading of Socrates, it nonetheless emphasizes Hamann's concern with delimiting the scope of reason.

The debates with Kant and Berens in part culminated with Hamann's *Sokratische Denkwürdigkeiten* (1759). Speaking against his two tormenting *Aufklärer,* Hamann reinterpreted the figure of Socrates, a hero of the *Aufklärung,* as a vehicle of articulating what Hamann felt a rational theology and aesthetics threatened to obfuscate: "But perhaps all history is more mythology than this philosopher thinks, and is, like nature, a book that is sealed, a hidden witness, a riddle which cannot be solved unless we plow with another heifer than our reason" (SD, 151). This enigma that cannot be solved, that will not betray its secrets to the urgings of reason, can be thought but not comprehended. Reason cannot comprehend its ground "because we were made in secret, because we were formed in the depths of the earth," and our "concepts were made in secret" such that Socrates, imitating the midwifery of his mother, must wait upon them and help birth them (SD, 153).

In giving birth to forms, however, Socrates also imitated his father, a sculptor, "by removing and cutting away what should not be in the wood." In this operation of paring, streamlining, and determining, however, Socrates did not answer the riddle of the birth of reason. He did not arrive at an Archimedean point by which to unite with conceptual clarity the many fragmented forms whose birth he assisted. "Therefore the great men of his time had sufficient reason to cry out against him that he was cutting down all the oaks of their forests, spoiling all of their logs, and that he only knew how to make chips out of their wood" (SD, 153). Socrates pared the fabled tower of reason into chips. His ideas were not derived from an identified first principle, but rather "were nothing more than the eruptions and secretions of his ignorance" (SD, 167).

While reason only gives birth to fragments, Socratic ignorance, that is, the Socratic allegiance to the dispensations of the unthinkable, remains somehow attuned to a source that it does not understand. Hamann called Socratic ignorance *"Empfindung"* (SD, 167), a receiving, a sensibility, that does not include an understanding of the first principles (which remain concealed, *"im Verborgenen"*).

Invoking Hume, Hamann, who likely woke Kant up from his dogmatic slumber by introducing him to this Scottish skeptic, quite strikingly claimed that "our own existence and the existence of all things outside us must be

believed and cannot be understood in any other way" (SD, 167). Midwifery and the sculpting of reason must have faith in its mysterious source. They are like Nietzsche's thoughts, coming to him from the dark night like lightening bolts: "One hears, one does not seek; one takes, one does not ask who gives; a thought flashes up like lightening *[wie ein Blitz leuchtet ein Gedanke auf],* with necessity, unfalteringly formed—I never had any choice."[47] Faith is not a "work of reason" and is not answerable to its protests (SD, 169).

Socrates' "faith" and faith in general marks the play of "genius" or the daimonic, of divine productivity creating within the human aesthetic process. Genius is receptivity *[Empfindung]* or enthusiasm (becoming filled with the gods) for the birth processes of the mysteriously divine, a sculpting that attends to the incarnation of newborn thought. The history of art is a kind of Theogony within the theater of artistic activity. "What for a Homer replaces ignorance of the rules of art which an Aristotle devised after him, and what for a Shakespeare replaces the ignorance or transgression of those critical laws? Genius is the unanimous answer. Indeed, Socrates could very well afford to be ignorant; he had a genius on whose knowledge he could rely, which he loved and feared as his god, whose peace was more important to him than all the reason of the Egyptians and Greeks . . ." (SD, 75).

Faith, the ecstatic, sensitive *[empfindlich]* side of reason, is the theater of daimon life in which artistic activity, to paraphrase Hamann's description in *Aesthetica in nuce* (1762), translates angelic language. *Reden ist übersetzen,* to speak is already to translate—"from the tongue of angels into the tongue of men, that is, to translate thoughts into words—things into names—images into signs." Such translation hides its status as a translation—it "shows the stuff, but not the workman's skill." As such, it has to be reclaimed, but, as such, the first language, the language of nature, the angelic language, cannot be directly spoken. It can "be compared with an eclipse of the sun, which can be looked at in a vessel of water" (AN, 142). In a sense, Hamann's provocation is to listen without hearing and to speak without having spoken. Hamann subtitled *Aesthetica in nuce* a *Rhapsody in Cabbalistic Prose,* as if already to announce that writing would not be able to pronounce God but rather would indirectly let God speak in the very act of being hidden and silent, in the "miracle of such infinite stillness that makes GOD resemble Nothingness" (AN, 144). God reveals itself as angelic language, as a silence hidden within language that can only be indirectly heard in the way that the sun can only be indirectly seen. In this respect, Hamann is perhaps closest to Kierkegaard, that other master stylist of indirect or left-handed discourse.

The left-handed *Sokratische Denkwürdigkeiten,* as Hamann stole Socrates away from the pedestal of the Enlightenment, are artistic fragments of the provenance of faith. This is not Jacobi's *salto mortale* to a naïve faith in things. This is rather the revelation of things. As such, Hamann is among the first to draw explicit attention to the question of *style,* a question that shall occupy the

entire Jena Circle, including Schelling. Those who "read" this text carefully, Hamann began, will find a "microscopically small forest" (SD, 61). Although the cursory reader will find only "mold," the one who looks closer will find that there is a complexity that escapes the naked eye. The text, so to speak, begins to appear as other than it first appeared as it draws attention to its self-irony.[48] Furthermore, a common intelligible thread does not unify the text. It is the child of faith, of *Empfindung*. Ideas, like monads, occupy contiguous relations with each other and an oblique relation with their source.

As Ernst Jünger in *Blätter und Steine* aphoristically wrote of Hamann's own highly aphoristic style: "Hamann thinks in archipelagoes with submarine connections."[49] The connective tissues remain in hiding *[im Verborgenen],* never visible to the points themselves. Hamann begins an early section "dedicated to the two" (presumably Kant and Berens) by claiming that "I have written about Socrates in a Socratic manner. Analogy was the soul of his conclusions, and he gave it irony for a body." The flesh of the book betrays itself and the soul of the text points beyond itself. Reading the islands of the text, then, involves swimming in their obscure ocean, which, like the river of Heraclitus, refuses to remain the same. Hamann noted that Socrates, as a reader of Heraclitus, "spoke of readers who were able to swim." In a "flowing together of ideas and impressions *[Empfindungen]* . . . he made the same sentences perhaps into a lot of small islands, lacking bridges and ferries of method for their community" (SD, 61).

This term *Empfindung,* sensibility, is critical for Hamann, and it marks an early and important attempt to think what Schelling will later call *Mitwissenschaft* [conscience], thinking's conscientious relationship to freedom. According to the Kluge, *Empfinden* originally meant something like "to find out *(herausfinden),*" or "to perceive *(wahrnehmen),*" and was later delimited to the perception of soulful excitements. This reception of the soul's excitations, this revelatory mode of sensation, already hints at daimonic pulsations. In the eighteenth century *empfindsam* was used to translate the English "sentimental," often in the sense of the *feinfühlig* or the delicate sensibilities. It later degenerated through exaggerated deployments. Nonetheless, there are hints of reason's "perception" or "reception" of nonrational sensations or forces as they birth themselves in the rational. This led Hamann, as it later led Nietzsche (in Zarathustra's third metamorphosis), to speak of the childlike origins of thinking. "We must become even as little children if we are to receive the spirit of truth which passeth the world's understanding, for it seeth it not, and (even if it were to see it) knoweth it not" (AN, 143).

It behooves me when on the topic of *Empfindung,* of sensibility, to separate Hamann's, and finally Schelling's, position from the celebration of naïve and sentimental poetry in Schiller. Despite his proximity to Hamann and Schelling, even to the Kant of the *Third Critique,* Schiller had not thought the logic of sensation through.

In *On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry* (1795), Schiller contrasted the mode of *Empfindung* of the Ancients with that of Modernity. Schiller, lamenting the alienation of modernity and hungering for a reunification with what the children of civilization had once had but what its adults have lost, claimed that the Ancients *"empfanden natürlich; wir empfinden das Natürliche":* "They perceived naturally; we perceive the natural."[50] The ancients, who lived and poeticized unselfconsciously in the naïve mode, did not imitate nature. They, like Jackson Pollock once claimed about himself, *are* nature. Modern poets, however, *seek* lost nature (NS, 183). The "object utterly possesses" the Ancient poet (NS, 183) while the modern poet, sundered from that original poetic unity, looks at nature from a detached distance. The goal of modernity is therefore the sentimental task of seeking again to become naïve, that is, of striving to overcome the Enlightenment's alienation from nature.

These themes were originally more fully developed in Schiller's hugely influential *On the Aesthetic Education of the Human in a Series of Letters* (1793–1794),[51] which he construed as a variation on Kantian themes from the *Critique of Judgment*. In the twenty-fifth letter, Schiller spoke of an aesthetic unity, the enjoyment of beauty, which unites the otherwise alienated modes of thinking and sensibility (AE, 25.6). The letters make it abundantly clear that *Empfindung,* left to its own devices, renders one a mere pawn of sensation. In the twenty-sixth letter, Schiller distinguished between "what we see with the eye" and sensation *[was wir empfinden]* (AE, 26.6). The latter is passive, a violence *(Gewalt)* that we suffer. One remains a "slave of nature . . . so long as he merely feels *[empfindet]* it" (AE, 25.3). *Empfindung* is a "state of merely filled up time" (AE, 12.1), time rolling along its successive states, just taking up space and dragging consciousness along with it like a pawn. Schiller contrasted "mere" *Empfindung* with "seeing with the eyes" and *Vorstellung*. The latter two speak of the activity of the eye as it produces form (AE, 26.6). It is the active production of *Vorstellungen* (AE, 19.3), not the slavish life of mere sensation. Rather than mere *Empfindung,* it is something like natural perception in the literal sense, to perceive as if one were nature. Or to put it in the more forceful language of sensation, it is to register the sensations of nature.

This sense of an active *Empfindung* as creative perception comes very close to Hamann and Schelling's position. Yet the talk of alienation, of the longing for reunification and pining for the naïve, is somewhat misleading. It threatens to erode Schiller's own insight into the antinomies of reason (that a creative relationship to some kind of *Empfindung* is at the seat of the understanding). The antinomies of reason cannot be overcome, only continuously affirmed. As Schelling was latter to reflect in one of his *Aphorisms as an Introduction to the Philosophy of Nature:* "The eye alone never sees enough, nor does the ear ever hear its fill, reason too is never satiated with contemplation . . . nobody can think the thought of the All to its end, nor talk it through" (I/7, 142/245). There is no possibility of a return to childhood. It is, after all, only

adults who know what childhood is precisely because they know it as something that they have lost, a naïveté that, if pursued, will just make them sentimental and their acts childish. There is only the affirmation of the vitality of the rupture, the life of the contradiction. Schiller has not fully worked out the logic of sensation at the heart of a discourse on *Empfindung,* the lightening flashes of thinking at the ecstatic origins of philosophical and poetic discourse, but he at times, despite his sentimental fantasies of a naïve relationship to *Empfindung,* nonetheless comes very close to sensing the monstrous life of sensibility at the heart of thinking.

Schiller did not appreciate fully the ecstatic nature of time as the antinomy of sensibility and the understanding, but his reading of Kant nonetheless reiterates, despite its sentimentality, the critical chiasm of sensibility and the understanding. Schiller sees something critical about the origin of thinking and its active, nonslavish affirmation. It is this chiasm that already gave shape to Hamann's writing and which Schelling, a sharper and more expansive reader than Schiller of the *Third Critique,* deployed fully in his thinking. Schelling would call the relationship of the intellect to sensibility *die gelassene Vernunft,* reason that lets be. This is not the return to a naïve relationship to reason, nor is it a sentimental search for an irrecoverable loss. It is an act of self-sacrifice that suspends the authority of the ego, of the *I* think. It is the mortification of the ego whose death is the birth of the life of reason. "Reason is not a faculty *[Vermögen],* not a tool, nor can it be used. Anyhow there is no reason at all which we could have, but only a reason which has us" (I/7, 148–49, 250).

Empfindung is an important term for Schelling, at least to the extent that language can hold onto to its accomplishments. One might even say that not only has modernity been marked by the forgetfulness of nature, but also, as even Schiller and Kant recognized, by an inability to account for sensation without recourse to mysticism and other brands of *Schwärmerei,* which do more to shore up the privileged sentiments that found state machinery than they do to reinvigorate nature. In his Munich address *On the Relationship of the Fine Arts to Nature* (1807), Schelling claimed that the spiritual eye, intuition, "feels *[empfindet]*" life pulsing and circulating within form. This intuition, this liberation of *Empfindung,* this unclogging of the clichés that otherwise strangle sensation, demands first the suspension of form as delimiting the full range of nature. *Empfindung* is released only after there has been a loss of sorts. One must first move through and thereby beyond the form as such. One must, to use Schelling's oft employed construction, come to know apparent object x so thoroughly and intimately that one moves *über x hinaus,* through x and thereby beyond x. "We must go through the form *[über die Form hinausgehen]* in order to gain it back as intelligible, alive, and as truly felt *[empfunden]*" (I/7, 299).

One does not do this by circumventing x, nor is the released sensation of x the eclipse of x and the melting away of x into the oblivion of the soul's per-

petually dark night. Schelling, a devotee of the liberal arts if ever there was one, engaged in numerous concrete studies, including medicine, physics, biology, the history of languages, and the history of religion. "Only those states which begin with strict legislation are gifted for greatness. . . . The Platonic adage, let none enter who is not initiated into geometry, is valid in a much wider sense" (AIN, I/7, 143/246). Nor is such discipline the preparation for wanton intellectual terrorism. The disaster should not submerge form. It should free and invigorate form. The Mahāyāna tradition sometimes speaks of the destruction of the thought that a mountain is a mountain (that a mountain is permanently available in the ιδέα or εἶδος of a mountain, that the ego can suspend the life of the mountain with a concept). Only when a mountain is not a mountain is it possible for the mountain at last to be a mountain. As Dōgen taught in the *Sansui-Kyō or Mountains and Waters Sutra* (1240):

> There are mountains hidden in treasures. There are mountains hidden in swamps. There are mountains hidden in the sky. There are mountains hidden in hiddenness. This is complete understanding. An ancient Buddha said, 'Mountains are mountains, waters are waters.' These words do not mean that mountains are mountains; they mean that mountains are mountains. Therefore investigate mountains thoroughly.[52]

In a way, the importance of sensation for Hamann and Schelling would make them strange bedfellows with the paintings of the late Francis Bacon and his violent distortion of form in order to capture its indwelling animal forces. As Bacon told Michel Archimbaud, "The unknown is not relegated to the realm of the mystical or something similar. I loathe all explanations of that sort."[53] Francis Bacon was a painter of *Empfindung,* of the release and capture of force, of sensation, as it complicates form. As Deleuze said of Bacon, "The shadow escapes from the body like an animal that we shelter. In place of formal correspondences, Bacon's painting constitutes a zone of indiscernability, of undecidability, between man and animal."[54] Bacon's distortions enact violence upon the form in order to decongest it, in order to return it to life. What Bacon said of his painting could be said of *Empfindung* itself: it is the "slight remove from the fact which returns me unto the fact more violently."[55]

Nonetheless, Hamann's looming presence in the background of the Pantheism Controversy helps bring its subtext into focus, namely, that it was the struggle between reason and its Other. Hamann's extraordinary project, which was, in a sense, already beyond Kant's critical philosophy even before Kant inaugurated it, and which Jacobi only superficially appreciated, foreshadows a pair of images that Kant took up twenty-two years later in the first *Critique:* reason as an island isolated in an immense and incomprehensible sea, and the house of reason located in a village whose people once dreamed of a unifying

tower, only to have inadvertently built the Tower of Babel. For Hamann, however, the emphasis is different. The *Sokratische Denkwürdigkeiten* do not rescue reason by humbling its range. Hamann instead offered analogies for a God that can only appear ironically in the same way that the *logos* could only become flesh by ironically assuming the order of appearance. Socrates the sculptor had, contrary to the religious sensibility of his day, returned to an outmoded custom when he sculpted the "three statues of the Graces." Rather then depict them in their naked truth, so to speak, Socrates sculpted them wearing garments such that their truth must remain hidden under clothing (SD, 67). Reading and thinking, so to speak, know no unadorned truths. Readers who can swim can read, but not comprehend, the daimon life that ironically appears (an admitted pleonasm) in the cultural and historical vicissitudes of language.

Hamann's microscopic forest of lonely islands—reason and God—whose submarine connection is not derived from ratiocination but is rather daimonic, a divine transit between the reasons of the world and the mysteries of the earth, emerged again with Schelling. The latter's own collection of monads, is not, as Hegel was to describe it in his Berlin *Lectures on the History of Philosophy,* a "training carried out in public," each text a flawed step in Schelling's progress to his final result. Rather, Schelling's islands operate like a Socratic dialogue with a daimonic transit between its oppositions. When viewed from the demands of an autonomous operation of reason, these islands remain a disconnected training. However, viewed from the thought of their marvelous and strange connectivity, their invigorating, nonsectarian violence, and their *wunderlich* belonging together, Schelling's continuous production of fragments conspires with life.

3

Nature

> There is in biology a formula called "the equation of burning." It is one of the fundamental pair of equations by which all organic life subsists. The other one, "the equation of photosynthesis," describes the way that plants make foods out of sunlight, carbon dioxide, and water. The equation of burning describes how plants (and animals) unlock the stored sunlight and turn it into the heat energy that fuels their motion, their feeling, their thought . . .
> All that is living burns. This is the fundamental fact of nature. And Moses saw it with his two eyes, directly. That glimpse of the real world—of the world as it is known to God—is not a world of isolate things, but of processes in concert.
>
> —William Bryant Logan[1]

I

The Pantheism Controversy had created a sensation, and in its heat other philosophers emerged either to take sides or to dismiss both participants. The young Pietist, fideist, and friend of Jacobi, Thomas Wizenman, for example, defended Jacobi (through arguments independent of Jacobi) in his *Die Resultate der Jacobi'schen und Mendelssohn'schen Philosophie, kritisch untersucht von einem Freiwilligen, The Results of the Jacobian and Mendelssohnian Philosophy, Critically Undertaken by a Volunteer* (1786). Kant, on the other hand, dismissed the extremity of both sides of the debate while forging a third way between the Scylla of nomadic irrationality (and pseudorationality) and the Charybdis

of dogmatic optimism in his small essay of the same year, *"Was heist: sich im Denken orientieren?"* or "What Does It Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?" Kant defended a humbled form of reason and its capacity for a certain kind of rational faith.

On the other hand, the Pantheism Controversy had made Spinoza himself a hot topic. Spinoza, even while despised by the orthodox, had always had a small following among the heterodox and iconoclastic.[2] Even before the Spinoza reception among certain freethinking and politically progressive Pietists, pantheism had been associated with political radicalism. During the Counter-Reformation, for example, Valentin Weigel and Sebastian Franck deployed a pantheistic critique of the neo-orthodox that helped pave the way for the Pietist interest in Spinoza's philosophy almost two hundred years later.[3] This time around, when it seemed that Spinoza's ignominy would be further assured, some thinkers, most notably Goethe and Herder and eventually Schelling, Hegel, Hölderlin, Schleiermacher, Novalis, and others, emerged to take his side. For Novalis, Spinoza was a *Gottbetrunkener* man, a man drunk with God. "Spinozism is a supersaturation with the divine. Unbelief a lack of the divine sense and of the divine. . . . The more reflective and truly poetic a person is, the more formed and historical his religion will be."[4] While disliking some of its nomenclature, Goethe again studied the *Ethics* in 1785 and again found Spinoza's holistic outlook to be a corroboration of Goethe's own pantheistic convictions about nature. "Being *is* God," Goethe scolded Jacobi in 1785. It was, after all, Lessing's comments on Goethe's then unpublished poem "Prometheus" that had first kindled the fires of the Controversy.[5] For Heine, "Goethe was the Spinoza of poetry."[6]

Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), the precritical Kant's star student in Königsberg from 1762 to 1764, for his part, published his dialogue *Gott, einige Gespräche über Spinozas System* (1787). Kant had been fond enough of the young Herder to waive his lecture fees. The precocious Herder also developed an abiding friendship and correspondence with Hamann. Although the latter did not always agree with his young friend's positions (Hamann was the subtler and less prolix writer), his influence on Herder is readily apparent. Both insist on the fundamental importance of the role of language and the historical imbeddedness of cultural practices, including philosophy and religion. For both, reason is bound by history (the heterogeneity of times) and location (the heterogeneity of space). It is their delimitation of the sovereign pretences of reason that sometimes earned both of them, along with Jacobi, the moniker of *Glaubensphilosophen,* philosophers of faith. Regardless of how one values a term like faith or belief *(Glaube),* it is at least clear that the term is not automatically reducible to Jacobi's naïveté.

In Herder's dialogue, Philolaus is led by Theophron from the cave of an ignorant hatred of Spinoza (in the tradition of the militant opposition inaugurated by Bayle), through the blinding confusions of the Pantheism Contro-

versy, to the sun of a new, critical appreciation of Spinoza. Herder's Spinoza becomes the first unabashed and philosophically sophisticated published defense of a new "reading" of Spinoza: he is neither the "dead dog"[7] that the militant establishment had always claimed him to be nor the cold proponent of a God enslaved by its analytic necessity. Theophron, with the eventual help of the newly converted Philolaus as well as Theano, a female interlocutor who joins them in the fifth and final dialogue, reads the *Ethics* as attempting to articulate the relationship between God and world in a way that frees it from Mendelssohn's contention that if the imperfect and finite world were somehow "in" God, God qua perfection and infinity would contain within itself imperfection and finitude.

For Herder, the way out of Mendelssohn's critique of Spinoza lies in denying imperfection and thereby, in a certain way, adopting a position similar but not identical to the "purified" pantheism that Mendelssohn attributed to Lessing. All things are perfect "expressions" of God and "therefore in the kingdom of God nothing evil exists which could be actual" (G, 842/190). How, then, are things "expressions" of God? In the fourth dialogue, Theophron separates the relationship between God and the world from the model of emanation: Spinoza's "favorite is the word, 'expression *[Ausdruck]*.' 'The world expresses attributes, that is, powers of God in infinite number, in infinite ways.' . . . Of 'emanations' from God, Spinoza never speaks. . . . Thus when we speak of God, let us rather use no images! This is our first commandment in philosophy as well as in Mosaic Law" (G, 810/156). Adhering to a strict *Bilderverbot,* a proscription against graven images, Jacobi's "personal God" becomes a mere projection of the imagination gone awry, i.e., the confusion of God with an image of God (anthropomorphism) and hence a sanctuary of ignorance.

Nonetheless, Theophron's Spinoza was also constricted by the moral parameters of Leibniz's theodicy. Theophron's God is a gentleman, and hence the *Ethics* becomes a kind of *Theodicy* as the absolute force of substance (of which all things are necessary expressions) is constrained to act according to the law of its own goodness and justice. By taking Leibniz's critique of Spinoza in the *Theodicy* seriously, Theophron argues that he can incorporate this critique into Spinoza and thereby move beyond even Leibniz (G, 777/119). Here is the sticking point and what Schelling will later claim in the *Freedom* essay is the issue of greatest difficulty. God's sovereignty is delimited by the unimpeachable goodness of his nature. Thus, the expressions of God express God's goodness and wisdom. As expressions of the beneficent ends of God—a thought that seems strikingly incompatible with the appendix to the *Ethics* I, 36, in which Spinoza holds that the "doctrine of final causes turns nature completely upside down, for it regards as an effect that which is in fact a cause, and vice versa" and that "when men became convinced that everything that is created is created on their behalf, they were bound to consider as the most

important quality in every thing that which was most useful to them." Consequently, one asks for the cause of each thing, wanting to know for what purpose it was made so that "they will go on and on asking the causes of causes, until you take refuge in the will of God—that is, the sanctuary of ignorance."[8]

Theophron rejects Spinoza's charge that belief in the benevolent will of God is a "sanctuary of ignorance." He attributes Spinoza's position to the "consequences of the pernicious Cartesian explanations which he took, and in those times was compelled to take into his system" (G, 777/119). If one thinks through the demands of substance's perfection (as defined by Spinoza), one is compelled to accept that "an unorganized lawless, blind power *[eine ungeordnete, regellose, blinde Macht]* is never the highest" (G, 780/123), and hence if one accepts this and not Spinoza's unfortunate lapse into what Theophron construed as the Cartesian demand to abolish final causality and retain only efficient causality, only the vindication of God's ways in the necessity of all things remains. Philolaus called this a "Theodicy of wise necessity" (G, 842/191):

> Everything is determined, fixed and ordered by forces, which work in every point in creation, in accordance with the most perfect wisdom and goodness. Examine, my friend, the history of miscarriages, dilapidations and monstrosities when the laws of nature seem to be upset through alien causes. The laws of nature were never upset. Every force acted true to its nature, even when another disturbed it. . . . Even in the apparently greatest chaos, I have found constant nature, that is to say, immutable rules of a highest necessity, goodness, and wisdom, active in every force. (G, 826/173)

God as *natura naturans,* the *Urkraft aller Kräfte,* the primordial force in advance of all forces, Philolaus then concludes from Theophron's lead, is the morally bound (in the Leibnizian sense of a prearranged harmony that accords with the necessary goodness of God's nature) "connecting medium" and "inherent connection of active forces" such that the world is one in "which all is connected" (G, 826–27/174). The new teleological Spinoza accounts for the interdependency of the multiplicity of differential orders as expressions of a single divine substance (or monad): the morally bound *Urkraft*. Herder, following Leibniz, Wolff, Mendelssohn, and many others, abhorred the idea of a truly sovereign free God. Schelling, in reworking Spinoza and distancing him from his mechanistic physics, tried to unleash this absolute sovereignty of God. As Schelling claimed in the *Freedom* essay, the spiritualization of nature, the rendering of its foundation as ideal, is a nature "where freedom rules *[herrscht]*" (I/7, 350), where freedom maintains its sovereignty.

Herder, as Schelling will later, carefully separates Spinoza from the claim that pantheism holds that each thing *is what it is to be* God. Schelling was

unequivocal in his rejection of this reading of Spinoza. In the *Freedom* essay, for example, the claim is never made that in pantheism there is a tautology between God and things (God = things). God and things are not *einerlei,* they are not of the same kind. They are opposites, and there is nothing in the idea of God, an idea whose *ideatum* eternally transcends it, that includes the idea of things, whose *ideata* have, however inadequate, some connection with ideas. The idea of the absolute contradicts the idea of things and vice versa. Rather there is a tertium quid, neither God nor a thing, that yokes them together despite their contradictory natures. If God becomes an object of the understanding and all things are said to follow from God, then Jacobi is right that the only possible system of reason is Spinozism, that is pantheism, and that this is just another name for fatalism. If the absolute swallows up all things as things, then there are only the forces of death in the night when each thing is anything and thereby nothing in particular.

Hence, even a simple judgment like "x is y" does not say that "x = y," but that the copula joins together or synthesizes x and y, despite their distinctness. The judgment, "the body is blue" does not assume that the idea of the body includes the idea of blueness or vice versa. Bodies and blueness have no intrinsic relationship. The copula joins them together while preserving their distinctness (I/7, 341). If one were to designate the Absolute as A and the modes of its attributes as A/a, it does not follow that A = A/a (I/7, 344). In fact, A/a marks what Leibniz called monads and are not a contradiction of Spinoza (I/7, 344–45), but rather a clarification of the relationship between substance (supreme monad) and attribute (monads or the A/a, each being an atomic or windowless and oblique reflection of the Absolute). In this way, Schelling once remarked that "a plant was *an arabesque delineation of the soul*" (I/1, 386). The contradiction of God and nature, "which is truly *differentia totius generis* [a complete difference of kind]" (HMP, 46/73) are held together by a tertiary term (the copula) found in the judgment that God *is* nature. In the same fashion one could say that the Good *is* Evil while preserving the being of their opposition. They are not one and the same, but rather the oppositional poles revolving about the aporetic "cision" of nature itself.

Herder's account lacks Schelling's subtlety. For Herder, Spinoza's expressionism seems to be a kind of *pan-en-theism*—all things *within* God such that things express God without themselves being equal to God. God is both in and beyond its attributes. Even death expresses God, as it allows creation its fluidity of expression. Death is only the "hastening away of that which cannot remain" (G, 839/187).[9] Death is but a moment in a living, perfect, vital whole. God is the tertium quid by which all oppositions—phenomena and noumena, reason and faith, thinking and nature, etc.—are expressed.

For Herder, creation expresses the dialectical logic of God, and hence God is the living power of which each individual power is one of its infinitely numerous expressions. As such, and this may be what most forcefully marks

Herder's modification of Spinoza, creation bears the goodness of God in that it redeems itself through realization of its inherent goodness, of its "accordance with eternal laws of wisdom, goodness and beauty" (G, 841/190). This in effect recoils from the thought of God's sovereignty, from the possibility, if you will, of infinite possibility, of what Schelling was to call *das reine Können,* pure possibility.

Theophron, in a moment of hesitation, however, calls this entire discourse a "stammering," noting that "we have no senses that can look into the inner nature of things *[ins innere Wesen der Dinge hineinzuschauen]*" (G, 829/176). Strictly speaking, Spinoza, or any other philosopher, can only be a detour for what "flows from the soul" (G, 843/192), arresting thought with the joy of its divine necessity yet somehow confounding language's capacity to discourse adequately about it. Following Herder's lead, one could conclude that language itself could not get behind that of which it is an expression. It stammers about itself and the world a posteriori.

On the other hand, the stammering of the dialogue does not itself seem to suggest a clearly articulated sense of the nature of the mediated relationship between reason and nature. Although one does not "see" nature qua *substantia (natura naturans),* one experiences nature *(natura naturata)* as the a posteriori evidence of nature's vital core. Nature, in its teleological excellence, bears witness to the God that does not directly manifest. Natural teleology "discovered" a divine presence, as it has become evident through the divinely instilled τέχνη to which scientific research bears witness. Perhaps, as Nietzsche later remarked, one invents what one wishes to discover.

This contention that nature is teleological even prompted Herder to offer this as a kind of a posteriori proof for the existence of God. This is a problematic position. If the operation of a *Hineinshauung* into the inner essence of things is not possible, how can Herder claim that such an essence is necessarily bound to the Leibnizian rules of goodness and wisdom? Is this not precisely the kind of overextension of reason that characterized dogmatic philosophy? In the wake of Kant's critical project, such a naïve reliance on experience can be said to trespass the domain of reason. Kant critically sparred with Herder over this inconsistency[10] and seems to be responding to Herder, at least in part, when he claims in the third *Critique* (in the *Analytic of Teleological Judgment*) that teleology can only be a regulative principle and never a constitutive one and, at best, is proper to the work of reflective judgment but not to that of determinative judgment. The latter would illegitimately hold that we could have "attributed to nature causes that acted intentionally" (§61).

On the other hand, Herder had insisted on a relationship between the ἕν and the πάν in which the ἕν operated as a vital, organic core to a multiplicity of differential orders. Although this idea would still have to be understood within thinking's affirmation of its ineluctable mediation, it delivered a new Spinoza that would captivate both Schelling and Hegel. On the other hand,

the uncritical character of Herder's *Urkraft aller Kräfte* provides an initial insight into what Kant, Schelling, Hegel, and the early Romantics held to be the dangers of both dogmatism and *Schwärmerei.* The absolute cannot be thought absolutely. (For Schelling, it cannot finally even be thought dialectically!) Without taking into account in a rigorous fashion the mediating "cut" of all thinking (the very thought of the continuous is performed obliquely and incompletely by a discrete act of thought), thinking risks affording itself the fanatical illusion that it has constituted the absolute. God is brought under reason's chain of conditioned conditions as a "dead" object. The absolute, i.e., God, noumena, some object = x, supreme substance, the continuous, etc., does not surrender to the demands of reason in the way that the respective essences of things in the world are allegedly made to confess their secrets. In the end it is ridiculous to claim that nature confesses anything whatsoever.

Herder, rather, gathered the absolute under the rule of reason (albeit, only in the form of a posteriori testimony) by constituting it as an originary energy that manifests itself in each individual constellation of energy, yet is constantly reconfiguring itself in new arrangements. The *Urkraft* is a kind of world soul animating the "eternal palingenesis" of the universe (G, 840/188), "the Eternal who wanted to become visible in the appearances of time, the Indivisible who wanted to be become visible in the forms of space" (G, 838/186), "the eternal, infinite root of all things, so sublimely beyond our imagination that in It all time and space disappears"(G, 787/130). On the one hand, Herder, accepting Kant's pure forms of intuition, admits that subjectivity can only see everything "under its measure," such that one could only say of "the highest cause": "it is, it affects" (G, 787/130). Despite such dramatic proximity of some of Herder's insights to Spinoza's in the critical mode, Herder comes dangerously close to the twin dangers of dogmatism and *Schwärmerei.*

Herder spoke of this "having become visible," this emergence into the order of appearance, without accounting for how the continuous has managed to relate itself to the discrete. How does the discrete "see" the discontinuous while still remaining discrete, that is, without itself becoming infinite? This deus ex machina in which God reveals itself a posteriori as the "infinite root" suggests that the uncritical side of Herder leaves him open to being what Leibniz called a "monopsychite." Following an interpretation of "Plato's Soul of the World" or the Stoics "who succumbed to that universal soul who swallows all the rest," the monopsychite holds what Leibniz claimed Spinoza held: There "is only one substance in the world, whereof individual souls are but transient modifications" (T, "Conformity," §21).

Leibniz further noted that Moses Germanus, a Swabian convert to Judaism, held that Spinoza had learned this from the *Kabbalah.* Even the writings of the mystic Johann Angelus Silesius lend themselves to this "sinister interpretation" in which, as for the Quietists, there is an "annihilation of all that belongs to us in our own right" (T, §9, 10). This concern can be expressed

as a worry about an immediate relationship to the absolute such that the brute facts lose their coefficient of resistance. Without concretization, the universal threatens to usurp all limitation. Death gains a sweeping victory as facts recede altogether into the darkness of their birth. Not only does this lead to a loss of the concrete, it also leads to fanaticism insofar as one can claim that the absolute has come home into an order of presence, endowing those who have attained this absolute knowledge a rule by which to judge absolutely. There is the dual catastrophe of a mystical meltdown of the concrete and the claim of epistemic privilege ("If only you knew God as I do, then you would see how right I am!"). Such a position, the attainment of the absolute *Urkraft,* the Dionysus who swallows all traces of the Apollonian, this lost origin "which can be won again" and restrained in a net of presence, I would agree with Manfred Frank in *Der kommende Gott,* is quite dramatically exemplified in Ludwig Klages' *Vom kosmogonischen Eros* (1930), which "united Klages with the regressive Mythology of Fascism (in particular with Rosenberg's *Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts*) and also already with the idea of the conservative revolution"[11]:

> The cosmos lives, and all life is polarized according to soul *(psychæ)* and body *(soma)*. Wherever there is living body, there is also soul; wherever there is soul, there is also living body. . . . They are, spoken without allegory, the poles of reality. The history of humanity now shows us in the person and *only* in the person the fight "to the finish" between the all-expansive life and a power *outside of time and space,* which wants to divide the poles, de-soul the body and disembody the soul, thereby annihilating them: one names this *Geist (logos, pneuma, nous)*. . . . When each superhuman life essence . . . pulses in the rhythm of cosmic life, then the person has separated from the *law [Gesetz]* of *Geist* . . . and from the light of a servitude to a life under the yoke of concepts! To again free life from this, the soul as well as the body, is the hidden draw for all mystics and users of narcotics.[12]

When one reunites with the Absolute qua recovered origin, amidst the delights of the *Schwärmer*'s frenzy in the night when all cows really are black, one is severed from the subversive promise of a utopia still always to come, tolerating no idols and promising no results. It is an unfair hyperbole to equate Herder to a *Schwärmer* like Klages, but even a posteriori knowledge of God nonetheless runs the same risks that befell both Mendelssohn and Jacobi. In trying to save the world, they inadvertently risk unleashing the means of its destruction. Yet for Schelling, Herder provided an opening and "deserves to be mentioned among the *genii* who prepared this new spiritual movement, in part without knowing it or willing it" (HMP, 123/132). Schelling's Spinoza,

on the other hand, spoke of an eternity of new beginnings, a perpetual stammering that allows for no final resolution in an idea. For Schelling, any total idea was not only a monstrosity and testimony to the incomprehensible movement of radical evil, it was the death of philosophy and the loss of the future's perpetual gift of new beginnings.

It was Herder's important contribution, however, to insist upon Spinoza's language of expressivity. Deleuze later turned to such a discourse in his first book on Spinoza [*Spinoza et le problème de l'expression* (1968)] as the problem of expressionism.[13] The latter describes the com*pli*cation of nature such that attributes in their individual modes im*pli*cate substance and substance ex*pli*cates itself in attributive modalities. The *pli,* the fold, is at once an evolution and an involution, a *complicare* of *implicare* and *explicare*. A explicates (folds out) itself as A^1, and the A^1 implicates (folds back into) itself as an explication of A (= A^2). A^1 and A^2, *explicare* and *implicare,* belong together as a *complicare* or A^3:

> To explicate is to evolve, to involve is to implicate. Yet the two terms are not opposites: they simply mark two aspects of expression. Expression is on the one hand an explication, an unfolding of what expresses itself, the One manifesting itself in the Many (substance manifesting itself in its attributes, and these attributes manifesting themselves in their modes). Its multiple expression, on the other hand, involves Unity. The One remains involved in what expresses it, imprinted in what unfolds it, immanent in whatever manifests it; expression is in this respect an involvement. (SE, 16)

This ἕν καί πάν, this complication of the One and the Many, is not to be confused with the Neo- or Post-Platonic theory of emanation. Inverting the Platonic theory of the Many's "participation *[mathexis]*" in the One, Post-Platonic thought attempts to articulate the inverse: the relationship between the One and the Many. The One "emanates" as Many. Emanation and expressionism are the same insofar as they both donate without themselves suffering a change in the donation. "They produce while remaining in themselves" (SE, 171). However, an emanative cause does not give itself with its donation. The emanative One remains transcendent, sundered from its gifts. The One, according to Plotinus, has "nothing in common" with its donations (SE, 172). For Spinoza and Schelling, the One remains bequeathed with the bequeathing while at the same time remaining itself. Emanation holds the One above Being while expressionism implicates it within Being. The former leads to a hierarchical universe with the One such that the latter can only be expressed in a negative theology in which the One is not involved in Being (SE, 171–2).

Despite Schelling's concern that Spinoza was a one-sided realist in that he could not articulate the darkness of sovereignty with a foundational term

like substance, Deleuze was well aware that Schelling and Spinoza nonetheless shared the same philosophical impulse. Even though, as Deleuze admited, Schelling claimed that he had found the expressionism of revelation in Jakob Böhme rather than Spinoza (SE, 18), "Schelling is a Spinozist when he develops a theory of the absolute, representing God by the symbol 'A³' which comprises the Real and the Ideal as its powers" (SE, 118).

II

Along with Kant's critical project and the French Revolution, the still simmering Pantheism Controversy helped decisively form the milieu of ideas that intoxicated the Tübingen roommates. Spinoza in the critical mode and Kant seemed to be offering a way of articulating the experience of freedom that they, for example, saw explosively emerging to the west of Swabia in 1789. It is to Kant that I now turn.

Although he followed the likes of Herder and Goethe in opting for Spinoza rather than choosing sides in the Pantheism Controversy, Schelling took the Jacobi text very seriously, finding it to be an ironic revelation of Spinoza's critical importance. Schelling never attempted to escape the labyrinths of finitude nor resorted to a *salto mortale* but rather begins with the absolute but does not claim that one can think it absolutely. Or if one were to use the phrase that Kierkegaard coins in *Fear and Trembling* (1843) to describe Abraham's relationship to God, namely, "an absolute relation to the absolute," one could say that for both Schelling and Kierkegaard, one cannot—not even dialectically—conceive of the Absolute and thereby one cannot directly communicate it. For Kierkegaard and Schelling there is indeed the deeply registered demand to at least attempt to speak to everyone. But the problem remains paradoxical and ineluctable. How does one communicate the *strictu sensu* incommunicable? It is not a question, as it was for Klages, of narcoticizing the concept so that one knows only the hallucinogenic pleasures of cosmic life.

Already in a letter to Hegel early in 1795 on the feast of the Epiphany, shortly before his twentieth birthday, Schelling announced, still in Tübingen, that "I presently live and spin *[lebe und webe]* in philosophy. Philosophy is not yet at an end. Kant gave the results: the premises are still lacking."[14] Schelling does not entirely share Kant's premises, but does share the general import of many of Kant's conclusions. In fact, it is through Kant that Schelling retrieves Spinoza in the critical mode. I want to insist, as I will argue in the next chapter, that Schelling is not a mystic. He is not giving Spinoza a mystical reading, if by this one means that Schelling and his retrieved Spinoza are both *Schwärmer* in philosophers' clothing. Schelling does not attempt to resolve the antinomy of thinking the unthinkable by recourse to a mystically privileged epistemic access to the otherwise concealed essence of things. Nonetheless,

like Herder, Spinoza had not carefully thought through the mediating relationship between substance and its attributes. Spinoza's substance is objectified and reified, that is, it is adequately conceived, opening him to Jacobi's charge of fatalism (everything follows with analytic necessity from the nature of the ἕν). Kant "*directed philosophy towards the subjective,* a direction which it had completely lost since Spinoza; for what is peculiar in Spinoza is precisely the substance which is just object, is subject-less, which has completely destroyed itself as subject" (HMP, 89/106).

It is not therefore surprising that when Kant entered the Pantheism Controversy with his essay, *"Was heißt: sich im Denken orientieren?"* (August, 1786), he reiterated the claim that he had already made in the first *Critique:* that Spinozism is dogmatic in that it "professes the impossibility of seeing an essence whose idea consists of nothing but pure concepts of the understanding in which one has only separated all of the conditions of a sensory nature *[Sinnlichkeit]* so that therefore a contradiction can never be found. . . ." This immediate identification with the absolute "leads right to *Schwärmerei.* Against it there is not a single other secure means to extirpate all *Schwärmerei* by the root than each determination of the bounds of the faculty of pure reason."[15]

It is here, however, that I would also like to consider briefly some of Kant's missing premises, especially for the conclusions that Schelling most favored, namely, the *Critique of Judgment*—"Kant's deepest work, which, if he could have begun with it in the way that he finished with it, would have probably given his whole philosophy another direction" (HMP, 177/173). There is no doubt that Schelling was profoundly influenced by Kant and that, to some extent, Schelling's thought would not have been possible without Kant's inauguration of the critical project.[16] Crucial for Schelling is Kant's masterpiece, the third and most exquisite jewel of critical thinking, snatched away from impending old age.

In his early writings, Schelling seems intoxicated with the freedom that critical philosophy promised: thinking begins with the absolute: *"Vom Unbedingten muß die Philosophie ausgehen."*[17] Philosophy must proceed from the absolute. Kant's place of orientation, his guiding question, however, is not the mysterious sea surrounding the modest island of reason but the island itself, a tragic subject, cursed with questions that it does not have the means to answer. Reason, however, has several interests, and, as Deleuze noted, "If there were only the speculative interest, it would be very doubtful whether reason would ever consider the things in themselves."[18] Reason has more than a theoretical interest in the question of the a priori possibility of synthetic judgments because of the "disunity of reason with itself" (A 464/B 492) as it flounders in antinomies and conflicts of interest.[19]

In the *Preface* to the first edition, Kant attributed the aporetic condition *[Verlegenheit]* of "human" reason, its tragic inheritance of a miasmic stain for which it does not claim responsibility, to a "special fate in one species of its

knowledge": it is "burdened by questions which, as prescribed by the very nature of reason itself, it is not able to ignore, but which, as exceeding every faculty, it is also not able to answer" (A vii). Reason has interests that the understanding cannot satisfy. Kant attempted to placate these "needs" not with Hamann's recourse to Socratic faith nor with Jacobi's disavowal of reason and *salto mortale* into faith, and certainly not with the dogmatic philosophy attempted by Mendelssohn, but with a "rational faith" derived from reason's humbled capacities and in accordance with its pressing needs. Kant had already recognized that reason was in a crisis, that it was threatened with Jacobi's prognosis of nihilism and that it threatened to collapse into the skepticism of pure empiricism, the "*euthanasia* of pure reason" (A 407/B 434), and hence float out into the immense ocean, a ship without a rudder or a compass or even a point of orientation, its ethical interests and spiritual hopes lost among the waves.

Kant's *What Does It Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?* signaled both his official contribution to the Pantheism Controversy and an important clarification of his own project. Kant began by evaluating Mendelssohn's position, agreeing with a suggestion by Thomas Wizenmann in his *Resultate der Jacobi'schen und Mendelssohn'schen Philosophie*[20] that Mendelssohn does not clearly differentiate between reason and common sense and that the failure to do so compromises his reliance upon reason (DO, 267–68). For Wizenmann, if common sense could correct the speculative abuses of reason because it precedes reason, as Mendelssohn claims, then reason is not primary and hence loses the capacity to correct common sense.

This is a classic tenet of the Enlightenment, which Kant also embraced. For example, as Leibniz argued in the *Theodicy,* a dog, seeing its reflection in a mirror, might be convinced that another dog was confronting it and bark. One might even sense that it belongs to the common sense of a dog to behave in such a way. Reason corrects such errors of common sense because common sense can, as Leibniz argued, misinterpret sensory experience (T, preliminary dissertation, 65). If reason were beholden to common sense, reason, like a dog, would be forced to accept beliefs that contradicted reason. Reason needs a tribunal, a kind of gold standard, to adjudicate competing sensory claims. On the other hand, if reason and common sense were identical, then common sense, not being distinct from reason, could not intervene, as Mendelssohn claims it could, when reason itself soared to heights offensive to common sense.[21] Common sense, by eroding the autonomy of reason, committed Mendelssohn to a first principle akin to Jacobi's faith, that is, belief in intuitions without a foundation in reason. To give Wizenmann his due, this is a classic objection. The appeal to common sense always runs the risk of committing the *ad populum* fallacy, namely, just because everybody thinks that something is true and hence it accords with common sense does not ipso facto make it true. Common sense once held that the sun revolved around the earth,

and Galileo had no common sense when, in taking the heliocentric position, he helped establish the Enlightenment. Nonetheless, Wizenmann feels the bites of Blaise Pascal, gadfly of the Enlightenment, and sides with Jacobi, not in banning reason from the polis, but in insisting that religiosity, being an act of faith, belongs to the realm of the heart and not to the knowledge acquiring faculty of reason.

Kant took Wizenmann a step further and insisted that both Jacobi and Mendelssohn threaten to erode the hard-won autonomy of reason, Jacobi intentionally and Mendelssohn unintentionally. Wizenmann, by advocating an irrational, or at best nonrational, faith in God, also threatens to erode the very material (reason) by which freedom can be protected. Anticipating his third *Critique* and walking a fine line between Mendelssohn's rationalism (which, were it consistent, would be dogmatic and, in its present form, relies upon the wiles of common sense) and Jacobi's arational faith (a faith that abnegates reason), Kant argued for a rational faith *[Vernunftglaube]* (DO, 275). The central question that titles the essay asks about thinking's interest in orienting itself to its own activity. What compass shall guide the lonely ship of reason through unknown and perhaps hostile seas? How can reason regulate the beliefs that the exigency of the human condition demands but which reason cannot legitimately know? Jacobi, Mendelssohn, and Wizenmann offer no rational compass to orient critically belief, leaving it open to the whims and wiles and privileges of a heart that everyone might not share. They therefore "entitle themselves to the right to speak of supersensuous objects" and hence "a wide gate is opened to all *Schwärmerei,* superstition, even atheism itself" (DO, 277). Without reason's ability to orient itself somehow within itself and thereby to regulate its own proper activity, reason is left with the *Schwärmerei* of the Pantheism Controversy and that, for Kant, amounted to making "the maxim of nullity *[Ungültigkeit]*" the "highest" faculty of "law-giving reason" (DO, 281). The Pantheism Controversy had risked delivering reason over to the forces of nihilism. This was not the euthanasia of reason. This was its wholesale slaughter.

Reason, rather, *"needs"* another measure (even though this can only be, at best, a belief) as a prophylactic against its own annihilation. I would here emphasize the importance of this word "need," *Bedürfnis,* because the entire essay hinges upon a distinction made at least implicitly in the first *Critique* and explicitly in the second and third. Kant argued that the "need of reason is twofold." On the one hand, it has need of a theoretical usage and, on the other hand, it has need of a practical usage. The latter is not a consequence of the prior. On the condition that reason *wants* to believe, as did Herder, that the world displays divine final causality, it can employ the theoretical usage of reason to furnish a regulative ideal of final causality as a necessary conditional: "when we *want to judge* that the first cause of everything accidental is first and foremost in the order of ends actually placed in the world, then we must

assume the existence of God" (DO, 274). The need for the practical usage, however, *must* (absolutely) assume the existence of God: "Much more important is the need of reason in its practical use because it is absolute and we assume the existence of God not merely because we are so necessitated if we *want* to judge, but because we *must judge*. Therefore the pure practical use of reason consists in the prescription of moral laws" (DO, 274).

Reason's moral exigency necessitates that it presuppose and assume the existence of God, even though the demonstration of such a postulate remains outside the scope of the understanding. The ground of faith is indeed "subjective," consisting of a "necessary need of reason" (DO, 276). It does not follow, however, that Kant abandoned reason to the wiles of subjectivity. Rather, reason assists faith to "presuppose and assume" what reason itself dares not claim "through objective reasons" (DO, 271). Reason needs to believe what it cannot know and therefore "holds as true" what it cannot demonstrate: "All belief is a subjectively sufficient but objectively with consciousness insufficient holding-for-true *[Fürwahrhalten]*.[22] Therefore it is counter to knowing" (DO, 276). In this sense, without abandoning reason (yet without taking refuge in the understanding), Kant concluded that reason could only "presuppose and not demonstrate the existence of a highest being" (DO, 276). Since the authority for the presupposition arises from an ineluctable need of reason (it has no choice but to make moral judgments), the correlate of a "belief of reason" "could be called in its practical intent a *postulate of reason*" (DO, 277). As such, a pure *Vernunftglaube* as a postulate of reason in order to satisfy a need that the theoretical use of reason cannot accommodate is the point in which thinking can orient itself within itself, a "signpost or compass with which the speculative thinker orients themselves during the patrols of reason into the field of supersensuous objects" (DO, 277).

Heinrich Heine thought that the moral uproar of the French Revolution, an uproar in which morality per se did not come into question, could not compare with the ravages of Kant's deicide in the first *Critique,* claiming that it "far surpassed in terrorism Maximilian Robespierre" (RPG, 109). Yet he is somewhat incredulous to find that practical reason "as with a magician's wand" resurrects God—the God "which theoretical wisdom has killed" (RPG, 119). Kant himself confessed in a famous remark from the first *Critique* that he had "found it necessary to deny knowledge to make room for faith" (B xxx), prompting Heine to ask: "Was not his object in destroying all evidence for the existence of God to show us how embarrassing it might be to know nothing about God" (RPG, 120)? The *Vernunftglaube* was already implicit in the first *Critique* as it erected itself as the "tribunal" which "will assure to reason its lawful claims and dismiss all groundless pretensions, not by despotic decrees, but in accordance with its own eternal and unalterable laws" (A xi–xii).

By restricting legitimate thought to the immanent limits of its domain, Kant threw out of court as hubristic all constitutive groundings of the think-

ing subject derived from a transcendent domain. When Boethius, for instance, turned to the muses of tragic poetry to lament the absurdity of his wretched fortune, Lady Philosophy angrily counseled him to silence "these hysterical sluts"[23] and that the remedy to his despair could be found in an anamnestic retrieval of his "true nature" in terms of an "end and purpose of things" (CP, 51). Philosophy in its finest moment was a commentary on death, a Theodicy, a vindication of the *summum bonum* before the specious absurdity and injustice of Boethius' impending torture and death. "The protector of the good and scourge of the wicked is none other than God, the mind's guide and physician. He looks out from the watchtower of Providence, sees what suits each person, applies to him whatever He knows is suitable" (CP, 138).

With relentlessly sober movements of the pen, Kant had killed much more than Robespierre's kings. Kant committed deicide and thereby toppled the watch tower that had redeemed tragic experience: "We have found, indeed, that although we had in mind building a tower which should reach the heavens, the supply of materials suffices only for a dwelling-house" (A 707/B 735). There is not only an inadequate supply of materials, but the attempt itself resulted in a "confusion of tongues which inevitably bifurcates the workers in regard to the plan to be followed, and which must end by scattering them all over the world, leaving each to erect a separate building for themselves, according to their own design" (A 707/B 735). In the demand for the unifying Tower of Babel, the very demand for the one divided the searchers into many.

After reminding the reader that "no objects can be represented through pure concepts of the understanding apart from the conditions of sensibility" (A 568/B 596), Kant began the third chapter of the Transcendental Dialectic with a remarkable claim. "We have no other measure of judgment for our actions other than the behavior of this divine person in us" (A 569/B 597). How can one square talk of a "divine person" without collapsing into skeptical *Schwärmerei,* that "species of nomads, despising all settled modes of life" who, like the Mongol hordes, "broke up from time to time all civil society" (A ix)? So far as theoretical reason is concerned, the "divine person in us" has no "objective reality (existence)." Neither is it, however, one of the brain's many fancies *[Hirngespinste]*. Rather, it is "an indispensable legislative measure of reason" in the form of a rule derived from an idea in the form of an *Urbild* or *prototypon transzendentale*. It serves as a "complete determination of the copy *[Nachbild]*." The copy is an idea of that which cannot be adequately understood (noumena). It is a limiting concept or *Grenzbegriff* (some object = x) that marks the seas into which the understanding cannot legitimately venture. As such, it provides a formal rule or standard by which "reason set limits to a freedom which is in itself lawless" (A 569/B 597). "This divine man in us" is a Platonic ideal robbed of its constitutive capacities but retaining its regulative capacities. It no longer offers reason a tower with which to look down upon

the things-in-themselves. On the contrary, Kant reversed the priority of the Good over law. Regulative law acts as a proxy for our inability to constitute the Good speculatively and hence the latter depends on the former.

Deleuze compared this revolution to Plato and Kafka: "'The Good is what the Law says.' . . . This is clear in antiquity, notably in Plato's *Laws*. If men knew what the Good was, and knew how to conform to it, they would not needs laws. Laws, or the Law, are only a 'second resort,' a representative of the Good in a world deserted by the gods."[24] In lieu of a theoretical representation of the Good, it offers us an "indispensable" illusory standpoint, a *focus imaginarius* from which the theoretical and practical interests respectively can legislate over an otherwise unruly freedom.

These imaginary foci, moreover, are not the dazzling *trüglicher Schein,* the deceptive semblance, of imaginative knowledge nor one of the brain's many fancies for at least two reasons: 1) Reason has derived these illusions as rules based on the limits of its knowledge. They do not deceive reason, that is, it does not mistake them for constitutive knowledge. 2) Reason avoids "imaginary knowledge *[eingebildetes Wissen]*" by adhering to the rules of the understanding and not resorting to the "shadow image" produced by the "creatures of the imagination" (A 570/B 598). It provides only rules based on the always inadequate idea of the unthinkable. That is, it furnishes ideas without correlative images. Nowhere is Kant's famous denigration of examples as the "*Gängelwagen* of judgment" (A 134/B 173) more operative than here. With respect to the tricky waters of regulative principles, examples, the go-carts of children, "make the illusion that is aimed at altogether impossible" (A 570/B 598). The reproductive imagination, that dangerous movement of caprice and simulacra in which philosophy is inseparable from daydreadming, produces "monograms" determined "by no assignable rule." Indeed, the sleep of reason produces monsters. As such, they resemble a "mere fiction *[bloße Erdichtung]*" (A 570/B 598). Since reason has an interest in legislating the "in itself lawless freedom," it is certainly not going to leave itself vulnerable to the caprices of the reproductive imagination. The human mind is capricious and irresponsible, fallen into the Babel of its own inclinations. Reason corrals it with a transcendental ideal—albeit under the rigor of a strict *Bilderverbot*—"putting it under the strict surveillance of reason" so that it does not *schwärmen* but rather can *dichten* or poeticize. Reason must provide for a poetic activity *[dichten]* that would avoid the dreamy though dangerous and fanatical perils of *Schwärmerei*. Reason *needs* recourse to a kind of indispensable poetry, a noble lie in the form of an always inadequate address of the freedom of life.

Since reason assists the understanding with questions that it must solve but cannot, left to itself, legitimately solve, it can admit the domain of *Vernunftglaube*. This poses the following problem: no matter how strict the surveillance of reason, can one not reintroduce as practical postulates all of the traditional metaphysical postulates? This was indeed the trend at the

Tübinger Stift. Returning to Schelling's Epiphany letter to Hegel, one finds that Schelling's worry was not so much with Kant himself, or at least not with the spirit of Kant, but with the Kantians. Writing from Tübingen, Schelling meant, at least, the Kantians at the Stift who, unable (or unwilling) to understand the spirit of Kant, "stop at the letter and bless themselves." Rather than confront the radical reorientation that Kant's Copernican Revolution suggests, Kantians continue with the same traditional philosophical concerns by taking refuge in Kant's premises. Rather than confront the disorientation of Kant's severing of the umbilical cord between thinking and nature, they rebuild the village of thought around the tower of thinking's transcendentally deduced structures, and when more knowledge is required, they derive it from practical reason. As Schelling further described them:

> There is now a herd of Kantians—praise for the philosophy has spread itself out the mouths of children and babies—but after much effort our philosophers have finally found the point for how far . . . one will be allowed to go with this knowledge. On this point they have implanted themselves, settled and built huts in which it is good to live and for which they praise God. . . . Every possible dogma has already been stamped as a postulate of practical reason and, where theoretical-historical proofs are never sufficient, practical (Tübingen) reason chops the knot in two. (M, 118)

A thinker like Fichte, by way of contrast, did not take refuge in these huts. He, Schelling continued, "said the last time that he was here that one must have the genius of Socrates in order to penetrate Kant. Daily I find this truer and truer. We must still go further with philosophy!—Kant cleared away everything!—But how should they perceive this? Before their eyes one must smash it into pieces so that they can grasp it with their hands! Oh the great Kantians who are everywhere!" (M, 119).

Schelling's concern was not so much with rebuilding huts that allowed one to continue with business as usual, albeit more modestly, but with an ethical relationship to the absolute that disrupts every towering effort to master it.[25] At this point, and this is a way of anticipating Schelling's effort to maintain Kant's results without holding to his premises, one could ask: if experience has noumenal roots, that is, the "to us unknown root" of both sensibility and understanding, how can Kant anchor and secure the intellect in the phenomenal realm? Does not the noumenal, that inconceivable residue in every conception, haunt the security of every order of phenomenality? In examining the ideal of the productive imagination, for instance, one can trace the vestiges of the unruly operating anterior to the rules of experience. In the first edition or "A" version of the Transcendental Deduction, Kant made a remarkable claim: "The transcendental unity of apperception thus relates to

the pure synthesis of imagination, as an *a priori* condition of the possibility of all combination of the manifold in one knowledge" (A, 118). Heidegger claimed in *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik* that this seems to suggest "that the power of imagination is an intermediate faculty *[Zwischenvermögen]* between sensibility and understanding."[26]

The productive or transcendental imagination would be a heuristic ideal to explain the "to us unknown root *[uns unbekannten Wurzel]*" by which sensibility and understanding are synthesized. As such, it makes experience possible without itself being wholly bound by experience. Like all transcendental ideals, it is, strictly speaking, only a reasonable fiction and can only be underdetermined by experience. In this regard, reason is absent from its origin and unable to give a constitutive account of itself. As Heidegger suggests: "The original, essential constitution of humankind, 'rooted' in the transcendental power of the imagination, is the 'unknown' into which Kant must have looked if he spoke of the 'root unknown to us' for the unknown is not that of which we simply know nothing. Rather, it is what pushes against something unsettling *[das Beunruhigende]* in what is known" (KP, 160/110).

John Sallis has also rather provocatively picked up on the question of the productive imagination, concluding that "The tension is obtrusive: On the one hand, imagination is that by which subjectivity is first constituted as such; on the other hand, imagination continues to be reduced to a mere power possessed by the subject. Imagination is freed with one hand, only to be suppressed, bound with the other."[27] Kant, to be sure, downplayed the preeminence of the transcendental or productive imagination in the "B" Deduction in favor of reason. As Heidegger argued: "In the radicalism of his questions, Kant brought the 'possibility' of metaphysics before this abyss. He saw the unknown. He had to shrink back" (KP, 168/115). The abyssal character of reason would rob him of the universality in which "to wander critically through the region of Moral Philosophy and to repair the indeterminate, empirical universality of popular philosophical doctrines concerning morals" (KP, 168/115).

Kant was a thinker of need, of *Bedürfnis,* of the poverty of our genetic lack of the requisite means for the conduct of life. In patchwork ways, we somehow supply them, their inadequacy forgiven in advance by our desperation. Schelling, on the other hand, dared think that this poverty is the very source of our wealth. The *unendliche Mangel an Sein,* the infinite lack of Being, is the wealth of infinity itself, the superabundance of the nothing. For Schelling, *Bedürfnis* is a "base concept that starkly contrasts with the sublime idea of God" (I/1, 351). The absolute subject is not literally nothing, a vague and impotent vacuity. Free from all being, it "is *not* nothing, but *as* nothing" (HMP, 99/114). For Schelling, there was no duty, no deontological imperatives, no *Vernunftglaube,* no morality, no responsibility, for these qualities assume a free agent confronted with moral choices and obliged to legislate inclinations. As Schelling argued towards the end of his long and exhaustive

System der gesammten Philosophie und der Naturphilosophie insbesondere or *System of the Whole of Philosophy and of the Philosophy of Nature in Particular* (1804 and derived from handwritten remains), "God must be the substance of all thinking and acting and not simply an object of some kind of devotion or of a mere holding for true *[Fürwahrhalten]* or of a falsely understood knowledge" (I/6, 558). Rather religion is not a *Vernunftglaube,* and it is not born of desperation or paucity. It is *Gewissenhaftigkeit,* conscientiousness, both in the nonvoluntaristic ethical sense, as one is led without choice by one's conscience, and in the epistemic sense, as one pursues the life of knowledge—and not just a life devoted to knowledge, but the life that expresses itself in the complication of knowledge. "Conscientiousness is the expression of the highest unity of knowing and acting" (I/6, 558).

