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The Will as the Ground of Intelligibility: Schelling on the relationship between the Will and the Ground of Reality

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**The will as the ground of intelligibility:
Schelling on the relationship between the will and the ground of reality
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Introduction

One of the most striking features of 19th century German thought is the way in which the will emerges as an important topic for philosophy. Obvious examples of this trend are philosophers such as Schopenhauer and Nietzsche who both use the concept of the will to explore important ethical and ontological questions. What is often overlooked, however, is that the prominence of the will in late German philosophy is not that surprising given the prominent role the will plays in the two founding fathers of German philosophy, Leibniz and Kant. The fundamental break made by Kant in the Copernican revolution has as one of its most fundamental elements the concept of the will as a *causa noumena*, which plays an important role as a postulate of reason without which a unity between the three critiques would be impossible. The will can therefore be understood as an important locus classicus for understanding German philosophy as a whole.

An often-forgotten contribution to this tradition is Schelling's reinterpretation of the will in his late philosophy. As is recognized by many modern scholars Schelling's philosophy, particularly the late period, is significant because it can be seen as the first move away from the idealism of earlier German thought.¹ In later German thought the will becomes an important element in thinking the relation between thought and what comes before it. The most famous examples of this philosophical development are, I think, Schopenhauer's notion of the will as a primal drive beyond thought and Nietzsche's conception of the will to power. Both these influential philosophical accounts have in common that they use the will as a way of raising the question how thought relates to what externally seems to ground it. This focus on the way thought finds itself confronted by the fact it seems to arise out of prior forces cannot be understood without the reappraisal of prior notions of thought itself grounding its own intelligibility.

As I hope to show in this thesis within Kantian and post-Kantian philosophy there already exists a well-developed sense of the problem of the relation between what I call the external and internal constitution of the intelligibility of thought. It is widely recognized that one of the most important elements of the Kantian revolution in philosophy should be understood as the idea that the a priori basis for the possibility of having knowledge yielding cognitions is grounded not in the things themselves, but in the necessary a priori conditions thought itself must contain in order to make plausible knowledge claims. The object of knowledge must '*sich nach unserem Erkenntnis richten*', and this means that thought itself constitutes the basis for the ability of gaining knowledge.² The constitution of intelligibility, the fact that facts can become understood in the first place, is therefore constituted internally by thought itself.

¹ For what in English is still the most classic explication of this view see Snow 1996, 1-11.

² See KrV B XVI.

An important part of my thesis is the fact that Kant himself did also face the question of how this internally constituted intelligibility relates to the fact reality outside of thought still needs to constitute itself in such a way that it can be known in thought. This external constitution of intelligibility is unified by Kant in what he calls the ideal of pure reason. In the often-forgotten conclusion to the dialectic of pure reason Kant shows how reason must commit itself to the idea that all the determinations thought makes by its use of concepts must fundamentally be affirmed or denied by reality itself.³ In this sense the internal constitution of intelligibility needs to be grounded in the external affirmation of knowledge by reality. Kantian philosophy itself therefore includes the idea that intelligibility on some fundamental level is only possible when reality itself is constituted in a way where it affirms or denies our thinking. This transcendental affirmation is, however, according to Kant only an ideal for thought, not something it can proof affirmatively.

Schelling's thought has, I think, some very interesting answers to give to this Kantian problem, of holding unto two necessary ways of conceiving the possibility of intelligibility at the same time, because he is the first who thought of the solution to this problem as based not in an ideal relation between thought and reality, but in a way which is true to life itself. Schelling makes this clear at the end of his career in the 1841/42 Berlin lectures, almost the middle of the 19th century. '*Vielleicht war in keiner Zeit, mehr als in der unsern, das Bedürfnis fühlbar einer wirklich an die Sache gehenden Philosophie.*'⁴ This statement on the importance of philosophy to reorient itself towards actual life can be seen as an epoch defining statement and in relation to later philosophies of the will and phenomenology as a statement of the problem which they will attempt to solve.

As my thesis attempts to show Schelling at