Schelling was keenly aware of his difference in this respect with Kant. Echoing Heine's comment about the resurrection of God in the *Critique of Practical Reason* "as with a magician's wand," Schelling insists that although Kant has definitely barred the comprehensibility of the absolute, he nonetheless *needs* the idea of God to resolve the (third) antinomy between freedom and necessity in order render moral responsibility intelligible. Although morality cannot circumvent the epistemic ruins of the first critique, it must nonetheless somehow make recourse to God in thinking. It must somehow think the inconceivable without thereby making it conceivable. Schelling does not resolve the third antinomy between noumenal freedom and phenomenal necessity. He activates it, without any petition for resolution, as the movement of the conspiracy of life. Recourse to belief out of the desperation born of necessity misses the mark. "Now Kant is known, after he expelled God from the theoretical philosophy, to have nevertheless brought him back via the practical philosophy, by presenting at least the *belief* in the existence of God as required by the moral law. However, if this belief is not completely devoid of thought then God is at least *thought* here. Now I should like to know how Kant can begin to think God without thinking Him as substance, admittedly not as substance in Spinoza's sense, as *id quod substat rebus* [that which stands under things]" (HMP, 88/105).

If the subject of reason is an absolute subject, if it, as Schelling claimed in *Von der Weltseele* (1798), cannot properly be described (I/2, 347), if it is the ground of things that in itself is not a ground, not a support or a ὑποκείμενον but an abyss that as such resists thought as it is being thought, then the premise of Kant's philosophy is still missing. As we have seen, Schelling claimed that Kant had some of the conclusions, but the premises were still lacking. Furthermore, the originary premises that constitute the origin of philosophy are not the grounds of philosophy. They are not the foundational principles that prop up reason on reason's own terms.

What bizarre, nomadic, unsettling principle would this be that takes on the guise of the subject or origin of reason? What manner of principle must

be thought even though it cannot be constituted, as if one were in a comedy of thought in which one was always looking for the "fixed point," only to lose it each moment one was about to find it? How would this absent premise of Kant's, this elusive limiting concept of the "thing in itself," produce the wondering, the wound, the perpetual displacement from home, which are the endlessly commencing commencement of philosophy? Schelling argued that the very notion of a "thing in itself" is a "true wooden iron."[28] Schelling chose an almost comic metaphor, as if the elements of the absolute would always trump its actuality. A wooden railroad will never really be a railroad. "For to the extent to which it is a thing (object) it is not in itself, and if it is in itself it is not a thing" (HMP, 84/102). If the first principle is true to itself, it is nothing. If it dissembles in the transmission of itself, it is something, but if it is something, if it *is,* it *is not* itself.

How then does one think this monster, which reveals itself as a means of concealing itself and conceals itself as a means of revealing itself? This is the task of first philosophy for Schelling, albeit a task that must simultaneously think the abyss of principles and the principle of the abyss. This Unknown, this *Unbekannte,* that Kant designated as the x, as the thing in itself, Schelling argued, would really "be the 'thing in and *before* itself,' i.e., before it becomes a thing, for it only becomes a thing in our representation *[Vorstellung]*" (HMP, 81/100). This is the time of the monster: it is always gone in its having appeared, as if it were the paradoxical presence of an absence, a spirit (the dead are gone) haunting the representation of philosophy's origin. This monster, this "pure subject in its in and before itself being" (I/10, 101), is the abyss of freedom concealed within the positivity of all beginnings. For Schelling, as Slavoj Žižek argued, "the rejection of the 'unacceptable' content, of a traumatic foreign body which cannot be integrated into the subject's symbolic universe, is constitutive of the subject."[29]

Nonetheless, despite Kant's apparent repression of the monster within his own thought, I would like to suggest two things: 1) Kant's own philosophy continued to develop in increasingly radical ways, and 2) the question of the transcendental imagination, despite Kant's own ambivalence towards it and underdevelopment of it in his own thinking, can serve as a point of entry into the post-Kantian critical philosophy of Fichte and Schelling.

As for my first point, I would like to suggest that the distance between Schelling and Kant narrowed toward the end of Kant's life. On the one hand, the impact of the third *Critique* on Schelling's own philosophy of art is substantial. On the other hand, Kant's final project, the so-called *Opus postumum,* which occupied Kant during the final years of his life and which Kant himself claimed "must be completed or else a gap will remain in the critical philosophy,"[30] ends with an evocation of Schelling's philosophy.

Conceived, at least in part, as a "transition from the metaphysical foundations of natural science to physics," the fragments conclude with Kant

struggling to bring together moral and scientific philosophy in a "system of transcendental philosophy."[31] Although incomplete, the *Opus postumum* also contains some remarkable passages in which Kant announced a new relationship to Spinoza. Discussing transcendental philosophy as that "which proceeds from completely pure philosophy" (OP, 251), Kant first claimed that "what is, what has been, and what will be, belongs to nature—hence to the world. What is only thought in a concept belongs to appearances. Hence the ideality of objects and transcendental idealism" (OP, 251). Although the fragment lacks elaboration, Kant seems to have made the distinction between a science of objects, that is, a natural science of phenomena, and their grounding in ideality. The world is an objective expression of the ideal. Kant then linked this ideality to "Spinoza's God, in which we represent God in pure intuition" (OP, 251). Later one finds that "the spirit of man is Spinoza's God" (OP, 255).

Transcendental philosophy is my power to intuit myself and my world as an expression of God: "transcendental philosophy is the capacity of the self-determining subject to constitute itself as *given* in intuition, through the systematic complex of the ideas which *a priori,* make the thoroughgoing determination of the subject as object (its existence) into a problem" (OP, 254). I am given such that I can know myself as the expression of a God that I can never know. If the discussion of the immanence of myself and the world in the idea[32] of God (the pure, the ideal) begins to sound a lot like Schelling, there is some reason to believe that Kant was beginning to rearticulate his project along the lines suggested by Schelling. Kant's reevaluation of Spinoza strongly suggests the presence of Schelling, and so it perhaps should come to no surprise that Kant mentioned Schelling twice, listing the title of Schelling's *System of Transcendental Idealism* (OP, 251, 254).[33]

As for my second point, I note that Fichte, in his *Grundlage der gesammten Wissenschaftslehre* (1794), written almost at the same time as Schelling's first two major works and the contents of which Schelling knew before Fichte published them, avoided Kant's equivocations. As John Sallis argued: "Fichte shows, more unequivocally even than Kant, that the fundamental synthesis is the work of the imagination—that it is imagination that composes in their opposition those opposites whose synthesis is required: thought and intuition, phenomenon and noumenon, subject and object."[34]

Schelling himself, perhaps reading with the "genius of a Socrates" that Fichte had claimed was a *sine qua non* for philosophical activity, found the same "movement" of the imagination in his early review of Kantian and post-Kantian critical philosophy that he wrote for Immanuel Niethammer's *Philosophisches Journal*. Calling them the *Abhandlungen zur Erläuterung des Idealismus der Wissenschaftslehre* or *Treatises on the Elucidation of the Idealism in the Doctrine of Science* (1797),[35] Schelling explained that, in the wake of the often hostile reception that Kant's philosophy received, he does not count

himself among those who feel the duty to rescue Kant by popularizing him and making his writing more accessible. To popularize Kant grants too much to the anti-Kantians because it tacitly assumes that Kant was incomprehensible. Schelling produces new readings in the spirit of Kant and not mere recapitulations of the letter of Kant. In other words, Schelling's inspired reading of Kant was a kind of "symbolic reading," a reading sensitive to the ironies inherent in the Kantian project. Such a symbolic reading of Kant was quite dramatically promoted by Schelling's English admirer Samuel Taylor Coleridge whose *Biographia Literaria* (1817) drew heavily on the *Abhandlungen*. Coleridge insisted on the mendacity of the idea or Kantian transcendental ideal, noting that "an idea, in the *highest* sense of the word, cannot be conveyed but by *symbol;* and, except in geometry, all symbols of necessity involve an apparent contradiction. . . . And for those who could not pierce through this symbolic husk, his writings were not intended" (BL, 156–57). The symbolic reading (or, more daringly, the intuition that the very act of reading is itself symbolic) is sensitive to the vitality of the rupture, the life of Spirit's mendacity.

In this spirit, so to speak, Schelling produced a reading of Kant in which pure space [ἄπειρον] symbolically delivers itself into form [πέρας] qua time. An absolute positivity has betrayed, is betraying, and will betray itself by determining itself. The ἄπειρον is the original subject (and, as such, is only symbolically a subject) and is absolutely positive, that is, without any qualification or limitation. Negation is the transition into limit. Absolute space has determined, is determining, and will determine itself as time. To express this, Schelling turned to Plato's *Timaeus*. "Hence time and space are necessary conditions for all intuition. Without time the object is formless and without space it has no extension. Space is originally absolutely undetermined—(Plato's *apeiron*); time is that which first gives everything determination and contour (Plato's *peras*)" (I/1, 356).

This spiritual self-activity—this circulation between ἄπειρον and πέρας, positivity and negativity, freedom and restriction, nothing and determination, absolute subject and conditioned object, absolute space and its ceaseless determinations as time—marks the conjunction, "a third or commonality *[Gemeinschaftliches]* (Plato's *koinon*)" (I/1, 357), that yokes together utterly opposing forces. This tertium quid somehow holds together a multiplicity of determinations and the indeterminateness of their origin. As such, it cannot be straightforwardly determined. If the origin of determination cannot itself be determined, then it remains as that which resists determination within the determination of the third, which is the commonality of determination and its opposite. Schelling located this tertium quid in Kant under the name of the transcendental imagination.[36] "Kant correctly ascribes this spiritual self-activity *[geistige Selbstthätigkeit]* that acts in intuition to the imagination *[Einbildungskraft]* because only this faculty, which is equally capable of passivity and

activity, is that which uniquely enables the grasping together of negative and positive activity and its presentation *[darstellen]* in a common product.[37] And for this reason this action is called for him the original, transcendental synthesis of the imagination in intuition" (I/1, 357).[37] The "divine Plato" had returned, not as the dead dog of dogmatism, but, like Spinoza, as a philosopher of nature, albeit one that, like Spinoza, needed first to be translated into the critical mode.

Shortly before composing his first important published work, *Über die Möglichkeit einer Form der Philosophie überhaupt,* the teenaged Schelling wrote a commentary on Plato's *Timaeus*.[38] Borrowing also from the *Philebus,* Schelling located a prototype of Kant's subjective account of the creation of the world through the transcendental or productive imagination in Plato's objective account of world creation. As Sandkaulen-Bock argued, "The key to the explanation of the entire Platonic philosophy is the remark that he transfers the subjective to the objective."[39] In Schelling's reading, world creation, objectively rendered by Plato, marks the connection of πέρας (= delimitation, inhibition, restriction, determination, delimitation, temporalization, etc.) and ἄπειρον (= the χώρα or "matter" as absolute space and as the absolute subject[40]) through a third or intermediary, the "connective appearance *[koinon]* through a cause *[aitia],*" namely the δημιουργός.

The transcendental imagination for Kant, then, is the demiurgic construction of appearance through its subjective production of form. It is the ongoing production of unity out of difference, of light out of darkness. For Schelling, unlike Fichte's delimitation of the productive imagination to the domain of human subjectivity, the productive imagination is the life of the *Weltseele,* the world anima, the animation of nature in its circular and demiurgic life. Thinking is never for itself but circulates in the demiurgic life of nature. It is not that there is first the δημιουργός and that it subsequently creates things, with an eye to their blueprints or forms, out of raw materials (the χώρα). Rather nature is the δημιουργός, which creates out of the χώρα of its own unfathomable space, out of the ἄπειρον of its own absolute subjectivity or freedom. The figure of the χώρα operates tacitly throughout Schelling's entire corpus, taking on many different names. In *Von der Weltseele* (1798),[41] for example, Schelling seemed to have had it in mind when he referred to the *"Proteus of Nature"* (WS, 78) and when he later invoked the principle that "although it is receptive to all forms, it is nonetheless itself formless (ἄμορφον) and cannot be presented anywhere as determinate matter" (WS, 255). Schelling's δημιουργός produces from out of the darkness of its own longing, which is the movement of the unconscious of the universe as it produces its own *Māyā* from out of itself. Nature is the disequilibrium of infinite space producing ceaseless times from out of itself.

In bringing itself forth or it producing itself as form from out of its own formlessness, the productive imagination—the circulation of freedom and

things, *natura naturans* and *natura naturata,* absolute subject and conditioned object, monster and norm, χώρα and time—is the auto-ποίησις of nature, the perpetual coming forth of life from out of itself. In a way one could say that nature is in part the life of the productive imagination. It is not mechanistic and dead. If time were simply to move forward in a linear series of successive points, it would be mechanical. "The mere succession of the representations, considered externally, provides the concept of *mechanical movement*" (I/1, 386). The question of nature only emerges with the possibility of thinking, against Kant, albeit with many of Kant's insights, nonmechanical temporal movement. The time of nature is a demiurgic circle. It is the movement of spirit (soul + body) as the soul (not the discrete identity of a thing but the χώρα as the absolute continuity of eternity) produces itself through ceaseless restrictions (bodies) as time. Linear movement is the mechanistic illusion of the movement of things in space. Circular movement, on the other hand, is the life of spirit as the autoproduction of nature, as the soul restricts its absolute space and takes place, so to speak, as things. However, since time contradicts absolute space and absolute space contradicts time, the things of nature circle simultaneously between presence and absence. Newtonian physics, that great restricted economy of presence, is not speculative physics and hence for Schelling called for spiritualization.

Nature is not simply *there* for us to use and abuse as we wish or as our politics dictate. We are not in nature, nor do we belong to nature if by that one means that we are things among things in some kind of conglomeration of things under the heading of the natural. We are no more *in* nature than we are *in* time. Our life belongs to the conspiracy of nature, to the conspiracy of life itself. For seen in the right way, everything is alive for Schelling.

Five years before embarking on the *Freedom* essay, Schelling, in the *System der gesammten Philosophie Nachlaß,* made an extraordinary claim about the origin of philosophy in the absolute subjectivity of nature. "This must be the fruit of a universal philosophy that leads humans back to nature so that nature teaches the more cheerful contemplation of the world and of humans; so that nature teaches one to contemplate actions and things not in relation to the subject but rather in themselves and in relation to the order of nature" (I/6, 545). This is not some reactionary embrace of natural law theory. The freedom of nature exceeds her own laws, her sovereign criminality complicates her forms, and the spirit of nature exceeds the letter of nature in the way that the future exceeds the present. For this reason, Schelling, departing firmly from Kant, eschewed *Sittlichkeit,* normativity, and excluded it from his system. "It is an atrocity to want to deduce God from normativity" (I/6, 557).

For Schelling, one does not acquire goodness because that assumes that one begins separated from goodness. Rather the movement is always the opposite. The Good is the soul of nature, and one does not move towards the Good but rather disengages oneself from the inhibitions and clots that block

one's capacity to affirm the Goodness that already has one. We are nature and it has us. We belong to the demiurgic circulation. It does not belong to us.

Schelling elsewhere called this circulation that produces itself freely from out of itself "divine imagination," itself a term that resonates with the auto-productivity of the δημιουργός, as if it were the world anima, the *Weltseele*. The divine imagination is "the final cause for the specificity of the world-work" (I/7, 347). The term *Weltwerk,* world-work, is a curious and intriguing neologism, reminiscent of a term like *Kunstwerk,* the artwork, itself a coming forth into work in and through the imagination. It is as if the world itself were somehow an aesthetic phenomenon, continuously brought forth—produced—in the free and discontinuous divine imagination.

In a way, nature is the complicated circulation of genius. It is therefore something that cannot be controlled in advance by normativity, for the very soul of the genius, the χώρα out of which the forms of life come forth, demonstrates that the forms of life do not exhaust the life of forms. Kant, according to Heidegger, anxiously sensed the monstrosity of the anima and recoiled, wanting to preserve the conventions of morality. As John Sallis argued:

> There is something monstrous about genius. It is the site where—the passageway through which—nature, by giving the rule to art, gives rise to something that, though born from and set within nature, nonetheless exceeds nature. . . . Is it not because of this monstrosity—because he at least caught a glimpse of it—that Kant insists on the requirement of taste, that taste is required to discipline genius, to clip its wings, to make it civilized or polished, to provide it with guidance, to introduce clarity and order?[42]

For Schelling, when one penetrates the external husks of things, one find the mad, destructive forces within to be horrible (I/8, 715), as if madness, wholly otherwise than the understanding, was at the seat of the latter and that reason was the circulation of the two.[43] Schelling did not advocate the collapse of reason as the understanding succumbs to its anterior madness. Schelling rather contrasted the dead and imbecilic intellectual, the civil servant of the truth and bureaucrat of the idea, the person concerned exclusively with matters of the intellect (the *Verstandesmensch*), with the ones who solicit and govern and cope with madness (AW, 338–39). The latter are not simply mad, but rather know reason to be in the wavering between madness and the understanding. "But where there is no madness, there is certainly no proper, active, living intellect" (AW, 338). One must have a touch of madness. Otherwise, reason is tyrannized by the dogmatism of the intellect and the clarity of shallow understanding, or it collapses into the chaos of sensibility utterly detached from the intellect. Madness would be something like immediate *Empfindung* without the capacity to translate its abyssal descent into human language.

In this way one can see that from the beginning Schelling grappled with the problematic of modernity much in the way that the early Foucault did. In the *Histoire de la Folie* (1961),[44] Foucault articulated an "archeology" of the "silence" that emerged in the caesura between rationality and madness. Using Schelling's critical language, one might say that for Foucault, in the Age of Reason, *Verstand* (intellect, ratiocination, discernment, understanding) had succeeded in uncoupling itself altogether from its opposite, from delirium and insanity. From the severance of any relationship between madness and *Verstand,* the latter subjugates the ghostly underbelly of the intellect, diminishing it to the status of a disease. From the "caesura that establishes the distance between reason and non-reason" (MC, ix), from the muting of the infinitely displaced soul of the intellect, is born the "language of psychiatry, which is a monologue of reason *about* madness" (MC, xi). The blackmail of the Enlightenment was for Schelling the triumph of the *Verstandesmensch* that bureaucratized nature, strangled *Empfindung,* and thereby asphyxiated nature. For Schelling, Foucault's archeology of the caesura would have been inseparable from the relegation of nature to a conglomeration of objects at the disposal of the human subject.

In the *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800), the productive imagination, or what Schelling also called the "productive intuition," was said to "waver *[schweben]* in the middle between infinity and finitude."[45] The Enlightenment silenced this "middle *[Mitte]*" and thereby assassinated nature. Reason was reduced to the intellect, to questions of explanation, and nature became a series of detached objects for an inquiring subject to explain and thereby to possess and control. The human subject took possession of itself as an object and thereby displaced not only its own absolute subjectivity (as Fichte demonstrated), but absolute subjectivity per se, the creative silence of nature in its ceaseless productivity. "The '*I* think, *I* am' is ever since Descartes the fundamental error in all knowledge" (I/7, 147/250). Reason reduced itself to the Cartesian claim of understanding, that to understand its own activity is to secure itself as the first principle.

Furthermore, this self-constitution in the understanding, in which the human subject found itself over against a domain of objects seeking explanation, had devastating ethical repercussions. The loss of the question of nature that marks modernity is inseparable from its ethical floundering. The Good becomes a) an enigma seeking explanation; b) as such, it is an object that resists explanation; c) the Good is reduced to an object (something useful or otherwise valuable) to an inquiring and needy subject; d) the Good is thereby simply the question: What at least is good for us?; and e) the Good is a question of moral choice for an autonomous and hopefully responsible agent. For Schelling, like Levinas, if it becomes possible to ask whether one should be ethical, then the ethical is already lost. If that could be a question, if it could admit of a choice, then one is already detached from the Good.[46]

Yet for Schelling, the productive imagination was also "the mediating activity between the theoretical and the practical" (TI, 229/176). It was not first a question of wondering theoretically about the Good and then seeking in praxis to understand it. Theory, the domain of the intellect in its capacity to make determinate judgments, already stands in relation to the absolute subjectivity of the Good. I should emphasize emphatically that by "subjectivity," I do not at all mean that our evaluative judgments are subjective, mere whims and capricious preferences of emoting agents. The Good is the absolute subject of existence, the eternal and simultaneously once and future ground of the True. In its sovereign alterity the Good is already the seat of theory. The Good is not a modification of God. "The Good is its being *per se*" (AW, 237). God is the dark ground (albeit also that which contests ground within ground itself) of the Good as the ground of the True. In some wondrous way, to know is to be good and to be good is to know.

Although I will turn to this topic in greater detail in the next chapter, the intellectual intuition marks the understanding's relationship to that which contests the intellect's own domain. As such, it is involved in *Empfindung,* in sensation. Schelling also speaks of this as *Sinn,* understood not as meaning (sense), but as sensation or sensory experience. Beyond our sense habits lies the chaos of what William James and Nishida Kitarō later call "direct experience," the unfathomable and chaotic plenitude of experience before it is ordered by judgments and habits of seeing. Schelling speaks of a *Sinn* that "beholds a present infinity," but since this has not yet been regulated by the intellect and by habits of seeing, *Sinn* simply has no idea whatsoever what it is doing. It just senses the "unfathomability *[Unergründlichkeit]* of the sensuous" and "its confused plentitude" (I/7, 146/249). *Sinn* is bereft of understanding as it registers the χώρα directly on the nervous system, so to speak. Considered in isolation from *Sinn,* the intellect *(Verstand),* with its determinate judgments and projects of explanation, produces "clarity without depth," and hence "it can be equated with science in its isolation"(I/7, 146/249). Left to their own devices, these pernicious and imbecilic *Verstandesmenschen* proceed relentlessly with their protocols, experiments, and domination of a nature that has been stripped of its depths by the hegemony of the clear and distinct.

The productive imagination, however, yokes together *Sinn* and *Verstand,* direct experience and determinate judgment, the Good and the True. It "unites clarity with depth," but it is only "sense that is conscious of its infinity or the understanding that at the same time intuits" (AIN, I/7, 146–47/248–49). It is the understanding undergoing the sensation of infinity or sense expanding disruptively into the understanding. The δημιουργός does not have to be conscious of itself (even if that cannot mean that it could ever understand itself) in order to be demiurgic. The life of the productive imagination, the life of demiurgic nature itself, is the life of reason.

It is not the reciprocal unity of all three that marks reason. Reason has all three as its restrictions without being equal to any one of them in particular. Reason, for Schelling, "cannot be described in any way" (AIN, I/7, 146/248) any more so than the system of freedom could ever be described or presented. Reason, furthermore, is not something that we do or something that can take itself as its own object and understand itself. It is not something present to itself such that it can get in front of itself and orient itself to its own activity. We do not have reason. Reason has us (AIN, I/7, 149/250). Reason, the demiurgic circle of sensation and the understanding, madness and the intellect, is another way of expressing the philosophically self-aware productive imagination.

Without the intervention of philosophic self-reflection, the imagination merely produces, and such production is not contingent upon reflection upon the history or nature or *Wesen* of its activity. Reason is the productive imagination in both its creative and its reflective capacity. Reason continually creates such that its highest creations are revelations. Reason reflects upon its own history and wonders about its own future. Reason is the imagination as it ceaselessly imagines itself, nature as it ceaselessly reflects upon itself, even though in doing so, it also ceaselessly displace itself. Reason is the ongoing self-reflection of the complication of the transcendental imagination as it mysteriously and secretly produces and displaces itself out of itself.

This is not to say that nature is reasonable, that it yields its secrets to the concept. Reason is nature as the complication of madness and the understanding, the formless and form. In this way, it makes no sense finally to say that we could ever think nature in any way. *Nature thinks us*. Nature is "in the human what, according to the mystics, the *primum passivum* is in God, or initial wisdom in which all things are together and yet severed, at one and yet each in its own way free" (I/7, 415). Reason is the cision of nature itself, such that "the real and the ideal all flow together towards absolute identity in reason. . . . Reason is the All in the All itself" (I/6, 207).

III

> After all, what accounts do the nethermost bounds of the universe owe to me? By what insatiate conceit and lust of intellectual despotism do I arrogate the right to know their secrets, and from my philosophic throne to play the only airs they shall march to, as if I were the Lord's anointed? Is not my knowing them at all a gift and not a right? And shall it be given before they are given? *Data! Gifts!* Something to be thankful for!
>
> —William James, *On Some Hegelisms*[47]

In one of *Aphorisms as the Introduction to the Philosophy of Nature,* Schelling asked himself, "Of what do I boast?" He answered himself by accepting his reputation as having "proclaimed the divinity even of the particular" (I/7,

143/246). Blake proclaimed at the end of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* that "everything that lives is holy," and for Schelling everything is alive. Nature is the circle of divine complication, and hence as Walt Whitman audaciously concluded, "And I will thread a thread through my poems that no one thing in the universe is inferior to another thing, and that all the things of the universe are perfect miracles, each as profound as any."[48] I will now take this thought up as it bears directly on Schelling's appropriation of Spinoza.

In his philosophy of nature, Schelling returned again and again to Spinoza, although Spinoza's dogmatic cast needed some modification to unleash its force. "Everywhere in his system the seeds of higher development are sown" and hence "the sealed bud *can* still unfold into the flower." Spinoza's *Ethics* was like the Hebrew language, a "script without vowels." Vowels would be required to draw into audibility the otherwise silent nouns of his thinking (HMP, 40/69). Although Spinoza lacked some of the requisite means for his extraordinary intuition to be heard, the sovereignty of nature silently operated and thereby challenged the text's initial claim to have made it into the highest object of the understanding.

In order to draw Spinoza's underlying intuition into better audibility, his idea of substance required rethinking in order to free it from the dogmatism in which God *qua substantia* was the *id quod substat rebus* [that which stands under things], the ὑποκείμενον that grounds nature. As such, God was an object constituted by a thinking subject and not an absolute subject expressing itself in a complication of objects. "The God of Spinoza is still lost in substantiality and thereby in immobility. For mobility (= possibility) is only in the subject. The substance of Spinoza is just object" (HMP, 40/69). Spinoza in the critical mode, however, is the revelation of deep ecology, of the absolute subjectivity of nature.

Schelling sought to replace "dead, blind substance" with "living substance" (HMP, 44/72). If the understanding succeeds in making divine substance into the understood ground of things, all kinds of dangers emerge. Jacobi saw clearly that such a move leads to fatalism. One could put this danger into more contemporary terms. The claim to have understood God is the claim of a total, or even totalitarian, philosophy. Schelling belongs to the long line of philosophers who have gotten a bad rap for being totalizing thinkers. If one were to say, however, that one cannot think the whole of things totally, then one has in some way thought the whole of things, even though one knows that one cannot understand the totality of things. This for Schelling is the problematic of the system of freedom. Suffice it to say for now, Schelling is a nontotalizing thinker of the Whole. One can think a whole that one can never fully comprehend.

Further, a dogmatic philosophy of presence, which posits an abiding, intelligible, and fundamental explanation of things, is only possible in the death of nature. The absolute subject of nature, which moves through all

things but has no being of its own, is alive and cannot be contained. It is the "absolutely mobile which is continually an Other" (HMP, 150/152). One should not therefore confuse the life of the absolute subject (the errancy of the χώρα, if you will) with the duration in time of things. The absolute subject is nothing, and it grants time without having time of its own. The "life" in the "life and death" of "living" things is not what Schelling means by the life of *natura naturans*. Schelling was after *the life of life* itself, the life that grants the living its life and death. It is the thought of the conspiracy of life at the heart of "life and death" itself. When one customarily speaks of the latter, one says that a living thing comes into life, conducts some kind of life, and then exits from life. The duration of the living as the succession of times in a given life might make some sense if one thinks of an organism just as an isolated organism. But just as what is true of the parts is not therefore true of the Whole (the fallacy of composition), what is true of a living thing is not therefore true of life as a whole. Organisms studied in isolation from the Whole, from their general economy, so to speak, may seem to strive to prolong their lives, to exhibit the neediness of the *conatus essendi,* but viewed from the life of life, from the conspiracy of life, even perishing is an expression of the plenitude of energy. Even the death of the organism is, seen from the Whole, an expression of life. This was also why Nietzsche called the *conatus* Spinoza's "great non sequitur." "Above all, something living wants to *discharge* its force—life itself is will to power; the *conatus* is only one of the indirect and most widespread *consequences* of it."[49] Schelling made the same claim, holding that "Only where nature has not inhibited this current, it flows forwards" (WS, 69). For Schelling, the idea of God, *natura naturans,* is the life in each life.[50]

I hope that it would already be self-evident that Schelling was not glib about the impact of death for respective organisms. If the movement of Schelling's own thought were not sufficient evidence of this, then his mourning for Caroline, a grieving that brought him precariously deep into the bowels of madness, and his own contention in the *Freedom* essay that nature is covered by a veil of melancholy, reminds us of the impossibility of sharing directly in all of God's solar abundance. Nonetheless, the movement to the Whole, the recovery of the general economy of nature, was for Schelling what it was for Bataille: "a revolution in ethics."

Hence, in the *Freedom* essay Schelling proclaimed that God was a "God of the living, not of the dead" (I/7, 346). Spinoza, that dead dog, was being resurrected as a voice of the conspiracy of life. "One could regard Spinozism in its rigidity like Pygmalion's statue which had to be besouled through the warm breath of love." It was "comparable to the most ancient images of the divinities which, the less individual living traits were apparent, the more mysterious they appeared" (I/7, 350). Spinoza's one-sided realism, lacking the dynamic signs of life, would be infused with the soul, the life of life, and the dark, vital movement of difference. Hence, Spinoza's *conatus essendi* would

give way to a general economy of nature. "Idealism is the soul of philosophy, realism its body" (I/7, 356). The general economy of nature, Spinoza's pantheism in the critical mode, is the dynamic disequilibrium of nature, as the superabundance of the ideal (the absolute subject) circulates in a complication, in a conspiracy, so to speak, with the real (the objective). "In every natural thing a *principle* of Being that *is not itself [ein Princip des Seins, das nicht selbst ist]* reveals itself"(I/3, 11–12).

This repetition of Spinoza, this time in the critical mode, as an opening into the deep ecology of the *Naturphilosophie* characterized Schelling's thinking from the beginning. "The life of each thing in God is an eternal truth but temporal life is just the life of things"(I/7, 164). Schelling dramatically refused the seemingly obvious distinction between dead, mechanical movement and living movement. Everything is, in a sense, in its own way, an expression of the life of life. Only when something is torn in the moment of analysis from its circulation in the conspiracy of life can it appear mechanical. Concluding that something appearing mechanical in isolation is also mechanical within the general economy of nature is to commit an ontological variant of the fallacy of composition. What is true of the individual is not true of the Whole and, furthermore, at least in the case of the illusion of the mechanical, the truth of the Whole, the truth of the Organism, trumps the truth of the individual, or of the mechanism. "As soon as our contemplation of the idea of nature as a *Whole* stretches aloft, the opposition between mechanism and organism disappears" (WS, 68).

In this way, Schelling reversed the traditional understanding. It was and still is largely held that if one begins with mechanical movement, one can define life by adding something extra, some kind of animating principle (an élan vital, an anima, certain carbon processes, organic movement, etc.). Such life is born out of the dead, so to speak. Things begin as dead things and then with the supplement of life, however that may be defined, certain of those things enter into their respective lifespans. The Enlightenment begins from dead nature, from, more poignantly, an unconscious murder of nature. It slowly dawns on one, if it does at all, that the rise of modernity emerges from an obliviousness to the nature-cide that is modernity's enabling condition. For Schelling, to the contrary, mechanical movement is a special case of life itself.[51] In chapter six, I will argue that the amnesia of modernity is not something that responsible agents did in an irresponsible night of drunken ontology. The murder of nature is perhaps the most profound symptom of what is specifically human about the human relationship to freedom, namely, that it is the faculty for good and evil. However, suffice it to say for now that for Schelling, if one begins with the Organism, with the idea of nature as a Whole, then the illusion of mechanical life is just a special case of the conspiracy of life. "Not, where there is no mechanism, there is Organism, but the reverse. Where there is no Organism, there is mechanism" (WS, 69).

The reflective productive imagination is the life of the Organism, a vast and inexhaustible general economy in which the plenum of energy is always in excess of the amount required for self-preservation and enhancement. The individual line segments that are the lives of individual things do not allow us to induce that the Organism is the vast conglomeration of all of these segments. This is the illusion of the mechanical. The life of the Organism, the movement of general economy, is the height from which "the individual successions of cause and effect" are not deceived by "the simulacrum *[Schein]* of mechanism. They are endless small straight lines in the general circle of the Organism, in which the world itself comes forth" (WS, 69).

In his first major work, *Über die Möglichkeit der Philosophie,* Schelling sought to unclog the arteries of freedom by noting that Spinoza located the Absolute in something objective (a pleonasm, for any "something" is already an object) or "realistic" substance. As such, Spinoza runs the risk of the "idle chatter *[Gerede]*" of such philosophical follies as an "objective proof for the existence of God" and for the existence of a *Ding an sich* (FP, 287/101–102/49). The real surprise, however, is the guest who once crossed into Holland to visit Spinoza: Leibniz. While rejecting Leibniz's flight from sovereignty and consequent refuge in a doctrine of final causality (the Goodness of God's nature makes this the best of all possible worlds[52]), Schelling located in Leibniz a protocritical exit from Spinoza's dogmatism. Although Leibniz's absolute is a supreme substance that is only formal, that is, ideal without also being real, unlike Spinoza, it can never be objective and given as such to thought. It remains subjective, positing from itself without exhausting itself in the posit.[53] Nonetheless, Leibniz remains too abstract and Spinoza too dogmatic.

Schelling began the Preface to his next important work, *Vom Ich als Prinzip der Philosophie, On the I as Principle of Philosophy* (1795), written when he was twenty years old, with a warning that, since his text will mention Spinoza quite often, the reader ought to decide either not to read the text or "to read it in its entire context." Spinoza will not be treated "like a dead dog (to use Lessing's expression)" (VP, 69/151/64). In a way, Spinoza, far from being dead, offers a possibility of thinking life itself.

Schelling announced that he will take a twofold approach to Spinoza. On the one hand, he will "undermine the Spinozistic system by its own fundament." On the other hand, he will argue that "with all its errors there is still in its bold consistency something infinitely worthy of respect" (VP, 69/151/64). He will also take on the Kantians who understood only "the letter and not the spirit of the teacher" and who hold that the first *Critique* promises philosophical business as usual (VP, 71/153/65). After defending his reading of Kant, Schelling observed that there appears to be too great a separation between Kant's theoretical and practical projects. Deontology seems to come from nowhere. Just when the chips are down, God and moral-

ity conveniently appear *ex machina!* Practical reason, lacking a common principle with the understanding, is just kind of stuck on to the first *Critique* like an ancillary building *[Nebengebäude],* bifurcated from the main building (VP, 73/154/66). Schelling announced that he would write a "counterpart *[Gegenstück]* to Spinoza's *Ethics*" (PV, 80/159/69) in which Kant's bifurcation of the practical and the theoretical would be united in a third and that this tertium quid would, like the *Ethics* (II, 43, scholium), be the self-warranting "light that illuminates itself and the darkness" (PV, 74/155/66). The counterpart would be a way of thinking that is simultaneously, not consequently, ethical. In a way, then, the young Schelling was striving to do what the old Kant waited until the waning days of his philosophical work to do. As amazing as it may sound, Schelling was already engaged as a twenty-year-old thinker in his own critique of judgment, in his own attempt to think a unity of opposites (understanding and reason, the True and the Good) that did not sublimate one side of the opposition.

Like the third *Critique,* this little text presents a tertium quid that holds together theoretical and practical philosophy. From the outset, Schelling discounted the possibility that an ethics can be derived from theoretical foundations. Rather, ethics is the claim of the superiority of an intellectual intuition into the complication of ἄπειρον and πέρας within the transcendental imagination (what Schelling would later call the A^3). As we have seen, reason would come to reflect upon itself as the conspiracy of demiurgic productivity. What Schelling, following Fichte, here named the "intellectual intuition" is in part an ethical intuition that disrupts the necessities that theory discerns and demands.[54] Although I will turn to a sustained discussion of the intellectual intuition in the next chapter, it is perhaps worth noting that Friedrich Schlegel, writing two years later in an *Athenäum* fragment, strikingly claimed that "the intellectual intuition is the categorical imperative of theory" (A, 85).

In a certain sense, Schelling's reading of Spinoza was an ethical critique: the *Ethics* are not ethical enough because they are dogmatic and thereby illiberal. They have not yet found a way to speak of the freedom of the Good. The project of Schelling's counterpart to the *Ethics* suggests that this essay on intellectual intuition is an ethical deployment of philosophy that interrupts the presumed priority of its theoretical deployment. It is a confrontation with the Enlightenment's elevation of the understanding and its denigration and eventual dismissal of *Empfindung,* leaving their link as a caesura largely unheard in the intellect's prolix monologues about itself and its domain. Schelling returned to the site of this caesura: *to know is to be good and to be good is to know.* This circulation, as we shall see in chapter five, was, even more so for Schelling than for Kant, "to flow back like so many individual streams into the universal sea of poesy from which they took their source" (TI, 300/232). As such, philosophy is the infinite revelation of the Good, the "thing *before* itself," thought always in the wake of itself.

Schelling announced his ethical reading of Spinoza in his February 4, 1795, letter to Hegel, which accompanied a copy of *Vom Ich als Prinzip* and in which Schelling proclaimed that "the alpha and omega of all philosophy is freedom." This announcement came in the form of an answer to Hegel's "surprising" question as to whether or not Schelling believed that if through [Kant's] "moral proof we do not reach a personal Being." Schelling, alluding to Lessing's response to Jacobi after being shown Goethe's poem "Prometheus," declared that the

> Orthodox concepts of God are also for us no more. My answer is that we are still *again* reaching to a personal Being. I have become in this a Spinozist. Do not be astounded. You will soon hear how. For Spinoza, the world (the object as such in opposition to the subject) was *everything*. For me it is the *I*. The actual distinction between critical and dogmatic philosophy seems to me to lie in this absolute I out of which the absolute object or ~I comes. The latter in its strictest consistency leads to Spinoza's system while the prior leads to the Kantian. Philosophy must proceed from the *absolute*. (M, 126–27)

There is a vital impulse in Spinoza that the young Schelling does not want obscured by a grammatical tick. Spinoza demanded what Schelling called in the *Freedom* essay an "interpretive supplement" (I/7, 345). The specter of dogmatism inhibited the life force in Spinoza's conception of nature. Dogmatism privileges the ~I, or real substance, before any I. Dogmatism contradicts itself because it posits a thing, a ~I, and calls it an I, an unconditioned thing. No thing can be unconditional because an I must first condition it as a thing in order to be a thing at all. Furthermore, Spinoza "nowhere proved that the absolute could or should lie in the ~I." Once the I becomes a ~I, through the sheer force of consistency, Spinoza's entire system becomes determined by an absolute object. If an object becomes absolute, then any system of knowledge, that is, any philosophy, becomes fatalism, as Jacobi claimed, because a master object determines it from the top down. There can be no absolute object because the absolute becomes objectified and hence trapped in the chain of knowledge. Despite having "degraded the I to the ~I," despite this "small grammatical remark," perhaps "at the same time against his will and through the sheer power of his boldness," Spinoza's own text moves in the opposite direction, and there is no need to reject it because of this "small grammatical remark." Despite the definition of substance as an absolute object (the I placed in a ~I), "the world according to him is never world, the absolute object never object; no sensuous intuition, no concept reaches his unique substance; only to the intellectual intuition is it present in its infinity" (PV, 94–95/170–72/77–78).

Although Spinoza defined substance in the opening definition of the book, the actual text performs the impossibility of ever completing this in a

conceptual operation.[55] Schelling made this point even more forcefully in the *System of Transcendental Idealism*. Claiming that dogmatism rests on the proposition that Being is fundamental, he again took up the problem of the dogmatic and critical tension within Spinoza. It is clear that the *Ethics,* despite its dogmatic cast, presents the chiasmic circulation of two powers in a third: "A consistent dogmatism is only to be found in Spinozism; but as a real system, it can only persist as a *science of nature* whose final result again becomes the principle of transcendental philosophy" (TI, 26/17).

The third kind of knowledge, the *amor intellectualis dei,* the love or affirmation of an absolute that dwells within every modal arrangement, is the love of what Schelling later called an "absolute subject," which "goes through everything and remains in nothing. For where it were to remain, nature and development would be inhibited" (I/9, 215). The I, the unruly, ensconced in the ego or the person, but as the absolute subject of nature itself, cannot be conceptually determined or controlled. One might say that the I is not the ego even of nature, let alone myself. Schelling employed Spinoza's *amor intellectualis dei* in the form of the intellectual intuition: "Where there is an object, there is sensuous intuition and vice versa. Therefore, where there is *no* object, that is, in the absolute I, there is no sensuous intuition, therefore either none at all or *intellectual* intuition. The I, the absolute subject of being itself, is therefore determined for itself as a sheer I in the intellectual intuition" (PV, 106/181/85). I will turn to this problem of the intellectual intuition, which thinks an *ideatum* as it exceeds its idea, in the next chapter. For now, I note that it is similar to what Levinas was to call "infinition" in which "the idea of infinity is transcendence itself, the overflowing of an adequate idea."[56] Infinition, for both Schelling and Levinas, summons a desire that transcends neediness. Need must in its desperation construe the Good in a manner akin to the Thomistic conception of a "perfective good," as a good that is a sine qua non for the actualized human life, a good without which one would remain lacking, in need of fulfillment.[57] The intellectual intuition is the birth of desire out of the corpse of need.

As for Spinoza, the intellectual intuition never confuses the origin of imagination with an image. It intuits only the unqualified I = I or A = A. It is an intuition into freedom: "The I is determined only through its freedom and therefore everything that we say about the pure I is determined through its freedom" (PV, 106/182/85). "The essence *[Wesen]* of the I is freedom, that is, it is not thinkable as anything else other than that which posits itself out of an absolute self-power, not as any kind of *something* but as a simple *I*" (PV, 103/179/84). It cannot be conceptually rendered even as the *Ding an sich,* which we have seen, is like the idea of wooden iron. Any determination restricts the spontaneity of its pure positivity. Following *Ethics* I, 15 ("Everything is in God and nothing can be or be conceived without God"), since the I qua pure positivity knows no restrictions and is both cause and effect, active

and passive, "The I contains all Being, all reality" (PV, 111/186/89). It is indivisible and immutable (PV, 118/193/93). The I cannot be any more conceptually determined than it can be numerically determined. The ἕν in ἕν καί πάν is not a numerical one.

Despite a thoroughgoing philosophy of immanence and its expressionistic complications, Spinoza places substance outside of the I such that his language consequently suggests that substance functions as the supreme object for the I to contemplate. "For that necessary union of ideal and real, of the absolutely active and absolutely passive (which Spinoza misplaced in an infinite Substance outside me) exists *within me* originally without my co-operation, and *my nature* consists precisely of this" (PN II, 37/28). When substance is stilled into the quiet waters of objectivity, it loses the barbaric, nomadic, and errant life that its mobility entails. This is an intuition of that which in the concept always eludes the concept, what Schelling in the *Freedom* essay was to call *der nie aufgehende Rest,* the irreducible remainder.

In this respect, Hegel and Schelling were in some agreement about Spinoza. In his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy,* Hegel maintained Kant and Schelling's concern that Spinoza had "united" thinking and extension, the ideal and the real, "in God, but thought it as motionless substance—nature and the person are developments of this substance, but they remain by this name."[58] For Schelling, Spinoza threatened to fall inadvertently under the ruse of emanationism because "he could not make comprehensible" how substance changed with its expressions (PN II, 37/28). Modes expressed the faces of God, but Spinoza did not articulate how God's freedom could continue to produce itself as other than efficient causality,[59] to fulgurate in new kinds of faces, to have spoken and to continue to speak in a multiplicity of ciphers.

4

Direct Experience

O a word to clear one's path ahead endlessly!
O something extatic and undemonstrable! O music wild!
—Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*

Philosophy's suspended state is nothing but the expression of its inexpressibility. In this respect it is a true sister of music.
—Adorno, "Expressing the Inexpressible," *Negative Dialectics*[1]

In speaking of his system of transcendental idealism, Schelling argued that not only would it solve problems that had so far proven insoluble, but that it would also produce entirely new problems (TI, 3/1). It was not enough that certain traditionally vexing questions would be answered, but in so answering them, we would learn that we had more pressing, more fundamental questions that we hitherto did not even know that we had. Furthermore, this system was going to result in the "shattering" of presumed truths and give birth "to a new kind of truth *[eine neue Art der Wahrheit]*" (TI, 4/1). The system, therefore, was in the end not just going to bring forth a new moment in the long progress towards the truth of things, a new true thing, or a long awaited true answer to certain traditionally vexing problems. It was going to bring forth a new relationship to truth, a truer truth.

But what is the truth of this new kind of truth that we did not even hitherto know we had? What manner of heretofore hidden truth is this? Before Kant, truth *(veritas)* was chiefly the capacity to understand correctly the

nature of things, *adaequatio rei et intellectūs*. It would hence make no sense to say that this prior account of truth was incorrect because correctness itself depends on the truth of this prior account of truth. Rather, there is the releasing or unleashing of a prior, heretofore concealed truth that remained hidden in the traditional, posterior account of truth. Correctness is but a special case of a deeper truth. In the search for a correct account of things, a hidden truth of truth, by which correctness was but a species, emerges.

How does one even demonstrate this truth when it is by virtue of itself already obscured by the demand that we demonstrate it? Demonstrations, when they are successful, provide a correct and thereby convincing account of things. Hence, could one correctly show what correctness itself obscures? Philosophy, Schelling later claimed, is finally "not demonstrative science. Philosophy is the free deed of the Spirit *[freie Geistestat]*. Its first step is not a knowing but rather much more expressly a not-knowing, a sublimating *[Aufheben]* of all knowing for humans" (I/9, 228). This *Aufhebung* does not demarcate what it did for Hegel, the arrival of absolute knowing, but rather what it did for Adorno. It is a negative dialectic that results finally in nothing, in a growing silent *(Verstummen)*.

But where would our cherished first principles be if fundamentally philosophy was born of a not-knowing, of an unimpeachable ignorance? How could one even philosophize in the wake of such ignorance? Descartes feared that if the great structures of knowing were built on a contingent truth that was later disconfirmed, then the whole edifice of knowing would be contaminated because it rested on a false foundation. If Schelling, like Socrates, whom Schelling called that "true daimonic man," knows that he does not know, does that not just make philosophical inquiry an infinite and infinitely futile series of questions? Without even Kant's humbled tribunal, are we not just left guessing without a standard by which to adjudicate competing guesses?

Or if we are always just guessing, even though we have good reasons to favor some hypotheses over others, what sense can we make of Schelling's first principle? How could what the Buddhists called the Great Doubt that leads to the Great Death[2] be a principle when it vitiates its own status as a foundation? How could the principle that gives while at the same time evading the clarity and distinctness that renders it, as Descartes demanded, claim to be a foundation and hence a first principle?

Would not this Great Death, this great Unknowing, swallow up all of the ways in which we come to know things at least in a humble and quotidian fashion? This Great Death born of the Great Doubt presents two thorny problems. Is not this Great Death the night when all Buddhas are black, the night when everything melts into the mystical one? Is it not like the great oblivion of death, which silences all of our truths, all of our urgent projects, all of our erstwhile priorities? When, for example, the World Trade Center was destroyed, did not

all of our activities, even as spectators, seem insignificant, trivial, unimportant? The poet Wisława Szymborska reflected that death "can't take a joke, find a star, make a bridge. It knows nothing about weaving, mining, farming, building ships, or baking cakes. In our planning for tomorrow, it has the final word, which is always beside the point."[3] The opacity of the future, which Schelling located already in the beginning, in the first principle, has no meaning and its word silences all words, rendering language itself irrelevant.

Ingmar Bergman's *Seventh Seal* (1956) dramatized this memorably. The pompous actor Skat escapes an angry cuckold by hiding in a tree, only to discover that Death is sawing it down. Skat informs death that he does not have time to die because he has too much to do. What about my impending performance? Cancelled by death. What about my contract? Terminated by death. Aren't their loopholes? Death, taciturn, continues to saw. Will you take a bribe? Death continues to saw until the tree falls and the forest is once again silent.[4] Nothing is left. How could oblivion then be a first principle, this great enemy of first philosophy?

Moreover, how does one know not-knowing? How does one somehow know death, even as death enervates knowledge per se? How does one access this knowledge? Does this not call for some epistemically privileged encounter, some mystical opening? These were the two great charges against Schelling and the intellectual intuition, and they form the meditation of this chapter.

I

Schelling's own discourse often sounded downright mystical. For example, Schelling often spoke of the development of a "spiritual eye" in a way almost reminiscent of the way that certain aspects of the Hindu tradition spoke of opening one's third eye. "Whoever has to some extent exercised their eye for the spiritual contemplation of natural things knows that a spiritual image, whose mere vessel (medium of appearance) is the coarse and the ponderable, is actually what is living in the coarse and the ponderable" (AW, 283). Not only is nature dead, a heap of presence available for a perceiving subject, but art is dead, deprived of its soul, its animating force, if you "do not bring the spiritual eye to it which penetrates the exterior and feels the active force in it" (I/7, 295). In the 1797 *Explicatory Treatises,* Schelling, echoing Hesiod's *Theogony,* argued that, "Thought cannot possibly be our primordial activity, because it comes after intuition and because its explanation mandates a yet higher principle from which it springs (like Minerva from Jupiter's forehead)" (I/1, 392/96).

How in the world can one speak of a spiritual eye and expect to be taken seriously? Is this not mysticism? Is this not *Seinsmystik* or some New Age nature sentimentality or some mystically privileged deep ecology? How does

deep ecology get its depth, or how does one gain access to this depth, unless one somehow just intuits it in some deus ex machina bit of fortune, waiting for Minerva and her wisdom miraculously to pop forth? Miracles do not happen on demand and defy universalization and legislation.

Friedrich Schlegel had already described Schelling's philosophy as "criticized mysticism" (fragment 105, A, 89/30), that is, mysticism made into the critical mode. Ludovico, Friedrich Schlegel's Schelling persona, claimed that Spinoza is "the general basis and support for every individual kind of mysticism" (GUP, 196/87). "All thinking is a divining *[Divinieren],* but humans are only now beginning to realize their divining power" (GUP, 197/88). How does one teach undergraduates to start divining so that they can begin to philosophize? Already one is beset with nightmarish images of sending young students to a New Mexico retreat to undergo crystal therapy in order to open up their third eye.

In a far more sober tone, Rudolf Hablützel claimed that

> The so-called 'mysticism' of the later Schelling is not a belated consequence of his occupation with Jakob Böhme, but rather nothing other than the explicit turn of what was already implicitly contained in the *Vom Ich* text. The kernel of the entire transcendental philosophy is *mysticism,* understood as the effort to know through rendering comprehensible not only the origin and conditions of consciousness but also the origin and conditions of the world as appearance. (DE, 34)

Or in light of our discussion in the previous chapter of the productive imagination, it is worth noting that Hablützel went on to characterize the foundation of Schelling's philosophy as "a *mysticism of imagination [eine Mystik der Einbildungskraft]*" (DE, 81).

It should come as no surprise that Nietzsche was merciless in his dismissal of such antics. In a *Nachlaß* fragment from 1884 one finds the objection: "The nonsense with Kant's 'appearance.' And where he found no explanation, to put in place a faculty. With this event the great Schelling swindle took off."[5] This argument was developed in the first set of aphorisms ("On the Prejudices of Philosophers") in *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) as Nietzsche complained of the *niaiserie allemande* when, in the wake of Kant's adoption of a discourse on faculties, the Tübingen philosophers run off into the bushes looking for new faculties. In their idiocy, they do not yet know the difference between *finden,* to find, and *erfinden,* to invent. As they search the bushes, they claim to find what they simply make up. What was Schelling's foolish "discovery"? What did he think he was able to enable? By virtue of what virtue (*Vermöge eines Vermögens,* as Kant had written)? Schelling excited the cravings of German piety by discover-

ing in the bushes the faculty for intuiting the supersensible, which he christened the intellectual intuition (§11, 24–26).

Nietzsche's charge is clear. A discourse centered on *Vermögen* is overdetermined because it invents false agents to account for actions that it invents but claims to have discovered. I am sick by virtue of my faculty for sickness. I am drunk by virtue of my faculty for drunkenness, etc. Furthermore, Schelling's imagined agent, the intellectual intuition, reflects and thereby reveals the invisible operation of the German hunger for piety, their slave morality by which they continuously search for a higher power under which to submit themselves. The problem has always been that this higher power (God, the ultimate slave master) is enormously elusive. But since the demand for the ultimate alpha male is so great, why not just make Him up yet claim to have discovered Him? And when asked how one can also find this great Master before whom one surrenders everything, one responds that it was by virtue of the virtue of the intellectual intuition. And to those who do not have this *Vermögen* or who refuse its fruit, the ascetic priest pities them, attempts to save them, and attempts to convert them by providing the poison for which the priest's pernicious theology will then be the cure. "One only has to say the words *'Tübinger Stift'* to grasp what German philosophy fundamentally is—*cunning* theology. The Swabians are the best liars in Germany. They prevaricate innocently" (*The Anti-Christ,* §10). Schelling, like all of the German idealists and Romantics, was just another *Schleiermacher,* a fabricator of veils.[6] With these veils, the alpha male God takes control, piety reigns supreme, the herd busies itself in the protection of its community, and the swindle is underway! You don't think that there is a God? Well, then, let's just intuit Him and then we will have gotten the wheel rolling!

While Nietzsche is certainly on to something of critical importance, and while no doubt such *niaiserie* still belongs deeply and tacitly to many parts of Western and non-Western cultural traditions, it does not follow that this vitiates the question of the intellectual intuition. Nietzsche, as is well known, was not particularly concerned with a careful reading of the German philosophical tradition. On the other hand, there is a way that Nietzsche is always going to be right in this respect. Each discourse has its structural limitations and Schelling admitted as much when, from an early age, he proclaimed, following Paul, that words are just sound (FP, 299/112/55). Nonetheless, for Schelling, the origin of philosophical discourse is not *need,* nor is it the ego's demand for the Great Master's refuge from a hostile outside. The origin was the same for Schelling as it was for Nietzsche. The *amor intellectualis dei* is fundamentally an affirmation of *amor fati*. In a way, Nietzsche, no doubt to his surprise and perhaps to his horror, is in some ways a companion thinker to Schelling.[7] Both thinkers begin from the origin of philosophy, indeed of living, as that monstrous "barbarian principle" that cannot be sublimated and that volatizes every veil and shreds every prophylactic. But I shall return to

this shortly. For now, I mention Nietzsche to emphasize the daunting challenges that a discourse on the intellectual intuition faces.

Heinrich Heine had already stoked the fires of this challenge. Although Heine showed some sympathy for the pantheistic strain in Schelling, Heine believed the intellectual intuition drove Schelling off the path of reason and into the hemispheres of folly.

> Along the path of philosophy, then, Schelling could proceed no further than Spinoza, since the absolute can be comprehended only under the form of these two attributes, thought and extension. But at this point Schelling leaves the philosophical route and seeks by a kind of mystical intuition to arrive at the contemplation of the absolute itself; he seeks to contemplate it in its central point, in its essence, where it is neither thought nor extension, neither subject nor object, neither mind nor matter, but . . . I know not what! Here philosophy ceases with Schelling, and poetry—I may say folly *[Narrheit]*—commences. (RPG, 152)

Both Nietzsche and Heine lumped Schelling and his intellectual intuition into the same category, the *niaiserie allemande* or what Heine called simply *Narrheit*. Heine compared the followers of Schelling to whirling dervishes who "continue spinning round in a circle until objective and subjective worlds become lost to them,—until both worlds melt into a colorless nothingness, that is neither real nor ideal, until they see things invisible, hear what is inaudible, until they hear colors and see tones, until the Absolute reveals itself to them" (RPG, 152). This is the night when all cows are black, when one spins wildly out of the unbearable realm of the *facta bruta*. This is a renunciation and caricature of Eastern traditions (the Hindu, Buddhist, Sufi, etc.) as narcotic and escapist blurs. Hence, it should perhaps come as no surprise that Heine turned to Hegel as the greatest German philosopher since Leibniz.

Before Heine and Nietzsche, it was Hegel who first dramatically dismissed the intellectual intuition as the exclusive prerogative of "Sunday's children"—it is not universally accessible, that is, it is not directly born out of reason's reflective and universalizable assessment of its own activity. Rather, the philosophy born of the intellectual intuition, as Hegel argued in *The Lectures on the History of Philosophy,* "gave the philosophy of Schelling the appearance of indicating that the presence of this intuition in individuals demanded a special talent, genius, or condition of mind of their own, or as though it were speaking of an accidental faculty which pertained to the specially favored few."[8]

But what is intellectual intuition if not creativity, if not remarkable, unexpected births? Philosophy does not begin with a concept because if there were only concepts, then we would not already find ourselves drawn towards them.

Concepts do not in and of themselves become desiderata. There must first be desire before there are desiderata. The real origins of philosophy lie in experiences like pain, injury, aporia, anguish, confusion, and thereby in wonder, in the desire to think. Or its origins lie in perhaps more radically unconscious forces, like the desire or hunger for the Good (I only want the True insofar as I somehow know that it is good or worthwhile). The relentless economies of presence that define the base domains of the *Verstandesmenschen* cannot remain closed. But what opens them? If Reason could remain within its own narcissistic domain, why does, as William James asked in "The Sentiment of Rationality," every generation have its Job or its Faust? What drives reason beyond the legitimacy of its domain?

> Since the heart can thus wall out the ultimate irrationality, which the head ascertains, the erection of its procedure into a systematized method would be a philosophic achievement of first rate importance. But as used by mystics hitherto it has lacked universality, being available for few persons and at few times, and even in these being apt to be followed by fits of reaction and dryness. (WTB, 74–75)

Deleuze and Guattari's contention in *What is Philosophy?* that the Greek origin of philosophy was not with the sages but with "the friends of wisdom, those who seek wisdom but do not formally possess it" (WP, 3).[9] Furthermore, as Deleuze and Guattari went on to argue, philosophical activity is more fundamentally modulated by taste (WP, 77):

> Philosophy does not consist in knowing and is not inspired by truth. Rather, it is categories like Interesting, Remarkable, or Important that determine success or failure. Now, this cannot be known before being constructed. We will not say of many books of philosophy that they are false, for that is to say nothing, but rather that they lack importance or interest, precisely because they do not create any concept or contribute an image of thought or beget a persona worth the effort. Only teachers can write "false" in the margins, perhaps; but readers doubt the importance and interest, that is to say, the novelty of what they are given to read. (WP, 82–83)

Philosophy is not born out of correctness any more than its chief activity is the management of correctness. In a way, philosophy is a kind of lovechild. Love, for Nishida, who was able to synthesize thinkers like Schelling[10] with that of the Buddhist tradition, grants the possibility of philosophy. "Love is the deepest knowledge of things. Analytical, inferential knowledge is a superficial knowledge, and it cannot grasp reality. We can reach reality only through love. Love is the culmination of knowledge" (IG, 175). This is not to say that for

Nishida, any more so than for Schelling, that philosophy begins with an arbitrary or wistful decision to start loving things. Nor is love something that proceeds from agency. It is not something that I do. Love becomes possible in the wake of the intellectual intuition and its overthrow of the tyranny of the ego. It is not *my* love for the Other, because the Other, the Good in all of its substitutions, always precedes any self. "Subjectivity is self-power and objectivity is other-power. To know and love a thing is to discard self-power *(jiriki)* and embody the faithful heart that believes in other-power *(tariki)*" (IG, 175).

For Schelling, philosophy, like creation, is first born of a wanting, of desire. "The first declaration of philosophy (which even precedes philosophy) *can* in fact only be the expression of a wanting. To this extent it must be permitted . . . to say: 'I do not like it, I do not want it, I cannot bring it into accord with myself'"(HMP, 166/165). But this is not the promotion of the emotivist creation of the world according to one's preferences. Just because I feel that something should be true does not ipso facto make it true.

Philosophy is born of the aporia of Eros, of that angelic daimon as the intermediary force of desire, this wanting that wants even what it does not want, what Foucault, commenting on Hölderlin, once called the "vitality of a rupture."[11] Schelling turned, inter alia, to Plato's *Symposium,* that daimonic mediation on the erotic. For Schelling, nature was the life of Eros, the conspiracy of the ceaseless strivings of *Sehnsucht* (Penia) and the forms of *Verstand* or the intellect (Poros).[12]

> Considered in itself, nature is like Penia showing up at Zeus' feast. From the outside Penia was the picture of poverty and extreme need. On the inside she shut away divine plenitude which she could not reveal until she had wed Wealth, Excess himself, that effusively and inexhaustibly garrulous being (A^2). Even then, however, the child wrested from her womb appears under the form and, so to speak, press of that originary negation. It was the bastard child of Need and Excess. (AW, 244)

Here Schelling repeats Socrates' own repetition of Diotima's famous story from the *Symposium* (203b–04b). To honor the birth of Aphrodite, the gods held a feast. *Poros* ("way," "passage," "resource," which Schelling extended to include *Reichthum* and *Überfluß,* wealth and excess), intoxicated on nectar, fell asleep in Zeus' garden. *Penia* ("poverty" or "need") came to the feast to beg, as was her wont, and when she saw the drunken, sleeping *Poros,* she planned to escape her poverty by copulating with wealth and bearing his child. Their breeding produced *Eros,* an intermediary between its parents, being neither mortal nor immortal, "neither ignorant nor wise," neither destitute nor rich. "Anything he finds his way to always slips away" (203e). *Penia* (generative negation, the intensivity of time) is the A^1, *Poros* (affirmation, excess, absolute space) is the

A^2, and their bastard love child is *Eros,* the A^3, the erotic ecstasies of time. The absolute subject of desire, however, is not need, not Kantian *Bedurfnis,* but *der unendliche Mangel an Sein,* the infinite lack of being that is, at the same time, not a sheer absence, harmless vacuity, but the wealth of nullity. As Deleuze and Guattari said of desire in *Anti-Oedipus:* "Desire does not lack anything; it does not lack its object. It is, rather, the subject that is missing in desire, or desire that lacks a fixed subject; there is no fixed subject unless there is repression."[13]

On the other hand, one must be careful not to lose the extremely personal force of the erotic amidst the architectonic details of systematic thought. In this respect, Schelling was much closer to Bataille when the latter insisted that of "all problems eroticism is the most mysterious, the most general, and the least straightforward. For the person who cannot escape their own nature, the person whose life is open to exuberance, eroticism is the greatest personal problem of all. At the same time it is a universal problem in a way that no other problem is" (E, 273). The problem of the erotic is not the accumulation of forces to satisfy a *Bedurfnis*. It is the affirmation of wealth as the problem that scarcity and need and stinginess have obscured.

As Levinas was later to argue, the ipseity of the I, its involution into itself as it strives to fulfill and complete itself, is need as "the vulgar Venus," that is, "in a certain sense, "the child of *Poros* and of *Penia;* it is *Penia* as source of *Poros*" (TI, 114–15). Need, as opposed to desire, begins by consuming what it does not yet have. Need is the desire for what one wants because one lacks it. Desire, in contrast, is "the *Penia* of *Poros,*" the poverty of wealth, the inability and impotence to appropriate and consume the Other. Desire does not make demands because it does not find itself as something lacking something else. Its lack is a lack of itself, a lack of its own being and this is its wealth, far greater than even the greatest thing. "What it lacks is its source of plenitude and wealth" (TI, 115).

Philosophy is born of lack, of nothing, but this wanting to be something while at the same time always not yet being anything—this in and before itself of desire, of the ongoing desire to create that is the life of the divine imagination—does not originate in the understanding. Rather, the understanding is always playing catch up, as the Good eludes its names even as it grants them. Somehow the nothing must interrupt the narcissistic monologue of the understanding with itself. The silence of madness must somehow collapse the caesura that uncouples it from the garrulousness of science.

Hegel would not think the transmission of such a silence that kept its secrets secret. Schelling, in his Munich lectures on Modern Philosophy, recounted one of Hegel's critiques of the intellectual intuition. Schelling's "philosophy, instead of proving the Absolute in the scientific manner, had recourse to *intellectual intuition,* and one did not know what this is; but it was certain that it was nothing scientific, rather something merely subjective, in the last analysis perhaps only something individual, a certain mystical intuition, that

only a few favored people could boast of, with the pretence of which, therefore, one could make life easy for oneself in science" (HMP, 147/150).

This mystical leap, this short cut that emerges as if shot out of a pistol, this nonscientific, incommunicable beginning that just suddenly happens, is a better description of Jacobi's *salto mortale* than it is of Schelling's intellectual intuition. "This was the worst present Jacobi gave to philosophy: this comfortable immediate knowledge, via which one is lifted over all difficulties as if with one word" (HMP, 172/169). Hegel, however, does not understand that the intellectual intuition is not some wacky and baffling *salto mortale,* not some epistemically privileged (that is, "mystical") miracle. Hegel cannot finally think the question of nature because he cannot think the intellectual intuition. If the dialectic never dies, if it is never utterly disrupted, if it survives through dialectical regeneration every encounter with the negative, then spirit will be able to maintain an idea of itself.

In the intellectual intuition, nature itself suddenly seems divine, utterly divine, each thing expressing the conspiracy of divine life. Hegel refused to grant this quality to nature. (This is one of the reasons, for example, that Hegel, as we shall see in chapter eight, disliked the Indian philosophical tradition.) Philosophy, for Schelling, as it was for Plato, is a preparation for death. The intellectual intuition neither produces an object for thinking, nor is it a shortcut to that special fundamental object or a privileged insight into that object. The intellectual intuition is the dawning of the Great Doubt, which makes possible the Great Death which, as the mortification of the ego, makes possible *bodhicitta,* enlightened consciousness, consciousness, far beyond the need for deontological controls, devoted to the love of the Other. The intellectual intuition is the loss out of which love is born.

Hegel assumed that Schelling was trying to fix some remarkable object in thinking in a subjective and therefore mystical way. The thought of freedom is not born of a knowing but a not-knowing. "One does not even yet have it as something which is really thought." It has not been logically realized but is really that which is always still to be realized. Freedom is the *"desideratum"* towards which one ever strives but which one never possesses (HMP, 149/151). If one never *has* freedom, one in a certain sense never *has* anything to show for oneself, although, on the other hand, one has everything to show for oneself (not just the dialectic). "Hegel admittedly does not want the Absolute, but rather the existing absolute" and furthermore presupposes that Schelling also wanted it and that the intellectual intuition was the magic wand that somehow conveniently granted it to him (HMP, 149/151).

Yet Schelling did not want the existing Absolute, and the intellectual intuition did not provide this special object. Schelling, from the beginning, endeavored to think the dark precursor, the dark ground of existence. The intuition brings nothing to light. It is the descent into the dark night of the soul, the abyss of freedom.

> That which is absolutely mobile, . . . which is continually an Other, which cannot be held onto for a moment, which is really thought in the last moment (take good note of this expression!)—how does this relate to thought? Obviously not even as a real object of thought; for by "object" one understands something which keeps still, which stands still, which remains. (HMP, 150/152)

Schelling therefore called the intuition *ein nicht denkendes Denken,* a thinking which does not think (HMP, 151/153). The *prima materia* of thinking is that which in thinking is not actually thought (HMP, 151/153). The intellectual intuition does not produce a concept although it intuits the dark ground of any possible concept. It is closer perhaps to what William James once called a percept. In *Some Problems of Philosophy,* James argued that "The great difference between percepts and concepts is that percepts are continuous and concepts are discrete."[14] The "perceptual flux" of experience originally provides percepts, and it is the ongoing work of intellectual life to move from percepts to concepts. This movement is precisely the question at hand. The percept is the perception of what James in *A Pluralistic Universe* called "pure experience":

> A philosophy of pure experience can consider the real causation as no other nature of thing than that which even in our most erroneous experiences appears to be at work. Exactly what appears there is what we mean by working, though we may later come to learn that working was not exactly there.[15]

The intellectual intuition is not a way of somehow magically seeing what is *there.* Rather, it is the interruption of economies of presence by the insinuation within what is there of that which is not there. This insinuation can be ignored, despite its haunting return. This decisive ignorance brings us to one of the most decisive and least pursued questions in Western philosophy, namely the relationship between fundamental practice and philosophy. It is not a question of not seeing something in particular, as if the intellectual intuition were some kind of decryption device. It is a question of not being able to see per se. Nietzsche once asked of the *Verstandesmensch* if *Wissenschaftlichkeit,* the will to knowledge and the despotism of the understanding, might not be "a cunning self-defense against—the *truth*" (GT, 12–13)?

In the sixth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gītā,* the *Dyānayoga,* the yoga of meditation (*dyāna* is the Sanskrit word that later becomes *Ch'an* in China and *Zen* in Japan), Kṛṣṇa counseled Arjuna to master meditation. One must concentrate on the supreme *ātman,* the self beyond the *conatus,* and as such remain in solitude *(rahashi)* and alone *(ekātī),* emancipated from the desire for one's own (VI: 10). Kṛṣṇa did not counsel that Arjuna pursue enlightenment

by contemplating grand themes or complex philosophical demonstrations that lead one to the uppermost heights of the great chain of being. Rather one is to sit erect and neither close the eyes nor allow them to wander, but to fix them on the tip of one's nose (VI: 13). The secret of secrets would be revealed not to the master metaphysician, not to the one with the cleverest system, but to the one who can learn to fix their eyes on something seemingly insignificant. But the yogin, the one who masters both *jñāna,* the supreme knowing of infinity, and *vijñāna,* determinate or discriminatory knowledge that proceeds from such wisdom *(jñāna),* is the one for whom a clump of dirt, a stone, and gold are held in equal esteem (VI: 8). One could put this conversely: if nothing in particular is to be esteemed, then all things are to be esteemed. It is not that meditation teaches one not to value the world but rather not to value things hierarchically. All that lives is holy and all things, in their own way, live. Arjuna, quite understandably, retorted that the achievement of such equanimity, beyond the incessant demand for dualities, is dauntingly difficult. Is not the mind too restless (VI: 33)? Kṛṣṇa agreed, claiming that taming the mind is like catching the wind (VI: 34). To complete the analogy, the intellectual intuition, an implicit taming of the mind, is like catching the wind. This difficulty has nothing to do with conceptual gymnastics as the "most difficult" is not a mystical shortcut. It was the merely conceptual that hid its stingy desire to be a shortcut!

This is the paradox. If the mind is in turbulence, it occupies itself with its quotidian demands, and the last judgment that it is capable of making is that it is in a state of turbulence. The world of determinations without the interjection of *jñāna* is blind to the fact that it has repressed the chaos of its origins. A turbulent mind paradoxically takes itself for a normal mind and contents itself with the seeming obviousness of things. To such a turbulent mind, the possibility of any other beginning might seem like mysticism or some other such tender-minded intrusion upon the quotidian sensibility.

Paradoxically, the only mind that sees turbulence is a mind that is not itself turbulent, anxious, impatient, and needy. A base mind contents itself with base truths and as the first of the inner chapters of the *Zuangzi* argue, "Small understanding does not reach huge understanding."[16] Western traditions tend to ignore the problem of fundamental practice, as if one's character, or more importantly, the largeness of one's love, were irrelevant. One tends to think of the understanding engaging primarily in its task of understanding things or of faith seeking an understanding or even of the endeavor to understand faith. Generally missing, at least since the Greeks, is the sense that one must first be freed for the understanding, that one must tackle the tacit narcissism that is the *conatus'* invisibly operating background. Philosophy does not begin with gaining something that one first lacks, but with the gift of the loss of oneself. As Kierkegaard argued in a footnote in the *Concluding Unscientific Postscripts to Philosophical Fragments* (1846):

> When a man has filled his mouth so full of food that for this reason he cannot eat and it must end with his dying of hunger, does giving food to him consist in stuffing his mouth even more or, instead, in taking a little away so that he can eat? Similarly, when a man is very knowledgeable but his knowledge is meaningless or virtually meaningless to him, does sensible communication consist in giving him more to know, even if he loudly proclaims that this is what he needs, or does it consist, instead, in taking something away from him?[17]

Schelling's own fundamental practice included the cultivation of the life of sensitivity, of a spiritualized relationship to nature and to the tradition. An ingenious reading is daimonic such that the irony of language itself is led back to the silence of its origin. Or one might say that it is sensitive, *empfindlich,* that is, receptive to the formless form dwelling within form. It is reading as the combination of percept and concept. There is nothing to get, and the intellectual intuition is not some kind of mystical decryption device. Rather it is the sense that, despite what the text gives us to understand, it is haunted by an anima no longer there. Even the most rigorous reading of the letter of a text does not exhaust the spirit of a text, which, in giving itself in the proxy of the letter, haunts each of those letters. *Der nie aufgehende Rest,* the irreducible remainder, haunts every text, every experiment, every investigation, and every conversation, suspending the final authority of the *Verstandesmenschen* even in their most convincing accomplishments. Yet how does one "teach" inspiration? In a series of *Lectures on the Method of University Studies* held in Jena in 1802, for example, Schelling spoke of the need to teach and learn not just the letter of the lesson, but to communicate and to learn with inspiration:

> Without a doubt, it belongs to a tradition that is rich in spirit *[geistreiche Überlieferung]* that one is able to interpret the discoveries of others from past times and contemporary times correctly, sharply, and in all of their implications. Many of these discoveries *[Erfindungen]* are of the kind whose innermost spirit can only be grasped through a homogenous genius, through a real post-invention *[Nacherfinden]*. Someone who simply hands the tradition down *[bloß überliefert]* will therefore in many cases in several sciences hand them down in an utterly false way. (I/5, 233)

Although most students have already internalized the pernicious death of nature that are the "infomercials" of teaching and the reduction of thinking to the exchange of information and the preparation for careers, life itself, the very life of life, depends on the release of life from within the word. To the *Verstandesmenschen,* this is haphazard mysticism, but then again, such accusations shield them from looking squarely at their own rotting thoughts.

II

The intellectual intuition is not mystical, at least not in the sense of offering privileged access to divine truths. It is an intimation, an *Ahnung,* of the abyss of freedom. It is a percept of death as akin to the unfathomable depths of the past as they re-intimate themselves as the future.

If the intellectual intuition were mystical knowledge of the center, as, say, the theosophists held, then there would be nothing to say. "If they were really in the Center, then they would have to go silent, but—they want to talk at the same time, to speak out, and to speak out for *those people* who are outside the Center. Herein lies the contradiction in theosophy" (HMP, 187/181). If Schelling himself were to write or speak, he would be either contradicting himself or this would not be mysticism per se. It is true that Schelling is trying to think what cannot be properly thought, that he is attempting to articulate an idea whose *ideatum* transcends it, but in so doing he is thinking and enacting this very mode of transcendence.

In the *Philosophy of Revelation* Schelling claimed that positive philosophy would strive to think in a philosophical and scientific way what the mystical teachings sought in a clearly unscientific way (II/3, 119–20). In the *Freedom* essay, Schelling lamented that natural philosophers (in both senses of the word: those who philosophize naturally and those who philosophize about nature) have been banished as mystics by both abstract idealists and dogmatists (I/7, 357). This is one way of articulating the problem of modernity. Either you are a mechanist, a disciple of a dogmatism of the merely present, or you are branded a mystic. But the ecstasy of time is not a mystical and epistemically privileged experience, and despite the difficulty of transmitting such a doctrine, one cannot thereby conclude that its transmission rests on a fortuitous mystical encounter. It does involve an element of chance as well as an element of dispersion, but this does not thereby make it a manner of epistemic privilege. The time of nature is not nature mysticism any more so than deep ecology demands a *salto mortale*. Schelling emphatically did not consider himself to be a mystic, and that he would be considered one banishes him in the same way that both the realists and the idealists banished all deep philosophical ecologists. The realists are too dogmatic to think nature, and the idealists are too vague, too general, to embrace the specificities of nature. In a way, the intellectual intuition is the capacity to look at a flower. "The goal is not reached in a simple vision." The farmer may watch the plant grow, but it is the scholar that tries to see each of the moments in their distinctness and "in their reciprocal opposition" (AW, 203–204).

In the *Philosophy of Art,* Schelling defined mysticism as "merely inward" and hence at best "subjective symbolism"("Construction of the Content of Art," §56). It is by its nature private, individual, incommunicable, privileged.

The difficulty is to make it objective, as in the cultivation of an "ethical or moral disposition" ("Construction of the Content of Art," §56). Left to itself, it remains only with itself, resisting even indirect communication. Either you had the experience and can see what I am talking about, or you didn't and are therefore left out in the cold.

Schelling took up the thorny problem of mysticism again in his Munich lectures on modern philosophy. He first observes that the term is misused and for most people it simply denotes what they cannot understand. Since nothing could be true that I do not understand, if I do not understand it, it must be mystical. Hence the derogatory epithet "mystical" comes to act as a shield to protect the ignorant from any insight into their own ignorance. The term itself, μυστικόν, simply denotes all that is hidden and concealed. In this sense, the ground of nature *(natura naturans)* is secret and thereby in a strict sense is mystical (HMP, 190–92/183–85). Yet mysticism has come to denote a difference not in content, but in the manner of knowing. To call an approach mystical is to draw attention to its lack of scientific clarity, its obscurantist and epistemically privileged manner of knowing. Mysticism is "a hatred of clear insight" (HMP, 192/185). In this sense, Schelling eschewed all such mysticism, for the demand is at least to speak to everybody, even if the challenge is the clear communication of the *strictu sensu* incommunicable. The intellectual intuition does not strive simply to mystify things and thereby shroud them in chaotic obscurantism. It moves to say the unsayable, respecting as much the clarity that speaking demands as it does the mystery that its seeks to communicate.

Schelling's relentless desire for the mystery did not derive from apocalyptic obscurantism and its desire to abandon the clarity of science to its ruinous origins. The intellectual intuition, quite simply, is the indispensable birth of philosophy.

> Without intellectual intuition no philosophy! Even the pure intuition of space and of time is not in the general consciousness as such. . . . Whoever does not have intellectual intuition cannot understand what is said of it, and hence it cannot be taught to them at all. A negative condition of its possession is the clear and heartfelt *[innig]* insight into the nullity of all merely finite knowledge. One can develop intellectual intuition; in the philosopher it must become her or his character, so to speak. (I/5, 255–56)

The problem, as we have seen, is the transmission of intellectual intuition, a problem no less thorny than the Buddhist problem of Dharma transmission. How does one develop intellectual intuition? In his early works, including the *Naturphilosophie,* Schelling relentlessly pursued an almost ruinously negative dialectic, the *über etwas hinaus* structure, leading all

determinations back to the indeterminacy of their origin. It is from this indeterminacy that thinking relates differently to nature, at last sensitive to the life conspiring within all form.

III

This emancipatory destructiveness, this liberating violence, so to speak, was already evident in Schelling's earliest important writing, *Über die Möglichkeit einer Form der Philosophie überhaupt,* or *On the Possibility of a Form of All Philosophy* (1794). Fearing that Karl Reinhold's "theory of the faculty of the imagination *[Vorstellungsvermögen]*" would not save Kant from Aenisidemus' (Gottlob E. Schulze) charge of skepticism, Schelling asked about "extending the investigation to an ultimate principle of all form."[18] Schelling was specifically attempting to ground Reinhold's theory of the imagination by taking up the question of the very possibility of philosophy itself, of the "science of the ultimate conditions of all other sciences" (FP, 272/92/41), of a "science of all sciences," that is, of a first philosophy. This *Urwissenschaft* "must be conditioned by an *absolute axiom as such [durch einen schlechthin-absoluten Grundsatz bedingt werden]*" (FP, 273/92/42), a tertium quid, if I may, in which all oppositions are its expressions.

Schelling attempted to establish this first philosophy as *Urwissenschaft* by reflecting on the "principle of all form." Schelling began with philosophy reflecting upon itself as it attempts to account for its own activity. Philosophy is a *Wissenschaft* or science, that is, it concerns itself with a specific content "in a specific form" (FP, 268/89/40). Why do philosophers assign a specific content to the form of philosophy? In other words, what is it about the form of philosophy that entitles philosophers to align it with specific materials, and what is it about certain kinds of materials that entitles the philosopher to designate them as philosophical? Is this the whim or arbitrary fiat of the philosopher? Is the "connection" between the form and the content of philosophy "arbitrary" or "does the ground of this connection lie deeper, and could there not be some kind of common ground which would simultaneously be its form and content" (FP, 268/89/40)?

Schelling then took up the question of a science in general, noting that it is a circulation of propositions or premises *(Sätze),* each of which, however, is "governed" by a fundamental premise *(Grundsatz)*. A science, in other words, is a unitary system whose constitutive members, that is, its various propositions *(Sätze),* are admitted because they are grounded in an originary and comprehensive proposition *(Grundsatz)*. This *Grundsatz* is the condition for the possibility of the *Sätze* which comprise each science (FP, 269–70/90/40).

It follows that the *Sätze* of a given system are contingent upon or "conditioned by" the *Grundsatz* and, anticipating Gödel, they cannot ground them-

selves by themselves. Each *Grundsatz,* with respect to the system or science that it governs, is unconditionally related to it. It founds the system. It makes the respective system's propositions possible. Furthermore, this relationship between systemically specific *Sätze* and the founding *Grundsatz* is the general form (or "formal condition") of all sciences. The differences between specific systems of circulation are relative to the specific *Grundsatz* by which the consequent content can be determined. One could say in more contemporary terms that the formal condition of a paradigm rests in the establishment of a program by which certain contents could consequently be judged as relevant to said paradigm. Or, to use more explicitly Heideggerian language, a system is a world as a referential totality within which beings *(Seienden)* can be thought in a specific way, contingent upon a positing *(Setzen)* of Being *(Sein)* under which the beings are governed. The initial proposition grounds what will count as relevant to a given system, whether it be disciplinary boundaries or the referential totality of a world.

Schelling then turned to the idea of a system of freedom within which all specific systems would circulate. This is the question of a "propaedeutic to philosophy," or, following Reinhold, an *"Elementarphilosophie"* (FP, 272/92/42), that is, *eine Wissenschaft der Wissenschaften*. This is not the question of what enables a particular science. It is rather what Heidegger would later call the ontological question. It is the question of the very possibility of science at all. Since a science in particular must begin with an unconditioned proposition and since philosophy does not concern itself with a particular *Grundsatz* (the positing of a particular system), but with the possibility of science itself, the question of a formal or a material origin to the system of systems presents itself. The *Grundsatz* of philosophy must be "an absolute *Grundsatz* as such" (FP, 273/92/42).

Science is fundamentally possible only through reference to a governing principle outside of itself. If this principle were only material, how could one posit it all? How could one have said anything definite whatsoever? How would this *Grundsatz* be different than any other *Satz?* It would not be distinguishable. It would not be communicable. It would not be thinkable. If one attempted to compare the *Grundsatz* with any other *Satz,* one has already presupposed formal definition to the extent that any kind of distinction whatsoever could be made. Reinhold's allegedly material *Grundsatz* of consciousness, for example, remains implicitly formal in so far as it is both *possible* as a *Grundsatz* and that it is actual as such.

If, on the other hand, it were only formal, like, for example, Leibniz's supreme substance (his "highest *Grundsatz*") (FP, 275/93–94/43), it would have to be absolute. If it were conditioned, then there would be a higher *Grundsatz* by which the lower would have been made possible. Yet, there is no form that does not entail the positing of a specific content (that which is posited). Matter is possible only by being formally determined, and determination is always determination of something.

Hence, Schelling located thought in a "magical circle" (FP, 277/94/43) in which form and content are codetermining. In the *Grundsatz aller Grundsätze,* however, it follows that form and content mutually condition each other such that it could not be said that form stands outside of content in order to condition it or vice versa. If one begins with a specific *Grundsatz* and attempts to whittle away until only the most essential *Grundsatz* remained, one would end up with "disjunctive propositions." If the *Grundsatz aller Grundsätze* were x, and x could be said to be that for which one is looking, then one already had it and the procedure was unnecessary. If one could say that x was not what was looking for and that x was conditioned by a higher y, then one would already have y, the higher for which one was looking. This inevitable disjunction (either x or y, each in its own way presupposing that one already had that for which one was searching) points to the "quite different way" in which the one *Grundsatz* that can be given "only through its own characteristic" must be sought (FP, 279/96/44).

The need for a different approach led Schelling to three fundamental forms:

1. The form of the *Unbedingte* or the unconditioned absolute is determined through reference to itself, that is, as that which refers only to itself, being "nothing other than an I originally posited through itself *[ursprünglich durch sich selbst gesetztes Ich]*" and "containing an absolutely independent original self" (FP, 279/96/45). This cannot be thought in a traditional hylomorphic model. Either form or matter must themselves be given before they can, so to speak, give. The I cannot be a material determined by form (form would be the condition and material would be the conditioned), and it cannot be a form determined by material (form would be the conditioned and material the condition). It can only be itself. This, Schelling discovered, albeit in a truncated form, in Leibniz's first principle, namely "the principle of contradiction." Since the absolute can only refer to itself—it, like Spinoza's substance, cannot have any form outside of itself—Schelling referred to the supreme principle as a *reines Setzen,* a pure positing, a sheer giving without prior or exterior foundation. *Das Unbedingte* is a giving without ground or, if one follows a much more contemporary idiom, it is the *Es* in *es gibt,* referring to nothing beyond itself, giving itself without qualification. It, as Fichte also held, "is posited not because it *is posited [ist gesetzt]* but because it is the *positing [das Setzende]* itself. . . . Its being posited *[Gesetztsein]* is determined through nothing outside of itself. It posits itself (through absolute causality)" (FP, 279–80/97/45).[19] Since it is anterior to the codetermination of form and content, it is a self-referential plenum of which one can only say: I = I. It is the positing of both subject and object, its form (subject) and content (object) given as an *absolutes Setzen*. It is, as the Buddhist tradition holds, a formless form, so to speak.

In this sense, there are no total ideas and every determinate idea, itself having been posited, has an outside, an irreducible remainder and a debt that it cannot remunerate.

2. *Das Bedingte* is form, which cannot be thought simply in reference to itself. As Leibniz held with the principle of sufficient reason *(nihil est sine ratio),* nothing conditioned can refer only to itself. For Leibniz, this principle referred to all content, while for Schelling it referred to a subject/object or form/content that is contingent or conditioned and hence is grounded by the I = I. The conditioned is that which is posited through the self-referentiality or spontaneity or freedom of the absolute and can be schematized as the ~I = ~I. "If the I should merely posit itself, then all possible form would be exhausted by the form of the unconditional *[Unbedingtheit],* an unconditionality that would condition nothing *[eine Unbedingtheit, die nichts bedingte]*" (FP, 282/98/46). Or, to use other words, freedom freely expresses itself as other than freedom (finitude). It freely limits its freedom, giving itself as something, that is, as a quiddity.
3. The third form is the "connection" between the first two (the I = I and the ~I = ~I) that is the condition for the possibility of experience and the tertium quid "to which two mutually exclusive things commonly relate themselves *[auf das sich zwey Dinge, die einander wechselseitig ausschliessen, gemeinschaftlich beziehen]*" (FP, 283/99/46). As such, the "three *Grundsätze aller Grundsätze*" make possible Reinhold's theory of *Bewußtsein* and *Vorstellung,* or consciousness and image (FP, 284/100/47). The transcendental imagination marks the free circulation of the unconditioned into the conditioned and the complication of the conditioned in the unconditioned, a subject giving itself as an object and an object expressing the plenitude of an absolute subject, a giving and being given. The imagination is a "conjunction *[Verbindung],*" the "and" that holds the one and the many together. *Die Vorstellung* or imagination conjoins subject (A = A) and object (~A = ~A), the *Unbedingte and* the *Bedingte,* the "determining *[das Bestimmende]*" *and* the "determinable *[Bestimmbare],*" "unity" *and* "multiplicity," "reality" *and* "negation," "possibility" *and* "actuality" (FP, 298/111/54). The productive imagination, itself not of the order of either sameness or difference, is the belonging together of these two incompatible operations. It is the living production of unity out of difference. In the one *and* the many, identity *and* difference, it is the mystery and freedom of the conjunction. Or, as we have seen, it is the conspiring life of the transcendental or productive imagination, what Schelling would later call the A^3.

In a letter written to Hegel (February 4, 1795) a few months after the completion of this text, Schelling further allied the *unbedingtes Ich* with God. However, he did so in such a way that he avoided Jacobi's demand for a "personal god" or even Kant's debased reliance (as a moral proof) upon God as a practical postulate or a *Vernunftglaube*.

> There is no supersensuous world for us except for the absolute I.—*God* is nothing but the absolute I, the absolute I in so far as it has annihilated *everything* theoretical and therefore is in *theoretical* philosophy = 0. Personality originates through the unity of consciousness. But consciousness is not possible without an object; but for God, that is, for the absolute I, there is absolutely no object because through an object it stops being absolute.—Consequently there is no personal god and our highest endeavor is the destruction of our personality and crossing into the absolute sphere of Being. (M, 127)

God, the absolute, freedom, the "pure I," are not theoretical or practical postulates. They are not concepts and therefore do not belong to the order of the understanding. If philosophy has traditionally been construed as a conceptual grasp of first principles, then the Copernican Revolution for Schelling led concept-driven and self-enclosed philosophy to its Other, to the thought and the sensation of the incomprehensibility of its origin—a thought and sensation that does not define the *cogito* but rather disrupts the finality of all of its boundaries. "The '*I* think, *I* am' is ever since Descartes the fundamental error in all knowledge. Thinking is not my thinking, and Being not my Being" (I/7, 148/250).

Here one finds Schelling's initial foray into the Pantheism Controversy when he observed that Spinoza "simply sets to work logically," transposing Descartes' *cogito* into substance, without following the opportunity that Descartes' own reflection had missed. Descartes' first principle, in holding that the subject of thinking could take itself as an object, missed the barbarian ground that upsets any unity of apperception. In the 1821 Erlanger lectures, which resulted in the short essay *Über die Natur der Philosophie als Wissenschaft (On the Nature of Philosophy as Science),* Schelling claimed "that there are many foolish people that always call out to the beginners in philosophy to turn into themselves—into their deepest depths as they say, but which only means: always deeper into their own limitations. Not being set in oneself but being set outside of oneself *[das außer sich Gesetzwerden]* is the human need" (I/9, 230). Descartes' turn into himself without thereby being turned ecstatically beyond himself (lacking what Schelling and others called *"Innerlichkeit"*) was a constitutive error of modern philosophy. A standing outside of oneself, that is, a "healing *ecstasis,*" is an "estrangement and relief from a place" that is not "befitting and due" (which would lead only to "senselessness"), but from a place one is not due (I/9, 230). In order to gain oneself, one must first lose oneself. This gain, this displacement into that which one is due, is not an object but rather "wisdom, the self-knowledge of eternal freedom" (I/9, 230). The more one tries to think it, the more one makes it into an object and thereby loses it.

Schelling ended the *Möglichkeit* essay with the lament that this inquiry may have been "necessarily dry" and "promising little in the beginning" but that one should not confuse the author's language with that which has motivated the inquiry. Paraphrasing a line from Paul's *First Letter to the Corinthians* (13:1), Schelling wrote that "words are mere sound—alas too often just a sounding gong and clanging cymbal" (FP, 299/112/55).[20] For Paul, words, even of an angelic order, are in themselves inadequate and demand love as a supplement. For Schelling, this supplement "is the great feeling" suggested by the possibility of a oneness of knowing, believing, and wanting—a oneness prompted not by the location of a point that gathers everything into a single space, but by the evocation of a site that eternally and spontaneously disperses itself, of "a central point with which rays of an infinite number and extension go out" (FP, 299/111/55). Language helps testify to a "point," perhaps akin to the infinite folds of Leibniz's supreme substance, that can never contain itself. One might already sense here a certain kind of complicated nominalism in which the articulation of that which posits the power to speak is not itself of the order of language. The origin of language is not language itself. As language reflects upon its possibility, it is called to express its inexpressible root.

Schelling remarked in his next major essay, *Vom Ich als Prinzip der Philosophie oder über das Unbedingte im menschlichen Wissen,* or *On the I as Principle of Philosophy or the Unconditioned in Human Knowledge* (1795), that he wished he had the divine Plato's language. Schelling wanted "to be able to distinguish immutable being from each conditioned, mutable existence. But I see that these men themselves, when they wanted to speak of the immutable and supersensuous, struggled with their language—and I think that this Absolute in us cannot be fettered through a simple word of the human language and only a self-attained intuition of the intellectual in us can come to the aid of the patchwork of our language."[21] After all, "the absolute is destroyed by the conditioned and the immutable by the mutable," such that "our knowledge is bound to objects" and "our existence is determined in time," leaving us with "faith" in what we can only intuit but never know (VP, 146/216/110). The "struggling" poetic-philosophic word grapples to link with freedom without fettering it, to say it without having said it and, thereby, somehow to have communicated it and hence, finally, to have given birth to philosophy itself.

In the Forward to the 1809 edition of Schelling's collected *Philosophische Schriften,* Schelling claimed that the *Vom Ich* text "shows idealism in its freshest appearance, perhaps in a sense that it later lost." What proceeds is bold in its simplicity. Schelling began with the question: "Who wants to know something at the same time wants their knowledge to have reality. Knowledge without reality is not knowledge. What follows from this?" (VP, 85/162/71).

This claim leads to the following disjunction: a) either knowledge simply has no reality and is a "chaos in which no element distinguishes itself," or b) there must be a "final point of reality" from which "the content and form

of our knowledge derives" (VP, 85/162/71). Either knowing is the night when all cows are black, or there is some point = x from which both the structure and content of knowledge allows itself to be determined. Since knowledge, if it is knowledge, is of determinate content, it cannot be the night when all cows are black. Knowledge must refer to the second prong of the disjunction, that is, to something = x, which must encompass "the entire *cosmos* of our knowledge" and which rules as the primordial ground *[Urgrund]* of all reality" (VP, 85/162/71).

This *Urgrund* of reality cannot be of the order of knowledge but must be that by which all knowledge comes to be knowledge. "If we know anything at all, we must at least know one thing that we do not reach through another knowledge and itself contains the real ground of all of our knowledge (VP, 85/162/71–72). This *Urgrund* must be self-referential and independent of any object higher than itself. To reach this highest ground, I need only the highest itself. "The absolute can only be given by the Absolute" (VP, 86/163/72). It must be *sui generis* and thought only with reference to itself.

Schelling then alluded to Jacobi's endlessly conditioned concatenation of conditions *[die bedingte Kette der Bedingungen]*. As knowledge seeks the absolute cause of itself, a cause that cannot be known through something else but only through itself, it finds that "the chain of our knowledge goes from one condition to the other." Hence, the absolute cannot be found within the chain but must be determined a priori to the chain because it is unconditionable *[unbedingbar]* (VP, 87/163–64/72–73).

One cannot locate the *Unbedingte* as an object, that is, within the genus of thing *[Ding]*. The *Unbedingte* cannot be a *Ding*. The absolute cannot be a thing (or genus or species or particular), and even if it were, it is itself a link in the chain of knowing and as such not the ground of knowing but an object of knowing. Things are determined as things within the concatenation of knowing. Consummate dogmatism makes the absolute object a mere object or thing (VP, 87/164/73). Even when God becomes the real ground of knowledge, God is being cognized as an object (a cause or ground) and is "therefore in the chain of our knowledge" because one presupposes that the chain can subsume God (and thereby condition God) by construing God as cause. God cannot be an object.

Schelling found an "exquisite" word in German that "contains the entire treasure of philosophical truth." "*Bedingen* [to condition] names the operation in which something becomes a *Ding* [thing], *bedingt* [conditioned], that which is *made* into a thing, which at the same time illuminates that nothing through itself can be posited as a thing. An *unbedingtes Ding* is a contradiction" (PV, 89/166/74). As we have already seen earlier, the unconditioned condition is *Ich bin, weil ich bin* or *Ich bin!* (I = I). This is an intellectual intuition of my conceptually unfathomable origin. Schelling took over two of Fichte's key terms, the intellectual intuition and the I, but he is extending them to all

of nature. It is an intuition into the pure positing *[reines Setzen],* without why, of all *things*. Beyond the tyranny of the *Verstandesmensch* who asks either what something is and if it is, but not about the obscurity of its origin, there is the intuition of the nothing that grants things and that dwells within them, complicating their status as things. This is not to say, strictly speaking, that there is nothing, as if there was contradictorily something with the nature of nothing. Nothing is not something. Rather it is the narcissism of the domain of the understanding, its abiding monologue with itself, which is interrupted by the nonconceptual origin of the conceptual.

When Quine claimed that "there is what there is" and that the ontological problem is reducible to the question, "What is there?"[22] he is a *Verstandesmensch*. The intellectual intuition would not give him something new to understand and add a strange new entity to be considered for membership into the set of everything or further populate the ontological slum. It would expose his formulation of the ontological question as reductive. What is there is not fundamental and what is fundamental is neither a quiddity nor there.

In contrast to the despotism of form, "the faculty of the transcendental freedom or conation in us transcends our knowing. As the limit of all of our knowing and doing, it is also necessarily the single *Incomprehensible, Irresolvable* and, according to its nature, the *Most-Groundless [Grundloseste],* Most-Unprovable, but, precisely because of this, the Most Immediate and Most Evident in our knowing" (I/1, 400). This self-warranting and fundamental principle cannot be located in the Archimedean, or Cartesian, demand for a single point upon which to ground philosophy as an epistemological project, that is, a "standpoint from which the world must be considered" (I/1, 400). But "to lay down the lever on any fixed place within the world and with it to want to move the world out of its place, is a vain labor." Archimedes was therefore correct, at least, in wanting a point outside of the world, but "to want to find it *theoretically* is absurd" (I/1, 400). The self-warranting point outside of the world that is otherwise than every point calls the world beyond itself. It produces the world's affirmation of the cision that is its relationship to the superiority of the earth.

Schelling returned to this problematic in the final lecture of the *Philosophical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology,* when he argued that in the intellectual intuition "the ego seeks to consummate the act of self-forgetting or abnegation of itself. This presents itself in mystical piety . . . which consists in the person seeking as much as possible to invalidate *[vernichtigen]*—but not to annihilate *[vernichten]*—themselves and all the merely accidental being pertaining to themselves" (II/1, 557). From this it is clear that the intellectual intuition does not consist in the denial or even the annihilation of oneself or the world. It is not the pernicious fantasy that Schelling warned against in *On The Lectures on the Method of University Studies* in which the highest state of the spirit in relationship to the absolute would be "the greatest possible

unconscious brooding or a state of complete innocence" (I/5, 278). Heine's unsympathetic characterization of both the intellectual intuition and the Sufis demonstrates more than a little narrowness and intellectual stinginess and sectarianism. *Vernichtigen,* as opposed to the wholesale reduction to nothing suggested by *Vernichten,* suggests a rendering invalid or void, or a rendering vain or empty. The *conatus* must first die to itself and to the world before it can be reborn as a formless self within the conspiracy of life. In the cultivation of *Vernichtigen,* one becomes as nothing, emptying oneself of essence and surrendering everything paradoxically in order to gain everything. Only when one becomes nothing can one love. In this sense Schelling anticipated Frantz Fanon who demanded that "the tool never possess the human. That the enslavement of a human by a human cease forever . . . that it be possible for me to discover and love the human, wherever she or he may be."[23] Or one might add that one has the possibility of discovering life, wherever it may be. This is the philosopher's ecstasy.

In this case, the "mystical moment," if one could ever really call it that, cancels the contract with things by refusing to be satisfied with them only as things. One seeks to gain oneself by recognizing the emptiness of oneself qua thing. This endeavor, furthermore, as both Schelling and Spinoza agree, is always *quantum potest [möglichst],* as much as possible. The intellectual intuition seeks itself by maximizing itself, by, *quantum potest,* deemphasizing its self-identification as a discrete entity. The breakthrough of *Vernichtigen* is not accomplished through self-effacement in order to reidentify with a larger group such as the state, but through identification with nothingness. There is no political place in the sun, no politically correct pure land, that is properly ours. To the sedentary life of the state, Schelling opposed the nomadic and errant life of the conspiracy that opens up in the *Vernichtigen* or emptying of all essence. "If one wants a perfect state in this world, the end is (apocalyptic) *Schwärmerei*" (II/I, 552).

Hence, there is no hypostatization of Prussia or of the West, or of any place. The intellectual intuition moves first not to gain, but to lose, to uninhibit, to open up by breaking down. The *prius* of nature is nothing and does not someday at last settle into something. "Freeing oneself from oneself is the task of all *Bildung*" (PO, 180). One only finds oneself, or the world, in first losing oneself, in first losing the world. Death is not just the mother of beauty. It is the mother of philosophy.

IV

The emptying of oneself and the world is not easily or casually accomplished. It is very difficult to hear anything or anyone beside oneself. For purposes of further clarification, I turn now to a brief discussion of Nishida's early discourse on direct experience, and I do so to articulate further the movement of

the intellectual intuition. Nishida combined thinkers like Schelling with the Buddhist tradition, and his famous starting point, pure experience, which Nishida also linked to the fruits of a meditative practice, was another way of thinking the intellectual intuition. "A true intellectual intuition is the unifying activity in pure experience" (IG, 32).

If anything, what is at stake in Nishida, even from his first, provocative treatise, *An Inquiry into the Good* (1911), is the deployment of Western categories in order that they might give speech to what is unthought in the West—or at least in modernity. This unthought background to all meaning is what is most difficult and important to think in any tradition. Nishida spoke of this dark background as *the idea of the Good,* in all of its abyssal darkness—a darkness before which no life can be indifferent.

Nishida made this quite clear in his 1927 work *From the Actor to the Seer:*

> It goes without saying that there are many things to be esteemed and learned from in the brilliant development of Western culture, which regards form [εἶδος] as being and formation as the good. However, at the basis of Asian culture, which has fostered our ancestors for over several thousand years, lies something that can be called seeing the form of the formless and hearing the sound of the soundless. Our minds are compelled to seek for this. I would like to give a philosophical foundation to this demand.[24]

If one is to take Nishida at his word, then his project is to take the resources of the εἶδος, the force of the idea, and to use them to express what transcends and contests the idea. In a way, Nishida is proposing to use ideas to somehow articulate the idea of that whose *ideatum* always transcends its idea, that whose idea relates to that which cannot adequately inhabit any idea. It is to see the form of the formless. It is to hear the sound of that which, properly speaking, makes no sound. It is to intuit stillness amidst all commotion. It is to intuit the immemorial past of the Good in its tearing open of the future.

Or, if one takes seriously Nishida's claim here that the West has traditionally taken the εἶδος or ιδέα itself to be the Good, that the idea of the Good is equivalent to the form of all forms, the measure that guarantees the measure of all other measures, that which institutes the domination of form over the formless, then Nishida is proposing to take the εἶδος to mark a Goodness that transcends all its forms. In other words, Nishida would be taking the goodness of the form to name the goodness that contests the very idea that would name it. Nishida's earliest work was an attempt to think the Good beyond being, the Good beyond all goods, a goodness that cannot be approached by the needy *conatus*. In the end, the Good is embraced by love, not by the concept. Love is *satori*. Love demands the Good in excess of any possible range of the *conatus*.

Nishida began his inquiry into the Good with what he called the fact of pure experience. If by experience one construes the pretension that one can have a meaningful experience of the Good, that experiences can be had in which the Good comes to be understood, then this would be precisely to locate the Good a posteriori, wrested from the struggles of living, much in the way that Aeschylus' Prometheus learns through suffering *(pathein mathein)*. Rather, the Good is pure experience, which, in turn and echoing Schelling's early formulation of freedom, "is the alpha and omega of our thought" (IG, 16). The Good is the infinite sea of percepts that give rise to the endless creation of new concepts.

Pure experience, a term that Nishida takes from William James, is not an experience *of something*. It is not intentional in structure. Rather, it is the undivided continuum, the plenitude of the Good. Nishida links pure experience to Schelling's intellectual intuition: "there is no distinction between subject and object in any state of direct experience—one encounters reality face to face" (IG, 31). As such, direct experience precedes a denotative account of experience in which an experiencing subject experiences certain objects of experience. Pure experience is an intuition that all that is partitioned, discontinuous, and discrete has been isolated from a pure state of awareness that always remains in excess of all judgments. Meaning emerges only in the betrayal of pure experience. "A truly pure experience has no meaning whatsoever; it is simply a present consciousness of facts just as they are" (IG, 4). Meaning is the ineluctable diminution of pure experience, of what the Buddha had called *tathatā,* suchness. "Meanings or judgments are an abstracted part of the original experience, and compared with the original experience they are meager in content" (IG, 9).

Pure experience, the abyssal source of all judgments, gives rises to judgments while transcending those very judgments. In a certain sense, pure experience, the Good καθ᾽ αυτο, is the meaningless origin of all meaning, much in the same way that Nietzsche argued that the origin of logic is illogic[25] and that error, which "arranges for ourselves a world in which we can live," is simply an act of faith, erroneous in nature, and contested by life [or pure experience, *tathatā*] itself.[26]

Pure experience, however, is not, as popular and obscurantist New Age Buddhism would have it, to take refuge in some fantasy land continuum, to absolve the rigors of the idea of the Good into a *satori* night in which all Buddhas are black. Beyond the subject-object dichotomy, beyond actors performing deeds, the Good individualizes itself, differentiates itself from itself, into ceaselessly flowing heterogeneities. Pure experience is Dao, embraced in a doing of nondoing, in *wei-wu-wei,* in "activity without agency," in which the Good is welcomed and affirmed in the unabated flow of its singularities. "From this perspective, what the ancients spoke of as acting from morning to night without acting we might call a stillness in motion, a doing of non-doing.

In this way we transcend both knowledge and the will, and in the intuition at their base we can discover their oneness" (IG, 33–34).

At this point Nishida's Zen Buddhist practice, his own reflective judgments on his own intellectual intuition, become obvious. In almost all Buddhism, the very block to enlightenment, the impediment to all *satori,* the means by which the ego is always complicit in its own sufferings, is the ego itself. The ego is the subject that partitions experience into objects.

The ego is the impoverishment of need that hungers for objects that it will never be able successfully to appropriate. *Satori* is the death of the ego in the desire, or what Nishida calls *love,* for the Good. "The more we discard the self and become purely objective or selfless, the greater and deeper our love becomes. We advance from the love between parent and child or husband and wife to the love between friends, and from there to the love of humankind. The Buddha's love extended even to birds, beasts, grasses, and trees" (IG, 174).

The ego relates to things by wanting things, by wanting *these* things, which appear to the famished ego as good things, and not wanting things whose nature opposes the nature of the things that it wants. The ego wants good things and wants to avoid evil things. The ego wants to do good things and avoid evil. The ego wants to go to heaven, wants to live in the Pure Land, and avoid the sullied, abject, stinking world of evil. The *satori* of pure experience terminates the ego and its grasping for a discrete, logical world. The self is born of this *Great Death,* the dawning of a *Great Doubt* that gives rise to a love that needs nothing and loves everything. "Love is the deepest knowledge of things. Analytical, inferential knowledge is a superficial knowledge, and it cannot grasp reality. We can reach reality only through love. Love is the culmination of knowledge" (IG, 175). Such love, such an intuition of the abyss of Goodness at the heart of all judgments, is not possible through the primacy of judgment. "The sword of logic cannot penetrate it and desire cannot move it" (IG, 34). Nishida is using the egoism of logic, always the tool of those who find their place in the sun, against itself, or, to use a more contemporary phrase, to deconstruct itself and thereby unblock the Good.

Pure experience, the birth of the Buddha's indefatigable generosity, is love in the dawning of a nonconstitutable self, a self that exceeds all of its manifest predicates, a self whose energies do not turn inwardly in the direction of self-maintenance and self-enhancement, an abyssal self in the wake of the death of the *conatus*. It is a self nondifferentiated from the Good and therefore *inseparable* from all things, inseparable from ceaseless flows of heterogeneity.

> To acquire this power is to kill our false self and, after dying once to worldly desire, to gain new life. (As Muhammad said, heaven lies in the shadow of the sword.) Only in this way can we reach the union of subject and object, which is the ultimate meaning of religion, morality, and art. Christianity calls this event rebirth, and Buddhism

> calls it *kenshō*. According to one story, when Pope Benedict XI asked Giotto to show him a work that demonstrated his ability as a painter, Giotto simply drew a circle. In morality, we must attain to Giotto's circle. (IG, 145)[27]

Love, for Nishida, then, is not *my* love for the Other, because the Other, the Good in all of its substitutions, always precedes any self. "Subjectivity is self-power *[jiriki]* and objectivity is other-power *[tariki]*. To know and love a thing is to discard self-power and embody the faithful heart that believes in other-power" (IG, 175). Love opens the ego to the self, to the abyssal Good of the Other. It was this infinition of the Good that deprives the ego of its primacy that struck the Twelfth Century Zen practitioner and poet Saigyō (1118–1190). "Saigyō exclaimed, 'Though I know not what is enshrined, my tears flow in the face of its awesomeness.' The majesty of morality dwells in an unfathomable realm" (IG, 110).

If the ego had divided experience up into good experiences and evil experiences and if it ceaselessly and vainly searches for the predicates perfective of experience in the Pure Land, then the idea of the Good is simply the form by which good things can be distinguished from evil things. Nishida made the tremulous claim, as did Schelling, that all normative judgments are inadequate to the Good itself, that, in a way, all things are Good, each in its own way, but that none of them are the Good itself. The Good is beyond good and evil, beyond communities of egos constituted by shared predicates of goodness. The idea of the Good transcends every judgment that would reduce it to the set of good things as over and against the set of evil things. "To my way of thinking, there is originally nothing absolutely evil; all things are fundamentally good, and reality, just as it is, is the Good" (IG, 171). It was Goethe's *Faust* that saw this clearly. "Although he constantly sought evil, Mephistopheles professed to be a part of the power that constantly creates good" (IG, 171).

Evil emerges, much as it did for Schelling, in the transfiguration of continuity into discontinuities and the consequent abjection of the Good by creaturely orders. It might be objected at this point that such a position, such a love, knows nothing of responsibility, that it cannot forcefully critique the many injustices of the world, that evil loses its punch, that when all things are somehow good, we sink into the quietism in which nothing is true and therefore everything is permitted. I submit that nothing is farther from the case. One might remember that some Buddhists strain their water before drinking it in order not to kill the microbes within it. What is at stake is the Good that has already been sacrificed in order that humans live well.

The plenitude of the Good is thought only discretely, even when such judgments are used to say their opposite. And hence the paradox: it is somehow a good thing to say—even for us—that the Good is not just what is good for us. "Again, reality develops through contradictions and conflicts" (IG,

171). Difference, the idea of the Good itself, substitutes itself as forms, as the countenances of the Good. In fact, Nishida, like Schelling, went much further on this point than someone like Levinas. For many Buddhists, the Good is in the face of grass, in water, in animals, in rain, in trees, even in death. When asked what things had Dao, Zuangzi once answered that even shit had Dao.

5

Art

Aber die Sprache-
Im Gewitter spricht der Gott.
—Hölderlin (fragment)

Therefore do not venture into the metaphysics of the fine arts without being initiated into the [Dionysian] orgies and Eleusinian mysteries.
—Hamann, *Aesthetica in nuce*

Artworks may produce concepts, but they are not themselves produced from concepts nor *are* they concepts. Nishida, echoing Schelling, argued that creativity is truthfully seeing and hearing and touching.

> At this time, the hand becomes one with the eye; the entire becomes the eye, as it were. The world of visual perception that has been perfected in this way is the objective world of art. Sculpture and painting are realities that have been disclosed by the eyes and hands of the artist becoming one. Thus, when the sculptor is sculpting and when the painter is painting, each becomes a process of seeing only. Plotinus states that nature does not create by seeing, but, rather, that nature's seeing is creation. In this way the artist becomes nature itself. If we consider that the visual act itself is the flow of one great *élan vital,* then art is the overflow of the surge of that greater life that cannot flourish completely within the channels of the ordinary eye. (AM, 27)[1]

How can painting having the character of disclosure when it is a creation? Does this not confuse *Finden* and *Erfinden,* discovery and creation? Does this not blur the lines between art (supposedly subjective activity) and science (supposedly objective activity)? Is not objectivity perceiving facts as they are and creativity the elaboration of things from a subjective point of view? How can creativity be the life of Truth, the Good of Truth, so to speak, when it seems predicated on the subjective disregard of the facts?

In a word, the question with which this chapter will grapple is: *How does creativity discover?* And conversely: *How is discovery also a creation?*

Although the artwork is no doubt in some respect just that—a work, a form—that is not the final word. It is not a work born of working. It is a work born of play. In a broad sense Schelling will argue, as we have already seen, that artworks are born from the life of the transcendental imagination. As such, its product, the artwork, is born of the play of the imagination. It is an image not *of* chaos, but *from* chaos. The beginning of the work of art brings one back to the beginning of any beginning.

What, then, is playing at working? Humans produce artworks, but they are not the fundamental *source* of artworks. Their work is the trace of an anterior play. Although artists are humans, the origin of the work of art does not fundamentally lie within the domain of the human. Rather the human is the intermediary between the nonhuman and the newly human. As Deleuze and Guattari argue: "Painters go through a catastrophe, or through a conflagration, and leave the trace of this passage on the canvas, as the leap that leads them from chaos to composition" (WP, 203). In this way one can speak of the artist as "a seer, a becomer" who has "seen something in life that is too great, too unbearable" and who aporetically produces "the mutual embrace of life with what threatens it" (WP, 171). In this sense, not only is the artwork not about working, it is not even just about producing, as if the artist were the subject and the artwork were the result of her or his production. Rather than an accomplishing, it is more of a releasing, an unclotting, a liberating, a freeing of the body from its habits of sensing. "It is always a question of freeing life wherever it is imprisoned, or of tempting it into an uncertain combat" (WP, 171).

Furthermore, even though an artwork can produce concepts, it is itself something like a percept, a mode of sensation. Although a percept does not have to conceive of itself as such (it is minimally the unreflective externalization of spirit), it can. Philosophical art, what Schelling called the "complete work of art," is art about art, percepts that can, in all of their nonuniversalizable particularity, also understand or conceive themselves as such. They reflectively mark the traces of the chaos out of which the percept emerged. Complete works of art are percepts that can reflectively produce concepts about perception. They are works that not only see truthfully, but which can *see seeing itself*. In this way, one might even say that Schelling had anticipated what Barnett Newman was later to call the "new painter" who is no longer obsessed

simply with the formal or "plastic" aspects of art, but with their nonformal (or "plasmic") origins. They are like the so-called primitive painter who "since he was always face-to-face with the mystery of life, was always more concerned with presenting his wonder, his terror before it or the majesty of its forces, rather than with plastic qualities of surface, texture, etc."[2]

For Newman, like Schelling before him, formal or plastic qualities do not express the absolute subject of nature. In this way, Newman, like Schelling and Hölderlin before him, rejected the Greek sculptural and pictorial emphasis on beautiful (Apollonian) form in favor of the Greek literary emphasis on the tragic. Greek tragic literature was to replace the merely formal qualities of neoclassicism. "That is why we as artists can paradoxically reject Grecian form—we do not believe any longer in its beauty—while accepting Greek literature, which by its unequivocal preoccupation with tragedy is still the fountainhead of art."[3]

Schelling, like Hölderlin and, later, Nietzsche, was going to find the form of tragic drama instructive in articulating the complex potencies that comprise an artwork that self-consciously marks its status as an artwork. This is not to say that it is the only form or that it is a superior form in this respect to comedy. Nonetheless tragedy yokes together competing potencies into a higher potency. In 1827, long after his early meditations on tragedy, Schelling summarized the relationship between these forces as follows:

> In the highest work, Poetry united with art—in the highest *Poetic art [Dichtkunst],* tragedy, there appears, in the storms of passions which blindly rage against each other, where for the actors themselves the voice of reason goes silent, and despotism and lawlessness, entangling each other ever more deeply, finally transform themselves into a hideous necessity—in the midst of all these movements there appears the spirit of the poet as the quiet light which alone still shines, as the subject which alone is not submerged, itself unmoving in the most violent movement, as wise Providence which can yet lead the greatest contradictions finally to a satisfactory conclusion. (HMP, 118/128)

Mere creativity is not yet self-conscious and hence not yet tragic. It is the fall of freedom to the creaturely, the birthing movement of the A^1. As such, it does not yet reflect on the freedom that granted it birth. Tragic art is therefore not just the movement of freedom to form, but the marking of form so that it reflects—with love, with *amor fati*—on the indwelling, Dionysian birthing principle that contests form from within form. In this sense, the great Henry Miller was right to insist that

> To paint is to love again. It's only when we look with eyes of love that we see as the painter sees. His is a love, moreover, which is free of

> possessiveness. What the painter sees he is duty bound to share. Usually he makes us see and feel what ordinarily we ignore or are immune to. His manner of approaching the world tells us, in effect, that nothing is vile or hideous, nothing is stale, flat and unpalatable unless it be our own power of vision. To see is not merely to look. One must look-see. See into and around. Or as John Marin once put it—"Art must show what goes on in the world."[4]

I

Schelling first seriously took up the question of the artwork in his anonymously published *Philosophical Letters on Dogmatism and Idealism* (1795). The epistolary reflections include an allusion to the text's status as a "symbol for the League of Free Spirits" (PB, 196/341/112).[5] The text, in part, seems to have been an attempt to articulate a philosophy of freedom for the "League of Free Spirits," a group of free thinkers in Stuttgart that formed as a companion society to the one formed by "the most radical students of Fichte in Jena."[6] Art was linked to the question of freedom, including political freedom, but not as the self-expression of the *conatus*.

In the Preface, Schelling drew explicit attention to the question of the text's style. "The author chose the form of letters because he believed that he could present his ideas in this more clearly than any other form" (PB, 156/283/50). The exchange of letters is not an arbitrary ornament to present attractively his ideas. It is somehow intrinsically related to the ideas themselves such that it allows them to be more clearly articulated than other forms (e.g., the expository style of *Vom Ich als Prinzip*). What, then, can the letter form articulate that the expository form cannot articulate as well? Friedrich Schlegel, writing in an *Athenäum* fragment (no. 77) that appeared a little over year after Schelling's *Letters,* claimed that "A dialogue is a chain or garland of fragments. An exchange of letters is a dialogue on a larger scale"(A, 85).[7] If one were to accept this as a description of Schelling's project, the letters are a large-scale dialogue, chaining together fragments—in a *wunderlich* way—that could not otherwise be linked together.[8]

The epistolary form also invites one to question the identity of the addressee. Schelling never offered a name. Franz Gabriel Nauen has suggested that it is Hölderlin.[9] Although this is impossible to establish, it is an interesting suggestion.[10] When this text later reappeared in the first volume of his 1809 edition of his *Collected Works,* Schelling reflected that it was a "lively polemic" against the "moral proof for the existence of God" (PB, 154/49). By this, Schelling presumably meant the Tübingen Kantians who bless themselves and orthodox philosophy under the name of practical reason (M, 119) and who wanted "to construct a new system of dogmatism out of the trophies

of criticism" (PB, 156/283/49). Hölderlin shared a common distaste for such activity. Furthermore, he seems to be addressing someone who, like Hölderlin, embraced tragedy as a mode of presenting freedom.

It is known that Hölderlin and Schelling met several times in 1795 and 1796 and had heated discussions. Hölderlin later wrote to Friedrich Immanuel Niethammer, whose *Philosophisches Journal einer Gesellschaft teutscher Gelehrter* had published Schelling's *Letters* late in 1795, reporting that "Schelling, as you will know, has become a bit rebellious from his first convictions" (December 22, 1795) (M, 137). Later he wrote that he and Schelling "had not always spoken in agreement with each other"[11] but that they had agreed that "new ideas can be presented most clearly in the form of letters" (February 24, 1796) (M, 143). Both were to employ, however short-lived, the epistolary form and both were to turn to Greek tragedy as a technique of presenting the cision. If one were to interpret the "rebellious" to mean Schelling's growing dissatisfaction with the *Vom Ich als Prinzip* essay, then one could read "the new ideas" of the *Letters* and their presentation in letter form, as well as Schelling's subsequent development, as in some way related to his dialogue with Hölderlin. The issue, as is evident already in Schelling's *Letters,* is the proximity of the *intellectual intuition* and *Schwärmerei*. Whether or not these letters were directed at Hölderlin does not obfuscate a shared commitment to the struggle to present within presentation what is not of the order of presentation.

Hölderlin, for his part, had announced to Niethammer that he would attempt to replace practical reason with an "aesthetic sense" in a series of letters that he would name, following Schiller, *New Letters on the Aesthetic Education of the Person* (AE, 143). The first volume of *Hyperion,* Hölderlin's *Briefroman,* would appear in August of the following year (1797). As Hölderlin explained to Niethammer: "In the philosophical letters I want to find the principle that explains the divisions in which we think and exist, but also what makes it possible for the conflict to vanish, i.e., the conflict between subject and object, between ourselves and the world, even between reason and revelation" (M, 143). That principle is the tragic yoking together of the gods (the realm of the Good) and mortals (the realm of the True). In another way, however, the *Letters* mark Schelling's early efforts to present the intuition of freedom not only as an ethical insight but more inclusively as an aesthetic insight. With Hölderlin, he also presented the letters as a mode to present aesthetically what cannot be presented in traditional exposition. As Schelling concluded the *Letters:* "It is a crime to humanity to hide axioms that are generally communicable. But nature herself has posited boundaries to this communicability" (PB, 196/341/112).

For both writers, the Whole can never be wholly presented, and this aporia can only be presented indirectly, for example, as letters or as opposing fragments conjoined by a tertium quid that remains subterranean. Deleuze instructively made the same point about Leibniz and Mallarmé in *The Fold:*

Leibniz and the Baroque: "It is well known that the total book is as much Leibniz's dream as it is Mallarmé's, even though they never stop working in fragments. Our error is in believing that they did not succeed in their wishes: they made this unique Book perfectly, the book of monads, in letters and little circumstantial pieces that could sustain as many dispersions as combinations."[12] Schelling's *Letters,* furthermore, is itself a kind of book of monads, of contradictory directives and forces, of multiple speakers, of infinite tasks and perpetual struggles—all of which reflect obliquely the supreme substance, each in their own windowless way.

Soon after the *Letters,* in the *Ideas Towards a Philosophy of Nature* (1797), Schelling wrote of the "absolute producing itself out of itself" in three discreet forms, each of which are absolute in their own way. Considered "from their formal side, each of the three unities are particulars, for example, that in it the infinite is formed in the finite or vice-versa." From another angle, each unity is absolute (PN II, 64/48). Following Leibniz, Schelling read the relationship between substance and its attributes as the relationship between supreme substance and monads.[13] The supreme substance is a composite of contradictory monads.[14] Schelling continued: "What we have here designated as unities is the same as what others have understood by *ideas* or *monads,* although the true meaning of this concept was itself lost long ago. Each idea is a particular, that, as such, is absolute" (PN II, 64/48). Monads, different in kind, express the absolute each in their own unique way. Each monad expresses the absolute uniquely. Each is a different perspective on the Whole from within the Whole. It would be an error to isolate any perspective from the Whole. Each is a different accent of the Same, that is, of the general economy of Difference.

II

The first letter announces the way of inquiry for the entire text. Responding to his unknown correspondent, and remembering that Schelling had initially published this text anonymously, Schelling began to present in medias res an irresolvable tension in the form of a struggle. "I understand you dear friend! It seems to you greater to struggle against an absolute power and to go under struggling than to secure oneself in advance against all danger through a moral God" (PB, 157/284/50). The author's "dear friend" shared the author's sense of the "perniciousness" of the appropriation of Kant in the Tübingen Stift. The *Letters* protest vigorously against the need for or the possibility of a moral God. The "dear friend" presented a stark contrast between a sovereign power and a power restricted in advance by the moral element of its nature. The latter, as I have shown earlier, can already be found in Leibniz's critique of Spinoza and was later appropriated in various forms during the Pantheism Debate. Mendelssohn appealed to Leibniz in order to redeem Lessing from Spinoza's

ateleological substance, and Herder, even while siding with Spinoza, ends up in position similar to the one attributed to Lessing by Mendelssohn. It seemed that few could bear the thought of an amoral God whose power could not be restricted in advance by a moral nature that expressed its creativity within the beneficent range of a divine plan. For Schelling, the Good transcends any moral account of it. This anxiety before God's freedom, as we have seen, held sway among the Tübingen theologians and had been christened Kantian practical reason. A moral God, that is, a God determined in advance by the law of divine goodness, defended one from the terrifying freedom of a God whose absoluteness cannot be restricted and whose fire consumes all attempts to do so. A sovereign God has, as William Blake also saw, a Satanic unconscious that expresses itself conversely as angelic orders.

Against the anxious Tübingen theologians (and against Kant's interest in rescuing the idea of a moral God), the "dear friend" found it "greater" to struggle against a sovereign God, and although one cannot triumph over sovereignty, the struggle offers the greatness of *decline*. The author responded that this "struggle against the immeasurable is not only the most sublime matter that the person can think, but also in my estimation the principle of all sublimity itself" (PB, 157/284/50). From the second sentence of the first letter, the author announced that his interest in these letters concerned the greatest principle, the principle of all principles, the *Grundsatz aller Grundsätze,* and that this principle involves not resolution and possession, but struggle and demise.

However, it is the character of this struggle that will itself become the struggle of the ten letters. While agreeing with his "true friend," the author asked, "How you would find the power itself, with which the person is opposed to the Absolute and the feeling that accompanies this struggle, explicable in dogmatism? Consistent dogmatism does not concern struggle but subjection. It does not concern the violent but rather the voluntary decline. It concerns the quiet abandon of myself to an absolute object: each thought of revolt and the struggling power of the self in dogmatism comes from a better system" (PB, 157/284/50). The first model of struggle, dogmatism, has a "purely aesthetic side" and draws on Spinoza and the quiet beatitude of the *amor intellectualis dei*. But, as we saw in chapters two and three, it demands the voluntary surrender to an absolute object whose nature governs a closed system of reason. It is only one arm of the struggle that, without the other arm, no longer struggles and resigns itself to the quietude of pure affirmation of an infinite object. "The quiet self-abandon to the immeasurable, the peace in the arms of the world, is what art opposes to the other extreme of every struggle: stoic peace of mind stands in the middle, expecting the struggle or having already ended it" (PB, 157/284/50). Dogmatism is the Spinozistic stoicism that dwells in peaceful resignation to the rule of an absolute object. The stoic is devoted to the "youthful world" only in order to "still their thirst for life. Existence, existence! it calls in them; they would rather fall into

the arms of the world than in the arms of death" (PB, 157/285/50). Dogmatism's infinite resignation to an absolute object drops out of life because it does not raise the question of life at the level of the life of life.

The moral God cannot produce an aesthetic universe. With the moral God the "pure principle of the aesthetic is lost." This happens when "a guardian of the world is necessary in order to hold the world in its boundaries" (PB, 157/285/51). One could say, using Blake's language, that without the abysmal foundation of Satanic freedom, there could be no beauty or sublimity. In the Thomistic tradition, for example, a moral God produces beauty in accordance with form. To find an object beautiful is to take pleasure in its close proximity to its divine idea. In this sense, beauty is the pleasure that one takes in the *integritas* of form. Saint Thomas reflected that "we call mutilated people ugly, for they lack the required proportion of parts to the whole."[15] Mutilated people are ugly because they fall wretchedly short of the end for which they were created, and this gulf between the mutilated body and the divine idea of the body causes the observer disgust and disapprobation. Thomism could never, for example, affirm the spirituality and sublimity of the photography of Joel Peter Whitkin. The same is true for all artifacts, divine or human. "If an artist made a saw out of glass it would be ugly despite the beauty of its appearance, because it could not fulfill its cutting function."[16] A moral God creates a universe in which beauty is equated with function. Beauty and sublimity for a sovereign God express the opposite, namely freedom.

The author contrasted the nonaesthetic cosmos with the "reciprocal approach" in which the "mutual succumbing in struggle" is "the actual principle of beauty." The aesthetics of nature, contrary to Leibniz, Wolff, Mendelssohn, and Herder, are not found in its preorganized harmony. Nature as an aesthetic phenomenon is chiasmic, the crossing over in struggle of two opposing orders that belong together. Beauty and sublimity belong to the struggle of the finite to implicate the infinite and the infinite to explicate the finite. "True art, or moreover, the *theion* [divine] in art, is an inner principle that forms its material from within itself and opposes omnipotently each raw mechanism and each unruly accumulation of material from the outside" (PB, 157/285/51). Like Spinoza's substance in the critical mode, the aesthetic intuition of nature is an intuition of nature as a Whole that is sovereignly self-organizing.

The aesthetics of nature would be something like Zarathustra's dice throw, each a posteriori moment of necessity implicating itself in the chance of the roll. For Zarathustra and Schelling, the aesthetics of nature demanded total affirmation—neither the hemiplegic affirmation of the theoretical realm nor the reduction of aesthetics to human self-interest. Theoretical activity accepts only the clear and distinct evidence and not the once and future mystery of its perpetually withdrawing ground. Hence, Zarathustra proclaimed in "Of Unsullied Knowledge": "Where is beauty? Where I *must want* with all my will; where I want to love and to go under that an image will not remain only

an image. Loving and going under: these belong together since eternity."[17] The beautiful, Zarathustra noted earlier in his address to the Sublime Ones, is not for heroes. "The beautiful is unobtainable to all violent wills." It is for those who have renounced their heroism that approach, "in dreams" the freedom that is "beyond the hero *[der Über-Held]*."[18] The hero exemplifies humanity's interest in perfecting its nature.

Schelling, in his 1807 Munich address, *On the Relationship of the Plastic Arts to Nature,* again took up the question of the relationship of artistic production and nature. Schelling argued that, as with nature, art is "dead" when "you do not bring the spiritual eye to it, which penetrates the exterior and feels the active force in it" (I/7, 295). The spiritual eye, as Hamann had already argued, "senses *[empfindet]*" the sublime ground in its having become a beautiful form. It does not see in the way that the theoretical eye reduces the beautiful to the contours of its appearance. The spiritual eye glimpses in the thing its "creating life" and its "power to exist" (I/7, 294). Hence, "we must go through the form *[über die Form hinausgehen]* in order to gain it back as intelligible, alive, and as truly felt *[empfunden]*" (I/7, 299).

The prepositional phrase *über etwas hinaus,* literally a going through in order to get beyond, is, as we have seen, the intuition of the formless within form. The sensation of sovereign life paradoxically emerges in the mastering of form. "Only through the completion of form can the form be annihilated" (I/7, 305). In this annihilation (what Schelling will later clarify as *Vernichtigen,* emptying) , in this emptying of form, so to speak, one finds "the highest beauty without character" in the sense that the "universe would have no determinate measurement, neither length, nor width, nor depth because it contains all with equal infinity. Or that the art of the creative nature would be formless because it itself is subjected to no form" (I/7, 306). To put it in other words, the spiritual eye feels the soul's grace in the body. The "body is the form and grace is the soul, although not the soul in itself, but the soul of form, that is, the soul of nature *[die Naturseele]*" (I/7, 311).

The soul is not the heretofore concealed *quidditas* or the essence of a thing (then soul = form), but the deformation of all form, the formless origin of form. The soul is the excess of the form within the form, its animistic life complicating its status as a form. "The soul in the person therefore is not the principle of individuality but that through which one is lifted beyond all selfhood and through which one becomes capable of sacrifice of oneself, of selfless love, and, what is the highest, of contemplation and knowledge of the essence of things and with this, of art" (I/7, 312). Without soul, without "great and general enthusiasm, there are only sects" (I/7, 327). It is critical to note here that artistic production does not seek to dominate others with the form of its vision. Rather it is the production of a space in which the liberating force of freedom appears. It is not the neurotic and public expansion of the *conatus'* fixations. believe

In the *Letters,* the artwork, like nature itself, holds together the formless soul of nature with what Schelling named the "symbol" (PB, 196/341/112), the form that reflectively presents the now restricted freedom indwelling in the artwork. Aesthetic creation in which the artist forms an image out of freedom (a rule out of the unruly) parallels the "living" creativity of nature itself. Schelling later made this quite clear in the lecture course on the *Philosophy of Art*. "I construe therefore in the philosophy of art not art as art, not as something *particular*. Rather I construe *the universe in the form of art* and the philosophy of art is *the science of the All in the form or potency of art*" (I/5, 368).

The universe, construed from the perspective of the creative potency that produces the artwork, is a self-generating work of art whose generativity is both inexhaustible and differential. It is inexhaustible in the sense that the world is spontaneous, and this spontaneity is not restricted by something greater within or without itself. Freedom, as pure possibility, cannot be restricted by actuality within itself because the latter, as a specific expression of possibility, is derivative of and inferior to it. Particular expressions of power cannot substantially determine power itself. Nonetheless, this plenum of indwelling power admits of no direct access and can only be found in its expressions. Its inexhaustibility is expressed through the life of concrete figures. But when the artwork or the intuition of nature fixates on itself as an object and fetishizes itself by referring only to itself, as happens, for example, in the demand for a moral God, the struggle breaks down and the circulation between the two contradictory orders clogs. "When neither the struggle nor the unification can happen in us, we lose at the same time the inner principle [the aesthetic] and the intellectual intuition of the world through which the momentary unification of both contradictory principle originates in us" (PB, 157/285/51).

The author and his interlocutor agreed that the moral God incapacitates the aesthetic intuition. The author, however, insists on taking a further step. Not only does the moral God disallow the sublime, it remains, like Spinoza's *vana religio,* empty. It is an anthropomorphic projection in which the imagination confuses its own images with freedom. "It contains nothing at all. It is as empty as every other anthropomorphic image—because in *principle* they are all the same." They want God, but resort to "theoretical reason," which is "too weak to conceive of a God." Given this paucity of means, they resort, as did the Tübingen theologians, to a "practical belief" derived from a "practical need." With this deus ex machina, the traditional business of theology can survive the scare that the loss of dogmatic philosophy threatened. The magic wand of "theology" provides one with what one needs. "I therefore need the idea of a moral God in order to rescue my morality, and because I assume a God only in order to rescue my morality, this God must hence be a *moral* one" (PB, 158/286/52). On a similar note, in an allusion to Kant and the Kantians, Nietzsche had later warned that "no one would so easily hold a doctrine for true *[für wahr halten]* simply because it made them happy or virtuous, except

perhaps for the charming 'idealists.'"[19] Without the presupposition of a moral God, then, Schelling attempted to think dangerously. As Nietzsche contended, "Something may be true even if it were at the same time harmful and dangerous to the highest degree."[20]

Rather than lament the death of the moral God, Schelling wanted to bury it. But this leaves the work of articulating a universe imbued with the sovereign amorality of the Good, and it is here that the figure of Spinoza again resurfaced. In the fifth letter, Schelling asked "Why Spinoza would have put forth his philosophy in a system *of ethics*?" (PB, 171/305/73). Furthermore, Spinoza's system, as a system of reality within which one could live and flourish, "must reach reality, but not through a theoretical faculty but through a practical one, not through a knowing but through a productive, realizing one, not through knowledge but through action" (PB, 171/305/73). The imperative of the *Ethics* is not: Subsume the world under the laws of the understanding! Since the sublime is always other than its integument in Being, the author in the seventh letter read this command as "Annihilate yourself through absolute causality, or: Comport yourself in *absolute* passivity towards the absolute!" (PB, 179/316/85). Spinoza abandoned his self, returning it to the indwelling power within the universe. "*His* I should not be his property. It should belong to the infinite reality" (PB, 178/315/84). Spinoza, out of an affirmation or love of the infinite indwelling in the finite, returns the gratuitous gift of the finite to the fires of its ground.

This command presents an aporia. Even though Spinoza's ethic is not derived from dogmatism, it is, in its most radical form, a kind of dogmatism in so far as the absolute, as freedom, is construed as an object "through the objectified intellectual intuition" (PB, 182/321/90). In order to return oneself to Moira, the dispenser of fate, even in the radical act of self-annihilation, one must be able to conceive Moira. In this sense, Schelling admitted that the imperative is intertwined with the universalistic assumption of Spinoza's philosophy: that his philosophy is *the* philosophy—that a monad can somehow frame adequately the whole of which it is an oblique reflection. "Spinoza interpreted in accordance with *his* system" (PB, 178/315/84). Since, according to Spinoza's view, there was no historically and spatially differential transit between the finite and the infinite, the heterogeneity of the finite was due exclusively to "the limitations of the finite. Everything existing should only be modifications of the same infinite: therefore there should be no transit, no conflict, but there should take place only the *demand* that the finite *strive* to become identical and to go under into the infinite" (PB, 178/315/84).

On the one hand, since there is no direct access to the freedom indwelling within Moira, since her fires burn always beyond her cooled and now mild masks, every symbol of freedom, even those that hold their own adequacy in question, are entangled in an unavoidable form of dogmatism. Affirmation cannot entirely transcend its *über etwas hinaus* structure. On the other hand,

the "moral principle" has allowed one to stand in the "the central point of every possible *Schwärmerei*" (PB, 179/316/85). *Schwärmerei,* for Schelling, is the meeting point of "the most holy thoughts of antiquity and the deformity of human madness" (PB, 179/316–17/85). It is the "return to the Godhead, the originary source of all existence, unity with the absolute, annihilation of the self" (PB, 179/317/85). Its holiness derives from an ethical insight into the madness circulating within Being. Its madness derives from the belief that one has possessed this madness and that the brute facts of the heterogeneous orders of finitude dissolve into the night when all cows are black and all monads reflect the same thing in the same way.

The "dear friend" wondered about this destructive *Schwärmerei,* asking how the "cheerful spirit of a Spinoza could bear such a destructive and annihilating principle?" (PB, 179/317/86). How could Spinoza claim to have conceived God? Schelling responded that this was only possible through self-delusion. It was a delusion, "natural and unavoidable," derived from intuiting one's self. Self-intuition produced a necessary deception. Spinoza, a mortal, had remarked after all that "we feel and experience that we are eternal" (V, 23, scholium). This self-intuition *[Selbstanschauung],* this withdrawal into interiority, "this mysterious and wondrous faculty to withdraw out of the vicissitudes of time and into our Innermost, out of everything that would come from without and into the naked self where one can intuit under the form of Immutability the eternal in us" (PB, 180/318/87).

Schelling located in the act of self-reflection an antinomic conjunction of phenomenal and noumenal orders. The phenomenal I finds itself also on the threshold of its noumenality. The 'I am I' is always, as Fichte had also clearly seen, a delusion because the ego-predicate is already the result of the subject's free judgment. I am always more than whatever I construe myself to be. My ideality, a fissure in my phenomenality (or reality), is an aesthetic or ethical intuition of my inexhaustibility in a concept or an image. 'I am I' denotes a fissure conjoined by the copula. I, as an inexhaustible ideality, am I, as a phenomenal reality. Contrary to Descartes' first principle, the thinking subject cannot orient itself to itself by coinciding with itself as its own object. The aesthetic intuition is not a return to a lost purity, nor can it orient itself to its own ground. This is the fanatical delusion of *Schwärmerei,* that is, dogmatism at its self-annihilating purest. Dogmatism would take the nothing as an object of thought for a thinking subject. It is rather a rediscovery of thinking's tragic stain, its inheritance of a crime that rationality, by its very nature, has always already committed. "Only a *restricted* reality is an actuality for us" (PB, 184/324/94).

In this sense, Spinoza's deception is his awareness that I, as an attribute, necessarily ensconced in finite modes, am also eternal, as an expression of freedom. This "am" does not, as Spinoza's language implies, demarcate a harmony between finite orders and infinite orders. The I *am* I also expresses a struggle. If I wholly affirm God, then I must utterly discount myself. If I wholly affirm

myself, then I discount God. Yet when I allegedly melt into the divine center, I do not vanish. I am still somehow myself, albeit a self aporetically in the center. "Hardly could a mystic think of himself as annihilated had he not always again thought of his own self as the substrate of the annihilation. This necessity always still to think of oneself helped all *Schwärmer* and it also helped Spinoza. When he intuited himself as *submerged,* he still intuited himself. He could not think of himself as *annihilated* without at the same time thinking of himself as existing" (PB, 181/319–20/89).

In a footnote to this discussion, Schelling argued that although "we can never be rid of our own I," this is due not to our exclusive status as determinate beings, but to "the absolute freedom of our essence." The power of this freedom is such that "the *I* in us is not a *thing* nor a *matter* that is capable of being objectively determined." Yet, in a way, I *am* nothing. *I have the being of nothing*. Hence, I am not utterly nothing nor am I just myself. This contradictory self-expression of the I, such that there is always a "necessity to rescue the I from every objective determination and yet always still to think of *oneself,*" can also be thought through "two contradictory although very common experiences" involving the idea of death and nonbeing. We sometimes associate "pleasant feelings" with these ideas, and we sometimes associate just the opposite. The association of pleasure with the idea of nihility and death presupposes that we will somehow continue to be without having being. We must presuppose ourselves as somehow still continuing to be—albeit in nonbeing. I would have the being of death, even though death is that which does not allow me to possess it or anything else.

This contradiction is also the source of my anxiety before death. Schelling remarked that Lawrence Sterne's quip that "I'd be a fool to fear you, death! As long as *I am, you* are *not,* and when *you are, I* am *not!*" would only make sense if I could think nonbeing adequately. This expresses the *hubris* of all *Schwärmer* who implicitly imagine that they have both themselves and death. "But I worry that I will still be when I am no more." My nihility is the source of my hope and my anxiety precisely because I think of it as *my* nihility. Hamlet's paralysis, "to be or not to be," expresses the aporia of my freedom. If I die, I may escape my miserable life, but I may still be as nothing. Freedom is always intuited by and through a determined self. It is my expansion into the absolute or it is my dissolution: "I will gladly not exist, only I want not to feel my non-being." Or, as Schelling recounted the Kantian Baggesen's "witty" commentary on Sterne's claim: "I fear only the lack of an expression of existence" (PB, 181–82/320/89–90).

The dogmatic Spinoza, the Spinoza that would claim to have understood death, the Spinoza that does not feel that "I am eternal" but rather fuses with eternity itself, seems at odds with the practice of his own text. Despite the equation of beatitude with the absolute passivity to an immutable order of Being, there is the "enthusiastic" Spinoza who intuited the substantial freedom

indwelling within all modal structures. Quoting the final proposition of the *Ethics,* Schelling remarked that "beatitude is not the reward of virtue but virtue itself!" (V, 42). Perhaps it was not so much that Spinoza's I lost itself in the absolute, but that his "enthusiasm *[Begeisterung]*" came from thinking that "his personality *expanded*" into the absolute. At this point, a figure of Spinoza emerges, complete with its necessary deception, that expresses the irresolvable struggle between the finite and the infinite. On the one hand, Spinoza has dared construe an objective thought of Being in its self-annihilating purity. Absolute stoicism would return the ~I back to the unrestricted and formless fires of the I, uniting it with limitless activity. Yet Spinoza is also somehow still Spinoza.

Hence, such complete stoicism is never possible. "We awaken out of the intellectual intuition as out of the state of death. We awaken through reflection, that is, through the forced return to ourselves" (PB, 185/125/94). If Bataille is right that we want as much as death as possible while remaining alive, then so long as we live, we have always deceived ourselves and cheated death.[21] We seek the supposed Golden Age from which our very being is a Fall. By virtue of being, we have been cast out of the absolute, left with scant intuitions of a beatific Golden Age that is unencumbered by the obstacles of language and things. The impossible recovery of this Golden Age is now the dream of all *Schwärmer* and dreamers, the "cabalists, the Brahmins, the Chinese philosophers, and the modern mystics" who reify the absolute into an objectless object (PB, 185–86/326/95–96).

The author, however, reminds his "dear friend" of Lessing's perhaps scandalous confession that "with the idea of an eternal Being is associated a representation *[Vorstellung]* of an eternal boredom which would give him anxiety and pain." Or, Lessing's other blasphemy: "I would not want beatitude for anything in the world" (PB, 186/326/96). Boredom results from the nostalgic return to the Golden Age in which the adventure is over and freedom succumbs altogether to its limits.

The ninth letter begins with the author responding to his "true friend's" puzzlement over the difference between dogmatism and idealism. How does criticism avoid the *Schwärmerei* of dogmatism? It would merely be another kind of dogmatism if "it attempts to represent the ultimate goal as attainable" (PB, 186/327/96). "If an activity that is no longer restricted by objects and that is fully absolute is not accompanied by consciousness; and if unlimited activity is identical with absolute rest; and if the highest moment of Being is right on the border of not-Being, then criticism goes the way of self-annihilation just as much as dogmatism does" (PB, 186/327/96–97). This would be the night when all cows are black and "*my* reality disappears into eternity" (PB, 186/327/97).

However, criticism and dogmatism move toward the same goal, the absolute, from opposite directions. Dogmatism seeks to dissolve the subject into an absolute object, and idealism seeks to dissolve the object (~I) into an absolute subject (I). The dogmatist, being happy, acts morally. The idealist acts

morally in order to find happiness. They move towards a goal that allows itself, as does death itself, to be thought in contradictory directions.

Dogmatism is a distilled form of stoicism in which one moves from freedom to necessity by relinquishing subjective differences and attempting to affirm passively an absolute necessity. However, as Schelling suggested with Spinoza, the *amor intellectualis dei* is always the love of *my* eternity and anxiety before *my* dissolution. Hence the stoic, a metaphysician who strives for an abstraction free from all sensuality, "became a physicist because his abstraction from all sensuality could only happen gradually in time" (PB, 188/329/99). The spinozistic-stoic physicist must contend with the perpetual *regressus* of the *über etwas hinaus* structure. Idealism, on the other hand, is a distilled form of Epicureanism in which one proceeds from the opposite direction. Epicures do not strive for independence from the world but rather throw themselves into the arms of the world (PB, 188/329/99). The epicure attempts to satisfy the demand of freedom by satisfying all sensuous needs through consuming as much of life as possible. Once is never enough. There are always new places to go, new people to meet, new hats to wear, new lovers to seduce, and new languages to learn. But the radical physicality of the epicures led them to become "metaphysicians because their task, the successive satisfaction of all needs to achieve beatitude, was infinite." Such desire is insatiable, although it is predicated on the deception that if one consumes voraciously, eventually one will have enough. Yet there are always more needs to satisfy in this *progressus ad infinitum*. However, unlike dogmatism, criticism never "sets up the final goal as realized (in an object) or as realizable (in any single point of time)." Criticism addresses a goal that is nowhere in particular and deferred as always still to come. As such, "criticism must consider the final goal only as the object of an *infinite* task" (PB, 189/331/102). The work of criticism is never done. It remains perennially underway. If the goal "becomes an object of knowledge," it "stops being an object of freedom." When this transpires, "philosophy is surrendered to the terrors of *Schwärmerei*" (PB, 189/331–32/102). Criticism and dogmatism differ not in object but in "approach to it" (PB, 190/332/103).[22]

Spinoza and beatific dogmatists fit the mold of the stoic-metaphysician-physicist. Fichte and the idealists in general fit the mold of the epicurean physicist-metaphysician. Taken together, they express the opposing and aporetic directions of the Whole. "Absolute freedom and absolute necessity are identical" (PB, 189/330–31/101). This is not to say that they are *einerlei,* that is, that they belong to the same kind or are the same things. They are aporetic potencies of the Same (the A^3), that is, of Difference. Belonging together, one can say that they are not just two or, as Schelling later put it, that they are "indifferent."

In the tenth and final letter, the struggle between freedom and necessity as an expression of this indifference emerges in the figure of a tragic, Promethean Spinoza. No longer only stoically passive to the manifestation of

divine causality in an absolute object, the tragic hero affirms freedom also by "struggling against" freedom "and thus to go under" (PB, 192/336/106). Not only does the author agree with his friend that one expresses one's freedom by struggling against "an objective power," but he also agrees that the representation of this contradiction "long disappeared from the light of reason, must be preserved as a possibility for art—for the highest in art" (PB, 192/336/106). Art, in this case Greek tragedy, can present a contradiction that would otherwise offend modern reason. "It has often been asked how Greek reason could tolerate the contradictions of their tragedy. A mortal, determined by grim fate *[Verhängnis]* to be a criminal and, struggling against this fate, is horribly punished for a crime that was a work of fate" (PB, 192/336/106). What makes this bearable? The reason is found "in the fight of human freedom with the power of the objective world in which the mortal, because this power is a superior power or a *fatum,* necessarily succumbs yet still must be punished for succumbing because he did not succumb *without a struggle*" (PB, 192/336/106). Not only did Oedipus, for example, succumb to a greater power; Oedipus was punished for having struggled against the superior power that eventually overwhelmed him. "That the criminal, who succumbed to the superior power of fate, was still punished was recognition of human freedom. It was the *honor* due to freedom" (PB, 193/336/107). In Oedipus, one finds the circulation of both stoic physics and epicurean metaphysics. Each monad, stoic annihilation and epicurean desire, reflects sublime indifference in its own contradictory way. "It was a *great* thought to bear the punishment for an unavoidable crime and through the loss of one's freedom precisely to prove this freedom and to go under with an explanation of free will" (PB, 193/337/107).

III

The *Letters* set out to present a "symbol" of freedom and they end with a Promethean monad that expresses the coupling of freedom and necessity. A symbol of freedom, that is, the presentation of that which is not of the order of presentation, involves a form that ironically and indirectly evokes its opposite, freedom.[23] The symbol is the contradictory presence of an absence. As such, its presence is an hypocrisy. In a phrase from the 1802–1803 *Philosophy of Art,* Schelling remarked that the symbol "in its finitude simulates the infinite *[in seiner Endlichkeit die Unendlichkeit heuchelt]*" (§65, V, 462). *Heucheln* denotes hypocrisy, feigning, and simulation. The infinite can only present itself through a kind of forgery. Symbols are noble lies, the ineluctable mendacity of divine poetry.

Still, the question remains: How does Schelling move from Kant's subjective idealism, which views the freedom of nature as a projection of human freedom, to a philosophy of nature and a philosophy of art in which subjectivity is

the freedom indwelling in the necessity of nature and the artwork? For Schelling, the productivity of the artist parallels the free productivity of nature. By productivity, what Schelling named ποίησις and *Poesie,* Schelling does not mean the pursuit of a particular craft. Poetry is an expression of freedom and, as such, cannot be practiced, learned, enacted upon demand, or said to have possessed its goal in advance. It is the "unconscious" in production which "can only be innately born through the free grace of nature" (TI, 289/223–24).

Nature is the living and "breathing" progression of ποίησις, freedom's free restriction of itself as well as the implication of necessity in the progression of freedom. In like fashion, artistic activity is the free play of genius that participates in the production of art within the life of the cosmic poem. Ποίησις, both cosmic and artistic, is production but not in the sense of constructing something complex out of simpler elements. It is production ex nihilo in the sense of producing even simple things out of no thing. Hence, the "fundamental character of the artwork is an unconscious infinity" (TI, 290/225) and therefore the artwork is the hypocritical appearance of sovereign playfulness. Schelling was clear about this in the *System of Transcendental Idealism:*

> This immutably Identical [subject expressed as object or freedom expressed as necessity], which no consciousness can reach and which only emanates back out of the product, is for the producer precisely what destiny is for the actor, that is, a dark, unknown power that brings the complete or the objective to the patchwork of freedom. Like each power, which through our free action and without our knowing realizes unimagined goals against our will, is called destiny, so is the Incomprehensible, which brings the objective to consciousness without the assistance of freedom and to a certain degree opposed to it and in which what eternally flies from itself is united in this production, designated by the obscure concept of *genius*. (TI, 286–87/222)

Schelling established a parallel relationship between the playing out of destiny for the actor and the play of genius for the producer of works. Destiny is the living manifestation of freedom in the world of the actor. Genius is the translation of freedom ("what eternally flees from itself") into a product. Both relationships, Prometheus' appeal to the sublime mysteries of Moira as well as the artist's production of form ex nihilo, are relationships to the "dark unknown power" immanent in even the coldest destinies. The conspiracy of life is a complicated poem that is writing itself. The artist, in creating, becomes, without so choosing, a daimonic vehicle of production. The tragic hero is, like all beings, destined and, as such, expresses the freedom indwelling in such a destiny. The artist is enthused or inspired, and the product of this genius is the necessary product of this relationship with the divine.[24] Such inspiration indicates a coming together with a dark ground

from which one had already been separated, and hence the artist in creating brings together what in nature is already together.[25]

Schelling expanded upon this in the *Philosophy of Art* lecture course. There are two monads or *Einheiten* held together in the work of art. The first "expresses itself" as "sublimity, that is, the imagination *[Einbildung]* of the infinite into the finite" (§65, I/5, 461). The sublime is the transition or explication or expression of supreme substance as a monad.[26] The monad is not the sublime itself but a "symbol" of the sublime:

> In the Great as such there is nothing infinite at all, only in it as reflection of true infinity. The intuition of the sublime then emerges when the sensuous intuition of the greatness of the sensuous object is found to be out of proportion and now the true infinite becomes evident for which this merely sensuous infinite becomes a symbol. The sublime is in this respect a subjugation of the finite whose infinity *lies* because of the true sublime. (§65, I/5, 462)

The sublime symbol is an always mendacious [*sie lügt* and *sie heuchelt*] and never adequate proxy of an ideal that will never arrive. It is only "glimpsed" through the "mirror" of that which Schelling, following Schiller, called its "relative greatness" (§65, I/5, 462). Furthermore, as both Dieter Jähnig and Jean-François Courtine rightly concur, Schelling located a sublime monadology not, as did Kant in the third *Critique,* in human subjectivity, and not in an allegedly objective *Naturphilosophie,* but in the imagination of human Being itself.[27]

For Schelling, the sublime took the formless form of what Hesiod in the opening lines of the *Theogony* named Chaos, the yawning gap. "Chaos is the fundamental intuition of the sublime because we interpret the mass that is too big for sensuous intuition like the sum of blind forces that are too powerful for our physical power. They are only in the intuition of chaos and only in this respect become for us a symbol of the infinite" (§65, I/5, 465). Chaos, furthermore, is not "the mere negation of form but formlessness in the highest and absolute form and vice versa: the highest and absolute form in formlessness" (§65, I/5, 465). This absolute form, this mendacious presence of unrestricted possibility, this "unboundedness," is inconceivable and, as such, an "aesthetic intuition" (§65, I/5, 466).

Tragedy is an affirmation of the holding together of the real and the ideal in the self-organizing movement of Being. The tragic figure is the lover of chaos who capitulates to nature, the real or the dogmatic, yet "remains simultaneously victorious in her inner nature":

> Necessity appears rather in an immediate struggle with the will itself and combats it on its own ground. Aeschylus's Prometheus does not suffer merely because of *external* pain, but rather much more deeply

> in his inner feeling of injustice and oppression; his suffering does not express itself as subjection, since it is not fate but rather the tyranny of the new ruler of the gods that causes this suffering. It expresses itself rather as defiance, as rebellion; freedom *triumphs* over necessity precisely because in this feeling of his own *personal* suffering nonetheless only the *universal* rebellion against the unbearable dominion of Jupiter motivates him. Prometheus is the archetype of the greatest human inner character, and thereby also the true archetype of tragedy. (I/5, 708/261)[28]

The presentation of tragedy as a way of unifying what is already unified in nature also brings Schelling into proximity with Hölderlin. As the latter sympathetically maintained in *Über den Unterschied der Dichtarten* (1799), the tragic poem is "according to its basic tone *idealistic,*" a caesura of the speculative, and, as such, it "must rest on an intellectual intuition which can be nothing other than this unity with everything that lives. It cannot be felt by the restricted disposition *[vom dem beschränkteren Gemüte]* that in its highest endeavors can only have a premonition of it. It can only be known by spirit" (IV, 277). Oedipus' fall derives from his faith in reason and his initial lack of intellectual intuition.

In suffering the contradiction of tragic presentation, one glimpses the incomprehensible ground of action. In his "Remarks on *Oedipus*" (1803), Hölderlin argued that "in the most extreme limits of suffering there is nothing more than the conditions of time and space" (V, 220). Hölderlin shared Schelling and Hamann's metacritique of Kant, in which the pure forms of intuition obscure their own transcendental conditions and thereby obscure the conspiracy of time and space. Beyond the pure forms, "God is present in the figure of death."

Both Schelling and Hölderlin seem to have been in accord about the triadic presentation of subject and object, that is, that they are never resolved into a logical identity[29] but are held together in the disequilibrium of the conspiracy. Hölderlin presented tragedy as the tertium quid by which God and the person are held together as infinitely sundered. "The presentation of the tragic is especially based on the enormous *[das Ungeheure],* on how God and the person mate and on how the innermost of the person and the power of nature become one without limit in wrath. It conceives itself as a becoming one without limit by purifying itself through separation without limit" (V, 219–20).[30] Although when left to itself it risks impoverishing the person, the unbridgeable separation between God and the person is also a prophylactic. It protects one from a direct experience of the monstrosity *(das Ungeheure)* that is the ground of life. The German *Ungeheuere,* the uncanny, the monstrous, the unfamiliar, is in the privative form, although the positive stem, *das Geheure,* is no longer in use. According to the Kluge, *das Geheure* comes from the Middle

High German *gehiure,* gentle or comfortable, which itself originally denoted "belonging to the same settlement." Hence, one might infer that the *Ungeheure* has no home of its own and belongs nowhere and hence errantly roams. It is the utopian coming of Dionysus, that monstrous caesura of the speculative. As in the seventh strophe of *Wein und Brot,* the poets follow "like the Wine God's holy priests which wander from land to land in holy night."

In the *Philosophy of Mythology* lectures, Schelling made a similar point about the *das Unheimliche* and its relationship to the emergence of the Homeric world. Not only does *unheimlich* denote the "uncanny" in the sense of what is not at home and hence what is unfamiliar and unsettling, it also speaks of the coming forth of what in itself should have remained concealed.

> The pure sky that hovers over Homeric poetry was first able to extend over Greece after the dark and darkening power of that uncanny *[unheimliches]* principle (for one calls "uncanny" all that which should have remained in secret *[im Geheimnis],* in concealment and latency, but which has nonetheless stepped forward). That œther which forms a dome over the Homeric world was first able to spread itself out after the power of that uncanny principle, which dominated in earlier religions, was precipitated down in the Mystery. (II/12, 649)[31]

The Strange is the origin of the Familiar and what has no home is the origin of every home.

In the turn to the tragic work of art as a symbol of nature, Schelling and Hölderlin also presaged Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* (1871).[32] Already in the Berlin lectures on the *Philosophie der Offenbarung* Schelling spoke of "the secret of true poetry," that holding together of sublime silence and beautiful articulation, as being "simultaneously drunk and sober. This is what distinguishes Apollonian enthusiasm from Dionysian" (II/14, 25). Nietzsche's text, by his own account, wore the *"perpetuum vestigium,"* the perpetual vestige, of "a union of the Apollonian and the Dionysian" (BT, 53). Although Nietzsche spoke of this "union" as an *Aufhebung,* it was not the resolution of this contrary forces in a higher synthesis but rather a "duplicity *[Duplizität],*" a "continuing struggle" with "only periodic, intervening reconciliation," an "open discord," and a "monstrous antithesis *[ungeheurer Gegensatz]*" and a "pairing" (BT, 33). Apollo and Dionysus were "two artistic impulses woven into each other" (BT, 81).

On the one hand, Dionysus, the "womb of all" and the "*Übermaß* [enormity] of nature," can be met only as already withdrawn behind one of its innumerable guises. An unprotected encounter with the naked Dionysus, shed of its "protective" clothing or "healing" clothing, is madness or death. On the other hand, Apollonian representation or "art" clothes one in a protective garb from the "pathological effect" while at the same time insuring that "life is possible and worthy of living" (BT, 35). The Apollonian veil protects one getting

too close to the blind madness that Heidegger once attributed to Hölderlin: "*Die übergroße Helle hat den Dichter in das Dunkel gestoßen*. The enormous brightness thrust the poet into the dark."[33] Just as the "dark colored flecks" protect the eyes from the sun *(die übergroße Helle),* the veil of beauty acts as the "sparkling flecks for the healing of eyes injured by horrible night" (BT, 67). Therefore the "metaphysical joy in the tragic is a translation of the instinctive, unconscious Dionysian wisdom into the language of images" (BT, 104).[34] Yet tragedy is much more than a prophylactic. It extends itself to the sublimity of destiny. As Derrida argued, "To think the closure of representation is to think the tragic: not as the representation of fate, but as the fate of representation. Its gratuitous and baseless necessity."[35]

IV

Alles, was tief ist, liebt die Maske.
Everything profound loves masks.
—Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*[36]

Schelling, as a "living counterpart" to Spinoza, discovered Spinoza's "ethical" insistence upon the ideality of bodies:

> However, nobody as yet has determined the limits of the body's capabilities: that is, nobody as yet has learned from experience what the body can and cannot do, without being determined by mind, solely from the laws of its nature in so far as it is considered as corporeal. For nobody as yet knows the structure of the body so accurately as to explain all of its functions, not to mention in the animal world we find much that far surpasses human sagacity, and that sleepwalkers do many things in their sleep that they would not dare when awake;—clear evidence that the body, solely from the laws of its own nature, can do many things at which its mind is amazed. (III, 2, scholium)[37]

Schelling discovered Spinoza's ideality of bodies, although Schelling knew that the ideality of bodies extends to all of the bodies of nature, to all corporeal expressions of the world anima. Nature, the infinite complication of bodies, expresses an animistic soul that cannot be subsumed by the intellect. Schelling, along with Goethe and Spinoza, inaugurated one of the first radically articulated deep and corporeal ecologies of Western modernity. Nature, as an endlessly creative expression that results from the yoking together of God and Being, *naturans* and *naturata,* marks a third, nature as the self-organizing, demiurgic imagination.[38] Schelling outlined such an ecology in his 1797 *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur (Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature)* as follows:

> The real side of this eternal act is revealed in nature; Nature in itself, or eternal nature, is spirit born into the objective, the essence of God introduced into form, so that only *in Him* does this introduction immediately conceive the other unity. Phenomenal nature, on the other hand, is the imagination *[Einbildung]* of essence in form appearing as such or in particularity, and hence is eternal nature, so far as it takes on for itself a body, and so presents itself through itself as particular form. Nature, in so far as it appears as nature, that is, this *particular* unity, is therefore as such already *outside* of the absolute, not nature as the absolute act of knowledge itself *(Natura naturans),* but Nature as the mere body or symbol thereof *(Natura naturata)*. (PN II, 67/50)

Philosophy will not satisfy itself with a mere reflection upon nature as if nature were an object facing the inquiring subject and, as such, for the thinker to master through scientific research and reflection. Schelling denigrated such reflection as a "spiritual sickness" (PN II, 13/11) in which nature is negated through determination. The freedom immanent within Nature is "immeasurable," calling us even "to pray to the veiled goddess."

For Schelling, the ground of nature resists all objectification. Thinking can no more master the ideality of nature than a particular constellation or Apollonian form of energy can be said to be formless Dionysian energy per se. Nature is "contradiction" that philosophy, if left to ratiocination, cannot tolerate and that only art can present *[darstellen]*. In the *System of Transcendental Idealism,* Schelling was quite explicit about the necessarily artistic character of the presentation and the aesthetic character of its founding intuition:

> If the aesthetic intuition *[ästhetische Anschauung]* is only the transcendental become objective, then it is self evident that Art is at the same time the single true and eternal *Organon* and document, which always and continuously verifies anew what philosophy cannot present externally, namely the Unconscious in acting and producing and its originary identity with consciousness. Art for this reason is the highest to the philosopher because it opens to him the most holy in which what is sundered in nature and history, and what in life and action, just as in thinking, must fly apart, burns as an eternal and originary unity in a flame. (TI, 299/231–32)

Schelling called for a new mythology in which the sciences are never completed, but rather "flow back" like "individual streams into the general ocean of *poesy*" (TI, 300/232), giving themselves over to no final determination, but exalting in the mystery of their ceaseless capacity to produce. The "return of science to poesy" (TI, 300/232), is the affirmation of the mystery of productivity in life's carnival of infinitely variegated masks. Artworks are like mon-

ads, reflecting the enigma of their origin, but in concrete, historical, and intimate ways. If one loses the singularity of the work, if one shields oneself from its sensations with abstract heuristics, then one is oblivious to the artwork's whisper of infinity. If one allows that infinity to roar so loud that it obliterates the artwork, then it can no longer whisper in its own, nonsubstitutable way. This is also the importance of Schelling's philosophical reflections on individual artworks. As Guy Davenport argues, "The arrogance of insisting that a work of art means what you think it means is a mistake that closes off curiosity, perception, the adventure of discovery."[39] Artworks are the possibility of radical new beginnings emerging from outside the range of any idea.

In this sense, the philosophy of art is at the same time the art of philosophy, the intertwining, born of wonder and love, of reflection and creation as well as concepts and percepts. This is not to say that philosophy merely reflects and that art merely creates. An artful philosophy—a philosophy full of aesthetic intuition (and therefore a nonreactionary philosophy)—also creates new concepts. Philosophical art—the complete work of art—reflects and marks the ground of creation in its singularly local way. An artful philosophy finds new ways to conceive heretofore unconceived percepts. A complete work of art, on the other hand, furnishes new percepts that nonetheless can mark their status as percepts. If one is not somehow already an artist, then one can not philosophize any more so than an artist can create without first being philosophical and in love with the wisdom that one will never formally possess.

Art and philosophy dance together and belong together without at the same time being *einerlei,* of the same kind. Otherwise, the painter would simply illustrate concepts and the philosopher would simply create without reflection. It is much harder to think that in reflection one also creates and that in creation one also reflects. It is harder still to think that in the work of art, both creative and reflective, one finds a way of loving all things and that in this moment, in the space that opens up between world and earth, bodies and soul, science and poesy, articulation and pregnant silence, Henry Miller was right to insist that "nothing is stale, flat and unpalatable unless it be our own power of vision."

6

Evil

Le mal n'est pas une histoire, c'est une puissance.
—Franz von Baader[1]

Wurzel alles Übels
Einig zu sein, ist göttlich und gut; woher ist die Sucht denn
Unter den Menschen, daß nur Einer und Eines nur sei?
Root of All Evil
To be united is divine and good; from where then is the addiction
Among humans that there are only just units and single things?
—Friedrich Hölderlin[2]

Mit dem Heilen zumal erscheint in der Lichtung des Seins das Böse. Dessen Wesen besteht nicht in der bloßen Schlechtigkeit des menschlichen Handelns, sondern es beruht im Bösartigen des Grimmes.

Evil appears in the clearing of Being at the same time with healing. Its essence does not consist of the mere badness of human action but rather in the malice and malignancy of fury.[3]
—Martin Heidegger, *Letter on Humanism*[4]

And if it is true that in the final stages of totalitarianism an absolute evil appears (absolute because it can no longer be deduced from humanly comprehensible motives), it is also true that without it we might never have known the truly radical nature of Evil.
—Hannah Arendt[5]

Rumor has it that in 1791, while Schelling was a precocious sixteen-year-old student at the Stift, the Swabian despot Duke Karl Eugen accused him of being a clandestine translator of the *Marseillaise*.[6] Indeed, the young Schelling and his comrades were almost drunk on a kind of Dionysian intimation of freedom. The French Revolution and its promise of Republicanism was in the air. Goethe and Kant had assured that philosophy would no longer be business as usual. In a letter to Hegel after Hegel had left the Stift (February 4, 1795), Schelling announced that "Freedom was the alpha and the omega of all philosophy" (M, 127).

So perhaps it should come as no surprise that when Schelling published the first volume of his collected works eighteen years later,[7] he should have included as a culminating piece the tremulous essay *Philosophische Untersuchungen über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit und die damit zusammenhängenden Gegenstände*. This would be the last major work published in his lifetime. In the foreword he announced that, with the exception of his 1804 essay *Philosophie und Religion,* he had so far limited himself to "investigations in the philosophy of nature." His published works, it could be inferred, had, with the aforementioned exception, concerned themselves with the implication of the real in the ideal. To use a classical analogy, Schelling's earlier investigations were like the Platonic dialogues, raising the concrete up to the level of the Good, just as the bewildered philosopher emerges out of the cave and confronts the glory of the sun of the Good. But what if, like Plotinus, one were to begin with the One, with the blazing sublimity of the Good, and move in the reverse direction? Rather than asking how the ideas lead to the Good, one would ask how the Good produces ideas. This is the turning point that the *Freedom* essay occasions. How does the ideal give rise to the real? How does the Good give rise to the True? How does such an origin claim the human *Wesen?* The negative philosophy always concludes with generalities about freedom. If philosophy were only to produce generalities, it could not think what was unique to human freedom, to the specific difference that the "human" makes to freedom. It is not simply that all things are generally free. When one reverses the direction of the analysis, freedom gives itself in non-generalizable, singular, ways. Humans, like all things, have a unique kind of freedom. "The present treatise is the first in which the author presents his concept of the ideal part of philosophy with full certainty" (I/7, 333).

I

Freedom is not an empty abstraction. Rather, the interplay of freedom and necessity complicate themselves in the living and freely developing "personality" of Being. Responding to the "often heard reproach" that his philosophy denied freedom its "personality" (that is, its historical particularity), Schelling

claimed that "in the Non-Ground *(Ungrund)* or indifference there is certainly no personality. But is the starting point therefore the Whole" (I/7, 412)? The "inquiries" referred to in the title *(Untersuchungen)* are not investigations into freedom per se but into a particular kind of intermediary circulation of freedom and necessity: *human freedom*. Logically speaking, the title of the book is a contradiction for *what* is human is precisely that, a *quidditas,* a determination, an εἶδος. On the other hand, freedom is in excess of any form. It is, again to borrow the Mahāyāna term, a formless form. It is the χώρα as the absolute subject of being and hence it cannot successfully be reified.[8] It opens up at the limit of the limit itself.

Addressing both his followers and detractors, Schelling claimed that it seems that only a "finished, concluded system" should have "adherents" (I/7, 334). However, up until this essay, Schelling claimed never to have offered such a system but rather to have "shown single sides of such a one" and "explained his writings as fragments of a whole" (I/7, 334). In order "to see their connection *[Zusammenhang]* would require a finer talent for perception than one finds among the intrusive followers and a better will than one finds among opponents" (I/7, 334). Schelling's present text, then, concerned itself with the connection or *Zusammenhang,* literally, the "hanging together," of these fragments. Schelling's followers, despite their good intentions, were too zealous to see the way in which bodies and animas, things and the concealed trace of their life, hang together, and his detractors did not want to see this connection.

As we have seen in chapter four, such seeing, which the intellectual intuition provides, is not a question of gawking at the abyss. It is an epiphany that alters fundamentally the experience of things. It does not given one an epistemic shortcut into otherwise concealed natures but rather is an experience of the animation of nature itself. The illusion of the atomism of things, of their status as discrete entities, as beings that own themselves, so to speak, is dispelled. The intuition of human freedom, moreover, does not just produce the negative or formal understanding that the human thing, like all things, is not just a thing, but an animated complication. Human freedom thought as the specifically human relationship to freedom demonstrates what is uniquely human about human freedom.

The task, then, is somehow to "see" the connective tissues of the whole. "It is time that the higher, or, moreover, the actual antithesis emerges, that of necessity and freedom with which the innermost center of philosophy comes to contemplation" (I/7, 333).[9] It is seeing in which the holding together of an irreconcilable opposition (real and ideal) at the heart of philosophy will somehow come to be seen in a specifically human, that is, *positive,* way.

In other words, Schelling had already announced in the foreward that the task of this text is to be found in the presentation of a center by which the belonging together of identity and difference can be thought in a positive

way. What is historically unique about the contradiction of *human* freedom? If the title has already announced the contradiction of human freedom, it has also announced that it is a philosophical investigation into the Being or *Wesen* of this contradiction. This *Inquiry* or *Investigation* concerns the *Wesen* of human freedom, that is, the connection that holds these two contesting forces together. *Wesen,* traditionally meaning "essence," cannot for Schelling mean the idea that names the identity of something. The *Wesen* holds together a thing (in this case, the human) and what contests thingliness (in this case, the freedom that contests the idea of humanity). The latter moves immediately to the absolutely abstract, to the continuous night in which all details are devoured. The human moves in the exact opposite direction, towards the specific character of this relationship. The *Wesen* holds them together as night and day, gravity and light. The text is a series of inquiries into a *Wesen* that has fractured itself into an opposition, yet which hangs together as this opposition. This *Wesen,* that which the text struggles to have come into consideration, that which Schelling somehow hopes will come to be "seen" (whatever "seen" will come to mean), is not a question of a philosophical anthropology any more than it is a question of psychology. The science of anthropology already assumes that the ἄνθρωπος is a thing to be studied. The science of psychology makes the same mistake about the ψυχή. It is rather the question of the *Wesen* of philosophy itself—a *Wesen* that cannot be rendered as a logical identity or ossified quiddity. "Hence, we . . . do not shun the contradiction. In fact, to the extent to which we are capable, we seek to grasp it well, even in its details" (AW, 321). The *Wesen* names the complication of freedom.

It is therefore also a question of presentation, of *Darstellung,* of how one brings forth the idea of freedom—in a specifically human way—even as its *ideatum* retreats. How does the abyss of freedom claim the human? Schelling confessed that, although he had attempted five years earlier in the *Philosophy and Religion* essay to present this *Wesen,* it has "certainly through the fault of the presentation *[Darstellung]* remained unclear" (I/7, 334). One could read this remark as Schelling's admission that the earlier essay was simply too murky and underdeveloped in its articulation and that the present essay is a much needed corrective. While this may to some extent be correct, there is a more radical hint to his remark. The "fault" of the first essay, expository in style, was precisely its very manner of presentation, namely a straightforward exposition. The *Wesen,* considered as the specifically human debt to its concealed barbarian principle, demands another relationship to presentation and, furthermore, if the question of this text is at the "center" of even philosophy itself, then philosophy must reconsider its commitment to certain traditional modes of presentation. The question of style is not frivolous. In these writings of Schelling's middle period (the *Freedom* essay, the *Clara, The Ages of the World*), Schelling seems ready almost to

explode, cautiously holding himself back so as not to be altogether unintelligible to his generation. "We must not misjudge our time" (AW, 206).

Yet, at least prima facie, the *Freedom* essay also appears to be a straightforward exposition. Yet, towards the end of the treatise, Schelling made the following remark in a footnote about the text's style:

> The author will also maintain in the future the course that was taken in the present treatise in which, although it lacks the exterior form of a dialogue, everything comes into being as in a dialogue *[wie gesprächsweise]*. Many things could have been more sharply determined and treated less casually. Many things could have been more expressly protected from misinterpretation. The author refrained from this in part intentionally. Whoever cannot or will not take it as such from him should take nothing whatsoever from him and seek other sources. (I/7, 410)

Schelling spoke here of the presentation of his treatise as one in which its subject is not presented from on high in an allegedly neutral expository style and by an author who is recording a completed project. Rather Schelling expressed the dialogical genesis of everything in the text. The writer composes from a particular perspective and *in medias res* within an unfolding drama still always to be completed. This dialogical demand, this indebtedness to the treatise's subject, does not grant Schelling authority over it. This writing, within a fluid context in which the *Wesen* can somehow emerge, does not grant Schelling the capacity to render it with sharp determinations. This dialogical humility knows that this is not a dialogue between equals because there is no parity among the interlocutors. The interlocutors are not *einerlei,* not of the same kind. A model of such an asymmetrical dialogue might be something like attempting to communicate with nature. Or speaking with animals, not as creatures to be trained for human use, but as animals per se. A more classical precedent might be Job's dialogue with the whirlwind. It is a dialogue between bodies and their animas, between the light and its concealed, indwelling darkness. It might be thought of as a dialogue of the fractured *Wesen* with itself, producing discontinuities without sublimation.

Within this dialogical storm, amidst the dissonance and disequilibrium of the *Wesen,* writing is always somewhat weather-beaten, unable to conquer the seas over which writing must travel. The will to the hard word and the unswerving determination, the bread and butter of the *Verstandesmensch,* will not only lead one astray, but those who would enter this kind of dialogue and who must make those kind of determinations should abandon Schelling's project altogether. "They should take nothing whatsoever from him and seek other sources" (I/7, 410). A strong contrast between two types emerges in the treatise. On the one hand, there is the dialogical word, always *in medias res,*

caught up within a mobile or "living" *Wesen,* that attempts to address this very *Wesen,* but can do so only through a kind of stammering, through incomplete determinations and a certain kind of turbidity that can never free itself from an integument in the living forces of darkness and obscurity. On the other hand, there are those who demand sharp distinction and exact definitions. They should, from the outset, abandon Schelling. Of course, there is little chance that they can recognize anything other than themselves anyway.

The articulation of this *Wesen* is a hanging together of opposites such that neither pole subsumes its opposite and such that the opposition, although preserved in a third, is not resolved *(aufgehoben)* by that third. Following Böhme, Schelling analyzed the birth of the real, which he equates with light, as emerging out of the depths of the utter darkness of the ideal. This emergence does not mean that the dark is overwhelmed by light but rather that the dark substitutes itself or betrays itself through contraction so that it can appear at all. Darkness must hold its full force back, so to speak, in order to appear. Hence, all appearance is betrayal and divine irony. It is the transfiguration *[Verklärung]* and thereby ironic revelation of the ideal. Time is always counterfeit time. "But since this principle, although transfigured as light, does not therefore cease to be fundamentally dark, there emerges in the person something higher, namely, spirit *[Geist]*" (I/7, 363). *Geist* is the conspiracy of dark (= soul) and light (= bodies). Because thinking can become aware of itself as transfigured darkness, thinking is the place where light can implicate itself in the darkness of its origin.

From the side of the real, *Geist* marks the capacity of thinking to become aware not only of its own dark ground, but also the dark ground within nature itself. And since thinking is akin to the relationship of the light of nature to the dark and superior powers of its origin (its subjectivity or the A^2), thinking is the place within nature that can implicate the clarity of nature in its mystery. Yet thinking has a tendency to flee from the nexus of forces and to take refuge in its own, lesser forces. Its anxiety before the dark, before death, drives it towards itself. In this sense, the person, as Schelling's Munich colleague Franz von Baader contended, "can unfortunately only stand under or over animals" (I/7, 373). Animals, driven by desire, remain in unity with the *Wesen*. They are nonreflective creatures of destiny. Only the person can think its freedom or fall to a depth lower than the animals by abdicating the thought. "Only in them (in the human) did God love the world" (I/7, 363). Only in the flight from the Center do humans become human, all too human. But they can also reflect not just upon the illusion of their discrete nature, but upon the cision that was their birth as well as the birth of all things. Humans, in abdicating the throne of humanity, can become the conscience of nature. "Nature is the first or Old Testament and hence things are still out of the Center and therefore under the law. The human is the beginning of a new alliance through which, as an intermediary, they are connected with God. God, after

the final cision *[Scheidung],* also accepts nature and makes it into itself. The human is therefore the redeemer of nature, towards which all of its archetypes aim. The Word, that is fulfilled in the person, is in nature as a dark, prophetic (not yet fully expressed) Word" (I/7, 411).

The human returns nature to its indwelling freedom by articulating its nascent silence. Humans express, like Prometheus, the freedom at the heart of the law and the divinity within nature. Through expression of the incipient word, nature is returned to God as an effulgent mask covering an inexhaustibly creative darkness. Yet nature is already more deeply in the Center and it does not, in a certain respect, need to be returned where it already is. Animal nature must be returned to the Center because it is the human that has first removed it or at least first been unable to recognize the Center within which everything else already lives. What distinguishes the human from all other differentia is not straightforwardly the λόγὸς. It is its faculty for good and evil, the fact that it is born anxious, already shunning the Center, and that it can return to the Center in such a way that it can think the aporia of the cision itself, nature's simultaneous falling away and coming back.

The anxiety before freedom drives humans back to themselves. It stokes the fires of the *conatus'* self-obsession. At the same time it also gives rise to the fear of death because anxiety also makes it possible to know death as the termination of oneself, and this is, to use Heidegger's term, the *Grundstimmung* of the *conatus*. Anxiety drives human freedom away from its freedom and towards the narcissism of something like a mirror stage, in which the human as such becomes the point of reference for the Good. Self-interest and its fear of death, that is, its fear of leaving its interests unfulfilled, gives rise to what Jacques Lacan once called "a consciousness of the other that can be satisfied only by Hegelian murder."[10]

This capacity to become aware of the darkness within light is also the capacity to express it in the Word. Or, to follow the metaphor further, it is the capacity to bring to expression the silence within language. "The eternal spirit expresses *[spricht aus]* the unity or word in nature. The expressed (real) word is only in the unity of light and darkness (vowel and consonant)" (I/7, 364). The poetic word, from the perspective of the real, is the finite symbol of the infinite in so far as it is a sound that implicates its indwelling silence. This is the problem of "expressionism" which Deleuze claimed was central to Spinoza's philosophy, and although Schelling did not articulate Spinoza's project in these terms, it is hard to imagine that the force of Spinoza's thinking, upon which Schelling relied heavily, did not influence him in this direction. It is also the case that both the allusions to the vowel of light and the consonant of darkness, as well as an explicitly expressionistic discourse, can also be found in the writings of Jakob Böhme.[11]

In fact, the *Freedom* essay is filled with phrases from various writings of Böhme. One might further reflect that such a motif is not new even with

Böhme. It is a problem already written into the practice of the Hebrew written language (consonants without vowels). In fact, the tacit force of the *Kabbalah*'s language is hard to miss in Böhme—it is even faintly detectable in Spinoza. This motif is also operative in several of the Platonic dialogues (including the *Theatetus* 202a–203e, the *Cratylus* 424c, and the *Sophist* 253a–d) in which Socrates considers that consonants (literally, with sound) need a vowel (literally, its own sound) in order to be heard. For Schelling, the poetic word is the vowel, that is, the finite, audible or legible construction, that puts its own legibility or audibility under erasure, so to speak, in order to "symbolize" a powerful silence, the consonant, that otherwise would not be heard through the din of discursive activity.[12] On the other hand, the ideal silence hears itself in the poetic but still real word.

If one were to trace this allusion back to Böhme, one might say that in creation, the pure vowels of the Godhead are silenced (for creation is the contraction of the divine vowels into the silence of isolated consonants) and in their muteness now demand human vowels to reexpress them. Hence, the divine vowels become the silent consonants of nature, which in turn need new vowels, new modes of speaking, to activate their expressivity. For Schelling, then, one could infer that the poet-philosopher, the child of the Fall of divine vowels into the mute consonants of nature, is the one who waits for the word to deliver the oblivion of nature back to its vital goodness. We are awaiting the poetic, the word that brings nature back to life, but, again, "we must not misjudge our time" (AW, 206).

With the poetic word and its capacity to signal the human being's two extreme possibilities—to rise above the animal with the poetic word or to fall below the animal in the din of theoretical reactivity—instantiations of these two forces can be seen with more clarity. In fact, Schelling ended the preface with a dramatic distinction between these two types. Addressing those who, "open or hidden, have attacked the author," Schelling responded with the following conditional: "If the complete mastery of one's subject makes possible its free and richly artistic development, then the artificial screw threads of polemic cannot be the form of philosophy" (I/7, 335). The subject of philosophy is freedom but its mastery does not grant thinking control over it. Rather, it enables thinking to expand beyond itself in the proliferation of artistic activity.

Such thinking does not isolate freedom in a single spot and defend it against all contrary positions but rather attempts to lead all discourses beyond their self-contained provincialism back into dialogue with their irreducible remainder. It allows monads to complicate themselves. This, in turn, makes possible the free use of the various sciences beyond the artificial walls of their disciplinary self-identification. Philosophy works to empower, not to contain.[13] On the other hand, polemical thinking moves in the opposite direction. It focuses its energy on a single spot and, like a screwdriver, works to pene-

trate its target, leaving behind only threads. It seeks to root itself and settle in a specific place, while a philosophy of freedom is restless and nomadic, living and building everywhere. This is the typological difference between the activity of health and the reactivity of sickness. Health continually supplants itself by overflowing into a superabundant center. Sickness cathects its energies around its trauma and hence takes them out of the general circulation of the conspiracy of life. Schelling followed "the splendid view" of his Munich colleague Franz Xaver von Baader who, a year earlier in an essay published in Schelling's *Jahrbücher der Medizin als Wissenschaft,* wrote that "the drive towards knowledge had the greatest analogy with the procreative drive" (I/7, 414). The love of nature in its eternal "naturing," so to speak, incessantly multiplies knowledge. It does not reduce it to sectarian strongholds, little forts and bellicose paradigms that war with all others for the status of centrality.[14]

Let us be as clear as we can about this. Schelling's remarks about polemicism are not merely matters of preference, or clarifications of his own stylistic proclivities. Rather it is a question of the possibility of philosophy itself, that activity that, despite its emancipatory moments, has had its overwhelming share of dogmatism and slave morality. What other discipline has spoken so much of freedom and the Good and yet produced so much slave morality, so much fundamentalism, so much aggressive reactivity not only of individual egos, but of the egos of ideas? Perhaps there are other disciplines that have similarly failed, but this is not a contest in which philosophy should take pride.

It is rare that the question of the *egoism of ideas* is even heard as a question. Is it not the work of ideas, their natural movement, so to speak, to speak for themselves, to be themselves? Yet, as we have seen, the exclusivity of such a movement can only emerge in obliviousness to nature. In the eclipse of nature, the movement of philosophy can be likened to the search for the philosopher's stone. There is *one* theory, *one* truth, *one* foundation, *one* activity, *one* language, *one* insight, *one* perspective, and *one* knockdown account that shall fulfill the promise of philosophy. If I find that truth, that master determination, my egoism, as well as the egoistic demands of that determination, must bare their teeth against all competing determinations. When one thinks of the wounded egos that finally in their rancor put Socrates to death, one realizes that these people too often are our colleagues and too often assume curatorship of philosophy. For Schelling, this was not an unfortunate historical accident. It is intrinsic to the ineluctable fallenness of philosophy and thereby belongs to philosophy's most difficult problem, namely, the faculty for good and evil. In a sense, the curatorial aggressivity of the *Verstandesmensch* stems from the problem of evil, a problem haunting philosophy as the problem of philosophy's perennially threatened existence.

For Schelling, philosophy does not proceed from scarcity, and thereby does not seek a single site of fulfillment, because its lack, its *unendlicher Mangel an*

Sein, is its wealth. The dark ground does not ask us to transpose its generosity with the comparative stinginess of finitude. Nature per se does not actively affect this transposition. Human freedom—not to be confused with human voluntarism—takes flight from the dark ground of imagination and represses the question of nature. The dark precursor is the forgotten ground within any ground, the repressed *Ab-grund* in every *Grund,* an irreducible remainder that reverses the need for a philosopher's stone, the need that is always a symptom of the loss of health, the condition of distress.

In the *Explicatory Treatises* Schelling distanced himself not only from the civil servants of the truth (those for whom philosophy is just another job) but also from those "who dread only the disruption of the comfortable tranquility wherein—consistent with the limitations of their nature—they have existed so formidably" (I/1, 346/62). Philosophy begins with the Great Doubt that gives rise to the Great Death, which is itself, seen from another angle, the rebirth of the Great Compassion. The anamnesis in which nature again becomes an infinitely fecund question emerges from the ruins of the *conatus*. As Hyperion told Bellarmin, "*Wir sterben, um zu leben,* we die in order to live."[15]

Beyond the polemical circumscription of thinking and its division of thought into isolated camps and disciplines, Schelling hoped that the time had come for a maximization of spirit. As Schelling concluded his prefatory remarks: "But even more do we wish that the spirit of a common striving continues to consolidate itself and that the sectarian spirit *[Sektengeist]* that too often rules over the Germans does not inhibit gaining knowledge and insight whose consummate development appeared determined for the Germans and was perhaps never nearer to them as now" (I/7, 335).

It is striking that an essay on the flight from the Center into the periphery of self-obsession insists that the problem of evil is inseparable from the problem of sectarian thinking. As we take refuge in our various schools, in our various positions and isms, as we march towards the communities that will have been the right ones, as the furious egos of philanthropists partake in the same root as self-righteous terrorists,[16] we see that the problem of evil is inextricably linked to the problem of the ego's narcissism. Even Hegel, despite the remarkable elasticity of his own project, dismissed his former friend and accelerated his *own* career by denigrating Schelling to a moment of Spirit's history that is *schon aufgehoben*. Hegel's insistence on his own admittedly fluid position is a refusal of death. Hegel's Spirit always lives to tell of its encounter with alterity and profits anew from it. It will not die of its own antinomies. For Schelling, all philosophical positions, that grand history of the great Western isms, is a history of clotting, of inhibitions, of stoppages, and hence of traumas, of sickness, of evil. Even Hegel's *Geist* is sectarian and hence, for Schelling, oblivious to nature. Nowhere does the gap between Hegel's camp of absolute knowing and Schelling's silence seem more dramatic.

II

It is obvious to any reader of Kant that the three great pillars of the critical philosophy make Schelling's philosophy possible—despite Schelling's contention that Kant had the right conclusions, but not the right premises. But the *Freedom* essay itself is a more specific confrontation with Kant's *Religion innerhalb der grenzen der bloßen Vernunft, Philosophy within the Limits of Reason Alone* (1793, second edition 1794),[17] which appeared three years after the third *Critique*.[18] The question of human freedom is inseparable from the question of radical evil.

Kantian critical philosophy was, like Schelling's philosophy, fundamentally concerned with freedom. As we have seen, Kant needs the idea of freedom to make sense of moral claims. Kant had already argued in the first *Kritik* that without freedom in the sense of personal agency, the idea of responsibility would be unintelligible. If I cannot choose x, I cannot be said to have been responsible to have chosen x, that is, that I *ought* to have chosen x (A554/B 582–A 555/B 583). Yet the record of human history anecdotally suggests that humans are so rotten to the core that they must be incapable of acting responsibly. If one contemplates the extraordinary cruelties that humans have so dramatically perpetrated, it is tempting to throw up one's hands and conclude that humans are evil.

Kant acknowledged that John the Evangelistst's lament that "the world lies in evil" is as old as history (RV, 157/15). After all the brutality that humans inflict on each other and on their environment, it is hard to disagree with Kant when he confesses that one must avert one's eyes from the actions of our fellow humans or risk the vice of misanthropy (RV, 173/29). Kant catalogued deeply disturbing acts of violence as well as incidents of *Schadenfreude* in which cruelties are committed for their own sake, "without the slightest advantage" (RV, 172/28). Furthermore, Kant knew that we lived in a world so incessantly bellicose that the mere prospect of world peace is "generally ridiculed as *Schwärmerei*" (RV, 174/30). Despite the anecdotal nature of such evidence, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that humans are not somehow naturally evil.

Yet one can also cite, rare as they may be, great and selfless acts love. Is it the case that we were somehow born innately good and then were spectacularly corrupted? Or are we not, as a crushing mountain of the most odious evidence seems to suggest, intrinsically evil?

Kant rejected as false both terms of the disjunction and thereby dismissed the disjunction itself. One cannot constitute the nature of the human subject from any amount of anthropological observation. The human is neither fundamentally good nor fundamentally evil but is rather fundamentally free. Good or evil results from the nature of the maxims that come forth from this intrinsically obscure first principle. "If we therefore say that the human is by

nature good or that the human is by nature evil, then this means no more than that the human contains a (to us unfathomable *[unerforschlich]*) first principle *[Grund]* of the adoption of good maxims or of the adoption of evil (unlawful) maxims" (RV, 160/17).

What is one to make of this primal ground, this first principle, which cannot be fathomed or penetrated and which admits of no *Forschung,* no research or investigation? While it may produce both good and evil volition, it is itself neither good nor evil nor reducible to any nature whatsoever. The darkness of this ground, however, is the same darkness that can be held accountable for the nature of the maxims that it wills. One cannot hold nature culpable when the human "is" evil nor can one credit it when a human is good. The human, that child of the dark ground, is the "sole originator *[Urheber]*" (RV, 160/17).

Although one cannot characterize this dark ground by inferring its a priori qualities from a posteriori anthropological and anecdotal observations and research, Kant argued that one can infer certain qualities of humanity's dark heart by an a priori consideration of the concept of evil (RV, 175/31). In pursuing these qualities, Kant carved a subtle distinction between an *Anlage,* a predisposition, and a *Hang,* a propensity *(propensio)*. A *propensio* is "the subjective ground of the possibility of a tendency *[Neigung]* (habitual desire, *concupiscentia*), insofar as it is altogether accidental for humanity" (RV, 167/24). An *Anlage,* on the other hand, is not accidental, but rather constitutes an essential property of the dark ground. One could only speak of an *Anlage* as perforce innate because it necessarily belongs to the nature of the first principle and never, like a *propensio,* of its possibility of being acquired. Freedom, which does not admit of research, is capable of good and evil, that is, it has a faculty for good and evil, but, considered in itself, it remains beyond good and evil. The Freedom (or one might say, the Good) beyond good and evil has a propensity for evil, although such a propensity tells us nothing of the nature of the primordial Good of which evil is one of its possible expressions.

Kant argued that the dark principle does not have an *Anlage* for evil or for good because a specific property contradicts the idea of freedom. The dark principle cannot be necessitated by the demands made in attributing to it a specific nature. It is free from the qualities that it inaugurates, including good or evil maxims. One can speak, however, of an accidental quality (that is, it does not necessarily belong to the idea of freedom) that did not have to be, but somehow is. The idea of freedom does not contain the idea of evil, but the concept of evil a priori speaks of the primal ground's propensity for evil. It would make no sense to think of this propensity as something physical because that would contradict freedom (RV, 170/26). Rather "it must spring from freedom" and hence it "precedes any deed" (RV, 170/26). Freedom is the free origin of good and evil, in itself neither good nor evil. It is the one expressing itself as the two, but not such that the two characterize the

one, as if, as it will be with Schelling, the one, wholly without predicates, negates or withdraws in order to self-predicate. Freedom, the "indifference" prior to good and evil, "has no predicate except precisely that of having no predicates *[Prädikatlosigkeit],* without thereby being nothing or a non-thing *[Unding]*" (I/7, 407).

Kant called this propensity the "evil heart" of human freedom. Kant spoke of this heart as *verderbten,* as corrupted and depraved. There is something odious in the human heart. *Verderbtheit,* now a somewhat dated term in German language, is related to the verb *verderben,* to spoil, to go bad, to putrefy, to become ruined. In fact, in the first edition of the *Religion* essay, Kant interchanged this word with the past participle *verdorben,* rotten, putrid, ruined, and in both editions he speaks of the "evil heart" as "the putrid stain of our kind *[der faule Fleck unserer Gattung]*" (RV, 178/34). The language of rotting and putrefaction, even in its moral sense of corruption, speaks of something that was once alive but that, in some way, has been cut off from its source of life and is now decaying. It is as if freedom expresses itself in such a way that it has the propensity to cut itself off from itself and express itself only in dead and dying ways, in slavish and subjected ways. Freedom has the propensity, so to speak, to kill itself, to ruin itself, to fall into putrefaction. In this sense, one could already say that freedom gets all turned around, expressing itself as slavery. Life somehow perverts itself and thereby expresses itself as rot.

There is something rotten at the root, even though this rot cannot be properly said to be a predicate of this "to us unknown root." It is the root's inessential propensity for putrefaction. It is in this sense that Kant speaks of the "evil heart" as a "radical evil," as a fundamental tendency for freedom, so to speak, to spoil. "This evil is *radical* because it depraves the ground of all maxims" (RV, 176/32). Evil is at the root, depraving and corrupting it. In this sense, Kant claims that one cannot extirpate *(vertilgen)* this rot that affixes to the root (RV, 176/32). Evil affixes to the heart like a disease, turning the order of its movements topsy-turvy. Since the heart cannot be found, the disease cannot be removed at the root. *Vertilgen* means to exterminate, as in a weed, to remove by its root, but how does one prune in a garden that one cannot find? The root of evil, which is itself neither good nor evil, cannot be extirpated. The best one can hope for is to attenuate its contagion.

But how does one get what cannot be cured to go into remission, so to speak? How does life freely struggle to attenuate its own rot? The word that Kant gave to name this attenuation is *überwiegen*. Knowing how difficult and thankless the burden of translation is, it is not my wont to pick on other translations. But it is nonetheless critical to note that, contrary to what is put forth in the first English translation of the *Religion* essay, *überwiegen* does not mean "overcome"—for evil cannot be overcome. It cannot even be located. *Überwiegen* means to keep the upper hand on, to attempt to maintain an advantage

over, to have a greater counterweight than, to outweigh and thereby predominate. It is to turn the rot of freedom against itself by siding with freedom and its preservation in the moral law, even though this remains an ongoing struggle with decay.

Kant articulated three levels of freedom's decadence. The first level is "fragility *(fragilitas, Gebrechlichkeit)*." When Paul in Romans 8:15 lamented that "I wanted to, but I did not," he expressed the fragility of the heart and its propensity to give into temptation and want what it does not want. The frail heart wants what is not good, as if it were good, even though it also knows that it is not. The second level is "impurity *(impuritas, improbitas, Unlauterkeit)*." Actions sometimes require incentives beyond the intrinsic goodness of the maxim, and hence duty is not always adhered to for its own sake. The final and most comprehensive level is malice or malignancy *(vitiositas, pravitas, Bösartigkeit)*. This is the domain of passions like *Schadenfreude* and the joy of cruelty. It is the rot that attends to the heart in which one acts not for the sake of the Good, but for the sake of its opposite (RV, 168–69/24–25).

Malice, an "evil heart," is the *Verkehrtheit des Herzens,* the topsy-turvy propensity of the heart. *Verkehrtheit,* with its root sense of a turning *(kehren),* is a kind of perversity, in its etymological sense of turning the wrong way. The deviance of evil is foremost a deviance of the heart, in which it reverses and thereby perverts (*umkehren* and thereby *verkehren*) the moral order (RV, 169/25). Such a reversal therefore calls for predominance, *Überwiegung,* in the form of a turning back around or a conversion. It is the call for a *Wiederkehr zu dem Guten* (RV, 184/39), a turning back towards the Good. It is a reversal or conversion of the direction of the heart.

This topsy-turvy or perverse propensity is the propensity to proceed from self-love *[Selbstliebe],* which is "precisely the source of everything evil," (RV, 185/41). The source of this topsy-turvy inclination to decay is self-love, narcissism, the *conatus* and its endless arrays of self-interest. Perversity follows from "the motivating force of self-love and its inclination towards the condition of compliance to the moral law" (RV, 176/32). Rather than making self-love subordinate to the moral law, the moral law becomes subordinated to self-love. Freedom, in expressing itself as things, has, even for Kant, the inclination for that thing to want itself, and thereby to turn against its mother. This therefore calls for a conversion, a turning back, of the child back to the lost mother that emerges in the ruins of identity's narcissism.

III

For Schelling, even though Kant is a profound opening to a reconsideration of freedom and its relationship to evil, he also belongs to modernity's obliviousness to nature. Perversion is not simply a personal problem to be solved by

the useful fictions of religion. Such a formulation betrays Kant's own amnesia of nature, despite his proximity to the question. Kant suffered from the same problem that he does in the *Kritik der Urteilskraft,* namely, the reduction of the question of nature to the question of human subjectivity. For Kant, the beauty and sublimity of nature play out exclusively in the theater of human subjectivity, not in the theater of nature's absolute subjectivity. As we have seen, the youthful Schelling had already contended that Kant had many of the right conclusions but the premises were lacking. Among the missing premises is an engagement with the barbarian principle of nature. Kant's "needs" drove him to attempt to domesticate it. For Schelling one comes to realize that one is assigned by nature and in dying to nature and therefore reversing the inversion, one is born into love. Such a *Wiederkehr* of the *Verkehrte,* such a turning back again of the turned around, is born in the temporality of the Good. The discovery of my own evil, the feverish life of the *conatus,* makes it possible to think the Good as what I discover *now* as what I have already lost. This is the lost and always *past* origin in every origin, or more intimately, the lost origin in my origin, in my feverish life.

Arguing strongly against a long tradition in which evil is a semblance produced by privation, Schelling maintained that evil was the manifestation of a positive force. This is not to say that evil is a discrete object, but it is also not to deny the force that engenders it. There is no such *thing* as evil, yet it is the result of a positive, *reactive* force. It is not just the result of the limits specific to human finitude. The "concept of evil rests on a positive perversity *[Verkehrtheit]* or reversal of principles" (I/7, 367). Note that what is positive is not evil itself, but the force of perversity which produces evil. Schelling at one point calls this positive perversity within the conspiracy an "ataxia of forces" (I/7, 370), a disarrangement or disorder of the forces. In the same way that in the disease of ataxia muscles cannot be coordinated, the forces get turned around and cannot move in a coordinated fashion. Evil is the positive, albeit reactive, fruit of uncoordinated forces, working at cross-purposes to the potentially catastrophic detriment of the conspiracy.

The idea of evil as a symptom of a monstrous ataxia, as the feverishly reactive disordering of the forces, is largely absent in the Western tradition. One the one hand, most philosophies, with a few exceptions like the daringly pantheistic Kabbalistic tradition (I/7, 412), cannot think evil positively because they cannot conceive the positive foundation by which the simulacrum of evil gets its reactionary force. Modernity, on the other hand, cannot think evil at all, save for pitiful descents into dogmatism, even to the extent that now the "philanthropist denies evil" and the Good becomes more a question of the "decorum proper to mastering animal impulses" (I/7, 371). Evil becomes just another word for bad taste.

The tradition, in its insistence on a *privatio* (στέρησις, *Beraubung*) theory of evil, which, in not predicating evil of God, denies evil as anything but

the mere "imperfection of the creature" (I/7, 367). Evil rests on something "merely passive, on limitation, lack, privation" (I/7, 368). Schelling rightly cited Leibniz as one who, despite his greatness, was limited by his inability to affirm, as did Spinoza, the sovereignty of God. Constricted by the law of Goodness, God was not free for evil and hence evil appears as the result of human finitude. In a *Vindication of God's Justice Reconciled with His Other Perfections and All His Actions* (1710), Leibniz argued that human corruption, despite God's "knowledge, permission, and concurrence," could not result from "some despotic power of God." Rather it originates in "the aboriginal imperfection and weakness of the creatures, which is the reason why sin has its place in the best possible series of events."[19] Leibniz had already been quite clear about this in his *Dialogue on Human Freedom and the Origin of Evil* (1695), arguing that, "In the same way that an infinite circle is impossible, since any circle is bounded by its circumference, an absolutely perfect created thing is also impossible."[20] Evil belongs to privation as the sine qua non of creatureliness. It is the force of finitude itself.

For Schelling, evil is not a default residue of finitude. "Evil does not follow from the principle of finitude for itself but from the dark or selfish principle that has broken from the intimacy with the center" (I/7, 372). Finitude alone is impotent. Rather, it is the propensity of the creaturely, as the child of the super-creaturely, to shun the abyss of its origin and the abyss of its future and move towards itself and affirm the presence only of itself. Evil is the force of the *conatus*. Things feverishly move away from their nonthingly center. "Each being primarily wants itself and this self-wanting is later precisely the basis of egoity, that through which a being withdraws itself or cuts itself off from other things and that through which it is exclusively itself, and therefore is, from the outside and in relation to everything else, negating" (AW, 224). This is not an active force, an expansive movement of the conspiracy of life. Rather, it is the *reactive* propensity within freedom to move at cross-purposes with itself. Reacting to the center, things sever themselves from the conspiracy and feverishly swell up, demanding more and more of their own separated center.[21] As Schelling was to articulate this in *The Ages of the World:*

> Particular things are at first created by the elevation of that which does not have being. By dint of the selfhood aroused in them, these things now necessarily strive to get away from the attracting force, from the universal center. Hence turgor follows from this. Turgor is the eccentric evasion from all sides, which becomes more violent the more the principle of selfhood is inflamed within things. (AW, 326)

Turgor, turgescence, tumescence, the swelling that comes from the isolation of the part from the general economy of forces, is a state of feverish severance, of self-quarantining from the conspiracy of forces. This is not something that

humans decide to do. It is a propensity of freedom itself, its inclination to cut itself off from its creatures and, inversely, for creatures to cut themselves off from freedom and affirm only themselves in a great desert of unremitting self-presence. Of course, a particular fever cannot become increasingly feverish indefinitely. Eventually, it will cut itself off from the general circulation of forces and die. "The flash of life *[Lebensblick]* illuminating the depths of darkness within every single person ignites into a consuming fire within the sinner" (I/7, 392). This is the irony of the perverse life of the periphery seeking *conatus*. The more it affirms its own life exclusively, the more it expedites its demise. The more a fever wants to be a fever, the more feverish it becomes. The more feverish it becomes, the more it destroys itself.[22]

In the *Stuttgart Lectures* Schelling defined temperature as "electricity" that itself is "polarity or opposition between production and product, activity and passivity."[23] In the moment of inflammation, the ebb and tide of the electric body is disrupted and the flow of energy is exclusively contractive—much in the same way that a wound cathects on a body's vital energies. The wound draws the energies towards a single area and thereby withdraws those energies from general circulation. If the wound cannot somehow heal, even though it might remain a scar, then it will die, removed from circulation with the whole. On the other hand, it is only in the disruption of electrical maximization that loss announces itself. The wound, teetering on extinction, is a call to the body electric—an anamnestic attraction to a lost health that has announced itself through its absence:

> Because God in its existence can neither be disrupted nor even less sublimated *[aufgehoben],* it follows that just as in the necessary correspondence that takes place between God and its basis, so too the flash of life *[Lebensblick]* illuminating the depths of darkness within every single person ignites into a consuming fire within the sinner. In the same way, when a single member or system within a living organism retreats out of the whole, out of the unity and conspiracy *[Konspiration]* itself, which it now opposes, it is felt *[empfindet]* as fire (= fever) and as inflamed by inner embers. (I/7, 392)

The creature strays from the cision and thereby disrupts the electrical ebb-flow of the *Wesen*. In evil, the flow of the ideal into the real cannot ebb because the latter arrests it and ossifies it. As such, evil cathects upon the complicated energy of the *Wesen*. In this cathexis and this severance from the "conspiracy," in this inflammation and sickness, the Whole (the Center) is sundered and, since there is no Whole, there is no longer the conflict that comprised its life. As such, there can be no actual life in the periphery, only death.

An inflamed and feverish member cannot expand indefinitely. Eventually it must, to borrow Bataille's language, expend or waste its accumulations

(there will always be more to expend than the *conatus* can use for its own preservation and enhancement), or it will be catastrophically consumed by its own wealth.[24] The relentless movement of the A^1, the unrepentant movement of creation as the fall from freedom that is therefore the refusal of freedom, the cathexis of energy into a single site, results in an over accumulation of energy. At this point, there is either death (severance from the conspiracy) or a release of tumescence, the exploding of the turgor of egoism. This, for the hapless and half-dead *Verstandesmensch,* is the onset of utter madness within her or his little empire of knowledge. This is the collapse of the ego, not into philosophical ecstasy, but into the orgiastic abandon of the Maenads. This is the destructive return of the Center, the frenzied reassertion of the A^2, of the angry Elohim annihilating all idols and the merciless Good shattering all truths. This is Śiva the Destroyer and Kālī the terrible, collecting human heads. This is the emergence of Dionysus out of the corpse of Apollo and thereby without the prophylactic shield of Apollo and the realm of form. This is the "murky and wild enthusiasm that breaks out in self-mutilation or, as with the priests of the Phrygian goddess, auto-castration" (I/7, 357) that Schelling warned about in the opening pages of the *Freedom* essay. This is apocalyptic *Schwärmerei*.

Schelling described the explosion of the madness of freedom within the carefully guarded walls of the ego's fortress with one of the more remarkable categories in the history of Western Philosophy, namely "the orgasm of forces." The Greek root of the word "orgasm" itself stems from τό ὄργᾰνον, an organ or tool. In the orgasm of forces, the organ swells, but it cannot hold onto itself and it explodes in a frenzy of excitement. "Hence, the contraction gives rise to its exact opposite, and gives rise to nothing less than to incessant excitement, the orgasm of all forces" (AW, 320). All erectile organs, female as well as male, human as well as nonhuman, sentient as well as nonsentient, explode in the frenzied excitement of their demise.

This discussion of fever and tumescence, sickness and evil, does not mean that evil is a hypostatized and discrete force locked in an eternal and Manichean combat with the hypostatized and discrete force of the Good. Nor does it mean that sickness is its own force per se that invades like a foreign contaminant the proper forces of health per se. Sickness is not an alien force opposed to life. It is another, albeit perverse, form of life.

The model of sickness that operates in Schelling's philosophy is similar to the model that Georges Canguilhem articulates in *The Normal and the Pathological* (1943).[25] Conventional models of sickness tend to fall into one of two camps. One model proceeds from a model of health and protects health against the foreign invasion of contamination and illness. "Disease enters and leaves man as through a door" (NP, 39). The other model, which Canguilhem attributes to the Greeks, assumes that there is a harmony that is upset and the role of medicine is to return the body to its equilibrium (NP, 40). Both mod-

els are polemical and both assume that the pathological is the opposite of the normal, just as sickness is the polemical opposite of health.

Yet to get either of these two models to work, one must first have a definite sense of what constitutes the normal and healthy body and therefore by contradistinction what either defiles or confuses it. For Canguilhem, as well as for Schelling, one does not begin with any such understanding of health (as purity or as equanimity and homeostasis or as anything else) and thereby seek to protect it against the incursion of disease. Rather, it is disease that makes evident that health is always what one has already lost. We begin fallen from health, always thinking it in arrears, and never in advance, of sickness. Pathology is not antilife, but rather *"another way of life"* (NP, 89)—perhaps one that emerges as the impossibility of health or perhaps one that continues to extend the possible range of health. "Diseases are new ways of life" (NP, 100) that a posteriori reveal more of the bodies heretofore inhibited possibilities. "Disease reveals normal functions to us at the precise moment when it deprives us of their exercise" (NP, 101). One learns more about hearing when, after losing one's hearing, one reflects upon what it was to have been able to hear. The allegedly "normal" body is oblivious to its habits and assumes that the body, when healthy, is simply doing what the body is supposed to do.

Canguilhem, like Schelling, dared the thought of the ideality of bodies, that the organs have a range of life that exceeds the understanding's knowledge and control. Organs proceed silently, enjoying a secret life of organs, so to speak. Only in the anguish of disease does the secret life of organs mysteriously intimate itself without, thereby, surrendering itself to a science of organs.

> Disease reveals normal functions to us at the precise moment when it deprives us of their exercise. . . . If health is life in the silence of the organs, then, strictly speaking, there is no science of health. Health is organic innocence. It must be lost, like all innocence, so that knowledge may be possible. Physiology is like all science, which, as Aristotle says, proceeds from wonder. But the truly vital wonder is the anguish caused by disease. (NP, 101)

When Canguilhem speaks of health as an "organic innocence" which must be lost in order for there to be knowledge, he makes an intriguing connection between health and the Fall. Only in the fallenness of illness, so to speak, does health emerge as a lost origin. When one recovers one's health, one does not thereby know exactly what it is that one has recovered. When we say that we are getting healthier, we really do not understand where it is that we are going. We can say that we are recovering our hearing, or the use of our arms, or our equilibrium, but this does not thereby mean that we know what it means to be healthy. There is only knowledge of health in sickness, but this knowledge does not thereby allow us to constitute the proper range of health.

It is always still to come as what is only thinkable as what has passed. It was in this sense that Nietzsche spoke of the *große Gesundheit,* the great health, as that which "one does not merely have but also acquires continuously, and must acquire because one gives it up again and again, and must give it up" (GS, aphorism 382).[26]

It was in this sense that Schelling maintained that there is no health or sickness per se (as if these were discrete entities) any more so than there is good or evil per se. Health becomes thinkable as what has been lost in sickness, the lost origin concealed within the ataxia of forces that is sickness. "Therefore each *Wesen* can only become revealed in its opposite, love only in hate, unity only in strife" (I/7, 373). In this sense, sickness would be the inversion of health within health itself. It is not a moving away from health, but rather an ataxia within health that turns health against itself. The soul of sickness, the opposite force, the ideal and incomprehensible force, concealed within the ataxia of sickness, is health, in the same way that Schelling claimed that "the soul of all hate is love" (I/7, 401). Health is the indivisible remainder of sickness, the unthinkable soul within sickness, just as love is topsy-turvy hate and hate is perverse love.

This is a refusal of a Manichean universe in which real good fights a real evil just as much as it is a refusal of the Enlightenment's inability to locate a vital difference between good and evil. A discourse of moral sentiments as tepid as a physics without value judgments is stalled. Yet, as was the case with Kant, one cannot speak of evil per se, as a freestanding force that stands in possible relation to a good per se. Evil is not something positive. The positive force is the perversion within the *Ungrund,* within freedom, that tends towards its own impossibility. "Evil is not a being *[Wesen],* but rather a non-being *[Unwesen]* that only has a reality in opposition but not one in itself" (I/7, 410). Evil is a kind of simulacrum, a ghost without an original, an *Unwesen,* or *Scheinbild des Lebens,* a "semblance of life" (I/7, 366), which, like sickness, "totters between being and not-being" (I/7, 367). Sickness haunts health just as health is the lost yet emerging background of sickness.

Loss therefore reveals both the gift-nature of health and the inability to *possess* good health or simply to *be* in good health. Health does not belong to us. We belong to health. In the same way that all living is also always already a dying, health and sickness form a complication, a conspiracy. Nietzsche's "great health" is always still to come and always lost and acquired anew just as in the conspiracy of health and sickness, untold new healths are always still to come. Yet every health is also implicated in sickness. "The primordial ground *[Urgrund]* towards existence continues to have an effect *[fortwirkt]* in evil, just as health still continues to have an effect in sickness" (I/7, 404). The verb *fortwirken* indicates that both the Good and health continue to have an effect. They are the haunting and lingering presence of an absent counterforce amidst that which holds sway.

In this sense, extreme evil can reveal that all along I too was evil, albeit in petty, heretofore tacit ways. The September 11 violence revealed—by way of clarifying contrast—to many people that they are cruel in smaller ways. Great cruelty made it possible for me to see my countless petty cruelties. The experience of evil can also lead some to the phenomenon of nonjudgment, to the birth of patience, in the refusal of the prerogative of pure victimhood in which I find myself simply innocent. Rather the disparity in the quantity of violence can draw me away from my own pettiness. It is a kind of Great Death for the living. In the experience of sickness and evil, we find ourselves put into question. Guilt emerges in the revelation of moral sickness in which one knows that one belongs to health in such a way that one has also always already betrayed it and lost it.[27]

In this way, Heidegger was right to insist in *Die Frage nach der Technik* (1953)[28] that the age of technology moves to put all of nature so much at our disposal that the ego itself will no longer come into question. For Heidegger, technology conceals the inability of this worldview to ask fundamental questions about its own grounds. It obscures guilt in the same way that it obscures insight into the relative being of health. Our bodies, our health, are just more commodities, more *Bestand*. Gone, for example, is the dawning of the questionability of the self-possessed human subject in which one knows guilt for having betrayed the secret life of organs. Such questions would appear useless. The desire to "entrap nature as calculable forces" (FT, 25/21) conceals the questionability of the subject who would have an uncontested domain over all of nature by stockpiling it as *Bestand*. In so doing, humanity itself becomes *Bestand*. When humanity is so threatened, it aspires to the "form of the lord of the earth," and all of nature must be at the disposal of the sovereign ego. This enables the "ultimate and deceptive semblance *[Schein]:* Humans encounter everywhere only themselves" (FT, 30–31/26–27).

This sovereignty of the ego, lord and master over a muted nature that cannot bring the ego into question, is the productive imagination gone awry, turning against itself and channeling all of its creative energy not within nature, but within the anxious borders of the life of the *conatus*. This is what Schelling chillingly named "an enthusiasm *[Begeisterung]* for evil" (I/7, 372). Sovereignty is the expansive movement through contraction of nature. The sovereign ego, in contrast, is the cathexis of forces in the service of the *conatus*. Humanity, unlike elephants and dogs, and not always because of its nobility but sometimes because of its perversity, poeticizes. History is full of testimony to the creative genius of sublime works of torture and murder. This poetry can, if the ego itself does not come into question, inflame into the bloodcurdling genius of narcissism. When one contemplates the crushing expanse of the poetry of evil, it is hard not sympathize with Ivan's rebellion against God when he details to his brother Alyosha the artistic splendors of human cruelty to animals and children in Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880).[29] Ivan has already given

up on adults, as if he had not heeded Kant's advice to avert his eyes, lest he fall into misanthropy.[30] Yet he cannot affirm a God that would condone the suffering of animals and children. Adults are animals and children that have lost their innocence. In so doing, they can reach great heights of "artistic cruelty":

> The Turks and Circassians [in Bulgaria] . . . burn, kill, violate women and children, nail their prisoner's ears to fences and leave them like that till the next morning when they hang them, and so on—it is impossible to imagine it all. And, indeed, people sometimes speak of man's "bestial" cruelty, but this is very unfair and insulting to the beasts: a beast can never be so cruel as a man, so ingeniously, so artistically cruel. A tiger merely gnaws and tears to pieces, that's all he knows. It would never occur to him to nail men's ears to a fence and leave them like that overnight, even if he were able to do it. (BK, 278–79)

Ivan goes on to detail this artistic cruelty. He speaks of the Turks who play with a baby, getting it to laugh and trust them, and when it playfully and trustingly reaches out to play with the barrel of their pistol, they blow its head off. He speaks of the ingenious nature of Russian corporal punishment. He speaks of the great cruelty to animals and, almost a decade before Nietzsche's demise in Turin, laments the treatment of horses, recounting the story of a peasant who became drunk with beating his horse (BK, 281).

Human perversity can so break with the Center that the forces of nature are hijacked into the artistry of the *conatus'* fallenness. This is a decisive issue for there are two kinds of genius. Active genius, to coin a phrase, furthers the production of new truths. Reactive genius, in contrast, is the artistry by which the personal ego, the national ego, even the species ego, sunders itself from the production of truth and moves to dominate nature. The production of its truths, as staggering as Ivan finds them, lord themselves over the Other in utter deafness to its call. While active genius returns nature to the productivity of the Center, the reactive genius subjects nature to the contagion of the ego's fever. Žižek wrote provocatively of this *Verkehrtheit* in which the narcissism of evil acquires enough counterforce or inertia to become an end-in-itself. The movement of nature is to expand, although the inertia necessary for discrete expression is the very inertia that moves it to become an end-in-itself.

> In man's striving to dominate nature, to put it to work for his purposes, 'normal' animal egotism—the attitude of a natural-living organism engaged in the struggle for survival in a hostile environment—is 'self-illuminated,' posited as such, raised to the power of Spirit, and thereby exacerbated, universalized into a propensity for absolute domination which no longer serves the end of survival but turns into an end-in-itself. (IR, 63)

In this respect, Schelling recollected that according to the Christian view, "the devil was not the most limited creature but rather the most unlimited" (I/7, 368). Satan's center was wholly transposed, wholly eccentric: he demanded the whole world for himself. As such, Satan is the principle of unlimited creatureliness, a black hole swallowing everything up into itself. He is the most extreme form of the ego's sovereignty in the forgetting of nature.[31]

This is also the contradiction of the satanic movement of the *conatus*. Satan is the fantasy of creatureliness that does not succumb to the destructive paradox of self-love. The more that it affirms itself and thereby dissolves the band of forces as it flees to the periphery in its incessant pursuit of itself, the more it consumes the environment in which the *conatus*' self-pursuit would even be possible.

> From this emerges the hunger of egoism *[Selbstsucht]* that in the same measure that it renounces the Whole and the unity becomes ever needier, poorer and precisely thereby more greedy, more hungry, more poisonous. This is the self-consuming and ever annihilating contradiction within evil itself. In striving to be creaturely, it precisely thereby annihilates the copula of creatureliness and out of the hubris *[Übermut]* to be everything, it falls into not-being. (I/7, 391)

Selbstsucht is the sickness of self-obsession, an inability to let go of oneself, an utter refusal of the ecstatic nature of the Good's self-giving. It is an addiction, so to speak, to oneself in which all of life is spent getting another fix of oneself.

Moreover, *Selbstsucht* is the sectarian propensity of humanity in which it continually moves into itself as the center of its own movement and thereby results in the conflict of innumerable bellicose centers that can tolerate no center but their own. I am number one! We are number one! Such movements are the *conatus*' tacit battle cries against an inexhaustible quantity of number twos, all of whom aspire to the center position. Hence, Pascal was correct in saying that the usurpation of the world begins as soon as I demand my place in the sun.[32] How rare, as Zarathustra celebrated, that one could look at a sun whose shining did not demand that all other suns cease their own shining.[33]

All creatures share this propensity for self-love. The creaturely, as children of the dark ground, have a propensity *(Hang, propensio)* towards their own creatureliness. All creatures have a *Hang zur Trägheit* (I/7, 370), a propensity for inertia, and such a propensity is not just a formal or negative characterization of all things qua things. It is the positive force of thingliness itself, a kind of karma, if you will, intrinsic to the very positivity of thingliness. In the *Stuttgart Lectures,* given in the year after both the publication of the *Freedom* essay and Caroline's death, Schelling spoke of "divine egoism." On the one hand, creation is the contractive force that holds the pure potency's all-consuming fire at bay so that there may be creatures. Hence, "egoity is the *deus*

implicitus. Everything lies *involved* in divine individuality" (SP, 139). Divine egoism is the ineluctable lag force that protects the creaturely from the fire of the absolute but, in so doing, moves eccentrically away from the center of creation within which the creature would have been continuously reborn.[34] Egoism is the lag force that stalls the fecund temporality of creation. Divine egoism is the movement of the A^1, the first potency, as the Fall of creation itself. In this sense, it is the "fundamental being *[Grundwesen]* of nature, the stuff out of which everything is created" (SP, 139). The wrath of creation is not yet the actual living nature. It is not yet, as we shall see, the affirmation of the organic unity of nature as the movement of love. It is rather the lag force within the creaturely, having become creaturely, to endeavor to be creaturely. Divine egoism is the movement of the *conatus*.

Hence, one might say that there is a positive force within movement that actively contests movement, brings it to a halt, clots and inhibits it, takes it out of general circulation and leaves it in an obstinate desertion of the oasis of the conspiracy of life. The more life's own inertia obsesses on itself, the thirstier for the oasis of life it becomes. But this thirst is the contradiction of the inertia within life that leads thirst to annihilate itself in pursuing itself. In demanding itself exclusively, it eventually destroys the environment that would make its own survival possible. Hence, for Schelling, it was not just a question of giving a positive account of how evil is actual in individual humans. The more fundamental question is: How is it possible for difference, which expresses itself as the semblance of identity, to lose itself in the obdurate force of such a semblance? Hence, one must explain evil's "universal effectiveness, or how it could break forth from creation as an unmistakably general principle that lies in struggle everywhere with the Good" (I/7, 373). The infinite monads of Being have the propensity towards the *conatus,* towards Hobbes' dismal *bellum omnium contra omnes*.

Self-love is bellicose because expansive energies turn back upon themsleves and are redirected toward the maintenance and defense of a single point. "Only where nature has not inhibited this current, it flows forward (in a straight line). Where nature has inhibited it, the current turns back upon itself (in a circle)" (WS, 69). Light as the continuous progression, via compression, of darkness, of life as the contraction of energy, inhibits itself in order to be itself, and hence in being itself, it is always already also not itself. This turning against itself in order to be itself is the inertia implicit in the movement of contraction. It produces a kind of Nietzschean slave morality written into the very movement of things, a propensity for the barbaric principle to refuse its own barbarity. Nietzsche's will to power, the expansive movement of contraction, has the propensity to turn against itself, to self-fetishize, to fight, borrowing Spinoza's phrase, for its own slavery as if it were for its freedom. In the *Genealogy of Morality* Nietzsche spoke of the sad human animal and its bad conscience that has failed to be properly human as an "animal soul turned

against itself, siding against itself."[35] Yet this "animal soul" does not speak to the nature of this animal. Rather, it is becoming besouled as a human. When "soul" itself comes to mark the range of any acceptable domain of humanity, then the animal soul, the *Tierseele,* the anima, so to speak, turns against itself and the human soul, the soul in flight from the anima, from forgotten animality, is born. This is "the consequence of a violent severance from the animal past, a leap and a Fall, so to speak, into new situations and conditions of existence *[Daseins-Bedingungen],* a declaration of war against the old instincts" (GM, 323).

Humans are fallen animals, given either to turn again towards the life of the always lost anima or to react against life itself, reactively condemning as evil its barbaric principle, that part of life that contests the inert force of the *conatus*. Instincts, for both Nietzsche and Schelling, mark the expansive force of the anima, of the barbarian principle, which is always outside any conceivable range of humanity, beyond all herds. When it cannot expand, when it must only contract, its energies turn inward in the direction of contraction. "All instincts which cannot outwardly discharge themselves, turn in upon themselves—this is what I call the *internalization [Verinnerlichung]* of the human, that which first grows up into a human and that which one later calls a 'soul'" (GM, 322). The anima, the *Tierseele,* not yet the "soul" of an individual or of humanity, but rather the playful progress of the conspiracy, turns in upon itself, producing a *Verinnerlichung*. This term does not only literally denote a moving inward of that which was formerly moving outward, an internalization, but is also a classic German literary term for "spiritualization," for turning towards a contemplative, spiritual life. That which moves everywhere but which moves towards nothing in particular, turns in upon itself and in its perverse state (for it was always morality that was perverse!) acquires a "soul." The *conatus,* for both Nietzsche and Schelling, was the sickness of a topsy-turvy movement of power, the "instinct of freedom violently made latent" (GM, 325).

Verkehrtheit, the transposition of freedom and slavery, good and evil, nothing and something, is, in a way, also the fundamental ethical problem for Spinoza, Schelling, and Nietzsche. In this respect, it is simply wrongheaded to count Schelling's treatise on good and evil as among those legions of slavish works of rancorous morality that Nietzsche's genealogical critique exposes. *Ressentiment* is the positive inertia contesting the expansive life of the will to power. It is freedom's own propensity for slavery. When Nietzsche exposes the tacit commitments of the bifurcation of the world into good and evil, he flushed out the needy, identity-demanding human soul, a topsy-turvy movement of power in which the superior force of difference is put into the reactive service of the *conatus*. In a sense, it is freedom, the will to power, which can both expand and contract, that, in its propensity to contract, condemns its own expansion as evil. The original judgment, *Gut* and *Schlecht,* the affirmation of

difference and the dismissal without prosecution of identity mongers, is spoken from a great health, from the exuberance of the Good beyond good and evil. Its speaking is fundamentally affirmative, the "holy yes-saying." It speaks from the place that Schelling in the *Freedom* essay called "the highest point of the whole investigation" (I/7, 406), namely, love.

There is a potency within freedom that moves to obliterate freedom, as if creativity as such always inadvertently also sows the seeds of its destruction as the precondition for creation. Freedom, which is the Good beyond the duality of good and evil, expresses itself in two oppositional wills that do not admit of reconciliation. In the conversion to the cision, beyond perversity, there is "the will of love" (the self at the Center of the Good). At the periphery, "the will of wrath *[Zorn]*" rules in evil (the perversity of the Good subordinated to the human center) (I/7, 409). This wrath, we learn in the *Stuttgartt Lectures,* is the "*Eigenkraft* in God" (SP, 138), the self-possessive force in God that moves towards itself and away from its Other. Contraction is the paradox of creation. In making the creaturely possible by compressing the all-consuming night, compression moves away from the Center, that is, from the cision of night and day. Wrath, as we have seen, is the paradox of narcissism. Because it loves only its own center and hence will tolerate no other gods before it, the *conatus* is finally a furious movement, the violence that, in wanting to leave nothing but itself, cannot even finally leave itself. Perversity or malice is a propensity within freedom that works at absolute cross-purposes with freedom. Love is procreative and the fury of evil, born of perverse malice, is annihilating. Wickedness or malice, the perversity of nature, as Jean-Luc Nancy astutely argued, does not impair the Good but is rather that which within the Good ruins the Good. It refuses the Good "its coming to life . . . withdrawing from the good its possibility *in statu nascendi*."[36] In this way, wickedness, the ongoing origination of the simulacrum of evil in the positive perversity of nature's own inertia, "consists in surprising the good where it has not even occurred: wickedness is stillborn good." Hence, in "this way, wickedness is freedom unleashing itself in the destruction of its own promise—just as Lucifer was promised to a sublime destiny" (ED, 126). In *Verkehrtkeit, "it is freedom that unleashes itself against itself"* and hence Nancy spoke provocatively of *"freedom's self-hatred"* (ED, 126). The conscience *(Mitwissenschaft),* the faculty for loving the conspiracy, redeems nature from its own self-destructive wrath.

IV

> But most people are frightened precisely by this abyssal freedom in the same way that they are frightened by the necessity to be utterly one thing or another. And where they see a flash of freedom, they turn away from it

> as if from an utterly injurious flash of lightening and they feel prostrated by freedom as an appearance that comes from the ineffable, from eternal freedom, from where there is no ground whatsoever. (AW, 304)

In a certain sense, evil is the propensity of difference to pursue identity, the inertia within the infinitely self-displacing progress that results in clotting, cathexis, inhibition, repression, and festering fevers. Evil is the lag force within the Good. It is the force within difference that moves against difference expressing itself as such. Evil is not such much to be fought as loosened up and emancipated from inhibition. To illustrate this with an analogy, evil is the force of a simulacrum that operates something like what the Hindu and Buddhist traditions name *karma*. It is the accretion of stasis through freedom's reactive propensity for nonmovement. As Nishitani argued, karma *[gō]* "originates from the self-centered elemental source of *avidyā,*" the great, dark ontological ignorance or lack of clarity, and "becomes manifest in taking the form of will as attachment and control."[37] Karma is the propensity for freedom to succumb to the reign of *avidyā*.[38] Schelling's account of the unconscious peripheral movement of the dark, unaware force calls for the release of forces trapped in the inevitable Fall into the sclerosis of nature. If this sclerosis is not continually attenuated, the question of nature fades into the feverish consolidation of karma.

This flight to the periphery, this unchecked accretion of karma, is not a conscious refusal of the Center. The Center (the Good, the great Health) emerges in the faculty of the Fall, in the coming to be aware, in the anamnesis or recollection of what one has lost. It is not, as we have seen, the recovery of some lost object for the center is never, strictly speaking, recovered, nor is it an object. It emerges in the fever of life as guilt for karmic existence. In this moment of guilt at the recollection of the trauma of severance, anxiety emerges as the vertiginous, erotic, and bewildering flight from the nothing. The accretion of karma is the unconscious operation (the dark principle, *avidyā*) of anxiety. "Darkness is the necessary inheritance" of creatures (I/7, 360), and the "human is spirit as a selfish and particular (severed from God) *Wesen*" (I/7, 364) whose "dark or selfish principle" breaks with the intimacy of the Center (I/7, 372). One does not decide to fall. One is always already fallen, already and ineluctably the inheritor of karma.

Schelling claimed that "the anxiety of life itself drives the human from the center in which they were created" (I/7, 382).[39] Thomas Buchheim reminds us that this phrase, *die Angst des Lebens,* can be taken in two ways, as the *genitivus subiectivus* as much as the *obiectivus* form.[40] In the objective sense of the genitive, it would be a shorthand way of expressing *die Angst vor dem Leben,* personal anxiety in face of life, the human's anxiety before the monstrous abyss of nature and the consequent and tremulous conflict of directions within the human. It is as if one were to stand at a great height and be

tempted to jump and be consequently horrified by the vertiginous nature of one's own temptation. In the subjective sense, however, one could say that this is the anxiety that belongs to life itself, the anxiety that belongs to the movement of life—life's own anxiety, its inability to decide between its two contesting centers, the supercreaturely and the creaturely. The movement of Schelling's thought forces both readings, for nature is human being writ large and the human being is nature writ small. Humans, for their part, unable to chose between the two centers, flee to the periphery and this intensification of the inertia of selfhood encloses them within themselves.[41]

> Anxiety is the governing affect that corresponds to the conflict of directions in Being, since it does not know whether to go in or out. Meanwhile, the orgasm of forces increases more and more and lets the contracting force fear utter cision and complete dissolution. But while the contracting force releases its life and, so to speak, discerns itself as already past, the higher form of its being and the silent purity of spirit rise before it like lightening. (AW, 336)

One can also see this *Angst* tacitly operating among the "Germans" at the conclusion of Hölderlin's *Hyperion*. Almost mad with grief at the death of Diotima, Hyperion climbs to the top of Mount Aetna and remembers the great Sicilian Empedocles who threw himself directly into the "soul of the world" (H, 204). Tempted as he was, Hyperion does not think highly enough of himself to aspire to Empedocles' "bold *joie de vivre [Lebenslust]*" (H, 204). Hyperion stands before the pulsating and inscrutable "heart" of life and knows Schelling's cision of forces. He senses the extreme questionability of its aporetic attractions and hence understands antinomically the ambiguity of all things and the meagerness of all names. When he wanders across the Alps and arrives among the Germans, however, he finds that they are claimed by no such questions. Rather, they busy themselves uncritically in wholesale devotion to their vocations. Hyperion does not hold that it is unwise to follow freely one's calling, but the Germans are filled with what he called a *karge Angst,* a meager and barren *Angst,* in which they must "literally and hypocritically only be what they are called" (H, 206). This is the *Angst* that impels one to abandon the cision for the periphery of oneself. It is also the *Angst* that will eventually explode in the great indecisiveness and eventual dissolution of the orgasm of forces. In neither case has *Angst* itself surrendered its invisibility. Rather it silently operates as the neurotic tyranny of the understanding (Hyperion's Germany was exclusively populated with *Verstandesmenschen,* the civil servants of the truth). This "barren *Angst*" operates at the ground of the understanding without thereby coming to the attention of the understanding. It silently strangles the understanding without the understanding having any inclination of its diseased condition. The "German sickness," if we could so

characterize Hyperion's criticism, is the unconscious struggle for identity which characterizes the fall from nothingness.

This is also the general sense of *Angst* that Kierkegaard brought to his remarkable study, *The Concept of Anxiety* (1844).[42] Kierkegaard clearly knew the *Freedom* essay,[43] and for both Kierkegaard and Schelling, the center of life that propels anxiety is not an object. Long before Heidegger cribbed the centrality of *Angst* in *Being and Time* (1927) from Kierkegaard, the latter had already explicitly argued that anxiety, unlike fear, takes no object: "the object of anxiety is a nothing" (CA, 77). This nothing is not an empty space, a simple lack or absence. It is the absolute subject of the Good, so to speak, and before it, like being before death, one is before a force that does not have the character of a thing.

Implicitly in line with Schelling's argument, Kierkegaard located the problematic of *Angst* within the problematic of the Fall. *Angst* is the trembling of the True before the nothingness of the Good. Conventional accounts of the Fall commit themselves to insipid and untenable positions. All of humanity is being punished for Adam and Eve because Adam and Eve did something so evil that even the unborn have to share in the punishment. Or they argue that the whole thing is just an allegory for sin, which teaches us that we should not do things, no matter how tempting they are, if we *know* that they are wrong. But did Adam know that it was wrong to eat from the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil? Did he know true things about Good and Evil?

> When it is stated in Genesis that God said to Adam, "Only from the tree of knowledge of good and evil you must not eat," it follows as a matter of course that Adam really has not understood this word, for how could he understand the difference between good and evil when this distinction would follow as a consequence of the enjoyment of the fruit? (CA, 44)

In this sense we could say that Socrates was right to insist that to know the Good is to do the Good. The problem does not lie with the latter half of the proposition but rather with the first. If one were to know the Good, then one would do the Good. The difficulty comes with what it might mean to know the Good.

Those steeped in the Christian tradition might immediately object and say that the very notion of sin entails knowing the Good and irresponsibly choosing its opposite. Yet if we knew that the object of temptation was indisputably and absolutely bad, how could it be tempting? Is not temptation the specter of the Good calling us from the far side of a prohibition? Given a taboo, is it not the possible goodness of the evil side that lures us? If we did not think that the forbidden object might not be good, we would not find it tempting and it is in this subjunctive mood that the Good complicates the abject.

For his part, Schelling situated the haunting side of the Good in the feverish eroticism of *Angst,* that is, wanting what you do not want and not wanting what you do want. Amidst the reactive movement of creaturely desire, of *Eigenheit* and ipseity, which shuns the abyssal nothingness of its ground, there can be heard the vertiginous cry of the repressed. "Seized by dizziness on a high and precipitous summit, a secret voice seems to cry out that one jump." This return of the abject from its banishment to the far side of the taboo is like that "old fable" *(The Odyssey)* in which "the irresistible song of the Sirens ring out from the depths in order to attract the passing sailors down into the whirlpool" (I/7, 381).

In the same way for Kierkegaard, "the prohibition induces in him anxiety, for the prohibition awakens in him freedom's possibility" (CA, 44). If he knew the Good, Adam would not know anxiety. He does not *know* that it is evil to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But rather, not knowing the Good, but having the prohibition, he is tempted by a subjunctive Good, the possibility that it might be Good. Were dogmatism convincing, we would never know guilt and we would never know temptation. Guilt exceeds the knowledge of having done wrong because it haunts even our sense that we have ever done right. As Heidegger later argued, the "call from afar to afar," the call from the uncanny *[das Unheimliche],* "comes from *within* me, yet from *beyond* me."[44] Yet one has no idea to where or to what one is being called any more so than one knows what to expect from death. The future opens in the vertiginous confusion of the demand that we know the Good without the means thereby to accomplish the task. The future, in anxiety, is the yawning abyss of freedom. "Anxiety can be compared with dizziness. He whose eye happens to look down into the yawning abyss becomes dizzy. But what is the reason for this? It is just as much in his own eye as in the abyss, for suppose he had not looked down. Hence anxiety is the dizziness of freedom" (CA, 61).

If the nothing were just the mere absence of things, then we would be free of anxiety. For Schelling, the nothing is the mother of creation, and in a striking criticism of a traditional distinction, Schelling refuses to separate the Christian sense of creation from the Greek. It is conventionally held that for the Greeks, creation is always creation out of something (out of some stuff, matter, chaos, ὕλη, etc.). Christianity, on the other hand, speaks of a *creatio ex nihilo,* a creation out of nothing. Schelling argued that this traditional distinction misinterprets both the Greeks and Christianity. For both traditions, argued Schelling, the creature emerges neither from the mere absence of things *(ex nihilo)* nor from some fundamental thing or stuff. The human emerges "ἐκ τῶν μὴ ὄντων, out of that which *is* not there *[das da nicht ist]*" (I/7, 373). Schelling linked this to the "famous μὴ ὄν of the Ancients" (I/7, 373). The phrase μὴ ὄν is usually translated as "not-being" (and hence nothing, lack of existence), although the force of μὴ does not negate being, but rather suspends the authority of its presence. If one were simply logically

negating a being, one would use the phrase οὐκ ὄν, "nonbeing" or "the negation of being." The phrase μὴ ὄν names that which *is* as not having being, the thing in and before itself. It is the dark precursor that haunts all being, the indivisible remainder contesting while supporting all beings. It is a name for the Good, the force of absolute difference indwelling within all identities.

Deleuze insightfully described this remarkable—and anxiety producing—force as follows:

> The most important aspect of Schelling's philosophy is his consideration of powers. How unjust, in this respect, is Hegel's critical remark about the black cows! Of these two philosophers, it is Schelling who brings difference out of the night of the Identical, and with finer, more varied and more terrifying flashes than those of contradiction: with *progressivity*. Anger and love are powers of the Idea which develop on the basis of a μὴ ὄν—in other words, not from a negative or a non-being [οὐκ ὄν] but from a problematic being or non-existent, a being implicit in those existences beyond the ground. The God of love and the God of anger are required in order to have an idea. A, A^2, A^3 form the play of pure depotentialisation and potentiality, testifying to the presence in Schelling's philosophy of a differential calculus adequate to the dialectic.[45]

This is a discontinuous progression expressive not of an underlying identity or agent, but of difference, the dizzying barbarian principle (the μὴ ὄν). For Deleuze, Schelling belonged to those select few who had dared the thought of the "dark precursor." "Thunderbolts explode between different intensities, but they are preceded by an invisible, imperceptible dark precursor, which determines their path in advance but in reverse, as though intagliated. Likewise every system contains its dark precursor which ensures the communication of peripheral series" (DR, 119). The precursor is this *fortwirken* of difference in every (becoming feverish) identity. "Given two heterogeneous series, two series of differences, the precursor plays the part of the differenciator of these differences" (DR, 119). "It is the in-itself of difference or the 'differently different'—in other words, difference in the second degree, the self-different which relates different to different by itself" (DR, 119). It "perpetually displaces itself within itself and perpetually disguises itself in the series" (DR, 120).

Compared to Schelling's progression of difference and the anxiety that it provokes, the self-deluded calm of conventional logic appears fallen, an egotistical and thereby hubristic relationship to the Word. It is a flight from the Good as the differenciator of the Good, so to speak. In logic, at least in its identitarian form, guilt is inhibited because the subject cannot become a question to itself and hence the differenciator stalls in the inertia of identities, unable to repeat its self-displacing progress.

V

Creation is the overcoming of divine egoism through divine love. (SP, 139)

Despite these extraordinary and striking meditations on freedom and evil, the *Freedom* essay is about love, "the highest point of the whole investigation" (I/7, 406). For love to emerge out of self-love's reactionary hatred of nature, the inward directed movement of energy must be redirected towards the outside. For this to happen, the great clot that is the ego must first be liquefied. The violence against nature, which is the life of the *conatus,* must become nature's violence against the ego.

This movement is reminiscent of Bataille's striking analysis of the self-violence and radical expenditure within the Tibetan Vajrayāna tradition. Although much more is now known about Tibet than Bataille could have accessed, he nonetheless located a critical disciplinary process in which this reversal is achieved. The former Mongol warriors, who had once dominated China, unleash upon themselves the violence that they once unleashed upon their external enemies. The lamas ravage the *conatus* and thereby make possible the Good as exteriority. "In this way the lamas celebrate the victory won over a world whose violence is crudely unleashed toward the outside. Their triumph is its unleashing within. But it is no less violent for all that" (PM, 110).

Without this reversal, one lives in the quiet hell of the *conatus*. For Schelling, hell is not found somewhere outside of nature. It is the discordant life on earth of *Angst,* a life that is anxious precisely in its forgetting of the earth. "Hell is the discord of forces" (I/8, 174) and hence "there is no feeling of heaven other than the constant overcoming of the hell of discord" (I/8, 174–75). The accord of the heavenly feeling is not the dulling of the forces of nature but rather the moment of maximal affirmation of the heavenly disequilibrium.

This is not a return to theological comforts. It is the actualization of a general economy of nature. As Bataille argued: "To solve political problems becomes difficult for those who allow anxiety *[l'angoisse]* alone to pose them. It is necessary for anxiety to pose them. But their solution demands at a certain point the removal of this anxiety" (PM, 14). *L'angoisse,* the condition of distress, the anxious worry over one's own and the eventual heightening of the antinomic forces of the cision, must be constantly overcome. Heaven is what is always lost in the ipseity of egoism and the severance from the Center.

Hence, while the ipseity of existence seeks its own, love demands the Other. "Existence is ipseity *[Eigenheit],* severance; but love is the nothing of ipseity. It does not seek its own and can therefore also not exist for itself" (WA, 19). Love rises out of the ruins of existence per se. "And the now liberated principle first knows the attracting principle as its necessary precedent *(Prius),* as its first ground and support. It loves it as the condition, as the vessel, so to speak, out of which it arises" (AW, 247). In love, the ruins, which had

to be rejected in order for there to be love, reemerge as the desiderata of love. Love loves things just as they are. "And awoken out of inactivity, the soul does not hate the contracting force but rather loves this confinement as the only way that it can come to feel itself and as that which hands over the material and the, so to speak, means, which are the only way that the soul can come out" (AW, 278).[46] Dying to oneself is paradoxically recovery, a return to the nature that is lost in the denigration of the question of nature.

The initial sickness and ruin of existence, however, allow for the realization that one has lost one's health, which only becomes evident in having been lost. As such, the moment of sclerosis is also the opening to the release of inhibited energies—just as, following Schelling's introduction to the *Freedom* essay, one reads not to polemicize but to affirm and liberate. "Just as all originary healing can only occur in the transition from sickness to health, the reproduction of the relationship of the periphery to the center is only through its opposite, namely, the restoration of the separated and singular life to the inner flash of the *Wesen* out of which the cision (crisis) again recurred" (I/7, 366). Health is the love of the cision that is the heart of the conspiracy of life. It is to affirm the crisis of time. "The mystery of all healthy and active life is . . . never to let time become exterior and never to come into discord with the time producing principle in oneself. Then the self is carried by time from within" (WA, 84). Love (the A^3) holds together and embraces the inertia of the past (the A^1) with the mystery of the future (the A^2). In this sense, one can speak of love as the affirmation of the *Augenblick,* the present moment, as the "everlasting, self-overcoming" drive of the determinate past into the mystery of the future (WA, 85).

Schelling produced numerous formulations to name the affirmative stance of the love of the conspiracy. For example, in the *Freedom* essay, he also expressed this living copula as "the relation of gravity and light in nature" and claimed that gravity "precedes light as its eternally dark ground" (I/7, 358). In an essay published three years earlier (the 1806 *On the Relationship of the Real and the Ideal in Nature or Development of the First Principles of the Philosophy of Nature through the Principles of Gravity and Light*[47]), Schelling expansively articulated this relationship. Gravity is the real's implicative relationship to the ideal and light is the ideal's explicative relationship to the real. Light is the positive darkness of matter that transfigures itself into light. The origin of light, after all, cannot itself be light. In the *Stuttgart Lectures,* Schelling called light "positive darkness—evolution" (SP, 152). Light is the expulsive force of the Good's dark ground of creativity. "All birth is birth out of darkness and into light" (I/7, 360–61) for the "birth of light is the realm of nature" (I/7, 377–78). Light explicates itself as progressions of divine representations that play themselves out in the history of consciousness, as "the eternity that you only imagine as passed time" (I/2, 365). Gravity, on the other hand, is the latent imploding potency within the real. The positive principle within gravity is matter, "the

darkest of all things" and the "unknown root out of whose elevation all images and living appearances of nature go forth" (I/2, 359). In the *Stuttgart Lectures,* Schelling called gravity "the principle of involution" (SP, 152). Gravity is the countermovement of the A^2, the implication of the light of nature in its original darkness.

Although he does not mention Jakob Böhme (1575–1624) by name in the *Freedom* essay, Schelling elsewhere quite generously acknowledged his debt to the so-called *philosophus teutonicus*.[48] Two years before the publication of the *Freedom* essay, Schelling lauded Böhme as emblematic of the German *Geist* in his struggle to articulate his inspirations.[49] In the lecture series *Einleitung in die positive Philosophie oder Begründung der positiven Philosophie* (c. 1842–1843), Schelling referred to Böhme as a "miraculous appearance in the history of humanity" (II/3, 123). Böhme attempted to articulate "a true drama that struggles with itself," but Schelling warned that when "Böhme went beyond the beginnings of nature and goes into the concrete," he descended into *Schwärmerei* and "one can no longer follow him. Here he loses every trace" (II/3, 124).

Nonetheless, Böhme endeavored to express the self-struggling theater of the conspiracy. Schelling activated Böhme's discourse on love as the belonging together of *Sehnsucht* and the understanding. In trying to understand itself, *Sehnsucht* continuously separates itself from itself. "The eternal spirit that has the Word in itself and at the same time feels *[empfindet]* the infinite *Sehnsucht,* moved by Love, which it itself is, expresses the Word so that now the *Verstand* and *Sehnsucht* become together a freely creating and all powerful will" (I/7, 361). *Sehnsucht,* the Good's dark hunger to give birth to its own Goodness, can only understand itself as self-separated.

One might remember that *Sehnsucht* is technically a kind of sickness and, by Schelling's account, divine *Sehnsucht* is also implicated in the propensity for evil. That is, in its expulsive and contracting "hunger for Being," divine energy *Sehnsucht* nomadically creates. It therefore becomes caught in the *principium individuationis* or the exclusivity of the A^1. It has the inertia-driven propensity to become the false dominance of the profane. In God, this would mean that God's own Satanic propensity is God's own divine egoism, God's propensity to become God itself, that is, complete itself in the realm of light and existence. Schelling sometimes referred to the A^1 as the A that has become ~A or B. It is only in the sickness and severed light of B that B realizes that it is an expression of A. "Therefore each *Wesen* can only become revealed in its opposite, love only in hate, unity only in strife" (I/7, 373). *Sehnsucht* is the sickness of ceaseless striving for *Verstand,* God's propensity, born of the ceaseless hunger of *Sehnsucht,* to want to get a fix on itself. This is a sickness because it is the expulsive creativity of light severed from its gravitational counterweight (that is, that there was in a fundamental respect never anything to understand). Health, however, allows the spirit of love to rule. The wrath of eter-

nally disappointed *Sehnsucht* must give way to love, the aporetic accord of Ground and Existence, Center and periphery, gravity and light, *Sehnsucht* and *Verstand,* freedom and necessity.

Hence, Schelling spoke of God's need to overcome its own *sehnsuchtig* egoism:

> This representation is at the same time the understanding—the Word of that *Sehnsucht,* and the eternal spirit, that feels *[empfindet]* the Word in itself and at the same time the infinite *Sehnsucht,* moved by Love, the Love that is Spirit itself, expresses the Word. With this Word the understanding together with *Sehnsucht* now become a freely creating and omnipotent will. Spirit imagines from within the initial unruly nature as if in its element or as its tool. (I/7, 361)

Schelling elaborated on this unusual phrase "the Word of that *Sehnsucht*" in a footnote: "in the sense in which one says, '*das Wort des Rätsels,* the Word of an enigma'" (I/7, 361). Schelling seems to be playing on the compound noun, *Rätselwort,* the solution to a riddle or the answer to a mystery. Schelling did not use this word in the quotidian sense of the punch line to a riddle or the solution to a crossword puzzle or any other such game. Here one might remember Schelling's insignia, the Sphinx calmly pointing to the wheel of time. One might also remember that Oedipus was cursed because he did not understand his own Word (the "human" as the Word, so to speak, of the enigma of the Sphinx). That is, Oedipus had an eye too many. He spoke the Word as if the Word of the enigma were a concept, a matter simply of the intellect.[50] Oedipus' Word exhibited the hubris of the *Verstandesmensch,* the one who would resolve the irreducible remainder in the intellect. Such a word stands at the periphery of the cision as the understanding severs itself from the gravitational pull of its receptivity *[Empfindsamkeit, Empfindlichkeit]* to the dark mother of *Sehnsucht*.

Hubris would then be the falling away from the sensational ground of the understanding. The more one endeavors to understand oneself and one's own, the more this desire is frustrated and the more it is frustrated, the more it demands until, "out of the hubris *[Übermut]* to be everything, it falls into non-Being" (I/7, 391). Oedipus spoke the Word egotistically, sundered from the center of the cision, and hence he spoke it without love, without spirit, without sensitivity to the dynamic holding together in the Word of the silence of *Sehnsucht* and the audibility of the understanding. Love is the spiritual expressivity of the Word, both creative and reflective, productive and sensitive.[51]

Hence, to love again is to affirm the general economy of the conspiracy:

> But Love does not reach Being *[Seyn]* from itself. Being is ipseity *[Seinheit],* particularity. It is dislocation. But Love has nothing to do

> with particularity. Love does not seek its own *[das Ihre]* and therefore it cannot be that which has being *[seyend seyn]* with regard to itself. In the same way, a Supreme Being is for itself groundless and borne by nothing. It is in itself the antithesis of personality and therefore another force, moving toward personality, must first make it a ground. An equivalently eternal force of selfhood, of egoity *[Egoität],* is required so that the being that is Love might exist as its own and might be for itself. (AW, 210–11)

To love is to be the conspiracy of life.

7

The Haunting

Schmerz ist etwas Allgemeines und Notwendiges in allem Leben, der unvermeidliche Durchgangspunkt zur Freiheit.

Pain is something common to and necessary in all life, the unavoidable point of passage to freedom.

—*The Ages of the World* (AW, 335)[1]

Alles Werden und Wachsen, alles Zukunft-Verbürgende bedingt *den Schmerz . . . Damit es die ewige Lust des Schaffens gibt, damit der Wille zum Leben sich ewig selbst bejaht,* muß *es auch ewig die 'Qual der Gebärin' geben.*

All becoming and growing, everything that guarantees the future, *requires* pain. . . . When there is the eternal desire for creation, when the will to life eternally affirms itself, there *must* also be the 'agony of the mother giving birth.'

—Nietzsche, *Götzen-Dämmerung*

Under what conditions do you dream of the dead?
Do you often think of them before you fall asleep?
Who appears first?
Is it always the same one?
First name? Surname? Cemetery? Date deceased?

To what do they refer?
Old friendship? Kinship? Fatherland?
Do they say where they come from?
And who's behind them?
And who besides you sees them in his dreams?

—Wisława Szymborska, *Plotting with the Dead*[2]

When one reads the *Freedom* essay, with its analogy between sickness and evil, it is sometimes hard not to think of Schelling's wife, Caroline, who died shortly after the essay appeared. As we saw briefly in the first chapter, Schelling was utterly devastated. In Schelling's diary for the year 1810, one finds a moving entry written on Schelling's birthday, "the first without Caroline." In this short passage, Schelling wondered if one can mourn to such a degree that one becomes utterly lost in interiority, unable to sense external provocations. Lost in the unfathomable depths of oneself, the gods flee. Melancholy and depression plummet one into the dark reaches of interiority and one becomes inattentive to any external stimuli.

> Any passion *per se* can be overcome. The most wrathful can suppress their wrath before the presence of the king. . . . To become master of one's passion, the human always needs something exterior that rattles one, occupies one, tenses one.—Will it always do this for one? . . . Who here wants to give it over to Providence—who can become free of madness and blindness? Therefore we remain unmoved by the most excellent warning of Providence. Or these exterior counterforces are lacking. We languished in the most forlorn loneliness. Nothing comes to us that rattles us. . . . No friend . . . no exterior help or hope is useful to us. We no longer sense the power present in us.[3]

Schelling knew this "most forlorn loneliness," as if the sheer opacity of the exteriority of death drove one into the depths of an imperturbable interiority. As Shelling wrote in a letter from the 2nd of October, 1809, not longer after Caroline's death (September 7, 1809), "the unspeakable pain of the severance of so loved a being whose life shared with mine a thousand roots, overwhelmed my powers. Only complete internal and external loneliness, the exclusive contact with her and with things of another world could preserve me in that moment."[4] As we saw in the *Freedom* essay, there is a "profound and indestructible melancholy of all life" because "the human never receives the condition under their power, although one strives to do so in evil; it is only lent to one and remains independent of one" (I/7, 399). We own nothing except our own death (we cannot give our death away, nobody can die our death for us) and we own that as that which violently reminds us that we fundamentally own nothing else. We do not own our lives, our predicates, our things, any more so than we own the lives and the things of those we love and cherish.

Amidst this period of "forlorn loneliness" and "unspeakable pain" and "complete internal and external loneliness" appears a remarkable document, the dialogue *Clara*.[5] As we have seen, Schelling had claimed in the *Freedom* essay that his future writings would be explicitly dialogical. As we also saw in the same essay, mere idealism was too general to think the specificity of human

freedom. "If freedom is the positive concept of the In-itself over all, then the investigation of human freedom is again thrown back into the general, since the intelligible, upon which freedom alone was grounded, is also the *Wesen* of the things-in-themselves. Hence, mere idealism is insufficient for indicating the specific difference, that is, the distinctness of human freedom" (I/7, 352).

In the introduction to the *Clara*,[6] Schelling emphasized the inadequacy of idealism, claiming that philosophy has become too general and that he was "calling it back to earth" (C, 4). This did not mean, as we saw in our discussion of Jacobi, that it was being called back from heaven. It was being retrieved from something like Jacobi's "delicate threads which swim in the air in late summer, incapable of reaching heaven and of touching the earth through their own weight" (HMP, 177/174). The question of the specificity of human freedom is also the question of a recovery of the earth, of a renunciation of the "empty space in which" philosophy "was suspended between heaven and earth" (C, 4).

The *Clara* is not, therefore, a flight back up to the heavens in search of an empyrean refuge from the question of death. "In this discourse one will rarely find flights of the imagination, particularly ones sought within the external, or find those light-hearted talks about the immortality of the soul that both writers and public alike seem so very much to enjoy" (C, 7). Rather, the question of death shall be brought down to earth—it shall be a part of the question of nature itself.

As the dialogue opens, it is immediately evident that the question has been *literally* brought down to the earth. It begins on the Catholic holiday of All Soul's Day, "the moving festival dedicated to the dead" (C, 11). The priest and the doctor had gone into town to pick up Clara when they noticed a parade of the living heading towards the cemetery. "We sat sunk in silent melancholy. How many of those who were now walking on the graves would be lying beneath them in the following year?" (C, 12). The dead are gone, leaving the living behind, yet somehow they were not just literally underfoot, not just technically buried under the earth upon which the living walk, under a scant few feet of soil that separate the living from the dead. The dead are somehow living hidden in the earth, claiming—precisely through their absence—the living, as if the past were haunting the present. The haunting of the present is the presence of an absence that intrudes upon presence itself, the silent dwelling of spirits as the soul of the earth returning, albeit never fully, to presence. They find us. We do not need to look for them.

At the cemetery, one realizes that Hamlet understood the return of spirits. Hamlet knew that the newly crowned Claudius, whose heart still secretly remained in proximity to his abject deeds, was deceitful in insisting that Hamlet has "a will most incorrect to heaven" because he cannot let go of his father's death. Claudius insisted that it is a "fault to heaven, a fault against the dead, a fault to nature, to reason most absurd, whose common theme is death of

fathers, and who still hath cried, from the first corpse to he that died to-day, 'this must be so'" (Act I, ii). Claudius demanded that Hamlet let the past be what it is: the past. The problem with spirits, however, is that the past is not simply the past. With the return of the dead, the antinomic Word of the Enigma of Time silently but persistently intrudes upon the living. Hamlet rightly exclaimed, "The time is out of joint: O cursed spite that I was ever born to set it right!" (Act I, v). And that is the curse, the tragic stain, and the dark inheritance: it cannot be set right. The illusion of linear time shrouds the enigma because it demands a joint that never was. Hamlet, on the other hand, inherits the eruption of the cision of time.

We are only a few scant feet of earth away from the dead, but this earth, the ineluctable center of the cision between the living and the dead, does not act, try as it may, as a complete barrier against the demands of the dead. It does not silence their intrusive silence. It is as if they were nonetheless still somehow "living" under us, or their ashes were still part of the air that we breathe. The dead return to the living without being called to do so. Clara knows that one cannot beseech the lord with prayer. Responding to the clergyman's stern insistence that at death "any connection we have to them will be removed," Clara agrees that the living do not successfully reach towards the dead with either their love or their hate. "Perhaps, Clara replied, the lower cannot act on the higher, but it is more certain that the higher can act within the lower, and thus the thought of some cross-over affect *(herüberwirken)* would not be so inconsistent" (C, 16).

Indeed, ghosts are everywhere, but they come to us; we do not come to them. We do not need "ghost detectives" because we do not need to find ghosts. Victor Turner tells us that among the Ndembu people of Zambia, one finds the practice of a "mourning camp" in which one attempts to break the ties that one had with the recently deceased. If one does not properly mourn, one gives birth to an "unquiet grave":

> It is during this period that the shade of the dead is thought to be most restless, forever trying to revisit the scenes and communicate with the people it knew best alive. Ndembu believe that without the ritual of mourning the shade would never lie quietly in the grave, but would be constantly interfering in the affairs of the living, jealous of every new adjustment, such as the remarriage of its widow or the appointment of a successor of whom it would have disapproved.[7]

If one does not stand in a wise relationship to the past, the past holds one hostage. The dead, the gone, are nonetheless present before us as the intimation of our future. But what do these complaining ghosts really want from us, this "us" constituted in this case as the left behind, as the haunted? This question forms the meditation of this chapter.

I

> We are incessantly trying to hoodwink ourselves, trying to get at continuity, which implies that the boundaries have been crossed, without actually crossing the boundaries of this discontinuous life. We want to get to the *beyond* without ever taking the final step, while remaining cautiously on the *hither* side. We can conceive of nothing except in terms of our own life, and beyond that, it seems to us everything is wiped out. Beyond death, in fact, begins the inconceivable, which we are usually not brave enough to face.
>
> —Georges Bataille, (E, 156–57/141)

The *Clara* is a haunted dialogue, the child of the cross-over affect *[herüberwirken]* of unequal interlocutors, the higher spirits and the lower creatures, a dialogue inaugurated by the intrusive silence of spirits and ghosts. The subtitle of the dialogue is, after all, *On the Connection of Nature with the Spirit World*. The dead are indeed alive, haunting everywhere. Most immediately, Clara is deep in mourning for the loss of her beloved friend Albert. "Behind those hills yonder which will become bluer and bluer and over which the sun is about to sink, there lies buried everything *I* have" (C, 15). What Clara *has,* what she can call her *own,* lies buried. She owns a loss, so to speak. Clara herself will soon die, leaving a note that, as we have seen, Schelling apparently never composed. To some extent, the dialogue itself seems haunted even by Caroline—even to the point to which she lingers as that to which we cannot assign a proper role. What precisely is her connection or *Zusammenhang* to the dialogue? Is her death the source of the dialogue? Is the death of two of her children the source? Is death per se the source? Is there any source, properly speaking?

The dead are not only alive as general intimations of a lost continuity, but of lost, irreplaceable singularities. This is the curious temporality of death. On the one hand, death is at once the most general future for all creatures—absolute generality without particularity, the dark night when all things are black. On the other hand, it is the most singular, for nobody can die our death for us and no two deaths are alike because no one person dies two deaths. The loss on the dark night of death is the loss of the utterly singular because each death is irreplaceable. When Caroline died and Schelling later remarried, this was not an exchange, a replacement for a lost part. This took place in an economy beyond exchange because death, the motor of general economy, reminds us that the equivalencies of a restricted economy are an inhibition of death, which renders all parts of the whole singular. In a system of freedom, in philosophy haunted by death, there is no interchangeability, no existential principle of commutation, because there are no equivalencies.

Amidst the celebration of the past on this day of the dead, the priest and the doctor, in order to avoid the throngs of the living called back by the dead

to the dead, "sat to one side on an old and mossy gravestone whose inscription had long become illegible" (C, 12). What does this stone stubbornly mark, where does this stone sign point as it wages war with entropy and stalls its own indwelling death in order, at the bequest of the living, to point somewhere?[8] It no longer straightforwardly points to a singular face because the name is no longer present and the singularity of the one buried has been further swallowed into the absolute generality of the dark night. Yet even as illegible, this faceless ghost, the one named by the stone's impertinent indication, haunts us, beyond a name, beyond a narrative, beyond recognition. The spirits that face us are immeasurably larger than the ones who still have faces. As Sallis wrote of the famous Jewish Cemetery in Prague:

> It is in no sense a calling from within oneself but rather a call coming from the stones themselves as their silent presence begins to announce that someone whose earthly remains lie buried below has once lived and died, someone whose name or other identifying mark may or may not still be legible on the stone, in any case a stranger whose absence is utterly sealed. And yet, without violating that seal, the stones bring the dead back; they summon the dead in the very announcing of the seal that forever deprives the dead of presence. (S, 29–30)

They are gone and the stones stand as sentinels to the dead's antinomic *presence* as *gone*. But it makes no sense at this moment to ask where they have gone, regardless of what one may elect to assent to in religious dogma. Whether one buries the dead or incinerates them or feeds them to birds, the dead dwell in the underground of Ground, in the un-ground that is at the same time the ground of existence. "Doesn't everything point to a life that has sunk downwards?" the doctor asked (C, 33). The dead *live* as the intrusion of the past that Schelling once addressed as "*O Vergangenheit, du Abgrund der Gedanken!* O the Past, you abyss of thoughts!"[9] The past here forms the groundless ground of the present.[10] It is the abyssal ground of nature's self-presencing. "Nature is an abyss of the past. This is what is oldest in nature, the deepest of what remains if everything accidental and everything that has become is removed" (AW, 243). Schelling, the one who, as we have seen, considered every thing of nature to be organic, here claimed that what is most essential, most *wesentlich,* of nature, the ground that abides once everything accidental in nature has been removed, is not at all a ground but an *Ab-grund,* an abyss.

Furthermore, this essential ground that is not a proper ground is the abyss of the past, as if what was most fully there was there as more fundamentally not there, as gone, as always already past. What most fundamentally—albeit abysmally—lives is always already dead and gone and thereby antinomically at

the heart of present life. If death is the heart of life as the abyssal ground of nature, that is, as the abyss of the past, then death is more alive than discretely living things, and hence death looms before the creaturely as the spirit of the past, which will in the future eternally return as the future-past, as the past that will always come again within every presence. The past always returns as the future and the repetition of this "always" is the differenciator of difference, so to speak. In *Angst,* therefore, one shuns death as the inevitable return of the past as it intrudes upon the defenseless present. Yet to shun death is to shun nature and to shun human freedom. Hence, the paradox of the conspiracy of life: *to shun death is more fundamentally to shun life*. "Most people turn away from what is concealed within themselves just as they turn away from the depths of the great life and shy away from the glance into the abysses of that past which are still in one just as much as the present" (AW, 207–08).

This mode of refusal characterizes the "young, well-educated" clergyman that the priest, doctor, and Clara meet at a Benedictine cloister. The clergyman had become a caretaker of a recently deceased prince's library and the cloister's philosophy instructor. The clergyman showed them several rare books, although the priest and the doctor preferred to look at the magnificent view out the window than at "these dead treasures" (C, 13). Although the clergyman surrounds himself with rare relics of the past, he has no sensitivity to the life of the past. The books are presented as dead treasures, as perished relics from a long faded past, as shells and coils abandoned by life. Outside the window, however, the vitality of nature beckons, but not because it is present while the books are relics of a lost world. As the doctor tells Clara: "Oh, the true ruins are not those of ancient human splendor which the curious seek out in Persian or Indian deserts; the whole Earth is One great ruin, where animals live as ghosts and humans as spirits and where many hidden powers and treasures are locked away, as if by an invisible strength or by a magician's spell" (C, 33). All creatures live among an unimaginably vast expanse of the dead, and this expanse forms part of the great and vital background of the creaturely.

Yet the doctor's claim is quite clear. Past animals and humans *live,* even though they are no longer creaturely. They are the past and forgotten origins of every present origin and they can never be adequately indicated. Furthermore, Schelling here distinguished between ghosts *[Gespenster]* and spirits *[Geister]*. Animals leave behind ghosts while humans leave behind spirits. Yet, as we saw in our earlier discussion of *Die Weltseele,* every single thing is organic and hence animalized. If all things are alive, all things can linger as ghosts. *Geist* would then be something like a species of ghost, the kind of ghost that speaks to the species difference of humans. This is a difficult thought because the kind or species that marks the human marks the place where the discrete nature of natural kinds itself returns to its originary crisis. The human kind is the kind that can complicate the discourse of natural kinds. Spirits call us back to the cision that we have abandoned in our propensity to love ourselves. Spirit hauntings

therefore indicate the conspiracy (inspiration, the A^1, *and* expiration, the A^2, as the conspiracy, the A^3) of life. This is the paradox of spirits as opposed to ghosts. They call humans to themselves by calling them beyond themselves, beyond anthropocentrism. Spirits call humans to live among the ghosts.

For the clergyman, however, the dead are too dead. He does not think that one should commemorate the dead. This is the irony of his profession, for the *Geistliche* (clergyman) is of spirit but not spiritual, not haunted. "The dead are for this sensuous world utterly dead." In a way, the *Geistliche* is Kantian or neo-Kantian, preaching with negative concepts, *Vernunftglaube* (rational faith), and duty before the gods that have already abandoned us. "Belief is simple . . . as is the duty from which it comes" (C, 18). The *Geistliche* and his deontologically driven theology know nothing of the intimacy of absolute difference, nothing of the violence of sensation and *Empfindung*. Clara, on the other hand, standing almost at the boiling point of the cision, is precariously close to the wrath of ghosts and gods. Opposing the clergyman's Kantism, Clara retorted that "This word immortality is for me much too weak for my sensitivity *[Empfindung]*. What do cold words and merely negative concepts have to do with ardent *Sehnsucht*" (C, 18)?

Clara complained that "nature seems to have to have a secret consuming poison in itself." All of nature's creatures are old enough to die as soon as they are born, as if death, the force of continuity indwelling within and struggling against every discontinuity, is the poison, whose velocity remains indeterminate and hence secret, but which actively ruins every creature. If nature itself is afflicted with the indwelling poison of its own temporality, why must nature pass it onto to all of her children so that they too are destroyed by it (C, 29)? The doctor objected:

> Even in your own opinion nature is suffering from a hidden poison that she would like to overcome or reject, but cannot. Doesn't she mourn with us? We are able to complain, but she suffers in silence and can talk to us only through signs and miens. What a quiet wistfulness *[Wehmut]* lies in so many flowers, the mourning dew and in the evening's fading colors. (C, 29)

Nature herself weeps, but through signs and through the *stille Wehmut* of her mien. *Wehmut,* the mood of crying—in nature's case, mutely—in pain is the silent wistfulness of nature. The English word "wistfulness" itself originally named an "attentiveness," as if to be attuned (itself a sense of *Mut*) to nature filled one with nostalgia for things lost, with pensive longing and melancholy. Emil Staiger, in his forceful and influential article on Schelling's melancholy, argued for such a decisive descent of both Schelling the person and Schelling the philosopher into depression, disappointment, and melancholy. Staiger took due note of the shift in mood and language in Schelling's middle period.

> One is accustomed to account for the change with the death of his wife. This is incorrect! The change already begins earlier. The scandal over his relationship with Caroline and her marriage with Schlegel, the accusation that he had killed Auguste Böhmer, Caroline's daughter, through a treatment based on ideas from his Philosophy of Nature, the controversy with the literary newspaper, the stultification of the University of Jena, the dissolution of the Romantic Circle. All of this did not in any way correspond to his cheerful metaphysics and proved the existence of the cumbersome and the obstructive so sharply that the serene mood, the dream of a universal harmony, gradually yielded to a not minor universal irritability.[11]

One could amplify Staiger's list to include Hegel's betrayal of Schelling, the consequent eclipse of Schelling's public stature, and even Hölderlin's descent into madness. The dreamers of the Tübingen Stift awoke to the nightmares of human life. From his own list, Staiger concluded that the "Regularity of nature has blurred and there is senseless, blind chance. Evil cannot be understood as a lesser degree of perfection. It is a monstrous power that often scorns the most sublime willpower. A grim veil extends over the mirror image of divine spirit."[12] It is hard to deny that there is a dramatic shift of accent in Schelling's middle period and, as we have seen, Schelling argued in the *Freedom* essay that the veil of melancholy, the profound and indestructible melancholy of all life, extends over all of nature (I/7, 400). Yet, despite the power of Staiger's observations and the undeniable pain of both Schelling's life and life itself, Staiger nonetheless exaggerates his case. This is a one-sided account. Catastrophe did not just lead to a breakdown for Schelling, but to a breakthrough. One can only see the moon after the house burns down. Schelling had already argued early in his writings for a model of tragic joy and later argues, as we shall see shortly, that any fixed position is, as such, inhibited and thereby lifeless and false. The melancholy of nature is at the same time, from another perspective, the joy of nature. The sadness of beauty is also a clue to the joy of beauty and vice versa.

In this sense, it is unwise to emphasize solely the melancholy transience of the perpetual parade of masks. This is also the secret to their joy and the wistful miens of flowers signal a more difficult and subtle question. What if it were not the case that Schelling's sensitivity was his ruin and the impetus to the final dissolution and failure of his project but just the opposite? What if one were to say that Schelling's sensitivity became so acute, so compassionate, that it felt *[empfindet]* the suffering of all things, even flowers?

The beautiful mien and smell of flowers is, after all, the mien and smell of death. It is not simply that flowers are an expression of an exemplary form that, sadly, cannot conquer the tides of time. Flowers express rather the ecstasy of time just as stones did. They remind us that their imminent demise is also

the dark seed of their birth. Hence, Bataille argued that flowers are not to be conceived, "following the verbiage of old poets, as the faded expression of an angelic ideal, but, on the contrary, as a filthy and glaring sacrilege."[13]

> Risen from the stench of the manure pile—even though it seemed for a moment to have escaped it in a flight of angelic and lyrical purity—the flower seems to relapse abruptly into its original squalor: the most ideal is rapidly reduced to a wisp of aerial manure. For flowers do not age honestly like leaves, which lose nothing of their beauty, even after they have died; flowers wither like old and overly made-up dowagers, and they die ridiculously on stems that seemed to carry them to the clouds.[14]

But finally for Schelling, as well as for Bataille, this wistful sacrilege is not simply to be refused nor is melancholy to be privileged. Perhaps Freud was correct in claiming that the melancholic has a sharper sense of the truth, but it is not enough to become fixated in or with this mood. Melancholy, like the Buddhist Great Doubt, is not a breakdown, certainly not an end in itself, but rather the first glimmer of a breakthrough. Flowers speak of the silent life of all things, the inaudible heart of the conspiracy of life. As Shibayama Rōshi mused in a poem at the beginning of his laconic Zen meditation, *A Flower Does Not Talk:*

> Silently a flower blooms,
> In silence it falls away;
> Yet here now, at this moment, at this place,
> The whole of the flower, the whole of
> The world is blooming.
> This is the talk of the flower, the truth
> Of the blossom;
> The glory of eternal life is fully shining here.[15]

How does one translate the silence of nature, the aporetically intrusive yet reticent roar of its past and future, into a language audible to humans? How does one hear the language of flowers and know that they smell of death? How does one tease out this silence always indwelling in the expressed, indeed, the expressible per se?

This, stated more generally, is the problem of the system, a problem that we have already previewed with Jacobi's condemnation of the narcissism of reason. How can one have a "system of freedom" without the system strangling freedom in its demand that it be the system's comprehensible first principle? In the so-called middle period in which the *Clara* was composed, Schelling was also expressly engaged in the articulation of a "system of freedom." This

was one of the questions that occupied Heidegger in his confrontation *[Auseinandersetzung]* with Schelling. Not known for his embrace of canonical thinkers in the *Seinsgeschichte* that forms the decline of thinking from Plato through the last great metaphysician, Friedrich Nietzsche, Heidegger nonetheless had atypical praise for Schelling, the thinker that had been too hastily dismissed as the *schon aufgehoben* precursor to Hegel. For Heidegger, Schelling is "the truly creative and boldest thinker of this whole age of German philosophy. He is that to *such* an extent that he drives German Idealism from within right past its own fundamental position" (SA, 4/4).

Yet Schelling, like his successor Nietzsche, "the only essential thinker after Schelling," "had—if that may be said—to fail at his work *[am Werk scheitern]*" (SA, 4/3). This was in part due to the lack of an "inner middle point" in modern German philosophy that could make allowances for this thinking. Yet this failing did not mark the futility of their thought but rather formed the "heat lightening of a new beginning" (SA, 4/3). For Heidegger, Schelling's great silence after the *Freedom* essay emerged from this failure, from this *scheitern*. One who knew the reason for or ground of this failure would be "the founder of a new beginning of Western philosophy" (SA, 4/3).

Heidegger located this failure in Schelling's inability to reconcile the demands of systemic clarity and the silence of freedom. "But if the system is only in the understanding, then Ground remains and that which opposes Ground is excluded from the system as the Other of the system, and system is, seen from the whole of beings, no longer the system" (SA, 194/161). This is the "difficulty in which he fails. And this failing shows itself when the moments of the jointure of Being *[Seynsfuge],* ground, existence, and their unity, not only become less and less compatible, but become rather so dispersed from one another that Schelling falls back into the rigidified tradition of Occidental thinking without transforming it creatively" (SA, 194/161). One only need look, Heidegger suggested, at the famous 1850 photograph of the "old Schelling" not just to see "a personal fate" but the *Gestalt* of "the historical spirit of the Germans" (SA, 8/7). Aged, exhausted, worried, and angst-ridden: the photo of Schelling seems to speak of an incapacity to accept the loss that freedom exacts on the system's drive to orient the activity of thinking in relationship to itself. But is this the only reading of the photo? Perhaps it speaks to the exhaustion of having been born *in* a time but not living such that one is *of* that time. Is this the exhaustion of speaking a language that few could hear, of being born, as Nietzsche put it, *unzeitgemäß,* out of the step of one's time? As Schiller put it in his ninth letter on *Aesthetic Education,* "The artist is indeed the child of their age; but woe to them if they are at the same time its ward or, worse still, its minion!" (AE, 9.4).

I want to take issue with at least two aspects of Heidegger's claim. I want to question Heidegger's contention that Schelling, despite forming, along with Nietzsche, the "heat lightening of a new beginning," did not creatively

transform the Occidental tradition. Both Schelling and Nietzsche turned this tradition upside down. I also want to take issue with Heidegger's contention that the system fails due to the inner incompatibility of freedom and necessity. For Schelling, the system must always perish of its own inner antinomies but such a crushing death, beyond the glancing blows of Hegelian negativity, is one of the most forceful aspects of its life. Certain failures paradoxically mark the highest success.

The question of a "system of freedom" or the conspiracy of life is inseparable from the problem of hearing the dead. How does one attend to their uninvited silence? How does the silence of the past impose itself, despite not having anything precise to say? How does silence impinge upon language, and how does language, whose very birth was the silencing of silence, speak to its own haunting? In other words, it is words themselves, forming the nexus of an intelligible context, within which things can come to be thought meaningfully, that are brought back to the brink of their perpetually anterior silence. This is the "forlorn loneliness" of language that paradoxically somehow still managed to speak to Schelling by silencing Schelling—a silence all the more remarkable when one remembers both Schelling's enormous early philosophical productivity as well as his reputation for garrulity. In *Les mots et les choses* Foucault made the point similarly: "Language loses its privileged position and becomes, in its turn, a historical form coherent with the density of its own past."[16]

We here turn to "the system of freedom" in terms of the relationship it tries, despite its ultimate impossibility, to locate between language, any language whatsoever, language per se, and silence. By silence I do not mean a silence within language, a caesura, a pause for breath, a quiet moment alone. I mean to name, proceeding systematically, the silence at the edge of language, intruding upon language, the abject but still irresistible threat to the very domain of language. Yes, the system fails, but herein lies its secret: the impossibility of maintaining the very moment that inaugurates the discourse on freedom.

How does one then think freedom as that which inaugurates language and simultaneously contests it? It is not sufficient to say, at least not in any conventional sense, that freedom is an idea or even a transcendental ideal. A little more than a year after publishing the *Freedom* essay, one of Schelling's former students, a kind of earnest yet dim Chaerophon, Karl August Eschenmayer, wrote to him with several critical questions about the treatise and asked that his letter, along with Schelling's response, be published together. Schelling dated his response April, 1812, and both letters were published in the inaugural issue of Schelling's new journal, *Die Allgemeine Zeitschrift von Deutschen für Deutsche*. In his letter, Eschenmayer quite pointedly asked Schelling the question that is central to us here. As Schelling summarized Eschenmayer's query: "First of all you are not at all satisfied that I held scien-

tific inquiries into the essence of freedom as possible and that I actually undertook them. . . . Freedom, you say, could never be a concept—as could nothing else be a concept that is not a concept" (I/8, 162). How can one have a concept of freedom when freedom is itself not a concept, when it eludes all conceptual snares?

Eschenmayer went on to ask if orders like ethics, virtue, and beauty are, strictly speaking, "thought." Schelling replied that one could raise the same objection about a stone or about other seemingly banal matters that one claims to have "thought": "is the stone, is sound, is color thought? In this respect, freedom is nothing special" (I/8, 162). The stone is not, strictly speaking, the thought of the stone no more than freedom is, strictly speaking, the thought of freedom. A stone is a stone is a stone, so to speak. There is a concept of stone just as much as there is a concept of freedom. This does not mean that freedom = a concept. Furthermore, Schelling claimed that "I do not know that I name freedom a concept, or if I even speak of a concept of freedom" (I/8, 163). But even if Schelling were to speak of a concept of freedom (or even the thought of freedom), that does not mean that the concept = freedom. This would not even be true of a stone. "But I can also speak of the concept of any kind of thing, for example, a stone, without therefore passing off the stone with which one builds houses for a concept" (I/8, 163).

Concepts are not adequate to their signified. No *idea* is adequate to its *ideatum*. With the idea of freedom this gap is at its most gaping. As even Eschenmayer admitted, one must speak of freedom, albeit, without the luxury of conceptual adequacy. This is precisely what Schelling had been trying to do: one must somehow speak of the Irrational. "But that would be precisely the Irrational of which I speak. One never entirely grasps freedom in a concept. There still always remains a remainder *[Rest]* that cannot be worked out in the concept" (I/8, 163). Even amidst its most heroic self-discoveries and triumphant conceptual deployments, the concept is haunted by a remainder, some residue of waste that eludes it.

Schelling addressed this clearly in the *Freedom* essay when he insisted that things have their Ground in "what in God is not *God itself,* that is, in that which is the Ground of Its existence" (I/7, 359).

> Following the eternal deed of Self-Revelation, the world is how we now perceive it, namely, everything is rule, order, and form. But the unruly *[das Regelose]* always still lies within Ground as if it could once more again break through. Nowhere does it appear as if order and form were originary but rather as if an initial Unruliness had been brought to order. This is the incomprehensible basis of reality within things, the irreducible remainder *[der nie aufgehende Rest],* which remains eternally within Ground and which with the greatest effort does not admit of being resolved in the understanding.

> The understanding *[Verstand]* in its actual sense is born out of this incomprehensibility *[Verstandlose]*. Without this preceding darkness there is no reality of creatures. Darkness is their necessary inheritance. (I/7, 360)

Freedom is the simultaneous natality and fatality of concepts, the source of their generation as well as what eternally evades the concept. Freedom is therefore a debt that cannot be paid (another way of translating *nie aufgehender Rest*), a remainder that cannot be balanced. Yet, just as it is possible that there be a thought of a stone without that thought being the stone itself, there still remained for Schelling a thought of freedom. Even in thinking that one cannot conceive freedom, is one still not somehow thinking freedom? By "thought" Schelling did not mean a determination, as if the limitless could simply be delimited. One who attempts to locate freedom within a specific domain is like the Orpheus who loses Eurydice because he demands to see her. Schelling explained to Eschenmayer that he named "irrational" what does not have "Being as such *[das Seyn, als solches],* or what Plato names 'that which does not have being *[das Nicht-Seyende]*'" (I/8 163). This is the thought of an absolute subject (or unsubject within the subject position[17]) of Being, the μὴ ὄν, a phrase that Schelling took from Plato. As we have seen, the μὴ does not so much negate Being (as would the construction οὐκ ὄν) as suggest an unruliness otherwise than Being indwelling within Being. The μὴ ὄν names the difference indwelling within identity, so to speak. Eschenmayer wanted to find the irrational in the heights of lofty ideas. Schelling, on the other hand, sought it in the depths (I/8, 163), as if it were the silence of the dead rustling underneath our feet.

Schelling then clarified to Eschenmayer what he meant by thinking itself. "The concept of something is nothing other than becoming spiritually aware of it *[das geistige Bewußtwerden derselben]*. Thinking is nothing other than the spiritual process by which we reach this becoming aware" (I/8, 163). This would also apply to what Schelling meant by "system." The thought of freedom and its systemic presentation involves a becoming aware of what within thinking presents itself at the limits of thinking.

Hence, when Schelling discussed systematicity in the *Erlangen Lectures,* he called the system "*eine Mitwissenschaft, conscientia*. From this it follows therefore, that there is *in us* something akin to this eternal freedom—or still clearer: this eternal freedom must itself be in *us;* it must be the knowing of itself within us" (IPU, 23). The thought of freedom is a kind of accessory knowing, a knowing with or *Mitwissenschaft*. It is the real becoming conscious of or aware of its ideality. This thought, however, never completes itself, but rather revolves in a cycle of expansion and contraction. Freedom "would remain in no form and is fettered by no form. We therefore expressly presuppose that in taking form, but only in taking form to emerge again victoriously out of every form, it shows itself as the in itself incomprehensible and infinite"

(IPU, 21). In this sense, Schelling argued, freedom cannot automatically be equated even with God. "The absolute subject is not not God. It is also not God. It is also that which God is not. As such, it is *beyond* God and just as one of the most excellent mystics of an earlier time dared to speak of a Super-Godhead *[Übergottheit]*" (IPU, 18).[18]

Something like the monstrous force of Schelling's "thought" of freedom dramatically comes to the fore in Bataille's analysis of the relationship between language and silence in the works of the Marquis de Sade. Bataille had no interest in addressing the fashionably complacent readers of de Sade who spoke of de Sade's hidden and wondrous secrets for those liberated enough to embrace them. "I am addressing the anxious person whose first reaction is to de Sade as their daughter's potential murderer" (E, 199/179). It was de Sade who endeavored to think sovereignty systematically and hence his first principle was "absolute solitude." This solitude expressed itself as a systematic disregard for all others as an impingement on the sovereignty of his solitude. "The man who admits the value of other people necessarily imposes limits upon himself" (E, 190/171). Sovereignty, then, is "an effort aimed at freeing human existence from the bonds of necessity" (E, 194/174).

However, as sovereignty systematically follows its own imperative (Be free! Affirm the spontaneity of solitude!), it finds that, for example, the pleasure of sovereignty restricts sovereignty to the law of pleasure. Sovereignty, which begins with the pleasure of solitude, must resist the very law that inaugurates it. It must become utterly insensate. As my sovereignty continues to affirm itself, I discover an even subtler restriction: to what extent can I speak of sovereignty as *my* sovereignty? Am I, the one who inaugurates the system of sovereignty, not finally the one who blocks that very sovereignty by restricting it to the domain of myself? Sovereignty, what first appeared as the solitude that demands the death of others, becomes, when systematically pursued, the solitude that demands the death of the self that inaugurates the system. "What can be more disturbing than the prospect of egoism becoming the will to be consumed in the furnace lit by egoism?" (E, 195/175). Schelling had located this paradox as the tension that marks any system of freedom: human freedom (*my* freedom, hence freedom restricted to a domain) is my relationship to what, left to itself, is the all-destructive fire of freedom. Hence, for Bataille, following de Sade, the violence of sovereignty "clings to a silent contempt for the words used about it" (E, 208/187). Yet "silence cannot do away with things that language cannot state. Violence is as stubbornly there just as much as death, and if language cheats to conceal the universal annihilation, the serene work of *time,* language alone suffers, language is the poorer, not time and not violence" (E, 208/187).

Bataille found the same tension in his own writing. Jean Wahl responded to Bataille by claiming that "One of the partners must be conscious of continuity. Bataille talks to us, Bataille writes, he is aware of what he is doing, and

the moment that he is, the continuity can be broken" (E, 306/276). Bataille responded that "Jean Wahl had taken my meaning exactly," for "the supreme moment is indeed a silent one, and in the silence our consciousness fails us. . . . In the end the articulate person confesses their own impotence" (E, 306/276).

This supreme moment that leaves language impotent yet somehow richer can also be found in Schelling's response to Hegel. The moment in Hegel's work that threatens to clog its own, quite remarkable life is when, in Hegel's privileging of the universalization of spirit, *logos* hears and thereby knows itself. Spirit must announce its arrival. Spirit for Schelling, on the other hand, does not announce itself, but rather, in the moment of its greatest intensity, grows silent *[verstummt]*. *Verstummen* is not a mere dialectical negation into muteness. Rather in hearing the murmurs of silence within the din of discourse, it moves towards its own inherent silence—a silence that speaks louder than words but that can only be approached, although never attained, through words. By speaking in such a way, speech finds its authority to speak reentering the silence-laden crisis of speech, falling into what Schelling called in the first draft of *The Ages of the World* "the growing silent of knowledge *[das Verstummen der Wissenschaft]*" (WA, 103).

Hence, one who wants to philosophize, one "who wants to place themselves at the beginning point of a truly free philosophy, must abandon even God" (IPU, 18). It is only for one who "had once left everything and who were themselves left by everything" and who, like Socrates contemplating his demise in the *Phaedo,* "saw themselves alone with the infinite: a great step which Plato compared to death" (IPU, 18–19). Hence:

> What Dante had written on the gate of the Inferno could also in another sense be the entrance into Philosophy: 'Abandon hope all you who enter here.' The one who wants truly to philosophize must let go of all hope, all desire, all *Sehnsucht*. They must want nothing, know nothing, feel themselves bare and poor. They must give up everything in order to gain everything. This is a difficult step. It is difficult, so to speak, to separate from the final shore. (IPU, 19)

This is not the language of the confirmed melancholic, of the irritability and impatience at the world for failing to affirm one's vision of the harmony of nature. This is rather the language of the Great Death out of which the Great Compassion is born—the compassion that is sensitive to the suffering of all things, even flowers. This is not the discourse of breakdown or the voice of the merely broken. It is the voice of the breakthrough, beyond all fixations, beyond even those final, most desperately sacrosanct shores where one mourns the death of God, demands that the world be more loving and philosophical and less herd-like, practices anthropocentrism, or ruefully obsesses upon melancholy and ruin. It is the breakthrough to absolute affirmation as the

grounding mood of philosophy—a mood beyond even the conclusiveness of Hegel's subtle account of the life of spirit. As Schelling said of Hegel and the Hegelians at the end of his life:

> Just as many people imagine a beginning without any presuppositions at all, they would not also be able to presuppose thinking itself and, for example, also not deduce the language in which they are expressing this. But since this itself could not happen without language, there would only remain the growing silent *[das Verstummen]* that the helplessness and faint audibility of language really seeks to approach. (II/1, 312)

It was not that the Hegelians had spoken the wrong word, or even that they had insisted upon having the last word. It was that they thought that they could understand the language of ghosts.

II

> I live without living in myself, and I hope in such a way that I die because I am not dying.
>
> —Saint John of the Cross[19]

So how does one hear the language of ghosts when the understanding is both the point of access to and betrayal of it? What does one say to that which imposes on one, yet does not make its demands clear? What does one say to the Ndembu's "unquiet grave"? And since "all of the earth is one great Ruin" inhabited by ghosts and spirits, what does the unquiet grave of nature, the "Past, you abyss of thoughts!" want from us?

In this respect, I am reminded of Yasunari Kawabata's penetrating, haunting and haunted, short story "Silence" (1954).[20] The translator, Michael Emmerich, reminds us of the circumstances of Kawabata's own death. Not long after the spectacular suicide by *seppuku* of his protégé, Yukio Mishima, Kawabata quietly committed suicide in his studio in Zushi, leaving no note. The obituary claimed that he had remarked that "A silent death is an endless word" (FS, xi).

In the story, the renowned writer Omiya Akifusa, or so it is said, refuses to speak or to write a word. Although a stroke has left his right hand paralyzed and rendered him unable to speak, the narrator nonetheless muses that this situation does not leave him wholly unable to communicate. He could at least communicate with silent gestures or by writing with his left hand. Old Akifusa is refusing to speak. The narrator, Mr. Mita, finds this refusal strange. Now that this great writer can communicate very little, does this not

give even single characters or simple gestures even more force than all the voluminous writings that flowed from the relative luxury of speech and manual dexterity?

Mita intends to share this argument with Akifusa during his visit with him. As he takes a taxi from Kamakura to nearby Zushi, the driver tells him that a ghost has been appearing at night in empty cabs coming from Zushi and then disappearing by the time the taxi reaches Kamakura. The ghost never speaks, although the cab driver seems nonetheless convinced that when ghosts speak, they just complain. Mita, himself a writer, arrives at the home of Akifusa, who is now living with one of his two daughters, Tomiko. Akifusa, Mita concludes, is a kind of living ghost. He says nothing, even to Tomiko. Yet this silence nonetheless makes demands, albeit always of an uncertain character.

Tomiko has gotten into the habit, as did the taxi drivers with regard to the ghost, of responding to this beseeching silence by deciding what the ghosts are asking and what they want and what we should thereby do with this silence. Tomiko remembers one of her father's novels, *What a Mother Can Read,* in which an aspiring young writer goes mad and is institutionalized. Writing implements are deemed too dangerous for him, so he was only allowed to have manuscript paper. Undeterred, the boy continued to write and when his mother would come to visit, her son would excitedly show her his writing. As she looked at the blank paper, she felt like crying but immediately got into the habit of reading the blank page aloud. After repeated recitations, the story got better and better and the son, despite his madness, seemed proud. What did the insane son really want and how could he really speak with his mother? And where did the story come from that the mother read, yet attributed to the blank pages and to her son's opaque demands?

The silence in the Akifusa household, despite all of the chattering between Mita and Tomiko, leads Mita to fear that one day, after Akifusa's death, Tomiko will write a scathing memoir of her father, her own *What a Daughter Can Read*. Just as the mad son could not correct his mother's reading of his blank pages, a dead Akifusa cannot correct the range of what a daughter can "read." Hoping to give Akifusa an opportunity to reign in his daughter's "reading," Mita suggests that Tomiko write some kind of memoir soon. After some hesitation, Tomiko contemplates writing a memoir of her father's love affairs after her mother's death. "But it did seem that a book written in such a way would have more life than a book of memories written after Akifusa was dead. If it went well, even the sort of life he was living now could be preciously literary" (FS, 166).

Tomiko announces, without Akifusa having spoken, that he wants Mita to drink some saké and the anxious Mita gladly obliges. Before retreating behind a liberal consumption of it, Mita asks Akifusa:

> "What are your thoughts regarding what Tomiko was saying just now?"
> ". . . . . ."
> I addressed silence.
> "I feel sure that you could produce an intriguing work, really quite different from your *What a Mother Can Read*. I started to feel that way as I was talking with Tomiko."
> ". . . . . ." (FS, 167–68)

Mita drinks his saké and resumes the "conversation." Eventually Mita asks Akifusa, "Is there some profound reason for your refusal to write?" Akifusa's "answer"—if one could even call it that—remains, ". . . . . ." (FS, 170–71). On the way home, as the taxi passes the crematorium, a ghost appears next to Mita. The cab driver begins to race towards Kamakura in order to discharge his unwanted guest. Mita is counseled not to speak to ghosts or be cursed. That, too, of course, is a way of speaking to ghosts and hence one could even conclude that one would be cursed even in the attempt to avoid the curse. In searching for the right word, even silence is prolix. The answer to ". . . . . ." is not just ". . . . . ." The silence of death, already intimated by the silence of birth, is not the last word because in a fundamental sense death is not a word and hence, in addressing it, there is no last word. Death, like the Good, seems to demand words, and it thereby produces words, although it never, so to speak, tells us what it thinks of these words.

Yet Kawabata's story is paradoxically eloquent as it conjures the faint echo of the silence beyond silence and its infinite and irremediably obscure demands. One enters a kind of circle of thinking in which, beyond the saying of silence, there is the faint echo of the silence beyond silence. This is not to say, therefore, that there is any true or adequate freestanding proposition, positive, negative, or otherwise. *Any* statement, left to itself, is, as such, false. The challenge, rather, is to cross into hell, to somehow, in abandoning everything, even hope itself, pass through the gates and enter into the magic alchemical circle of philosophizing, which produces gold out of nothing.

Schelling began his remarkable *Erlangen Lectures* with a series of reflections on the entrance or introduction to philosophy. Schelling distinguished between philosophy and philosophizing. Philosophy (*a* philosophy, so to speak) is not to philosophize. Philosophizing is irreducible to the philosophical systems and positions that philosophical activity produces. This distinction, Schelling expanded, is analogous to the difference between *having* gold (a philosophy) and *making* gold (philosophizing). "The one who philosophizes is the one who also has philosophy" (IPU, 7). Conversely, one could say that if one just *has* philosophy, this does not mean that one can philosophize. The legions of epigones, civil servants of the truth, and the countless kingdoms of the *Verstandesmenschen* are evidence of that. Philosophizing is not merely to recount narratives of the history of philosophy or to recapitulate the

details of various philosophies, or to drop dense allusions at cocktail parties, or to apply the latest and most fashionable paradigm to everything that one experiences. It is certainly not just to scan philosophies for inconsistencies, as if philosophizing were reducible to the production of consistent positions, no matter how base and imbecilic.

Rather, one must find some way to enter into the "magical circle" (IPU, 4) of thinking. Simply reading philosophy books does not do this. If one were to follow Schelling's alchemical analogy, one should ask not about the nature of gold, but rather about its provenance. Out of what does one make philosophy? What is the lead out of which philosophical activity is a golden transfiguration?

Schelling's answer is as blunt as it is remarkable. He names the prime matter of thinking *asystasia* (ασυστασία)—incoherence, irregularity, chaos. It is the lack or privation of σύστᾶσις, of standing and being together. It is *Unbestand* (changeability, unsteadiness, errancy), conflict and the lack of unity, a "*bellum intestinum,* so to speak" (IPU, 8), the Hobbesian *bellum omnium contra omnes* (IPU, 9). This is the wistful, anxious, bellicose "original asystasia of human knowing." After all, "The need for harmony first comes out of disharmony" (IPU, 9). The chaos of silence is the violence of the Fall.

Philosophizing, however, is not achieved through the denial or abnegation of asystasia, or freedom. Rushing to Kamakura to discharge the ghosts as quickly as possible is no more philosophical than to respond to silence by vainly searching for the right word. Rather to be *in* philosophy is somehow to be *in* silence. To separate words from their original silence and thereby to hear them just as words renders any such word false. "What can no longer develop itself, dies" (IPU, 2). Nothing is true in itself, only in relationship to other things and to the conspiracy of life.

Schelling offered infusorians as examples of such retarded life. These are "insects that only exist when higher life is inhibited" (IPU, 2). Often occurring in stagnant water, infusorians are microscopic organisms that do not develop in complex ways. The human equivalent would be herds, spiritless scholars, philosophical camps, unswerving canonical commitments, dogmatism, indeed, the alarming *bellum omnium contra omnes* of contemporary academic life. (Zarathustra remarked that after another generation of scholars, "spirit itself will stink!") Sects "only emerge if there is an inhibition in the development of the system." Philosophical sects are like these retarded microorganisms that cannot tolerate complexity and the dissonance of development. Indeed, there has been a whole history of such retardation. It is called the history of philosophy insofar as such a history is constructed around a set of warring fundamental philosophical positions rather than philosophizing itself. Philosophy, as opposed to philosophizing, is, as we have seen, symptomatic of the propensity of things (including philosophical positions) to flee to the periphery where they affirm themselves as identities. Even ideas have egos. Schelling hence provided a brief history of the belli-

cose mire of modern philosophy. Descartes contended that there were two substances, spirit (A) and matter (B). Spinoza's pantheism did not adequately differentiate (A) from (B). Leibniz did not adequately differentiate (B) from (A). Bruno favored only (B), albeit as a dynamic principle he called hylozoism. The French materialists had only (B) and a dead one at that, "matter without any spiritual vitality".

For Schelling, none of these positions are errors per se. As oblique reflections of the general economy of the conspiracy of life, they are not errors. They become errors when they remove themselves from the disequilibrium out of which they emerged. This Whole, as we have seen, is irreducible to any philosophical position. Indeed, any such reduction would be an error. Within the system of freedom, nothing stands in isolation and has its being within itself. The conspiracy is an interconnectedness in which no thing and no idea can be taken out of circulation. "There are no universally valid propositions, only propositions that are valid for *the* moment of development of which they are an expression" (IPU, 6–7). This is a mood of thinking that the Buddha (and Nagarjuna) called *pratītyasamutpāda,* dependent coorigination or interdependent arising. There are neither subjects nor objects per se. Things neither have their own being, nor are they simply nothing, the absence of being. Rather, all of these aspects form an extravagant Whole in which the parts, if removed from their relationship to other parts of the Whole and asserted in themselves, are frozen and retarded and quickly become false.

Schelling argued for a philosophical activity that produces no final positions, but rather the love of philosophizing as a mode of absolute affirmation. "Each proposition in this system is correct in what it asserts and it only errs in that it excludes Other propositions" (IPU, 11). No philosophical proposition is completely false. Error is rather to overemphasize a truth to the point of its exclusivity. Even so, there is something honorable about philosophical errors. "One who errs *[irren]* can wander *[abirren]* from the way, but they are still on the way" (IPU, 11). One who does not attempt to follow the way, to enter philosophical life, is not even capable of erring. Yet such a way is not an a priori prescribed way. The way that is such a way, to paraphrase Laozi, is not the eternal way. It is rather to abandon all positions, all possessions, so to speak, and to enter the alchemical circle of philosophizing.

Asystasia is not therefore something, a discernible source out of which philosophical activity properly emerges. It is, rather, the absolute nothing. It is not an empty space or a lack. It is superabundance, but as such, "It is nothing—not something, this itself would at least only be a negative definition. It is also not nothing, that is, it is everything" (IPU, 17). In the opening lectures, Schelling offered several poetic names for this absolute nothing, including "that which goes through everything and remains in nothing," "that which never is as such that it could not be otherwise," and "the subject that is in

everything but remains in nothing." Asystasia is nonetheless "the indefinable," "the incoercible," and "the ungraspable." To make gold is the alchemical act of philosophizing, the ongoing *creatio ex nihilo* of thinking.

III

There is a rather extravagant logic that governs the *Clara:* to keep Clara alive, to moderate her flight to the spirit world, and to draw her from the depths of her interiority. As Clara plaintively muses, "Why else do we say that prior to death no one is blessed apart from he, we might say, who dies while living—and what else is this solemn vow of deprivation and renunciation of worldly things other than a death in the living body" (C, 22)? Clara is a kind of living ghost, already departed from quotidian concerns. The doctor and the priest conspire to help their elegiac friend whose trauma drives her from nature into the nether depths of interiority and *Innigkeit*.

The priest reflected that "the pain over the one gone transformed itself into an inexpressible *Sehnsucht* for the futural. At the same time, there was something powerful in the way in which she strove to go beyond and over nature and the actual" (C, 27). Clara, both mournful and electrified, ambivalently drawn toward and repulsed by the death of her beloved Albert, leads the priest to surmise that this "may have filled her with a feeling that within nature there was something nameless and frightful; something towards which, with an awful desire, she sometimes felt drawn and sometimes repelled" (C, 27). This is the erotic wavering of anxiety, the impossible demand to have as much death as possible while still living. Clara's erotically charged ambivalence is reminiscent of Schelling's description in the *Freedom* essay of the vertigo in which one both does and does not want to jump from a great height. Yet to be so alive that one is about to die, to be so fully in the crisis that one is about to perish in the ebullition at the center of being, is impossible to sustain and is its own kind sickness, admirable as it may be. The doctor counseled that they should "charitably support the crisis *[die Krisis wohltätig zu unterstützen]* and steer it towards a curative goal" (C, 28).

In a way, the logic of such a strategy is not dissimilar to the problematic of David Lynch's film *Blue Velvet*. The film begins in the Norman Rockwell-like tranquillity of Lumberton, the very epitome of the loss of the question of nature. At least in terms of this clotted world, all is as it should be. Lawns are mowed. The sun shines. Streets are clean. People are smiling. Then Jeffrey's father has a heart attack and Jeffrey discovers a human ear. The latter serves as a kind of bridge to a nightmare land, to a world of spirits, if you will. Here the understanding loses its authority and the alleged tranquillity of Lumberton comes to appear, in contradistinction to the violence of the spirit world, as the despair of tranquilization, the quiet despondency of kitsch, and the depressed inhibition of life.

In the spirit world, connected to the quotidian world through an insect-filled ear, Jeffrey's mother returns as Dorothy Valens, frantically dependent upon Frank's violence to stave off her suicidal despair. The ear is an intermediary figure that opens up the transit between *natura naturata* and the spirit world, and Lynch's films often rely on such intermediary figures (the highway in *Lost Highway* or the blue key in *Mulholland Drive*). Dorothy is a kind of Clara figure, kept alive by her extreme proximity to the madness of the spirit world. In the mundane world, however, Jeffrey's mother is almost mute, unresponsive to the extraordinary events unfolding around her. We see her blankly staring at a television set, not even registering or caring that the station has gone off the air. Frank, her liberator of sorts, is an electrifying transformation of her onetime listless husband. Rather than feebly gasping on the respirator for life as the father did in the hospital, trying to recover from his heart attack, Frank furiously inhales oxygen to unleash the violence that will keep the depressed Dorothy alive.

Frank, following the French critic Michel Chion's astute analysis, provides a kind of electroshock therapy for the Dorothy enervated by spiritless Lumberton. "When you realize that the script's extravagant logic in fact revolves around the notion of forestalling Dorothy's suicide, by means of electroshocks and strong sensations, through blackmail . . . *Blue Velvet* acquires a more interesting and beautiful meaning more in tune with the disturbance it provokes in us."[21] Clara, like Dorothy Valens, is on the precarious edge of the spirit world. It portends the outburst of the A^2, the return of Dionysus led by a carriage of panthers, the orgasm of forces in the collapse of form and the bursting forth of heretofore contracted energies. Clara is on the edge of the electric (both electrifying and electrocuting) world of spirits, but the source of her life also threatens to expedite her demise. The doctor and the priest vainly try to return Clara not to the dead world of form, but to the conspiracy of life. Clara, like Dorothy Valens, is the reverse of the mother who is in desperate need of electricity. Clara is on the verge of being electrocuted. "Indeed, if another power within me didn't balance out this horror of nature, I would die from the thought of this eternal night and retreat of light, of this eternally struggling being that never has being *[ringende, nie seiende Sein]*" (C, 26).

The doctor's therapeutic techniques essentially rely upon the movement of negative philosophy. The doctor always begins with careful research into the details of the natural world and eschews those who would first start with the spirit world. "No-one should devote themselves to this investigation until they have gained a firm and solid ground here within nature on which they can base their thoughts" (C, 20). The doctor begins with the study of nature and follows the movement of negative philosophy *über etwas hinaus,* from within things beyond things. "And we must especially give up the thought of deriving life from something different and higher as if we were simply wanting to grasp that. Not top down but bottom up is my motto" (C, 21). The doctor employs

an arsenal of such arguments in his effort to bring Clara back down to the earth and to draw her out of her great interior labyrinths without losing her to the spirit world. Since few know how to handle the mystery of freedom and since many are thereby merely "gripped by the madness of caprice," the doctor recommends that one turn to art and its capacity to externalize the internal (C, 39). Although Clara could appreciate these arguments, just as Schelling could appreciate his own early writings, they are nonetheless still too abstract. These arguments fail to rouse Clara and she asks to be left alone, "for now that high, holy spiritual realm is nearer to me than nature, world and life" (C, 40).

The days grow longer. Soon it is winter and the dialogue resumes on Christmas Eve, the night in which Christians anticipate not only new deaths, but also the miracle of birth. On the heals of negative philosophy's incapacity to reel Clara away from the white heat of the spirit world and back to the cision of nature, they try again. Apropos of the holiday, Clara's mood has become so ethereal in her detachment that the bliss of the spirit world's annihilating force threatens to prevent her from engaging with life. The bliss of *sattva,* of absolute detachment, the great Indian philosopher Śaṅkara once argued, is also an addiction and an attachment.[22] Clara swoons,

> I see everything as if it were present; to me it feels as if the spirit life were already embracing even me, as if I were still strolling on Earth but as a completely different kind of being, as one borne by a soft, gentle element, as if I were without need and without pain—why can't we hold on to these moments? (C, 41)

Despite the bliss of Clara's breakthrough, the bliss of serene detachment, one cannot hold on to these moments because the brutally factual side of nature continues to interrupt it. Clara knows both the melancholy and the bliss of abandoning the brute facts, but her detachment still hinders engagement with the world. Detachment without engagement results from being electrocuted by the violence that was to have been revitalizing. Beyond the sclerosis of fixed attachments is the free engagement of nature just as it is—in all of its discontinuous and interdependent becomings.

The priest therefore endeavors to revive Clara, who is so alive that she cannot reasonably live, with the complementary approach of a positive philosophy, which proceeds in the opposite direction from the bottom up movement of the doctor's discourse. To clear the way for such an approach, however, he must first begin with an account of the Whole of philosophy, a discourse in the mode of *The Ages of the World*. Such an account is achieved "through clear concepts . . . in which what was known in an indivisible way is taken to pieces or separated and then made into a unity again" (C, 43). The priest attempts to lead Clara back into the "living rotation" (C, 49) of the Whole.

In a long dialogue about the living rotation between body, soul, and spirit, the conversation turns to subject of death. Clara admits that in death, the soul is released from the body but that this does not imply that one's personality lives on in the spirit world. The soul is not one's ego, but the irreducible remainder, the dark germ, the forgotten origin in every origin. The priest sympathetically argues that "the masses are almost purely comprised of people who defiantly insist on their individuality and who think that asserting oneself and having an impact comes before all else" (C, 69–70). Rather, as we saw in the first chapter, "the soul disappears in God like a drop in the ocean or a ray of light in the sun" (C, 72). Death is like a kind of drunkenness and loss of self and hence a return to what the Buddhist tradition calls one's original face.

Yet against the great oblivion of death, the priest and Clara endeavor, futilely perhaps, to discern and preserve small traces of the spirit that survive their reabsorption into the dark night of the soul. Perhaps such a humble endeavor is still to want too much. For what is one to make of traces that are no longer organized into a personality? These traces, they further speculate, can also be the traces of the soul lingering in nature in the form of ghosts. "For only a few pass over so pure and free of any love for earthly life that they can be absolved immediately." The rest become ghosts, still wavering between being and not being (C, 82). Those fixated with bodies return to haunt those bodies, unable to utterly detach from them. This discourse, as outlandish as it may be, is not a story that is told by ghosts, but by the haunted. This is both its problem and its provocation.

As the winter progresses, an opaque work of philosophy, drunk on its own erudition and obscurantism, arrives in the mail. The interlocutors express frustration with the text, indeed, with philosophy itself. (This all the more remarkable when one reflects that Schelling is among the densest and most difficult philosophers in the Western tradition.) Clara retorts that philosophy's drive to obfuscation is deplorable. Philosophy must think what is most obscure but in so doing resist all obscurantism. "The deepest, I feel, must also be the clearest; just as what is clearest, for example, a crystal, by virtue of being such, doesn't seem to get closer to me, but instead seems to withdraw and to become more obscure and just as I can look into a drop of water as if into an abyss. . . . Depth must be distinguished from opacity. Depth is one thing, opacity is another" (C, 87). The dialogue is called the *Clara,* after all, and Clara demands *das Klarste,* the clearest. Such clarity shows the infinite and intagliated depths within things. Yet this depth is too easily lost in countless abstractions in the same way that I deny my death by thinking about it abstractly. Clara herself is like a crystal in which the singularity of her proper name has depths that exceed all generality. Abstractions obscure the singularity that is the nonsubstitutability of one human life for another. Yet singularities resist philosophy's impetus to generalize. How then

does one speak both to the uniqueness of personality and yet not lose a philosophical sense of the conspiracy of life?

In the *Freedom* essay, Schelling, as we have seen, had already announced that his future philosophical works would be dialogical. In this particular dialogue, whose central character is both singular and general and whose very name speaks to the abyssal *clarity* that she seeks, there transpires a dialogue about the nature of dialogue. Clara insists "that dialogues fitting to our time be devised as if they were taken from the present but without trying to imitate any particular person, dialogues as they could be held now and which without doubt really are held" (C, 89). The dialogue, unlike the philosophical treatise, explicitly has an "historical ingredient" that tethers it to historical life.

This technique in the end marks a deep difference between Hegel and Schelling. The *Phenomenology* is a long record of abstract positions and, as Hegel's path progressed, there are still few proper names. On the other hand, despite being surrounded by "positions" (the Kantian clergyman, the doctor/negative philosopher, the priest/positive philosopher), it is Clara who comes to hold the conspiracy of life within her being while at the same time nondistributively remaining Clara. She is a monad that, without sacrificing her singularity, reflects the conspiracy of life. According to Schelling, Hegel held that "the *true* creator is the concept; with the concept one has the creator and needs no Other outside of this creator" (HMP, 127/135). Hegel's statement finally does not speak either to Clara's singularity or the absolute alterity of her depths.

Hegel's *Phenomenology* is more like a séance in which one tries to call back the spirit world. It is spirit's own odyssey back to itself after its long history of alienation. The Clara demonstrates the opposite kind of progression, for it is a discourse in which nature is haunted by the spirit world. The *Phenomenology* is the dialectical history of the evolution of philosophical positions until they culminate in the final position of dialectical self-awareness. Yet Clara herself is not just an abstraction, and when she dies, this is not the advent of the negative. It is a singular and absolute loss.

Finally, the dialogue stumbles upon Spring. In the same way that only a brief sketch is extant for the proposed second book of *The Ages of the World,* only a couple of pages of this section are extant. One wonders if Schelling could move beyond the hellish hold of the past. Yet Spring, unlike the promise of new life on Christmas Eve, is actually bursting forth with new life.

> Oh, Spring, time of *Sehnsucht,* with what a zest for life you fill the heart! On the one hand we are drawn to the spirit realm insofar as we feel that true blessedness *[Seligkeit]* can exist only in that greatest profundity *[Innigkeit]* of life; on the other hand with its thousandfold magic nature calls heart and senses alike back into the external life. (C, 175–76)

Spring is for some the cruelest month because it teases us with its extravagant gifts. The power of Spring is not that we are finally going to get what Winter has denied us because we know that every Spring also augurs future winters. Every rose smells of death. But it does not just smell of death. It also has the luxuriant fragrance of the rose itself, and in this we smell the prodigality of nature.

In the Fall we are wistful about the waning of life. In the Spring we are apprehensive about the transience of these miraculous births. However, Spring is not the happy ending, failed or otherwise, to the dark beginning of the Fall. Every moment is a new beginning, but no moment in *the* beginning any more than it is *the* ending. Every Spring is both the end of Winter and the portent of a new Winter. Hence, no one can say which season begins the circle of the seasons in the same way that it makes no sense to speak of the beginning point of a circle. Spring is neither the beginning nor the culmination of the seasons. Rather, one must somehow find one's way, beyond attachments, into the "magical circle" of the seasons of nature.

In the circle of the seasons of nature, Clara claims that "*Seligkeit ist Freiheit und Herrschaft der Seele,* Blessedness is the freedom and sovereignty of the soul" (C, 177–78). Such sovereignty is the affirmation of the soul of nature through the affirmation of her time, of the circle of all her manifestations. Love affirms *natura naturans* through the embrace of all *natura naturata*. The affective life of love is *Seligkeit,* which can mean "blessedness," but which can also carry the sense of bliss, even to the point of being "overjoyed." For Schelling, this is not to privilege happy moments over sad moments, to love Spring as the overcoming of detestable Winters. Rather it is a joy beyond joy, a delight beyond delight, and a happiness beyond happiness. It is the affirmation of the freedom and sovereignty of the dark abyss of the soul. The German term *Seligkeit* came to be historically linked to the Latin term *beātus,* happy, prosperous, fortunate, and although both the German and the Latin term were taken over by the Christian tradition, it still resonates with the sense of opulence, luxuriance, abundance, wealth, and magnificence.

Seligkeit is not finally to be happy with life as if somehow one no longer knew pain. It is not, like Clara's flight from trauma, to find refuge in a one-sided relationship with nature. Clara suffered from the opposite disease of the Enlightenment. For the latter, the *conatus* only knew nature as what should be made to accord with its interests. For Clara, nature was so haunted that it can no longer anchor her to the brute facts of each moment. Finally Clara glimpses something like a peacefulness and joy with the abundance of life in all of its valences. This is a joy beyond individual feelings of sadness and joy. It is not to be confused with Clara's occasional ecstatic states, which she knows, even while in these states, cannot be sustained. This joy is not a moment of especially distilled happiness, for it is happy even with the great winters of life. It is rather the joyous affirmation of the cision that is the conspiracy of life.

Clara comes not to a particular season that would save her, but to the affirmation of the seasons of nature. In this sense, Clara also becomes, in her own way, another name for the singularity of each moment of *time*. In the very earliest preliminary outline of *The Ages of the World,* Schelling began with a phrase to which he was often to return to for the rest of his life. It was the sublime slogan of Isis, which proclaimed that "I am what was, what is, and what shall be, and no mortal has sublimated *[aufgehoben]* my veil" (WA, 187).

This is Schelling's answer to the riddle that the Sphinx put to Oedipus. To the question: What is the person? The person is nature and nature is time. In other words, the answer is not to be found *in* time because things do not come into being *within time:*

> The mistake of Kantism (with respect to time) is that nothing comes into being in time. Rather that in each thing time comes into being immediately from eternity into the new. . . . The beginning of time is in each thing, and, indeed, each thing is the same as the eternal beginning. Each particular comes into being through this cision through which the world comes into being. (WA, 79)

Beyond the circulations of life and death is the absolute silence of the life of life. Finally the Sphinx points not only to the rotation of nature, but clearly to the abyssal love of life and life of love. "It points me full of spinning not towards variability. It points me towards the constancy of inner love, blessed peace in the movement of the world, under the rotation of time" (I/10, 451).

8

Puruṣottama

> We cannot do without the Orient. Open and free communication with it must exist.
>
> —Schelling (1806)[1]

> And to you Life I reckon you are the leavings of many deaths. . . .
>
> —Walt Whitman

In Mumbai near the Gateway of India, which once welcomed the English to one of the crown jewels of its empire, for a few rupees, a person can catch an old boat that travels into the harbor. The Gateway arch is near one of the grandest historic hotels in India, built in retaliation by the wealthy Parsi J. N. Tata for allegedly being denied entrance into one of Europe's premier lodgings. Mumbai, one of the largest and most congested cities in the history of the earth, is also a city of Hindus and Muslims and is still haunted by the tensions that erupted during the Partition. It is a city full of temples and mosques as well as sādhus and sufis. Amidst the complexity of Islam and the countless expressions of Hinduism, such as Śiva, Viṣṇu, Brahmā, and Kṛṣṇa, one also finds Sikhs and Jains, even Buddhists. Indeed, Mumbai is a vivid reminder that there is no such thing as an essential India, but rather there are ceaseless Indias, prompting the question, "Of whose India are we speaking?" Perhaps this heterogeneity is true of all places, but the extravagant diversity of India emphatically exemplifies it.

Yet amidst the wealth of heterodoxy that lacks a clear, general explanatory principle and instead suggests a history of countless layers, one can nonetheless

travel into the harbor on an old boat to the island of Elephanta. There, amidst the vendors and rhesus monkeys, one can walk to the ancient caves of Śiva. Carved out of a hill, damaged by the gunshots of Portuguese soldiers, these stone monuments still speak of a unity among difference and difference among unity—a unity without foundation or true subject, a unity that is a figure for the play, the *līlā,* of difference.

Despite their proximity to a teeming populous, these caves must once have seemed remote, as if they were the conclusion of some long pilgrimage. They do not form the center of some city or town, but are located in a peripheral place. In a way their location is analogous to Kṛṣṇa's instruction to Arjuna to learn to meditate on the great divine secret by first learning to meditate on the tip of his nose.[2] The nose seems like an arbitrary and unimportant location to begin training oneself to eventually behold the greatest of all mysteries, and indeed it is. Yet Viṣṇu is in all things: all things are its avatars, not just the institutions set aside for holy activities. All of nature—forests and mountains as well as cities and towns—is the temple. So too are the caves of Śiva, set aside as if they were on the nose of the earth, announcing to guests that they are now at the center of the world, nay, at the center of nature itself.[3]

The most prominent figure in the cave is the imposing *trimūrti* or three-faced Śiva. Here one finds the face of the destroyer to one side, the creator to the other side, and, holding the two together in deep and abiding serenity, its eyes in the almost closed pose of *samādhī,* is the preserver. It holds together creation *and* destruction, life *and* death, natality *and* fatality—the conjunction that is the unity of a deeper life.

And furthermore, the three faces of Śiva—qua faces—are the face, so to speak, of the Śiva that never emerges into visibility, that renders this depiction, despite its prescience, as yet more strands of *Māyā*. If the hidden face were to appear, were, so to speak, to reveal itself, creation would not be able to endure the absolute range of its destruction.[4]

In this concluding chapter I will meditate upon the trimūrti Śiva, and I propose to do so by bringing together two unlikely figures, Schelling and the early twentieth-century Indian Philosopher Sri Aurobindo Ghose. Furthermore, I will attempt to loosely direct my analysis around their complimentary readings of the *Bhagavad-Gītā,* looking primarily at Schelling's discussion of it in his 1842 Berlin lectures on the *Philosophie der Mythologie* (chiefly lectures 20–22).[5] I will attempt to reinforce Schelling's reading by looking at Aurobindo's magisterial reading in his *Essays on the Gītā*.[6] In the background of my analysis is Śaṅkara's justly famous commentary. This is not to say that Schelling did not make mistakes regarding his reception of the Indian spiritual and philosophical tradition, or that I concur entirely with his reading. Rather, I hope to indicate the richness of Schelling's opening into these traditions.

Indeed, Schelling knew, via Niebuhr, of the monuments at Elephanta[7] and considered them a profound expression of the secret teaching or *Geheim-*

lehre of the Hindu tradition, which for Schelling had its most extraordinary articulation in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. One could even say that this trinitarian monument, as well as the *Gītā* itself, expresses in a culturally unique way Schelling's own philosophical commitments.

In this figure and in these hymns Schelling found an early revelation of the doctrine of potencies. In the third version of his proposed but unfinished magnum opus, *The Ages of the World,* Schelling gave consummate expression to this doctrine by claiming: "The consciousness of eternity can only be articulated in the phrase: 'I am the one who was, who is, who will be'" (AW, 263). This phrasing, which was originally to have been the opening words to *The Ages of the World,* echoes Kant's observation in the *Critique of Judgment* that "Perhaps there has never been something more sublime said or a thought expressed more sublimely than that inscription over the Temple of Isis (of Mother Nature): 'I am everything that there is, that there was, and that there will be, and no mortal has lifted my veil.'"[8]

Indeed, as Schelling embarked during his great period of silence on what he announced in the *Philosophy of Religion* essay and the *Freedom* essay as his positive philosophy, he first turned to a historical study of these words in his posthumously published addendum to *The Ages of the World, The Deities of Samothrace* (1815). Here, in his analysis of the mystery religion of the Cult of the Cabiri, celebrated in antiquity on the Thracian island of Samos, Schelling discovered an "insoluble life" (I/8, 367). In this celebration of the Whole of Life, "no element can be lacking without the Whole crashing together; of which the truest statement would be that only together were they born, and only together can they die" (I/8, 368).[9] Schelling went on to ask, "What if already in Greek Mythology (not to mention Indian and other Oriental mythologies) there emerged the remains of a knowledge, indeed even a scientific system, which goes far beyond the circle drawn by the oldest revelation known through scriptural evidences?" (I/8, 362) Schelling was to spend the next four decades investigating these remains.

Already from this early exercise in positive philosophy, one finds a parallel to the triadic system of Elephanta. Buried underneath the public discourse on the gods was a secret unity. Ceres, whose *Wesen* is "hunger and seeking" and whose earthly expression was Proserpina, the "origin of external nature," could also be understood as the creativity of Brahmā. Dionysus, "lord of the spirit world" and destroyer of all forms, is also, perhaps even originally, Śiva the Destroyer. Finally, there is Kadmilos (or Hermes), who transcends both lower deities yet mediates between them (I/8, 361). This is also Viṣṇu the Preserver, the face that holds together creation and destruction in their simultaneity.

But why had Schelling, the alleged maker of systems, turned to history rather than relying on the abstractions of philosophy? Why get his hands dirty with the singularities of history rather than stick with the clean generalities of

the system? Is history simply examples of what could more cleanly be understood in the abstractions of systemic thinking?

For Schelling history could not be understood or *aufgehoben* or sublated into the general. The latter could only be understood in personal terms, and the personal could only be understood in general terms. But the personal is not thereby the general, and the general is not thereby the personal. Rather the two belong together, without resolution, in a third, in what Schelling called a *Wesen,* a third that holds together without reconciling opposites. This third, it follows, can only be thought—only be revealed—in singular ways.

If Schelling's early philosophy—what he called his "negative philosophy"—was an attempt to raise the real, the realm of appearance and nature, up to the absolute, then his later philosophy, which he called "positive philosophy," reversed the direction, thinking the revelation of the absolute in nature as history. Unlike many of those around him, Schelling embarked on a writing of history without sectarian interests and demands. "What we have described up until now (insofar as possible) is only the eternal life of the Godhead. The actual history that we intended to describe, the narration of that series of free actions through which God, since eternity, decided to reveal itself, can only now begin" (AW, 269).

In the 1842 *Philosophie der Mythologie* one can follow Schelling move through a dazzling series of multicultural analyses, carefully discussing Greek polytheism, Jewish monotheism, Egyptian mythology, Persian Zororastrianism, early Chinese thought, and, for our purposes here, Indian mythology and philosophy. What is immediately striking about Schelling's analysis of India is its utter lack of the condescension that typified the nineteenth-century reception of India, from English colonial interests to Christian proselytizing interests to Max Müller's refusal to visit India. Beyond the Scylla and Charybdis of exoticism and Orientalism, Schelling found in India one of the world's great philosophical traditions.

Certainly Schelling, who had never been to India, had to study its traditions by critically wading through the many interests that skewed the nineteenth-century's reception of India. No doubt his reading of the *Upanishads* leaves much to be desired, but he did see something of vital importance in the *Gītā*.[10] Hegel had already dismissed India as historically stalled, as a relic left behind, *schon aufgehoben,* in Spirit's journey to self-revelation. In the posthumously published *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* (1837), Hegel referred to both the Indian and Chinese philosophical traditions as lacking "completely the essential consciousness of the concept of freedom."[11] In his introductory lectures *On the History of Philosophy,* Hegel referred to the "mixed-up" Indian philosophical tradition as belonging more generally to all of the other Asian philosophies, all of which lack a conscience and individual morality. They are all stuck in a state of nature. The Indians, furthermore, tended towards "a flight to the emptiest abstraction to what is infinite."[12] In

the *Rechtsphilosophie,* India, "sunk in the most frightful and scandalous superstition" (§248), fanatically turned towards the "element of pure indeterminacy" and venerated its void in contemplation. Such a bad infinity kept them from thinking historically, and hence they were unable to regenerate and renew their political and philosophical practices (§5).[13] In general, for Hegel, India has been aborted by the historical activity of the *Weltgeist*. India has "no history" (XI, 99). They are uncomprehending onlookers, left behind by history and transfixed by pure indeterminacy, or the world-abnegating force of the negative.

As a corollary to their ahistorical fixation with a bad infinity, the Indians considered everything to be miraculous, and if that is the case, then nothing in particular can be miraculous (XII, 498). "Everything is a god to the Indians" (XI, 194), and the Indian "imagination makes everything into a god" (XV, 397).[14] Indeed, to a certain extent, Hegel is accurate in this claim. All things are finally the avatars of Viṣṇu and, as such, are good. But rather than hold this transformation of the mundane against either the Hindu tradition or Schelling, I would argue that the failure of Hegel to appreciate this point dramatically distinguishes Schelling from Hegel. Nowhere does one find the stinginess of Hegel, the ego of the *Geist* that always survives its own death, more apparent than in its repudiation of India and, by way of the starkest of contrasts, the deification not of all things, but of the Prussian state.

The Christian missionaries for their part were often appalled by what they found in indigenous religious practices. However, Schelling's primary access to the *Bhagavad-Gītā,* his most cherished Indian text, came to him through the translations by two of his former colleagues and friends, the Schlegel Brothers. August Schlegel, the first husband of Schelling's beloved first wife Caroline, was the first German to receive a chair of Sanskrit studies in Bonn and had translated the *Gītā* into Latin. Friedrich Schlegel, author of the influential yet problematic 1808 *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier,* with which Schelling was already engaged in the *Freedom* essay, translated the *Gītā* into German.

Contrary to the tendency to elevate the West to the status of the only properly philosophical set of cultures and the true children of the Greeks, Schelling discovered the Indian heritage buried within the Greeks. "Perhaps there are still strongly devout souls who are inclined to derive . . . the Greek teachings on the Gods from India. One could certainly not refute such a belief" (II/2, 465). For Schelling, Greek mythology originated in India, and hence Greek mythology and, eventually, Greek philosophy should be considered a flower of South Asia. Indeed, Schelling implied, correctly I think, that in a profound way, Greece could be thought of as West Asia. Certainly the assumption about this proximity had long faded, and Schelling was enthusiastic about reinvigorating the dialogue. In 1808 Schelling wrote to August Schlegel and argued that an entire Academy for

Asian Studies should be founded and that a formal mission should be dispatched to the East to facilitate these studies.[15]

I turn now to an analysis of Schelling's reading of the Indian Hindu tradition by focusing on his celebration of *The Bhagavad-Gītā,* what Schelling referred to as "incontestably one of the most profound and most delicate products of the Indian spirit" (II/2, 494). I will also refer to Aurobindo, who, so far as I know, knew nothing of Schelling's lectures on India, and discuss his reading of the Gītā as a kind of testimony to Schelling's central insight.

II

One of the most shocking aspects of the Indian philosophical tradition for many Westerners is its seeming equation of good with evil. If life, whatever it is, is good, then all things are good and there is no such thing as evil.

When one first considers Arjuna's plight in the *Gītā,* he seems reasonably despondent, much in the same way that Hamlet is. If he fights, he must attempt to kill friends, relatives, and former teachers. If he does not fight, he betrays his side, the Pandavas and their allies, and allows the crimes of the Kauruvas to go uncontested. In the *Rāmāyaṇa,* Rāma was the avatar of the straight and the narrow, who always did the right thing, who always followed *dharma,* even when others did not. Even if it meant living without Sītā, for whom he had waged furious war in Lanka against Rāveṇa and his demonic kingdom, so it was.

But what is the right way for Arjuna? If he fights, he is wrong. If he does not fight, he is wrong. And so he becomes confused about his *dharma,* dizzy in the head, and lies prostrate before his charioteer Kṛṣṇa. After prompting him to fight, to value his *dharma, svadharma,* no matter how imperfectly executed, over the *dharma* of another, *paradharma,* no matter how perfectly executed, Kṛṣṇa, the eighth avatar of Viṣṇu, reveals himself in his sublime form as *Kāla,* time, the world destroyer, the consumer of all, chewing the heads of mortals in the teeth of his endless heads.

Kāla, time, appears—feminized—in Hindu mythology as Kālī, her bloodthirsty tongue dropping down to her chin, a scythe in one hand, the decapitated heads of mortals in another hand. In former times she demanded human sacrifice, and today she still exacts the sacrificial decapitation of goats. She wears a necklace and a belt of human heads and, like Śiva, sleeps among the contamination of the crematoria.

Kṛṣṇa is able to convince Arjuna to embrace his *dharma,* and in the battle sequences that follow the placement of the *Gītā* in the *Mahābhārata,* millions die in the most horrible ways. Each Indian literary work strives to evoke a fundamental mood or *rasa,* which tradition holds are nine in number. How could it be said that this is a book whose fundamental mood, whose *rasa,* is not fury *(krodha)* or heroism *(vīrya)* but *śanti,* the peace beyond all peace?

Is this a simple Kantian deontology—that *dharma* is an absolute duty? Certainly not. This is not a doctrine of responsibility, which would depend on a choice between good and evil. In the *Gītā,* indeed in the *Vedas* as well as the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata,* there is no such thing as choice or agency. And more disturbingly, life is somehow always right. At the end of the *Mahābhārata,* winners and losers are equally returned to the heavens.

Furthermore, a text that renounces the fruit of action, the fruit of *karma,* is certainly not utilitarian, which, in any of its versions, demands that we somehow calculate the Good in the future perfect tense: the goodness of the result will justify the action. The destruction of the Kauravas does not vindicate Arjuna's actions, and the so-called crooked way of Kṛṣṇa does not claim that good ends justify corrupt means.

Nor does it make sense to speak of virtue ethics to Hamlet or Arjuna when the very source of their melancholy is the absence of a mean. Aristotle knew that the capacity to calculate the mean first of all assumed τύχη, *Fortuna,* the luck to have been in a situation that afforded such judgments. What is the mean between destroying one part of your family or abandoning the other? Hamlet and Arjuna are like unlucky King Priam whose life Aristotle claimed lacked the requisite means for *eudaimonia.*[16] One has to be lucky enough to have a life that admits the possibility of negotiating the best option.

Furthermore, the *Gītā* is clear, and both Śaṅkara and Aurobindo stress this, that Arjuna's tragic lament is itself the result of a more fundamental mistake: *ahaṁkāra,* ego sense, egoity, the assumption that the starting point for the relationship to the Good is "I and mine" or "Mine and thine." What is good for me in this situation? Arjuna mistakenly assumes that the question of the Good is the question of *his* good and then is despondent when nothing can legitimately be said to be good for him. *Svadharma* is otherwise than *ahaṁkāra,* my good. This is not the *Realpolitik* of the ego's strivings.

Is this quietism? Certainly not, for Arjuna in his despondency is already doing nothing, already a passive observer and Kṛṣṇa is coaxing him into action. As Schelling observed, the *Bhagavad-Gītā* recommends action in the most specific way and is opposed to any "indolent and dull quietism" (II/2, 518).

Nor is it a quietistic moral abandonment in which one does whatever strikes one and defends such caprices by claiming the prerogative of *svadharma:* Well, I was just following my dharma! As Aurobindo insists, it is expressly not to follow one's own whims. To the "unripe mind" this is just a "convenient excuse for indulging its Asuric propensities" (EG, 207).[17] One is utterly possessed, beyond the *aequilibrium arbitrii,* the choice between opposites, which Schelling in the *Freedom* essay called "the bane of all morality" (I/7, 392). As Aurobindo put it: "God is there not only in the silence, but in the action" (EG, 135).

Without responsibility, with the implication of evil with the Good, how is one to understand Kṛṣṇa's counsel? It offers actions without regard to their

fruit, *dharma* without the suppositions of responsibility (namely, the ego and its choices). It obviates the possibility of virtuous action, while at the same time arguing that witnessing life is the highest form of action and knowledge and is the opposite of standing at the sidelines of life.

Does this not make all things good and therefore also all evil things good? Does this not imply evil in the very heart of the divine? This was certainly Friedrich Schlegel's conclusion and Schelling was quick to object. "But there is a total misunderstanding in the judgment of Friedrich Schlegel, who in his *Philosophy of History,* cannot express his revulsion *[Abscheu]* enough that the Indian consciousness would have included a destructive primordial force, the principle of evil, the god of death, in the Godhead itself. Not everything destructive is thereby the same as the principle of evil" (II/2, 445).

Kālī belongs to the divine, is a potency of the divine. The destructive force of Śiva is certainly not the totality of his divinity, but nonetheless is inseparable from his divinity. Viṣṇu is also the destroyer and Arjuna sees as much when Kṛṣṇa reveals himself as *Kāla,* time, the world destroyer (XI: 32), to which Arjuna, shuddering, but realizing his *ahaṁkāra,* clasps his hands together deferentially. Aurobindo insisted on this thought:

> It is only a few religions which have had the courage to say without reserve, like the Indian, that this enigmatic World-Power is one Deity, one Trinity, to lift up the image of the Force that acts in the world in the figure not only of the beneficent Durga, but of the terrible Kālī in her bloodstained dance of destruction and to say, 'This too is the Mother; this also know to be God; this too, if thou hast the strength, adore. (EG, 42)

Schelling also attempted, both with regard to the *Gītā* and to his own thinking, to think the destructive force of the Good, which is not an evil part of the Good but rather belongs to the goodness of the Good. "If there is a principle, which is not that of evil itself, which nonetheless consumes the resistant part of human freedom, then this principle is certainly a beneficent force, a kind of good principle" (II/2, 445). Kālī, Śiva the Destroyer, all belong to the Good, otherwise than evil. As Arjuna shudders before the universal form of Kṛṣṇa/Viṣṇu, it is not because he has seen some horrible demon. He shudders before a vision of the Good that shatters its exclusive ensconcement in a human good. The Good shatters *ahaṁkāra,* my good—no matter how broadly the "my" is defined, including its broadest range: ethics. The ethical is not born of the human and its range. Rather, the human is born of ethics—the Good beyond good and evil—and its incomprehensible and unprethinkable *(unvordenklich)* range.

Although both Schelling and Aurobindo hold onto some provisional account of evil, they do not locate it in the destructive force of Kālī. She too is the mother. As Schelling already reflected in *The Ages of World:*

> If we take into consideration the many terrible things in nature and the spiritual world and the great many other things that a benevolent hand seems to cover up from us, then we could not doubt that the Godhead sits enthroned over a world of terrors. And God, in accordance with what is concealed in and by God, could be called the awful and the terrible, not in a derivative fashion, but in their original sense. (AW, 268)

Like Nietzsche, both Schelling and Aurobindo attempt to think the Good beyond good and evil. "It is a higher truth that the distinction of good and evil is indeed a practical fact and law valid for the egoistic human life which is the stage of the transition from the animal to the divine, but on a higher plane we rise beyond good and evil, are above their duality even as the Godhead is above it" (EG, 207).

How then are we to think this Good beyond good and evil, which nonetheless does not altogether obviate good and evil, yet at the same time knows that the Good of good and evil was never good enough?

A clue to Schelling's answer can be found in his account of the *Gītā*'s relationship to Buddhism. The *Gītā* itself, the most Buddhist of all Hindu sacred texts, is able to hold together what is otherwise a disparate aggregate in Hindu thought. Although Hinduism has always had the various strands that hold the polytheistic manifold together, it has not always thought them through in their inner relationship with each other. "God is many, or more specifically three, A, B, C, but is not God as A, not as B, not as C, in particular, but rather just A + B + C" (II/2, 484). Hence, the three gods, the creator, the destroyer, and the preserver, admit of being considered as three individual gods, not the three inseparable faces of the same God.[18] As evidence of this, Schelling cited passages from the Vedas as well as the anecdotal evidence of India's countless religious sects and devotions.[19] In the *Gītā,* however, they are thought together in their unity. "Kṛṣṇa is the highest historical transfiguration *[Verklärung]* of Visnuism" (II/2, 463).

There is already some indication of Schelling's claim in the movement of the *Gītā*'s argument. In the early hymns, Kṛṣṇa attempts to reconcile the Shankya position, which generally proceeds from a dualistic point of view (holy and profane, good and evil) and counsels the abandonment of the mundane world for the holy and wholly other plane. Yoga philosophy, on the other hand, counsels proper action in this world. Kṛṣṇa attempts to show that the way *from* the world belongs to the way *to* the world and that the way *to* the world involves the way *from* the world. To get to the world, you must leave the world, but in leaving the world, you get to the world. Kṛṣṇa holds these opposing tendencies together in a third way of being, in a *Wesen,* so to speak.

For Schelling, Buddhism was a "heightening of the Visnuism that we exquisitely recognized in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*" (II/2, 517). In fact, it was so

close to the Hinduism of the *Gītā* that Buddhism "would be nothing other than the secret of Indian religion made public and at the same time betrayed. Hence the bloody hate of the orthodox Indian church against Buddhism. In Greece, no small amount of hatred by the people followed those who had betrayed the Mysteries. Buddhism would be to India what the Mystery teachings were to Greece" (II/2, 496).

Buddhism steals the mystery from its exclusive possession by the Brahmin caste,[20] revealing something publicly, at least to the extent to which it can be spoken of at all. Buddhism "always remained something unprethinkable *[unvordenklich]* in the Indian consciousness, which was never fully suppressed within it" (II/2, 506). Schelling observed that in one of the caves at Ellora, Viṣṇu is represented as a servant of the Buddha (II/2, 506–507). At the same time, India's persecution of Buddhism speaks of India's dual relationship to the proclamation of its secret: India both gave birth to Buddhism and persecuted it (II/2, 510).

Schelling furthermore observed that the Christian missionaries, not unlike Friedrich Schlegel, were appalled by the Buddhist relationship to the Good. According to the missionaries, the Buddhists commit two appalling heresies. Good and evil "are one and the same thing *[einerlei]*" and both have the same validity *[Gleichgültigkeit]* (II/2, 503).

Schelling took up both claims, one by one. In the first case, good and evil are not the same thing, even though they may have an inextricable relationship in a third. They are not *einerlei,* they do not belong to the same kind. There is nothing in the thought of the Good that contains the thought of evil and vice versa. Nonetheless, there may be a third, a tertium quid, a copula, or *Band* that contains both, albeit as opposites, which belong together, without reconciliation or sublimation *(Aufhebung)* in a third. Schelling called this third a *Wesen:* "Good and evil are equally *wesentlich* [or essential], without evil in any way ceasing to be evil and the good ceasing to be good. There is no development without the force that holds back and inhibits development and therefore at the same time resists it" (II/2, 503).[21]

As for the second claim, the claim of *Gleichgültigkeit* or equal validity of moral opposites (good and evil are the same thing, which, furthermore, implies that no distinction between good and evil can be made and hence that there is no such thing as good and evil), Schelling offered the following subtle reflections.

Schelling first argued that "Evil in the final analysis is nothing other than the force *[Kraft]* of the Buddha, which resists creation, which is the very force that the Buddha subordinated to actual creation. But precisely thereby the Buddha brought the opposite to actual creation" (II/2, 503). If the Buddha wants to subordinate all action and all thought to creation, that is, to bring it into some sort of state of nature, the Buddha must defy nature itself. The natural state for which the Buddha strives is not a state that one finds in nature. If one found it

nature, then one would not need to strive for it. Hence, to be natural is an unnatural thing, and therefore one must in some profound sense be unnatural in order to be natural. Or one could extend this ineluctable paradox further. It is a good thing to be beyond good and evil, which, at the same time, is in some way still to be within good and evil. Yet it is also an evil thing simply to be within good and evil. This holding together of opposites in intimate proximity does not render the opposites *gleichgültig,* for one is depending on value distinctions even as one attempts to move beyond them. To see all things as good is at the same time the result of an anterior value judgment. The judgment that "all things are good" paradoxically claims to be a *better* way of seeing.

Secondly, Schelling took up the issue of what in many Indian religious practices, including Buddhism, stems from Tantric practices and beliefs. Considered scandalous in most parts of the world, these practices notoriously can involve techniques by which one encounters objects and people normally considered odious and abject. Many desperate explanations of these behaviors (living among the dead in crematoria in houses built of human skulls, sex with hideous people, etc.), have been offered, including the following ridiculous accounts: Good, evil, its all the same to me! Or, one has to learn that these things are bad (as if the starting point were not the abject quality of these rituals)! Or, one has to get it out of one's system (as if these ever were in one's system and as if one ever wanted to do these things)! Critical to these practices is the obvious abjectness of the objects themselves.

Although Schelling did not take up the issue of Tantric practices per se, he indirectly referred to them when he analyzed the missionaries' revulsion at certain Buddhist practices. Schelling reported that in Sri Lanka (in Schelling's time, Ceylon), the Buddhists erected small, chapel-sized ancillary temples, which the missionaries called "devil's chapels" (II/2, 504). Here devotees encountered the abject side of human life, engaging in distasteful and highly immoral practices. For Schelling, this too one knows to be good; this too, if one has the strength, one adores. The Buddhists attempted to combine "the two principles, which in the greatest generality can be designated as the real and the ideal principles, into a unity—into one and the same God." They avoided a God that is intermittently good and then evil, or basically good, and occasionally bad. They knew rather that, as we saw in chapter six, that the "principle that resists the Good and love" is "originarily . . . necessary for creation" (II/2, 504).

Here Schelling returned to the language of the real and the ideal, with the implication, born out dramatically for example in the *Freedom* essay, that the Good is ideal, that which, in being thought, resists comprehension, that whose *ideatum,* so to speak, always resists its idea. Yet the ideal, in its irresolvable silence, can only express itself in the din of the real. The Good can only express itself as what is not itself, as what is not Good. Hence, the not-Good is an expression of the Good.

In fact, Schelling already found this insight in the *Vedas*. "God is the truth and God is the great lie" (II/2, 480), although Schelling argued that the *Vedas* are not clear about the exact relationship between the Ideal (God qua the truth) and the Real (*Māyā,* the "great lie" of the sensible world). Although Schelling did not discuss this passage explicitly, the *Gītā* is very clear about this when Kṛṣṇa/Viṣṇu claims that "I am born by my self-*Māyā [ātamāyayā]*."[22] That is, I am only insofar as to be is to be *Māyā,* and therefore Viṣṇu is Viṣṇu only insofar as being itself is always the great lie. Viṣṇu is otherwise than nature expressing itself as nature, as if *Māyā* itself were both Viṣṇu (the ideal) *and* the world (the real), the Good *and Māyā* (the proxy of the Good).[23]

Schelling linked this "belonging together" to the *Gītā*'s understanding of the three *guṇas,* or what Schelling translated as qualities *(Qualitäten, Eigenschaften)* and finally potencies. The term literally denotes "strands," and Schelling duly noted that in the *Vedas* they are likened to the webs of a spider in which the weaving both comes forth and retracts. "Everything has its movement through the proper mixture of the three *guṇas [Eigenschaften],* the creating, the preserving, and the destroying" (II/2, 481). *Māyā* is the spinning of the three *guṇas*.[24] This may not be the only account of the *guṇas,* but it does suggest the extent to which Schelling is entering the circulation of the *Gītā*.

Schelling linked Brahmā to *rajas,* the red, fiery pulse and energy *(Tatkraft)* of life, the "fire of passion" and the "swiftness of decision" (II/2, 449). *Rajas* is the "first desire, the passion of creation in Brahmā," and, as such, Brahmā is that which brings forth the "semblance of Being *[das scheinbare Sein]*" and is hence alienated from his *Wesen* (II/2, 450). Brahmā is the God that merely posits the semblance of nature. Brahmā is the creator, which, in terms of potencies, Schelling named the A^1. Brahmā is the magic of nature, the movement of possibility *(Māyā = Möglichkeit)*.

The *guṇa* of Śiva is *tamas* (II/2, 450), which is often associated with indolence and inertia and literally denotes darkness. Śiva is the force of absolute light, which is the same as absolute darkness. Śiva is the destroyer, time which reminds all creatures that they do not own their being. In a particularly bold description, Schelling claimed that the destroyer is the "God of the universally orgiastic *[des allgemeinen Orgiasmus]*" (II/2, 444) and hence, like the late appearing Dionysus, the freedom of nature erupting from within the façade of its order and self-possession. As such, Schelling translated *tamas* not as darkness, but as *Dämmerung,* dawn or dusk (II/2, 451), the breaking through of one potency into another potency. This is the bursting forth of the A^2.

The *guṇa* of Viṣṇu is *sattva,* the super brightness of white, "what is real throughout," what is "free of all lack" and hence, lacking all nonbeing, is the absoluteness of truth. If one can think this not as some empyrean realm beyond *Māyā* in which the stalwart soul at last finds the great escape of *mokṣa,* but rather as that which knows *mokṣa* as a liberated relationship to *Māyā,* then

Viṣṇu, the transformative consummation of the three *guṇas* (Viṣṇu as the belonging together of Brahmā, Śiva, and Viṣṇu), can be designated as the A^3.

The *Gītā* is able to think clearly through the inner dynamic of the three *guṇas,* and it describes the "struggle of the separated potencies as a revolving wheel" (II/2, 493). This turning wheel has long been a part of Schelling's own thinking. His insignia, as we have seen, was the Sphinx pointing to a revolving wheel, and in *The Ages of the World* Schelling linked this to the Orphic origin of the Phanic Dionysus. "This is that moment that the intimating primal world marked as the splitting apart of the world-egg by which they hinted at that closed wheel, that inscrutable movement which could never be held fast; that moment in which the earthly and the heavenly first divided" (AW, 242).[25]

The revelation is not the escape from the wheel but the freedom, even the love, for the wheel. This is the genius of the *Gītā*. Viṣṇu is in all things, but no thing is in Viṣṇu, "the being of things in God is asserted but not reciprocally the being of God in things" (II/2, 494). Viṣṇu self-expresses as the *Māyā* of the world, and the world implicates itself in Viṣṇu. To love Viṣṇu is not to love Viṣṇu as *sattva*. It is to be free for the strands of being, to love Viṣṇu as the wheel of Brahmā, Śiva, and Viṣṇu, creation, destruction, and preservation:

> Viṣṇu, when this does not mean the *singular* potency, but rather God itself consummated through Viṣṇu, always appears in pictures with this revolving, flaming wheel, which one can call the wheel of the three *guṇas [Eigenschaften]*. In this wheel, one of the *guṇas* is victorious, then soon another, so that the entire manifold is produced exclusively through this revolving wheel that Viṣṇu turns with his conation and posits in ceaseless movement without Viṣṇu being comprehended in this wheel. Hence, the creator is distinguished in a most specific way from the *Māyā* of which the whole world consists. (II/2, 493)

To love Viṣṇu is to be within yet beyond the predicates of nature, unattached yet engaged. The Sphinx points one towards "the constancy of inner love, blessed peace in the movement of the world, under the rotation of time" (I/10, 45). Aurobindo describes this stance as follows:

> For while they are filled with the troubling sense of ego and mine and thine, he is one with the one Self in all and has no "I" or "mine." He acts as others, but he has abandoned all desires and their longings. He attains to the great peace and is not bewildered by the show of things; he has extinguished his individual ego in the One, lives in that unity and, fixed in that status at his end, can attain to extinction in the Brahmā, Nirvana. . . . (EG, 96–97)

For Aurobindo, to be free for the wheel is to be "beyond the grip of the three *guṇas, traigunatitya;* he is neither sattvic, rajasic nor tamasic" but rather has the "superiority of the calm soul observing its action but not involved in it" (EG, 177). It is to love the Viṣṇu beyond Viṣṇu through the love of the *Māyā* of Viṣṇu. "Love of the world, the mask, must change into the love of God, the Truth. Once this secret and inner Godhead is known and embraced, the whole being and the whole life will undergo a sovereign uplifting and a marvelous transmutation. In place of the ignorance of the lower nature absorbed in its outward works and appearances the eye will open to the vision of God everywhere, to the unity and universality of the spirit" (EG, 321).

For Schelling, this yoga was the becoming inward and sharing in the creative movment of the wheel of being. In fact, Schelling translated "yoga," the word that describes the many disciplines that Kṛṣṇa reveals to Arjuna, not as *devotio,* as August Schlegel had, nor as *Andacht,* as another had, not even as *Vertiefung,* deepening, as von Humboldt had. Although of the three the latter came the closest, Schelling chose the marvelous German word *Innigkeit,* the moving inward from the periphery of Being to the center of Being (II/2, 448), returning back to the site of the cision or *Scheidung* of nature from which humankind first finds itself in flight.

For Aurobindo, yoga is the awakening of love, of *bhakti,* love for all of the creatures of the circle. "On him is concentrated all his Bhakti . . . not on any partial godhead, rule, or cult. This single devotion is his whole law of living and he has gone beyond all creeds of religious belief, rules of conduct, personal aims of life. . . . This is the God-lover who has the knowledge" (EG, 274). For Schelling too, this wisdom, this *jñāna,* is more fundamentally the awakening of love, of φιλία. Could there not, if one were to engage in a radical rethinking of the dawn of Western philosophy, be some profound spiritual relationship between σοφία and *jñāna,* φιλία and *bhakti?*

Aurobindo, following the *Gītā,* named this belonging together of the three potencies, Puruṣottama: "The impersonal Brahmā is not the very last word, not the utterly highest secret of our being. . . . God is an ever unmanifest Infinite ever self-impelled to manifest himself in the finite" (EG, 124). Brahmā is both the body and the nonbody, both *kshara* and *akshara*. "To see that we have to look through its silence to the Purushottama, and he in his divine greatness possesses both the Akshara and the Kshara; he is seated in all immobility, but he manifests himself in the movement and in all the actions of cosmic nature" (EG, 125). The secret that once revealed brings forth the *śanti,* the peace beyond peace, that only *bhakti,* only love, can produce, can be said in the word Puruṣottama or what Schelling once called early in his thinking, *die Weltseele,* the world soul.

At the very end of the *Philosophy of Mythology* lectures, Schelling claimed that the aim of philosophy was not preparation for state examinations, but a vitalization of spirit so that one "could stand before the tear *[der Riß]* and be

afraid of no appearance" (II/2, 673). It is to awaken to the dance of God, to love *Māyā* as the play or *līlā* of the Good. This is the beginning of what Schelling called "philosophical religion," that is, not the capacity to sublimate the history of religion in a great pantheon of spiritual accomplishments, but the capacity of reason to trace the unprethinkable life of its Other, the life always still to come, the life that emerges in "complete independence" of reason" (I/11, 250).

For Schelling, the aim of thinking is finally, a kind of Nirvāna, found—if rarely—even in philosophy. "This ocean of becoming is only the outer appearance of the God that comes forth in separated qualities." Yet inwardly this God, like all humans who know Nirvāna, who are empty of substantialistic essence, "remains, underneath all of the mutability of its external existence, inwardly equal to itself in deep calm, a heart full of love and affection for creatures" (II/2, 520). God's creatures, having passed the test of the separation of forces, seek to unite with it in its original nothingness and emptiness. This union in nothingness is the rebirth of what Schelling called in *The Ages of the World* "the will that wills nothing" (AW, 239). This uncoercive, philosophical will can lead the way to that difficult freedom beyond dogma and creed, beyond totalizing first principles, where one can love all Indias, all creatures, all places, and all times.

Notes

Introduction

1. Throughout this book I will use the standard pagination, except where otherwise noted. Said pagination follows the original edition published after Schelling's death by his son, Karl. It is preserved in Manfred Schröter's critical reorganization of this material. See the first section of my bibliography for more information.

Chapter One

1. *The Ages of the World* (1815 draft), trans. Jason Wirth, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 237. Henceforth AW, with the standard German pagination found in the translation.

2. In *Wegmarken,* 2nd edition, (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1978), 347.

3. Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence* (1974), trans. Alphonso Lingis, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1981), 95. Henceforth OB. It is not the case, however, that Levinas, with his deflated or strawman reading of the Western philosophical tradition, would likely have agreed to the proximity of his thought to Schelling's project. As for the *conatus,* Levinas argued that "the essence thus works as an invincible persistence in essence, filling up every interval of nothingness which would interrupt its exercise. . . . And what can positivity mean but this *conatus?* Being's interest takes dramatic form in egoisms struggling with one another, each against all, in the multiplicity of allergic egoisms which are at war with one another and are thus together" (OB, 4). The *conatus* is Spinoza's term for that which endeavors to remain itself. [C.f., Proposition 7 of Part III of the *Ethics* (1677): "The *conatus* with which each thing endeavors to persist in its own being is nothing but the actual essence of the thing itself."] The *conatus,* a thing's drive towards its own self-maintenance and enhancement, is a classical term at least as old as Cicero. Thomas Hobbes, who influenced Spinoza, also made use of it. The *conatus* rides the wave of modernity's relatively untroubled insistence on self-interest as the ground of human action.

4. *Clara: Or on the Relationship Between Nature and the Spirit World,* trans. Fiona Steinkamp, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002). Henceforth C. I cite the original German pagination that Dr. Steinkamp uses in the body of her translation. I occasionally deviate from her translation to emphasize certain ideas in my analysis.

5. For a discussion of the debate, see David Farrell Krell, "The Oldest Program Towards a System in German Idealism," *The Owl of Minerva* 17 (Fall 1985), 5–19. I also use his translation of the fragment, which is found in the body of the article. Henceforth referred to as OS.

6. Emmanuel Levinas, "Ethics as First Philosophy," trans. Seán Hand and Michael Temple, in *The Levinas Reader,* ed. Seán Hand, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 76.

7. Although Hegel implicitly recanted this principle in his *Philosophy of Right,* Schelling held on to it until the end, even as the communists marched by the windows of his Berlin residence in 1848.

8. Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft,* ed. Karl Vorländer, 7th, expanded edition, (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1990), 11. Henceforth KU.

9. Nishida Kitarō, "The Union Point of the True, the Good, and the Beautiful," *Art and Morality* (1923), trans. David Dilworth and Valdo Viglielmo, (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1973), 100. Henceforth AM.

10. I rely, with my own emendations, on the A. V. Miller translation, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977). Henceforth PG.

11. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969) and *The Discourse on Language* (1971), trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982), 235.

12. *Philosophie der Offenbarung 1841/1842,* 2nd, enlarged edition, ed. Manfred Frank, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1993), 121–22. Henceforth PO.

13. *On the History of Modern Philosophy* (1827), trans. Andrew Bowie, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 124–25/133. Henceforth HMP. I list first the standard pagination followed by the pagination of Bowie's translation. I use Bowie's translations, with very slight alterations (chiefly for the sake of consistency with my translations of other Schelling passages appearing elsewhere in this book).

14. *Grundlegung der positiven Philosophie: Münchener Vorlesung WS 1832/33 und SS 1833,* edited with commentary by Horst Fuhrmans, (Turin: Bottega d'Erasmo, 1972), 222. Henceforth GP. See also HMP, which five years earlier made almost the identical claim. "Everything can be in the logical Idea without anything being *explained* thereby, as, for example, everything in the sensuous world is grasped in number and measure, which does not therefore mean that geometry or arithmetic explain the sensuous world." There remains that which "strives beyond the boundaries" of reason *(Vernunft)* (HMP, 144/147).

15. *"Sie geht von der Existenz aus"* (II/1, 564). Positive philosophy proceeds from existence.

16. *System der Weltalter: Münchener Vorlesung 1827/28 in einer Nachschrift von Ernst von Lasaulx,* ed. Siegbert Peetz, (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1990), 16.

17. "Schelling as Post-Hegelian and as Aristotelian," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 26, (December 1986), 322.

18. *Aus Schellings Leben: In Briefen,* ed. G. L. Plitt, (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1869–1870), vol. 3, 63.

19. *Aus Schellings Leben,* vol. 1, 228.

20. Martin Heidegger, *Schellings Abhandlung über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit (1809),* ed. H. Feick, (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1971), 15. *Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom,* trans. Joan Stambaugh, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1985), 13. I have used Stambaugh's translations with only very slight alterations. Henceforth referred to as SA with the German page reference followed by the English. This was originally a lecture course given in the Summer Semester of 1936 at the University of Freiburg.

21. This critique was already anticipated by Hegel in the 1801 *Differenzschrift* when he argued that a negative philosophy which cannot reach systematic expression becomes *Schwärmerei* in which "everything finite drowns *[versenkt]* in the infinite," and in which one can speak of "the intuition of a colorless light *[Anschauen des farblosen Lichts]*" (DS, 63/156).

22. When Heidegger repeated the Schelling lecture series in 1941 and 1943, he made the following quite remarkable claim about the "difference" and "identity" of the Hegelian and Schellingian strategies: "Despite everything there is fundamentally the same passion for the same *[das Selbe]* and therein precisely lies the bifurcation of both thinkers. Their discord is *the* product of their unity. [*Ihre Zwietracht ist das Zeugnis ihrer Einheit*]" (SA, 223/184).

23. I would therefore disagree with Heidegger's assessment of the anxious Schelling that needed to "give up everything again and again, and again and again bring it *[dasselbe]* to a new ground" (SA 7/6). Schelling was not an anxious thinker driven finally to totalize the Whole. Schelling traced the conspiracy of life as it unfolded, continuously revealing new dimensions, new openings, and new beginnings.

24. As Joseph Lawrence argued: "That, according to Hegel, the Absolute becomes fully mediated in thought, that its absolute nature does not exist apart from its classification in a universally valid and universally comprehensible science, is what is here at issue. Schelling—even in the period of his system of identity—had never presented his philosophy in a universally valid and universally comprehensible science. He remained committed to philosophy instead of proclaiming the emergence of the science of absolute reason" (320).

25. Lev Shestov, *In Job's Balances: On the Sources of the Eternal Truths,* trans. Camilla Coventry and C. A. Macartney, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1975), 184.

26. Quoted in Jasper's *Schelling: Größe und Verhängnis* (1955), (Munich: Piper, 1986), 302. Schelling's text appeared at I/4, 401.

27. *Hegel: The Letters,* trans. Clark Butler and Christiane Seiler, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 80.

28. Ibid.

29. Walter Schulz, in his seminal study of the late Schelling, *Die Vollendung des deutschen Idealismus in der Spätphilosophie Schellings,* second edition, (Pfullingen: Neske, 1975), also made this point. Schelling's critique of Hegel concerns the question "if it is at all possible that thinking first of all can complete itself in itself and posit itself absolutely, in order then to mediate nature. Schelling's entire critique of Hegel stands and falls with the answer to this question. . . . Only when Hegel is right that thinking could complete itself in itself, then Schelling's assertion is surely refuted and the entire positive philosophy, which a departure of reason to the transcendent demanded, is already in approach untenable and superfluous. This departure is legitimate only when there is no more self-actualization of thinking" (106).

30. *Die Weltalter: Fragmente in den Urfassungen von 1811 und 1813 (Nach laßband),* ed. Manfred Schröter, (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1946). Translations of these texts are my own. Henceforth AW. Schröter discovered these manuscripts in a chest in the basement of the Library of the University of Munich. Other materials from this Schellingian treasure chest, so to speak, were destroyed when Allied bombings destroyed the building in 1944.

31. I am using Thomas Buchheim's superb critical edition (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1997). He has imbedded the standard pagination, to which I refer.

32. Tanabe Hajime, *Philosophy as Metanoetics* (1946), trans. Takeuchi Yoshinori, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 159.

33. See *The Ages of the World:* "Panthers or tigers do not pull the carriage of Dionysus in vain. For this wild frenzy of inspiration in which nature found itself when it was in view of the being was celebrated in the nature worship of prescient ancient peoples by the drunken festivals of Bacchic orgies. Furthermore, that inner self-laceration of nature, that wheel of initial birth spinning about itself as if mad, and the terrible forces of the annular drive operating within this wheel, are depicted in other frightful splendors of the primeval customs of polytheistic worship by acts of self-flaying rage" (AW, 337).

34. See Buchheim, 153.

35. "Sacred religious feeling appears when one has abandoned one's entire person. When we know the truth, we must abandon the self and conform to truth itself. . . . Religion is not mere appreciation and pleasure; it must include a profound adoration of truth and sincere practice" (AM, 100–01).

36. From *Schelling im Spiegel seiner Zeitgenossen, Ergänzungsband,* ed. Xavier Tilliette, (Turin: Bottega d'Erasmo, 1981), 81.

37. *Brief über den Tod Carolines vom 2. Oktober 1809,* ed. Johann Ludwig Döderlein, *Kleine kommentierte Texte I,* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1975).

38. Quoted in Arsenij Gulyga, *Schelling: Leben und Werk* (1982), trans. from the Russian by Elke Kirsten, (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1989), 243.

CHAPTER TWO

1. Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* (1970), trans. Robert Hurley, (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1988), 17. Henceforth SPP.

2. The "Third Program" of the British Broadcasting Corporation, 1948.

3. Friedrich Nietzsche, "What Do Ascetic Ideals Mean?" *On the Genealogy of Morality* (1887), trans. Maudemarie Clark and Alan J. Swensen, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1998), 67. Henceforth GM. German found in the *Kritische Studienausgabe,* ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag and Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1986), vol. 5, 3rd treatise, aphorism 1, 339. Henceforth KSA. When the translations are my own, I will only give the KSA citation.

4. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), (San Diego and New York: Harcourt, 1976), 469. Henceforth OT. Ideologies, Arendt argued, "pretend to know the mysteries of the whole historical process—the secrets of the past, the intricacies of the present, the uncertainties of the future—because of the logic inherent in their respective ideas" (OT, 469). Schelling, with his critique of presence and his unswerving protection of both the mystery of all origins and the unprethinkability *[Unvordenklichkeit]* of the future, is, in Arendt's sense, the sworn enemy of all ideology.

5. *Der Antichrist: Fluch auf das Christentum* (1888), KSA, volume 6 aphorism 40. *"Die Liebe eines Jüngers kennt keinen Zufall."*

6. Wolfgang Wieland, *Schellings Lehre von der Zeit,* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1956), 7.

7. Quoted in Umberto Eco, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages,* trans. Hugh Bredin, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986), 7.

8. See Nishida Kitarō, "The Unity of Opposites," in *Intelligibility and the Philosophy of Nothingness,* trans. Robert Schinzinger, (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1966).

9. Friedrich Schlegel, *Dialogue on Poetry and Literary Aphorisms,* translated by Ernst Behler and Roman Struc, (University Park: Pennsylvania State Press, 1968), 84–87. *Gespräch über die Poesie* in *Friedrich Schlegel: Kritische und theoretische Schriften,* ed. Andreas Huyssen, (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 1978), 193–96. Henceforth referred to as GUP. I am using Behler and Struc's translation of this passage.

10. Although Coleridge claimed that he had arrived at his ideas before he had read Schelling and that both thinkers owed a "debt of gratitude" to Jakob Böhme, he acknowledged that in Schelling "I first found a genial coincidence with much that I had toiled out for myself, and a powerful assistance in what I had yet to do" [*Biographia Literaria* (1817), ed. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, in *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 160]. Henceforth referred to as BL. Schelling, for his part, returned the admiration for Coleridge, noting in the late Berlin lectures *Philosophische Einleitung in die Philosophie der Mythologie oder Darstellung der rein rationalen Philosophie* (between 1847 and 1852), that Coleridge, "an especially talented man," who, all the more amazing considering the prevalence of mechanistic philosophy at that time in England, had seen into and "almost more so felt" "a negative potency as beginning" (II/1, 294). For both, "all beginning lay in a lack *[Mangel],* the most profound potency" (II/1, 294). See also Thomas Pfau, "Schelling in the Work of S. T. Coleridge," *Idealism and the Endgame of Theory,* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 271–78. See also Thomas McFarland, *Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition,* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969).

11. Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy argue for this in their fine study *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism,* trans. Philip Barnard and Cheryl Lester, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 89. Henceforth referred to as LA.

12. *Kritische und theoretische Schriften,* ed. Andreas Huyssen, (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1978), 89. Henceforth referred to as A. This is fragment number 105. The English translation is by Peter Firchow, *Philosophical Fragments,* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 30. I give the German page reference followed by that of the English.

13. Jacques Derrida, "Force of Law: The 'Mystical Foundation of Authority,'" trans. Mary Quaintance, in *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice,* ed. Drucilla Cornell, Michel Rosenfeld, and David Gray Carlson, (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), 11.

14. This is expressly not to say that Spinoza is the only way or even the best way to present this contradiction. As Ludovico later admits, Spinoza is only a "representative" and had Ludovico wished to be more "extensive," he would have turned to the "great Jakob Böhme" (GUP, 199–200/91).

15. Andrew Bowie, *Schelling and Modern European Philosophy: An Introduction,* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 135. Henceforth MEP.

16. Friedrich Schlegel: "The Imagination *[Fantasie]* strives with all its powers to express itself, but the divine can only indirectly communicate itself in the sphere of nature" (GUP, 207/100).

17. *The Savage Anomaly: The Power of Spinoza's Metaphysics and Politics,* trans. Michael Hardt, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 58. Christopher Norris, for his part, has argued that Spinoza "anticipates many of the issues that currently preoccupy literary theorists. More than that: he thinks them through with a clarity and a persistence often lacking in his present-day descendants." *Spinoza and the Origins of Modern Critical Theory,* (Oxford: Basil Blackwood, 1991), 31.

18. Negri, 94–95.

19. See Deleuze on Spinoza: "Spinoza's ethics has nothing to do with a morality; he conceives it as an ethology, that is, as a composition of fast and slow speeds, of capacities for affecting and being affected on this plane of immanence. That is why Spinoza calls out to us in the way that he does: you do not know beforehand what good or bad you are capable of; you do not know beforehand what a body or a mind can do, in a given encounter, a given arrangement, a given combination" (SPP, 125). For Schelling the goodness of nature was *unvordenklich,* unprethinkable.

20. Johann Gottfried Herder, in *Werke,* ed. Wolfgang Pross, (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1987), 733–843. I have generally (with slight exceptions) used the translation by Frederick H. Burkhardt, *God, Some Conversations,* (New York: Veritas Press, 1940). I shall henceforth refer to both as G, listing first the German page reference and then the English.

21. *The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte,* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 48. Henceforth referred to as FR.

22. Beiser suggested that Leibniz and Wolff may have needed to separate themselves so strongly from Spinoza to counteract accusations that their respective philosophies "were little more than a halfway house on the fatal road to Spinozism" (FR, 49).

23. Quoted in Frederick Burkhardt's Introduction to his translation of Herder's *God, Some Conversations,* 14.

24. G. W. Leibniz, *Theodicy,* ed. Austin Farrer, trans. E. M. Huggard, (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1985), preface, 54. (The *Essais de théodicée* were first published in 1710.) Henceforth referred to as T.

25. Johann Wolfgang Goethe, "Prometheus," *Sämtliche Werke,* vol. 1, *Gedichte 1756–1799,* ed. Karl Eibl, (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1987), 203. Henceforth referred to as P. The German, from the second stanza, reads: *Ich kenne nicht ärmer / Unter der Sonn als Euch Götter. / Ihr nähret kümmerlich / Von Opfersteuern / Und Gebetshauch.*

26. *Nach meinem Bilde / Ein Geschlecht das mir gleich sei / Zu leiden, weinen / Genießen und zu freuen sich / Und dein nicht zu achten / Wie ich!* (P, 204).

27. *Die allmächtige Zeit/ Und das ewige Schicksal/ Meine Herrn und deine.*

28. See chapter nine, "The Yoga of Sovereign Knowledge and Mystery," verse 4. "All beings rest in Me but I do not rest in them." Trans. Eliot Deutsch, (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1968), 82. All further references to the *Gītā* will rely upon Deutsch's translation.

29. From Richard Daunicht, *Lessing im Gespräch,* quoted in P, 923.

30. *Über die Lehre des Spinoza in Briefen an den Herrn Moses Mendelssohn,* 2nd, expanded edition, (Breslau: Gottl. Löwe, 1789), 425. Henceforth referred to as BS.

31. The only other work besides the polemic against Jacobi that Schelling personally published after the *Freedom* essay was his foreword to the German translation of Victor Cousin's *Über französische und deutsche Philosophie* in 1834. While in Berlin Schelling also witnessed the painful appearance of the *Paulus-Nachschrift (Die endlich offenbar gewordene positive Philosophie der Offenbarung oder Entstehungsgeschichte, wörtlicher Text, Beurtheilung und Berichtigung der von Schellingischen Entdeckungen über Philosophie überhaupt, Mythologie und Offenbarung des dogmatischen Christentums im Berliner Wintercursus von 1841–42).* Published in 1843, this was Schelling's self-appointed opponent Dr. H. E. G. Paulus' transcription of the scandalous inaugural Berlin lectures as well as Paulus' own rather lengthy and utterly tiresome diatribe against them. The book was published without Schelling's permission and Schelling lost a legal attempt to have the book removed from circulation. His son Karl eventually published Schelling's collected works (including many of his lectures) after his father's death. The book is the basis for Manfred Frank's edition. See PO, note 12.

32. *Morgenstunden, oder Vorlesungen über das Dasein Gottes* in *Moses Mendelssohn: Schriften zur Philosophie, Äesthetik und Apologetik,* vol. 1, ed. Moritz Brasch, (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1968). Henceforth referred to as MO. The term "purified pantheism" first appears on 412 and "improved pantheism" on 421.

33. Leibniz, *Monadology,* in *Monadology and Other Philosophical Essays,* trans. Paul Schrecker and Anne Martin Schrecker, (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), §47, 155.

34. See Beiser's discussion of this idea, FR, 104–05.

35. For a further discussion of Schelling's relationship with Jacobi, see Birgit Sandkaulen-Bock's helpful and thoughtful study of the early Schelling *Ausgang von Unbedingten: Über den Anfang in der Philosophie Schellings,* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1990), esp. 13–18. Under footnote 9 (13–14) Sandkaulen-Bock lists some of the other texts that discuss this connection. See also Beiser, FR, 44–126; Andrew Bowie, MEP, 17–25; and Dale E. Snow, *Schelling and the End of Idealism,* (Albany: The State University of New York Press, 1996), esp. 11–31. Henceforth SEI.

36. An allusion to the *Kabbalah* in which the *Ein-sof,* the nothing, the *apeiron,* marks God as higher than Being itself such that in order for it to appear as *keter-elyon,* it must contract. Only in this self-restriction, in becoming what it is not, can God ironically appear. Spinoza himself was sometimes held to have based the *Ethics,* in part, on the *Kabbalah*. Schelling was quite clear about his own embrace of this idea. For example, in the *Grundriß des Ganzen (Outline of the Whole),* he argued that "In order to become real from out of an infinite (and insofar ideal) productive activity, it must be inhibited, *retarded*" (I/3, 6).

37. "Open Letter to Fichte," trans. Diana. I. Behler, in *Philosophy of German Idealism,* ed. Ernst Behler, (New York: Continuum, 1987), 126. Henceforth referred to as BF.

38. Andrew Bowie: "Nothing within the chain of difference tells us how it is that we can be *aware* of the chain of difference. This awareness must be of a different order from the chain of difference because it entails a prior identity that is the condition of difference (in the Christian tradition God is, of course, the basis of this identity)" (MEP, 22).

39. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 28. Henceforth WP.

40. I have used Allan Bloom's translation, *The Republic of Plato,* (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 218.

41. *Aesthetica in nuce: A Rhapsody in Cabbalistic Prose* (1762), trans. Joyce P. Crick, in *German Aesthetic and Literary Criticism: Winckelmann, Lessing, Hamann, Herder, Schiller, Goethe,* edited by H. B. Nisbet, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 145. Henceforth AN. Schelling referred to a portion of this passage with great approval in his 1807 Munich address, *On the Relationship of the Plastic Arts to Nature* (I/7, 293).

42. Johann Georg Hamann, *Sämtliche Werke,* vol. 3, *Schriften über Sprache/Mysterien/Vernunft* (1772–1788), ed. Josef Nadler, (Vienna: Herder, 1951), 286. An English translation of this essay by Ronald Gregor Smith appeared in *J. G. Hamann: A Study in Christian Existence,* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960), 213–21. Citations are my own translations. Henceforth referred to as PV.

43. *Hamann's Socratic Memorabilia,* bilingual edition, trans. C. O'Flaherty, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), 163. Henceforth referred to as SD.

44. At this point one can recognize a prodigious coincidence between Hamann and Schelling. For the latter, reflection upon language brings it back to the silence of

its origin. As Schelling phrased it in the Berlin *Philosophische Einleitung in die Philosophie der Mythologie* (1847–1852), perhaps with Hegel in mind: "Just as many imagine a beginning without any presuppositions at all, they would also have not to presuppose thinking itself and, for example, also not deduce the language in which they are expressing this. But since this itself could not happen without language, there would remain only the growing silent *[das Verstummen]* that the helplessness and faint audibility *[Kaumvernehmlichkeit]* of language really seeks to approach. The beginning would have to be at the same time the end" (II/1, 312).

45. Quoted in FR, 31.

46. KSA, vol. 1, 35.

47. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo,* trans. R. J. Hollingdale, (New York and London: Penguin, 1979).

48. Friedrich Schlegel later explicitly took up the question of the necessary relationship between style and irony. See his *Athenäum* essay *Über Unverständlichkeit* (1800) in which Schlegel linked irony to the overall possibility of communicating.

49. Quoted in SD, 74.

50. *Schiller's Sämtliche Werke, Säkular Ausgabe,* vol. 12, (Stuttgart and Berlin: J. G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung Nachfolger), 182. Henceforth NS.

51. I am using Elizabeth Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby's extraordinary translation and critical edition, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967). Henceforth AE, followed by the letter and then the paragraph number.

52. Trans. Arnold Kotler and Kazuaki Tanahashi, in *Moon in a Dewdrop: Writings of Zen Master Dōgen,* ed. Kazuaki Tanahashi, (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1985), 107.

53. *Francis Bacon in Conversation with Michel Archimbaud,* (London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 1993), 86.

54. Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: Logique de la sensation,* (Paris: Éditions de la Différence, 1981), 19–20.

55. David Sylvester, *The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with Francis Bacon,* (New York and London: Thames and Hudson, 1987), 30.

CHAPTER THREE

1. *Dirt: The Ecstatic Skin of the Earth,* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1995), 3.

2. See Deleuze: "Writers, poets, filmmakers—painters too, even chance readers—may find that they are Spinozists; indeed, such a thing is more likely for them than for professional philosophers. It is a matter of one's practical conception of the 'plan.' It is not that one may be a Spinozist without knowing it. Rather, there is a strange privilege that Spinoza enjoys, something that seems to have been accomplished by him and no one else. He is a philosopher who commands an extraordinary conceptual apparatus, one that is highly developed, systematic, and scholarly; and yet he is the

quintessential object of an immediate, unprepared encounter, such that a nonphilosopher, or even someone without any formal education, can receive a sudden illumination from him, a 'flash'" (SPP, 129).

3. See FR, 336.

4. Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg), "Last Fragments" (c. 1799), in *Novalis: Philosophical Writings,* trans. and ed. Margaret Mahony Stoljar, (Albany: State University of New York, 1997), 159–60.

5. Goethe in his autobiographical *Dichtung und Wahrheit* had called "Prometheus" the *"Zündkraut einer Explosion,"* the ignition wire of an explosion.

6. *Religion and Philosophy in Germany,* trans. John Snodgrass, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959), 135. Henceforth RPG.

7. A moniker that Jacobi borrowed from Lessing, referring to the contention that Spinoza was an atheist and that Wolff had already vitiated his entire pernicious project.

8. I have used Samuel Shirley's translation of *Ethics,* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1982).

9. Here Theophron clearly seems to follow Spinoza who noted that "water qua water, comes into existence and goes out of existence; but qua substance it does not . . ." (I, 15, scholium).

10. See Kant's 1788 essay *"Über den Gebrauch der teleologischen Prinzipien in der Philosophie"* in *Werke*.

11. Manfred Frank, *Der kommende Gott,* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1982), 31–32.

12. Quoted in Frank, 34–35.

13. Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza,* trans. Martin Joughin, (New York: Zone Books, 1990). Henceforth SE.

14. *F. W. J. Schelling: Briefe und Dokumente,* vol. 2, ed. Horst Fuhrmans, (Bonn: Bouvier, 1962), 57. This, along with several other important letters from Schelling from this period, can also be found in *Materialien zu Schellings philosophischen Anfängen,* ed. Manfred Frank and Gerhard Kurz, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1975), 119. Henceforth M.

15. "Was heißt: sich im Denken orientieren?" in *Immanuel Kant: Schriften zur Metaphysik und Logik,* (Wiesbaden: Insel Verlag, 1958), 279. (Akadamie Ausgabe, 323–24). Henceforth DO.

16. "The effect of Kant was indeed exceptional. One cannot be pleased that, fifty years after the appearance of Kant, after we are admittedly at a different point, but one to which we would never have got *without* him, Kant's contribution is diminished by those who contribute nothing to going beyond Kant" (HMP, 73/94).

17. This phrase first appeared in a letter to Hegel from Schelling dated February 4, 1795 (M, 127). Schelling continued: "It now only asks itself in what this absolute lies, in the I or in the ~I. If this question is decided, *everything* is decided. For me, the

highest principle of all philosophy is the pure, absolute I, still not at all conditioned through objects but posited through *freedom*. The alpha and omega of all philosophy is freedom." For a discussion of this, see the introduction to Sankaulen-Bock's *Ausgang von Unbedingten,* 7–10.

18. Gilles Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy,* trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Babara Habberjam, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 6.

19. I have used Raymund Schmidt's edition of the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1781), (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1956). When quoting, I have used Norman Kemp Smith's translation, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965) with some of my own emendations.

20. Kant only knew Wizenmann as the "astute" and anonymous author—*der Freiwilliger*—of this treatise.

21. See FR, 110–13.

22. *Fürwahrhalten* stems from the now obsolete adverb *fürwahr,* literally meaning "for true" or "forsooth" and roughly meaning "truly" or "really." Schelling, in the 1809 *Freedom* essay, showed how far away he was from a sense of belief in what is not rationally demonstrable. For Schelling, faith is "conscientiousness *[Gewissenhaftigkeit],*" the loss of choice before the superior power of the Other.

23. *The Consolation of Philosophy,* trans. V. E. Watts, (London: Penguin Books, 1969), 36. Henceforth referred to as CP.

24. Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy,* x.

25. It is here that, in a certain respect, Schelling's relationship to Kant resembles Emmanuel Levinas' relationship to Kant: "If one had the right to retain one trait from a philosophical system and neglect all the details of its architecture . . . we would think here of Kantism, which finds a meaning to the human without measuring it by ontology and outside of the question 'What is there here . . . ?' that one would like to take to be preliminary, outside of the immortality and death which ontologies run up against" (OB, 129).

26. Martin Heidegger, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik,* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1991), 131; *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics,* 4th edition, trans. Richard Taft, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 90. Henceforth KP, with the page number of the *Gesamtausgabe* edition followed by the Taft translation.

27. John Sallis, *The Gathering of Reason,* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1980), 175.

28. Andrew Bowie translated this metaphor of *ein wahres hölzernes Eisen* by the more abstract and straightforward "impossible hybrid."

29. Slavoj Žižek, *The Indivisible Remainder: An Essay on Schelling and Related Matters,* (London and New York: Verso, 1996), 36. Henceforth IR.

30. Quoted from a letter to Christian Garve (September 21, 1798) found in Eckart Förster's introduction to the *Opus postumum,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), xvi. Henceforth referred to as OP.

31. Ibid., xliv.

32. "Ideas are not concepts, but pure intuitions: not discursive, but intuitive representations" (OP, 246). Transcendental philosophy is the "*complexus* of ideas in the one system of reason, constituting itself under a principle. The highest existence, the highest power, and the highest will. All unlimited. But only in idea" (OP, 246).

33. A copy of Schelling's *Vom Ich al Prinzip der Philosophie* was found in Kant's library along with several issues of the *Philosophisches Journal einer Gesellschaft teutscher Gelehrten* where some of Schelling's articles had anonymously appeared (Förster, *op. cit.,* 274). Burkhard Tuschling in his article "Die Idee des transzendentalen Idealismus im späten *Opus postumum*" argued that Schelling was the decisive influence not only on Kant's reevaluation of Spinoza but on the very project of a system of transcendental idealism, that is, the project aimed at "intuiting everything in God" (129) and uniting theoretical and practical philosophy, "this attempt to conceive from the theoretical and practical spontaneity of the subject the regularity of nature and the freedom of the person not as *factum brutum* but as rational" (133). In *Übergang: Untersuchungen zum Spätwerk Immanuel Kants,* ed. Forum for Philosophy at Bad Homburg, (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1991), 105–33.

34. Ibid., 174–75.

35. The English translation, *The Treatise Explicatory of the Idealism in the* Science of Knowledge, by Thomas Pfau, is in *Idealism and the Endgame of Theory,* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994). I am using his translations, with some slight alterations, mostly for the sake of consistency with my own translation choices. I retain the standard pagination, which Pfau inserted in the margins of his translation.

36. For a helpful discussion of the productive or transcendental imagination in Schelling, see Rudolf Hablützel, *Dialektik und Einbildungskraft: F. W. J. Schellings Lehre von der menschlichen Erkenntnis,* (Basel: Verlag für Recht und Gesellschaft, 1954). Henceforth DE.

37. *Einbildung* suggests the introduction *(ein)* of image *(Bild)* into that which is at first without image. Presentation *[Darstellung]* is divine *Einbildung*. Schelling at times referred to this "expulsive *[ausstoßende]*" movement as the *In-Eins-Bildung* (e.g., VII, 60), that is, conjunction of freedom and necessity (difference and identity) in a shared one. The many become one *[Eins]* through having come into *[In]* form *[Bild]*. Coleridge, for his part, attempted to render this movement through his remarkable neologism "esemplastic," derived from the Greek "ἐις ἕν πλάττειν, i.e. to shape into one . . ." (BL, 168). The shaping is "plastic" (from πλάττειν), suggesting the movement from the formless to the formed. Coleridge also articulated this as to "coadunate," to make one with (BL, 168, editor's footnote).

38. *Timaeus: Ein Manuskript zu Plato* (1794), ed. Harmut Buchner, (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1994). For a masterful discussion of these texts, see "Appropriation" in John Sallis, *Chorology: On Beginning in Plato's Timaeus,* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 154–67. Important also is Michael Franz, *Schellings Tübinger Platon-Studien,* (Göttingen: Vanderhoeck and Ruprecht, 1996). See also the short discussion in Birgit Sandkaulen-Bock's *Ausgang von Unbedingten: Über den Anfang in der Philosophie Schellings,* 19–21.

39. Sandkaulen-Bock, 20.

40. See the *Freedom* essay in which Schelling referred to "Plato's matter" [the χώπα], which has no form of its own and cannot produce any permanent forms (I/7, 360). See also the first draft of *The Ages of the World* in which Schelling claimed that Plato was close to this insight, only that he had not fully thought through the unity of matter and time as δημιουργός. The δημιουργός, what Schelling here named God, acts as if it "were separated from being as the transfigured spirit hovers over its wrapping" (WA, 100).

41. *Werke: Historisch-Kritische Ausgabe,* series 1 *(Werke),* vol. 6, (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 2000). Henceforth WS.

42. John Sallis, *Force of Imagination: The Sense of the Elemental,* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 219.

43. Slavoj Žižek: "'Reality' is inherently fragile, the result of a temporary balance between contraction and expansion which can, at any moment, 'run amok' and explode into one of the extremes" (IR, 24). Žižek reminds us in this context of Rilke's famous dictum that the "Beautiful is the veil of the Horrible" (IR, 81).

44. *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (1961), trans. Richard Howard, (New York: Random House, 1965). Henceforth MC.

45. *System des transzendentalen Idealismus* (1800), ed. Horst D. Brandt and Peter Müller, (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1992), 228. An English translation can be found in *The System of Transcendental Idealism,* trans. Peter Heath, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1978), 176. Henceforth referred to as TI, with the German pagination followed by that of the English.

46. For Levinas, the claim of the idea of the Good is already the Good's assignation of me. "This antecedence of responsibility to freedom would signify the Goodness of the Good: the necessity that the Good choose me first before I can be in a position to choose, that is, welcome its choice" (OB, 122).

47. William James, "On Some Hegelisms" (1882), in *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy,* (New York: Dover, 1956), 271.

48. *Leaves of Grass,* facsimile edition of the 1860 text, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1961), 15.

49. *Beyond Good and Evil,* aphorism 13: *"Vor allem will etwas Lebendiges seine Kraft auslassen—Leben selbst ist Wille zur Macht—: die Selbsterhaltung ist nur eine der indirekten und häufigsten Folgen davon."* (KSA, vol. 5, 27.)

50. In this sense Schelling spoke, for example, in the *Stuttgart Lectures* of "identity" as the "organic unity of all things" (SP, 103). This does not mean that all things are the same thing, that is, *einerlei* (of the same kind, either logically or numerically). "What is meant is not that the real and the ideal are logically or numerically of the same kind. There is rather one and the same matter posited in both forms, but it is in each of these forms its being and not a being of the same kind" (SP, 104).

51. "The *world* is an organization, and a *general Organism* is itself the *condition* (and thereby something *positive*) of *mechanism*" (WS, 69). Considered in isolation, the mechanical appears as the simple negation or inhibition of the life force.

52. "The common doctrine 'God can only do good' is a tautological proposition; for good *is* only what God does, and as such he admittedly can *only* do good. Anyone who has any idea at all these days knows as well that the proposition which completely sublimates *[aufhebt]* the freedom in God via the semblance *[Schein]* of ethical necessity is the last resort of rationalism" (HMP, 58/83).

53. Leibniz argued in the *Theodicy,* "In giving him [man] intelligence, God has presented him [man] with an image of Divinity. He [God] leaves him to himself, in a sense, in his small department. . . . He [God] enters there only in a secret way, for He supplies being, force, life, reason, without showing Himself" (§ 147). The thinking monad is a fulguration, a lightening strike of perfection, albeit one that mirrors it only in an oblique fashion. Each and every monad is a perspective on the substance. Each expresses the ideal substance, but mirrors it in its own way.

54. In an *Antikritik* written for the *Intelligenzblatt zur allgemeinen Literatur Zeitung* for 1796, Schelling answered the critics of his *Vom Ich als Princip,* who claimed that the treatise was a return to speculative and questionable first principles. Schelling retorted that "he believed that one is born to act *[Handeln]* not to speculate" (193). "Philosophy is an act of freedom," not a theoretical posit (192). "But since the public only seems to have ears for *first principles,*" freedom could only be a *"postulate"* (193). It cannot be proven because it is that from which all philosophy is derived. "As little as the geometer should prove the line should the philosopher prove freedom" (193). Philosophy proceeds from practical reason (194). *Werke: Historisch-Kritische Ausgabe,* vol. 3.

55. In this sense, Schelling is already in disagreement with Fichte who "remarked" in the *Grundlage der gesammten Wissenschaftslehre* that "when one transgresses *[überschreitet]* the *I am,* one must necessarily come to Spinozism! There are only two fully consistent systems: the *critical,* which recognizes these boundaries, and the *Spinozistic,* which hurdles over them" (101). And: "In the critical system the thing is posited in the *I.* In the dogmatic system is that in which the I is posited. Criticism is therefore immanent because it posits everything in the I. Dogmatism is transcendent because it still transcends the I *(über das Ich hinausgeht).* In so far as dogmatism can be consistent, Spinozism is its most consistent product" (120). Fichte, too, had not yet thought nature and his I was still thought within a subjectivity that still clung to the final vestiges of human subjectivity.

56. Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority,* trans. Alphonso Lingis, (Pittsburgh: Dusquesne University Press, 1969), 80.

57. Thomas Aquinas, *De Veritate,* XXI, 1.

58. *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie,* vol. 3, in *Werke in zwanzig Bänden (Theorie Werkausgabe),* vol. 20, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1971), 423.

59. Schelling referred to this as Spinoza's "mechanistic physics." Spinoza did not claim that God is the exclusive cause of effects (effects are also caught in local constellations of effects) (I, 27, scholium): "Some things must have been produced directly by God (those things, in fact, which follow directly from his absolute nature) and others through the medium of these primary things. . . ."

CHAPTER FOUR

1. *Negative Dialectics* (1966), trans. E. B. Ashton, (New York: Continuum, 1973), 109.

2. See Nishitani Keiji, *Religion and Nothingness,* trans. Jan van Bragt, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982): "The Great Doubt represents not only the apex of the doubting self but also the point of its 'passing away' and ceasing to be 'self.' It is like the bean whose seed and shell break apart as it ripens: the shell is the tiny ego, and the seed the infinity of the Great Doubt that encompasses the whole world. . . . This is also why it can be called the 'Great Death.' There are numerous Zen sayings referring to that conversion in such terms, for example: 'In the Great Death heaven and earth become new,' and 'Beneath the Great Death, the Great Enlightenment'" (21). Nishitani was also the Japanese translator of the *Freedom* essay.

3. Wisława Szymborska, "On Death, Without Exaggeration," *View with a Grain of Sand: Selected Poems,* trans. Stanislaw Barańczak and Clare Cavanaugh, (New York: Harcourt and Brace, 1995), 136.

4. *Four Screenplays of Ingmar Bergman,* trans. Lars Malmstrom and David Kushner, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960), 153–54.

5. *Nachlaß* of 1884, *Kritische Studienausgabe,* vol. 11, 273.

6. "The Wagner Case," §3, in *Ecce Homo,* KSA vol. 6.

7. Karl Löwith was among the first to insist upon this kinship. "The utter lack of madness leads not to reason but to imbecility. The fundamental stuff of all of life and existence is, according to Schelling as well as Nietzsche, the awful *[das Schreckliche]:* a blind power and force, a barbaric principle, that can be overcome but never eliminated and which is 'the foundation of all greatness and beauty.'" *Nietzsches Philosophie der ewigen Wiederkehr des Gleichen* (1935), 4th proofed edition based on the corrected 3rd edition, (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1986), 154.

8. See Dale Snow, "Genius: The 'Sunday's Children' Problem," SEI, 62–66. I am using her translation of Hegel at p. 63.

9. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, WP, 3. See also the claim in the *Freedom* essay: "Philosophy gets its name on the one hand from love as its general inspiring *[begeisternd]* principle, and, on the other hand, from this original wisdom that is its authentic goal" (I/7, 415).

10. "Schelling's 'identity' *(Identität)* is a state of direct experience. The distinction between subject and object is a relative form that arises when one has lost the unity of experience, and to regard subject and object as mutually independent realities is an arbitrary view." Nishida Kitarō, *An Inquiry into the Good* (1911), trans. Masao Abe and Christopher Ives, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990), 31–32. Henceforth IG.

11. "The Father's 'No,'" *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice,* ed. Donald Bouchard, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 68. Later in the essay Foucault argued that for Hölderlin "the work is ruined by that which initially constituted it" (80).

12. See my "Schelling and the Force of Nature," in *Interrogating the Tradition,* ed. Charles Scott and John Sallis, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), esp. 259–60.

13. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1972), trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 26.

14. William James, *The Philosophy of William James,* (New York: Modern Library), 75.

15. Ibid., 111.

16. Chapter One, line 27. I have used Kuang-ming Wu's translation, *The Butterfly as Companion: Meditations on the First Three Chapters of the Chuang Tzu,* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 48.

17. "A Glance at Danish Literature," *Concluding Postscript,* part 2, in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to* Philosophical Fragments, vol. 1, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 275.

18. *Über die Möglichkeit einer Form der Philosophie überhaupt,* in the *Werke: Historisch-Kritische Ausgabe,* vol. 1, (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1976), 267. Although I have relied primarily on my own translations, an English version is available as *On the Possibility of a Form of All Philosophy* in *The Unconditional in Human Knowledge: Four Early Essays (1794–1796),* trans. Fritz Marti, (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1980), 39. Henceforth FP. I will list the page reference for the *Historisch-Kritische Ausgabe,* followed by the page for the standard edition and then for the English edition.

19. Here Schelling paralleled J. G. Fichte, who argued in the *Grundlage der gesammten Wissenschaftslehre* (1794) that "*Sich selbst setzen* and *Sein* are . . . fully equal. The sentence, I am, because I have posited myself can be accordingly expressed: *I am as such because I am. . . .* The I posits absolutely its own being." *Fichtes Werke,* ed. Immanuel Hermann Fichte, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1971), 98.

20. "I may speak in tongues of men or of angels, but if I am without love, I am a sounding gong or a clanging cymbal." *The New English Bible,* (New York: Cambridge, 1972).

21. *Vom Ich als Prinzip der Philosophie oder über das Unbedingte im menschlichen Wissen* (1795), in *Werke: Historisch-Kritische Ausgabe,* (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1976). A version of the English appears in Fritz Marti's translation, 109–10. Henceforth referred to as VP. I will list references for the *Historisch-Kritische Ausgabe,* followed by the standard edition and then the English references.

22. "On What There Is," *From a Logical Point of View,* 2nd rev. edition, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1980), 1.

23. *Black Skin, White Masks (Peau noire, masques blancs)* (1952), trans. Charles Lam Markmann, (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 231.

24. Quoted in Abe Masao's excellent introduction to IG, x.

25. "How did logic come into existence in man's head? Certainly out of illogic, whose realm originally must have been immense," *The Gay Science* (1882), aphorism 111, trans. Walter Kaufmann, (New York: Vintage, 1974), 171.

26. "We have arranged for ourselves a world in which we can live—by positing bodies, lines, planes, causes and effects, motion and rest, form and content; without these articles of faith nobody now could endure life. But that does not prove them. Life is no argument." Ibid., 177 (aphorism 121).

27. *Kenshō,* literally denoting "seeing nature," is *satori,* the seeing of *tathatā,* suchness, beyond the duality of seer and seen.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. Nishida not only linked this insight to Bergson, but also to Schelling and Fichte. "The intuitive nature of imagination lies in its internal creative nature, as Fichte and Schelling thought" (AM, 20).

2. "The Plasmic Image" (1945), *Barnett Newman: Selected Writings and Interviews,* ed. John P. O'Neill, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 145.

3. "The New Sense of Fate" (1948), in Newman, 168.

4. Henry Miller, *To Paint Is to Love Again,* (Alhambra, Cal.: Cambria Books, 1960), 17.

5. I have here employed the *Historisch-Kritische Ausgabe*. I follow the same citation procedure detailed in chapter 4, note 21. Henceforth PB. Translations are my own.

6. Franz Gabriel Nauen, *Revolution, Idealism, and Human Freedom: Schelling, Hölderlin, and Hegel and the Crisis of Early German Idealism,* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971), 21.

7. See LA, 84.

8. The letter form was already establishing itself as a forum for radical philosophy. Jacobi had published his correspondence with Mendelssohn, Carl Leonhard Reinhold had published his popularization of critical philosophy, the *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie* (1790–1792). J. G. Herder had begun publishing in 1793 his *Briefe zu Beföderung der Humanität*. Most decisive for both Schelling and Hölderlin, however, was, despite their reservations, Schiller's anonymously published *Briefe über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* (1795), whose aesthetic and political refashioning of the critical project raised the letter form to an ethical and political level.

9. Nauen, 41.

10. It is also quite possible, judging from their correspondence at the time, that the addressee is Hegel. Or given his view of tragedy, there is an outside chance that it is Schiller. Or, perhaps Schelling had someone else in mind or that he had no one in particular in mind. Perhaps it is like Paul Celan's letter in a bottle, tossed to sea, its addressee unknown. For a discussion of the evidence pertaining to the identity of the

addressee, see Annemarie Pieper's editorial report in the third volume of the *Historisch-Kritische Ausgabe,* 29–34. Pieper concluded that the evidence does not point clearly to either Hölderlin or Hegel or to Schelling's "highly treasured friend" Karl Christoph Renz. Perhaps the addressee was "fictive" and could represent all of the various philosophical, political, and aesthetic possibilities that presented themselves to those trained in Tübingen (34). Finally, the question of the addressee is not of critical importance. It is at least whoever would receive it.

11. On September 1, 1798, Hölderlin, in a letter to his mother, wrote "I had sometimes myself quarreled with him over his opinions" (*Stuttgarter Ausgabe,* VI, 301).

12. *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque,* trans. Tom Conley, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 31.

13. As Deleuze in *The Fold* defined the monad: "each monad expresses the world

$$\frac{1}{\text{infinity}},$$

but clearly expresses only one particular zone of the world

$$\frac{1}{\text{n}}$$

(with *n* in each case having a specific value). Each monad includes the world as an infinite series of infinitely small units, but establishes differential relations and integrations only upon a limited portion of the series, such that the monads enter in an infinite series of inverse numbers" (130).

14. Leibniz proclaimed that the confused and oblique relationship between monads and the supreme substance (that is, between the discreet and continuous) was one of his two central concerns. In the *Monadology,* supreme substance is "unique, universal, and necessary" such that "there is nothing existing apart from it which would be independent of it" and that it "does not admit of any limitation and must contain as much reality as is possible" (§40). It is perfect, a pure positivity without limits. (§41) Monads are "simple," being *"sans parties"* (§1), each in its own way being unique (§9) yet "subject to change" (§10). They are "derivative products" of the supreme substance (§47), imperfectly mirroring their origin and standing in "relations which express all others" (§56) while having "a confused knowledge of the infinite" (§60) as "perspectives of a single universe, varied according to *points of view,* which differ in each monad" (§57).

15. In Umberto Eco, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages,* trans. Hugh Bredin, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986), 78.

16. Ibid.

17. *Kritische Studienausgabe,* vol. 4, 157.

18. Ibid., 152.

19. *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), aphorism 39, KSA, vol. 5, 56.

20. Ibid.

21. Georges Bataille, *L'Érotisme,* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1957), 17; *Erotism: Death and Sensuality,* trans. Mary Dalwood, (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1986), 11. Henceforth E, with the French citation followed by the English citation. I have slightly emended Dalwood's translations.

22. Hegel was to adapt this analysis in the *Phenomenology*. Stoicism can only think the True and the Good abstractly and in general terms, and it cannot get beyond its resignation to such a "contentless thought" (PG, §200). Skepticism is the dialectical flip side of stoicism. It is unable to find the Good and the True anywhere in particular and hence loses its relationship with reality (PG, §204). If this dialectical antinomy is not resolved, consciousness is at an "absolute dialectical unrest" (PG, §205).

23. As Tzvetan Todorov explained this coupling: "As for the symbol, it is characterized by the fusion of two contraries, the general and the particular, or, to use Schelling's favorite formula, by the fact that the symbol does not simply signify, but also *is:* in other words, by the intransitivity of that which symbolizes. In the symbol, 'the finite is at the same time the infinite itself, and does not merely signify it' (V, 452–53)" [*Theories of the Symbol,* trans. Catherine Porter, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 209].

24. All three of these words, "enthusiasm," "inspiration," and "genius," are related to Hamann's (or Socrates') δαίμων. "Enthusiasm," as its Greek etymology suggests, is an indwelling of the gods. "Inspiration" is its Latin transliteration. "Genius" is a Latinate transliteration of the Greek δαίμων. The Latin form specifically suggests a birthing or procreative divinity.

25. There is a difference between the ποίησις of nature and artistic ποίησις. Organic production does not originate in human consciousness and therefore does not begin with "with the eternal contradiction that is the condition of aesthetic production." In nature, freedom and necessity are already held together. In art, they are first experienced as separate and then re-presented (in a work of art) as belonging together. Therefore, Schelling concluded, "the organic product of nature will not necessarily be *beautiful*" and that natural beauty is an aesthetic experience (TI, 293/226–27).

26. On the theme of the relationship between the sublime and tragic presentation in Schelling, see Jean-François Courtine's essay, "Tragedy and Sublimity: The Speculative Interpretation of *Oedipus Rex* on the Threshold of German Idealism," in *Of the Sublime: Presence in Question,* trans. Jeffrey S. Librett, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 157–74. "The sensible infinite—that which reveals itself to us at first as the incommensurable—is thus in reality only the mask of the true infinite which, as such, remains unseizable. Through the sublime, the infinite reveals itself in its double visage. It is actually more a matter here of transfiguration or 'transverberation' than of disguise or dissimulation. In fact, the sensible infinite hides nothing but rather translates or betrays what one must always decipher obliquely. . . . Or, again, to formulate differently this central thesis: there is properly speaking no absolute intuition or intuition of the absolute. Certainly, the absolute gives itself, offers itself to us—its essence consists in this gift itself—but always in the shadow or mirror of the sensible and, in reality, of the finite" (167).

27. See Courtine, 168.

28. This is Douglas Stott's translation.

29. Even in the dialogue *Bruno* (1802), the pinnacle of Schelling's so-called *Identitätsphilosophie,* Anselm argued that "There was good reason, then, behind our decision that mythology ought to be left to the poets, while philosophers establish and conduct the mystery rites" (I/3, 233). Poetry was like John the Baptist, preparing one for a future that philosophy itself could not provide. Philosophy is at best an anamnesis of an aesthetic relationship to Being. As such, philosophy is related, as a rite, to a mystery that it can never make public. Anselm: "Then philosophy is necessarily esoteric, by its very nature. There is no need to try and keep it secret, for, instead, it is essentially mysterious" (I/3, 232). There "was something in the nature of the mysteries which could not be profaned, even if a great multitude took part in them" (I/3, 232). Bruno then attempts to speak of the "images and actions that might be used to present a mystery" (I/3, 324). What is at stake, for both Hölderlin and Schelling, was the poetic presentation of a mystery whose secret cannot be betrayed. [I have used here Michael Vater's translation of *Bruno,* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984)].

30. *"Die Darstellung des Tragischen beruht vorzüglich darauf, dass das Ungeheure, wie der Gott und Mensch sich paart, und gränzenlos die Naturmacht und des Menschen Innerstes im Zorn Eins wird, dadurch sich begreift, dass das gränzenlose Eineswerden durch gränzenloses Scheiden sich reiniget."*

31. I have used Edward Allen Beach's translation of this passage in his *The Potencies of the God(s): Schelling's Philosophy of Mythology,* (Albany: State University of New York, 1994), 228.

32. *The Birth of Tragedy* [with *The Case of Wagner*], trans. Walter Kaufmann, (New York: Vintage, 1966). I have modified the translations slightly. Henceforth BT

33. Martin Heidegger, "Hölderlin und das Wesen der Dichtung," *Erläuterungen zu Hölderlins Dichtung,* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1971), 44.

34. Following John Sallis, this is a compulsion to "stammer on in the alien languages of poetry and philosophy": "For what they must translate is such as to withdraw from such translation: the resounding ecstasy." *Crossings: Nietzsche and the Space of Tragedy,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 103.

35. Jacques Derrida, "The Theater of Cruelty and the Closure of Representation," *Writing and Difference,* trans. Alan Bass, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 250.

36. Aphorism 40, KSA, vol. 5, 57.

37. Deleuze commented on this passage as follows: "In short, the model of the body according to Spinoza, does not imply any devaluation of thought in relation to extension, but, much more important, a devaluation of consciousness in relation to thought: a discovery of the unconscious, of an *unconscious of thought* just as profound as the *unknown of the body*" (SP 18–19). Schelling articulated a similar "discovery." If one accepts Deleuze's reading of a parallelism in Spinoza, which does not "consist merely in denying any real causality between the mind and the body, it disallows any primacy of the one over the other" (SPP, 18) and apply this language to Schelling's *Naturphilosophie,* one might say that the I and nature "parallel" each other.

38. Bernd-Olaf Küppers, in his fascinating study *Natur als Organismus: Schellings frühe Naturphilosophie und ihre Bedeutung für die moderne Biologie,* described the self-organization of Nature as follows: "The constant Becoming of Nature is the expression of an absolute and infinitely thought productivity of nature that never comes to an end in its products. For this reason the products of nature are not static and immutable products but only transient products of a nature that is constantly modifying and unfolding itself." (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1992), 107.

39. Guy Davenport, *A Balthus Notebook,* (New York: Ecco Press, 1989), 39.

CHAPTER SIX

1. This was the epigram at the beginning of Franz von Baader's article *"Über die Behauptung: daß kein übler Gebrauch der Vernunft sein könne,"* which originally appeared in the *Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände,* no. 197, (Tübingen: Cotta, 1807). It is now collected in the *Gesammelte Schriften zur philosophischen Erkenntniswissenschaft als spekulative Logik,* (Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1963), 35. Schelling approvingly alluded to this article in a footnote in the *Freedom* essay (I/7, 367).

2. *Stuttgarter Hölderlin-Ausgabe,* I/302.

3. In the dimension of action, *bösartig* denotes malice and viciousness. In the medical dimension it denotes malignancy. Both dimensions are critical to both Heidegger and Schelling's respective arguments. For Schelling, evil is the furious malignancy of the *conatus*.

4. In *Wegmarken,* 355.

5. Arendt, OT, viii–ix.

6. Horst Fuhrmans, *op. cit.,* 18. The *Marseillaise* had just been written when Schelling allegedly translated it. Needless to say, Schelling's Swabian environment was in no way receptive to such activities. For an account of Schelling's activities while in Tübingen, see the first chapter of Manfred Frank's *Eine Einführung in Schellings Philosophie,* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985).

7. *F. W. J. Schellings philosophische Schriften,* vol. 1, (Landshut bei Philipp Krüll, Universitätsbuchhändler, 1809), 397–511. This was the fifth and concluding essay. Other volumes did not appear.

8. See Julia Kristeva, who refers to the χώρα as the "receptacle of narcissism": "The sign represses the χώρα and its eternal return. Desire alone will henceforth be witness to that 'primal' pulsation. But desire ex-patriates the ego toward an other subject and accepts the exactness of the ego only as narcissistic. Narcissism then appears as a regression to a position set back from the other, a return to a self-contemplative, conservative, self-sufficient haven." *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1980), trans. Leon S. Roudiez, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 14.

9. The penultimate paragraph of the essay concludes by refusing invidious sectarianism. "It is not the time to again awaken old oppositions but to seek that which lies outside of and beyond all opposition" (I/7, 416).

10. "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience" (1949), *Écrits: A Selection,* trans. Alan Sheridan, (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1977), 6.

11. See Böhme's *Mysterium Magnum*. In the expansive remarks found in the Buchheim edition, there is a reference to Jacobi's use of the same motif in his *Über eine Weissagung Lichtenbergs* (1801). See Buchheim, 128–29.

12. See the *Stuttgart Lectures:* The "living band, what Plato and the *Bible* name the *logos,* is the copula. . . . The living word is the fusion of vowels and consonants. The ideal is here the vowel and the Real is the consonant" (SP, 143).

13. Schelling reiterated this in the opening arguments of his inaugural Berlin lectures: "What one usually calls a polemic will never appear as the goal of philosophy and in any case will only occur as a peripheral matter" (PO, 94). Rather, Schelling's intentions were expansive: "I am not here to destroy, but to build, to set up a castle in which philosophy might from now on dwell securely" (PO, 95).

14. One might ask about Schelling's own alleged polemicism. What about the polemic against Jacobi? Or the strong remarks made against Hegel? Perhaps no one is utterly free of these moments, but there is a large difference in type between someone who comes from the spirit of polemicism and its aggressive demand for the center, its center, and its hostility against all who would threaten that center, and Schelling's movement to emancipate philosophy from the various constipated dogmas that clogged thinking's circulation. Furthermore, it is not difficult to imagine the hostility of the reaction against Schelling's thought. During Schelling's years in Bavaria (including the time during which he composed the *Freedom* essay), for example, he was brutally attacked by both sides of the German Christian establishment. For the *Aufklärer,* Schelling, like Hamann before him, threatened to return reason's hard won autonomy back to religion. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, accused Schelling of the opposite. Always a force to contend with in Bavaria, the religious orthodoxy feared that Schelling's apostasy was eroding faith in traditional religious institutions, which, no doubt, was the case. In the inaugural Berlin lectures, Schelling took an antipapal stance ["the pope is the true Anti-Christ" (PO, 318)] and furthermore claimed that, although the Catholic Church had the historical fact of Christ, they did not understand it. "Catholicism, as the Church of Christ, had the fact *[Sache]* and still has it. Its service is to have preserved the historical relationship with Christ. But they do not have the understanding. Theirs was only an external, blind, and non-comprehending unity" (PO, 321). This is not to say, therefore, that Schelling turned to the Protestants. They were right to protest, but they did not yet provide a positive philosophy.

15. Friedrich Hölderlin, *Hyperion* (1797, part 2, 1799), *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Textausgabe,* vol. 11, (Darmstadt: Luchterhand, 1984), 199. Henceforth H.

16. See Lacan: "We place no trust in altruistic feeling, we who lay bare the aggressivity that underlies the activity of the philanthropist, the idealist, the pedagogue, and even the reformer." Lacan, 7.

17. *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone,* trans. Theodore Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson, (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1960). In my judgment, this is a highly misleading translation at best, so the translations are my own, using Ernst Cassirer's

edition of Kant's *Werke,* vol. 6, (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer Verlag, 1923). Henceforth RV, with the German citation followed by the English.

18. For a resumé of some of the key issues, see Otfried Höffe, "Ein Thema wiedergewonnen: Kant über das Böse," in *Über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit,* ed. Otfried Höffe and Annemarie Pieper, vol. 3 of *Klassiker Auslegen,* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1995), 11–34.

19. In *Monadology and Other Philosophical Essays,* trans. Paul Schrecker and Anne Martin Schrecker, (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1965), 130–31.

20. *Philosophical Essays,* trans. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1989), 114.

21. "The original evil is the human's desire to be for themselves and from themselves" (I/6, 561).

22. See the *Freedom* essay: "There must necessarily be a Wesen within evil just as there is in good. But in the one that is opposed to the good, it must be the one that perverts the temperature contained within it to fever *[Distemperatur]*" (I/7, 370).

23. *Stuttgarter Privatvorlesungen* (1810), unedited version, ed. Miklos Vetö, (Turin: Bottega d'Erasmo, 1973), 153. Henceforth SP.

24. See Bataille: "On the surface of the globe, for *living matter in general,* energy is always in excess; the question is always posed in terms of extravagance. The choice is limited to how the wealth will be squandered." *The Accursed Share,* trans. Robert Hurley, (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 23. *La part maudite,* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1967). Henceforth PM with the English citation.

25. Georges Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological,* trans. Carolyn Fawcett and Robert Cohen, (New York: Zone Books, 1989). Henceforth NP.

26. This is the Kaufmann translation (New York: Viking, 1974), 346. Henceforth GS.

27. See *The Ages of the World:* "If an organic being becomes sick, forces appear that previously lay concealed in it. Or if the copula of the unity dissolves altogether and if the life forces that were previously subjugated by something higher are deserted by the ruling spirit and can freely follow their own inclinations and manners of acting, then something terrible becomes manifest which we had no sense of during life and which was held down by the magic of life. And what was once an object of adoration or love becomes an object of fear and the most terrible abjection. For when the abysses of the human heart open up in evil and that terrible thought comes to the fore that should have been buried eternally in night and darkness, we first know what lies in the human in accordance with its possibility and how human nature, for itself or left to itself, is actually constituted" (AW, 268). Sickness is the becoming clear of the inner propensities tacitly operating in the silent life of the organs.

28. Martin Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze,* (Pfullingen: Verlag Günther Neske, 1954). *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays,* trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper and Row, 1977). Translations are my own, although I will list the German citation followed by the English citation. Henceforth FT.

29. Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov,* trans. David Magarshack, (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books, 1958). Henceforth BK.

30. As Ivan tells Alyosha, "To love a man, it's necessary that he should be hidden, for soon as he shows his face, love is gone" (BK, 276).

31. This is not to say that Satan is not only the most dramatic exemplar of the *conatus,* the most accomplished reactive genius. Evil is always the most profound clue to the Good. Proscriptions against evil are always haunted by their inability thereby simply to have done the Good. In this sense, Satan returns again, as the Good that haunts the Evil shunned by one's taboos.

32. This aphorism from the *Pensées* is one of the opening epigrams to Levinas' OB.

33. This is the opening section of Zarathustra's Preface: "So bless me then, you calm eye that can also look at another all too great happiness without envy" (KSA, vol. 4, 12.)

34. "The Being *[Sein]* in God is = divine egoism, the force through which God exists as its own being *[Wesen]*" (SP, 139).

35. Second treatise, aphorism 16, KSA, vol. 5, 323. Henceforth GM followed by KSA citation.

36. Jean-Luc Nancy, "Evil: Decision," in *The Experience of Freedom,* trans. Bridget McDonald, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 126. Henceforth ED.

37. Nishitani, 256.

38. The root of the term *avidyā,* the privation *(a)* of wisdom *(vidyā),* already speaks of a loss of wisdom at the very inception of the creaturely. *Avidyā* is the nescience of birth in which one is exclusively and unconsciously absorbed in the phenomenal world. For the Mahāyāna tradition, following Nagarjuna, among others, it is a nescience that gives rise to the ceaseless thirst *(tṛsnā)* of the ego in its entangled nonrecognition of the emptiness *(śūnyatā)* or nonidentitarian nature and interdependent co-origination *(pratītyasamutpāda)* of all things, including the ego. For Śankara and the nondual or *advaita* tradition of commentary on the *Upanishads, avidyā* belongs to the movement of *prakṛti,* nature not yet raised to the level of the conspiracy of forces (see chapter eight). *Avidyā* and its inherited forgetfulness of nature indicate unreflective servitude in the continuing amassment of karma, the inert force of the fruits of actions.

39. See also WA, 41. *Angst* is the *Empfindung* that corresponds to the conflict of directions in Being. Amidst this strife, "the cision comes forth and brings the forces to ever greater severance so that the contracting force, so to speak, trembles for its existence." Or AW, 246: "Hence, since the first potency unites within it conflicting forces, of which one always craves the outside and of which the other is always inwardly restrained, its life is a life of loathing *[Widerwärtigkeit]* and anxiety since it does not know whether to turn inward or outward and in this fashion falls prey to an arbitrary, revolving motion."

40. See Buchheim, 145. Buchheim also notes that a discourse on anxiety is also to be found in Böhme (especially *De signatura rerum*) as well as Ötinger.

41. See Žižek: "This ground is rather like the figure of woman in David Lynch's films: the traumatic Thing, the point of simultaneous attraction and repulsion, which stands for the vortex of Life itself threatening to draw us into its depressive abyss" (IR, 75).

42. Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety,* trans. Reidar Thomte with Albert Anderson, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980). Henceforth CA.

43. For a discussion of Kierkegaard's references to the *Freedom* essay, see Vincent McCarthy, "Schelling and Kierkegaard on Freedom and the Fall," in *International Kierkegaard Commentary: The Concept of Anxiety,* ed. Robert L. Perkins, (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1985), 89–109.

44. Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (1927), 7th edition, (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1953), §57, 275. Hence Heidegger claimed that "*Gewissenhabenwollen wird bereitschaft zur Angst*. Wanting-to-have-a-conscience becomes readiness for anxiety" (§60, 296).

45. Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (1968), trans. Paul Patton, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 190–91. Henceforth DR.

46. See *The Ages of the World:* "But in the setting into mutual opposition itself, all of the forces retain the feeling of their unity. The necessity to be one is overcome but not annihilated. Necessity remains, but as something mitigated through freedom. Love comes to be out of compulsion. Love is neither freedom nor compulsion. Even though it is separated and set into mutual opposition, it wants the inner all the more as something in order to sense itself as One and to feel itself through a voluntary, inner harmony as a living Whole" (AW, 275).

47. The German title was *Über das Verhältniß des Realen und Idealen in der Natur oder Entwicklung der ersten Grundsätze der Naturphilosophie an den Principien der Schwere und des Lichts*.

48. After being persecuted by the clergy even to the point of being interrogated for blasphemy on his deathbed, and being banned from Görlitz and receiving a proscription against further writing (he disobeyed both), Böhme was then dismissed by the German Enlightenment as a *Schwärmer*. Although copies of Böhme's work were smuggled out of Görlitz and translated into other languages, it was not until the end of the eighteenth and turn of the nineteenth century that there was a renaissance of Böhme's influence. One of the more influential "Swabian Spiritual Fathers," Christoph Ötinger (1702–1782), helped rekindle an interest in Böhme, but it was among later figures like Novalis, Friedrich Schlegel, Franz von Baader, and Louis Claude de Saint Martin (whom both Hegel and Schelling criticize) that Böhme became a rage. In his Berlin *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* Hegel credited Böhme with being "the first German philosopher" (VG, 94) and a crude but sometimes brilliant predecessor of German idealism. "On the one hand their articulation is unmistakably barbarous, and in order to put his thought into words he employs powerful sensuous images such as *Salitter,* Tincture, essence, *Qual, Schrack [Schreck],* and the like. On the other hand, however, there is here the greatest profundity, one that grapples with the forceful unification of the most absolute antitheses" (VG, 130–31/118, Brown's translation). For a study of the influence of Böhme on Schelling, see Robert F. Brown's *The Later Philos-*

ophy of Schelling: The Influence of Böhme on the works of 1809–1815, (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1977). See also Ernst Benz's excellent study, *Schellings theologische Geistesahnen,* (Wiesbaden: Akadamie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, in Kommission bei Franz Steiner Verlag, 1955).

49. *Über das Wesen deutscher Wissenschaft,* I/8, 8.

50. The enigma of the Sphinx was: What walks on four legs in the morning, two legs in the afternoon, and three legs in the evening? Oedipus answered that it was the human (crawls as a baby, walks as an adult, uses a cane in old age). Yet this assumes that the Word of the riddle was a word used to solve the riddle by resolving it in the understanding. See my "Schelling and the Force of Nature."

51. See *The Ages of the World:* "Love is consequently not a quality, a part, or a mere principle of the Godhead. Rather, it is the *Godhead itself,* whole and undivided" (AW, 299).

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. I would here like to express my gratitude to Dr. Hans Ruin and to Dr. Marcia Sá Cavalcante Schuback, whose two invitations to come help them teach two Schelling mini-seminars at the Philosophy Department in Södertörns Högskola in Stockholm, Sweden, were instrumental for this chapter. I would also like to thank the seminar students as well as another of the seminar leaders, Prof. Anna-Lena Renquist, all of whom taught me much.

2. Szymborska, 153.

3. In the appendix to SP, 214.

4. *Brief über den Tod Carolines vom 2. Oktober, 1809,* ed. Johann Ludwig Döderlein, *Kleine kommentierte Texte I,* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1975).

5. Although there is some debate as to when the *Clara* was written, its discussions of evil and death place it solidly in the middle period. Furthermore, this dialogue speaks deeply of mourning and its elegiac mood places it after Caroline's death. I would concur with those who date it sometime in 1810 or so.

6. Some scholars question whether this introduction belongs to the *Clara*. Nonetheless, it speaks clearly to the dialogue's concerns. For further discussion of this issue, see Fiona Steinkamp's introduction to her translation of the *Clara*.

7. Victor Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual,* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), 9.

8. See John Sallis, *Stone:* "Stone is ancient, not only in the sense that it withstands the wear of time better than other natural things, but also in the sense that its antiquity is of the order of the always already. Stone comes from a past that has never been present, a past unassimilable to the order of time in which things come and go in the human world; and that nonbelonging of stone is precisely what qualifies it to mark and hence memorialize such comings and goings, births and deaths." (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 26. Henceforth S.

9. See Manfred Schröter's introduction to WA, xviii.

10. In the relationship between Ground and Existence, *Grund* and *Dasein,* it behooves one to keep in mind that *Dasein,* a construction that emerges relatively late in the German language, during the German philosophical Enlightenment, was coined to handle the Latin term for presence. In German, at least in this case, the present is literally what is there, *was da ist*. The ground of existence is therefore the past origin in every present origin. The Latin *praesēns* is the present participle of *praeesse* (*prae,* before + *esse,* to be). Presence is to be before one, for some x to be there in front of the perceiving subject. In this sense, presence and *Dasein* can be linked to the German *Vorhanden,* to be there before one and hence the claim that x is objectively present.

11. Emil Staiger, "Schellings Schwermut," in *Studia Philosophica: Jahrbuch der Schweizerischen Philosophischen Gesellschaft,* vol. 14, (Basel: Verlag für Recht und Gesellschaft, 1954), 120.

12. Ibid., 121.

13. Georges Bataille, "The Language of Flowers" (1929), in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939,* trans. Allan Stoekl, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 13.

14. Ibid., 12.

15. Shibayama Zenkei, *A Flower Does Not Talk,* trans. Kudo Sumiko, (Kyoto: Nanzenji Monastery, 1966), i.

16. Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (1966), (New York: Vintage Books, 1970), xxiii.

17. As Schelling explained to Eschenmayer, "Ground is the not-subject, that which does not have its own being" (I/8, 164).

18. See *The Ages of the World:* "Hence that which is without nature, which the eternal nature desires, is not a being and does not have being, although it is also not the opposite. Rather it is eternal freedom, the pure will, but not the will to something, e.g., the will to reveal itself, but rather the pure will without obsession and craving, the will in so far as it actually does not will. We have expressed the Highest elsewhere as pure equivalence (indifference) that is nothing yet everything. It is nothing, just like the pure happiness that does not know itself, like the composed bliss that is entirely self-fulfilled and thinks of nothing, like the calm interiority which does not look after itself and does not become aware of its not Being. It is the highest simplicity, not so much God itself, but the Godhead, which is hence above God, in the way that some of the ancients already spoke of a Super-Godhead *[Übergottheit]*. It is not divine nature or substance, but the devouring ferocity of purity that a person is able to approach only with an equal purity. Since all Being goes up in it as if in flames, it is necessarily unapproachable to anyone still embroiled in Being" (AW, 236).

19. *The Poems of Saint John of the Cross* (1577), trans. Ken Krabbenhoft, (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1999), 31.

20. The story appears in Yasunari Kawabata, *First Snow on Fuji* (1958), trans. Michael Emmerich, (Washington, D. C.: Counterpoint, 1999). Henceforth FS. Mr.

Emmerich was so moved by this story that he claimed that it was his impetus to translate this short story collection.

21. Michel Chion, *David Lynch,* trans. Robert Julian, (London: British Film Institute, 1995), 95. My comments on *Blue Velvet* are indebted to Chion's third chapter of this book, "Welcome to Lynchtown."

22. "*Sattva* binds the Self by making Him think 'I am happy'—it binds Him by causing in Him attachment to happiness by bringing about a union of the subject (the Self, *ātman*) with the object (happiness). It makes him think 'Happiness has acrued to me.' This attachment to happiness is an illusion; it is *avidyā*." *The Bhagavad-Gītā with the Commentary of Sri Śaṅkaracharya,* trans. Alladi Mahadeva Sastry, (Madras: Samata Books, 1977), 382–83. The translation was first published in 1897.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. "Letter to Windischmann" (18 December 1806), ed. Plitt, vol. 2, 108.

2. (VI: 13) of the *Dyānayoga:* "Holding the body, head and neck erect and motionless, looking steadily at the tip of his nose, not looking in any direction."

3. See Wendy Doniger (O'Flaherty), "The Myths Depicted at Elephanta," in *Elephanta: The Cave of Shiva,* ed. Carmel Berkson, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 27. "To begin with, Elephanta is on an island; one reaches it by crossing quite a lot of water. This produces not only a feeling of isolation from the profane world but a special cosmological situation from the Hindu point of view: for India is an island (the 'Rose-apple Island,' *Jambudvipa*); and the world is an island, surrounded by concentric oceans of salt and milk and honey; and the universe is an island, a closed egg floating in the cosmic waters. Here, therefore, one is at the center of the center of the center." See also Charles Dillard Collins, *The Iconography and Ritual of Śiva at Elephanta,* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988).

4. There are traditionally four faces. The fifth and utterly hidden face is the face of absolute transcendence. See Stella Kramrisch, *The Presence of Śiva,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 256. For Kramrisch, Śiva is the time beyond time (272).

5. Although Indian themes are often in the background of Schelling's thinking, this is the only lengthy discussion of them.

6. Sri Aurobindo Ghose (1872–1950), *Essays on the Gītā* (1916–1920), (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1970). Henceforth EG.

7. Cf., II/2, 454.

8. Kant mentioned this in a footnote in section 49 of the *Kritik der Urteilskraft ("Von den Vermögen des Gemüts"),* KU, 171.

9. I am using Robert Brown's translation, *The Deities of Samothrace,* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1974). He has imbedded the standard pagination to which I refer.

10. I would take exception to Jean Sedlar's remark that "Schelling's errors on the subject of India" are chielfy "the result of his willingness to ignore evidence in order to

force Indian religion into his concept of 'mythology' and to his inability to think in other than Christian terms." Schelling no doubt made mistakes, but his sensitivity to the central matter of the *Gītā* demonstrates a very different kind of thinker than the one Sedlar glibly described. *India in the Mind of Germany: Schelling, Schopenhauer, and their Times,* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982).

11. Hegel, *Reason in History,* trans. Robert S. Hartman, (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, 1953), 86.

12. *On the History of Philosophy,* trans. E. S. Haldane, in *On Art, Religion, and the History of Philosophy,* ed. J. Glenn Gray, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 300–01.

13. *Philosophy of Right,* trans. T. M. Knox, (Clarendon: Oxford, 1952).

14. See A. Leslie Wilson, *A Mythical Image: The Ideal of India in German Romanticism,* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1964), 117–20.

15. *F. W. J. Schelling: Briefe und Dokumente,* ed. Horst Fuhrmans, (Bonn: H. Bouvier, 1962), 414–15. The letter was written August 26, 1808.

16. "Supreme happiness will not be his if a fate such as Priam's befalls him" (1101a). Trans. Martin Ostwald, (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1962).

17. Arjuna "has passed even beyond that distinction of sin and virtue which is so all-important to the human soul while it is struggling to minimize the hold of its egoism and lighten the heavy and violent yoke of its passions" (EG, 173).

18. See the inaugural Berlin lectures where Schelling claimed that "Viṣṇu has his own votaries that exclude those of Śiva and vice-versa" (PO, 462).

19. "Brahma, Śiva, and Viṣṇu, considered in their unity, are the Godhead itself. But considered in their separation (tension), these are three individual beings, which, because in them only the single godhead exists, can be considered as three gods" (II/2, 484).

20. In this way Schelling characterized Buddhism as an "attack against the political existence of the Brahmins" (II/2, 497). "Buddhism is exquisitely opposed to Brahminism in that the Buddhists wholly reject caste distinctions" (II/2, 507), something that had been considered so inviolable that caste climbing would have been considered a crime. Nonetheless, "Buddhism is just the secret teaching *[Geheimlehre]* of the *Vedas* made exoteric and public" (II/2, 481).

21. See *The Ages of the World:* "Most people would find nothing more natural than if everything in the world were to consist of pure gentleness and goodness, at which point they would soon become aware of the opposite. Something inhibiting, something conflicting, imposes itself everywhere: this Other is that which, so to speak, should not be and yet is, nay, must be. It is this No that resists the Yes, this darkening which resists the light, this obliquity which resists the straight, this left which resists the right, and however else one has attempted to express this eternal antithesis in images" (AW, 211).

22. See EG, 147.

23. Schelling was also quite clear about this relationship in *The Ages of the World:* There is an "inner unity in which each potency comes out for itself. Hence the day lies

concealed in the night, albeit overwhelmed by the night; likewise the night in the day, albeit kept down by the day, although it can establish itself as soon as the repressive potency disappears. Hence good lies concealed in evil, albeit made unrecognizable by evil; likewise evil in good, albeit mastered by the good and brought to inactivity. But now the unity of the being thus seems torn and hence each of the opposites stands for and in itself as its own being. Yet they incline themselves towards unity, or they come together in one and the same because the negating force can only feel itself as negating when there is a disclosing being and the latter can only be active as affirming in so far as it liberates the negating and repressing force. It is also impossible that the unity of the being could be sublimated. Hence facilitated by eternal necessity through the force of indissoluble life, they posit outside and above themselves a third, which is the unity" (AW, 227–28).

24. Schelling argued that the German *Möglichkeit* is linked both to *Māyā* and the Persian *Magie* (magic), from the Magi, the Zoroastrian priests. See II/2, 494.

25. "It is conspicuous that, in the whole of nature, each single particular nature commences with the rotation about its own axis and hence manifestly with a state of inner revulsion. In the greatest things as in the smallest things, in the orbit of planets as in the partly rotary movements of that world, discernible only with the aided eye, which Linnaeus presciently calls 'the chaos of the animal world,' the annular drive shows itself as the first form of life separated into its own self. It is just as if everything that isolates itself in itself, and hence away from the whole, would immediately thereby have to fall prey to the inner struggle. At least this remark would shed light on the forces of the annular drive as belonging to the oldest potencies, which were active in the first creation and which are not, as the prevailing opinion now has it, forces that later externally and accidentally supplemented what came to be" (AW, 323). The cosmic egg also belongs to the Indian heritage of creation myths. In the *Brāhmaṇas,* a golden egg emerges out of the continuum of the great chaotic waters. Prajāpati broke out of the cosmic egg and thus time was born. See *The Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa,* IV, trans. Julius Eggeling, (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1972).

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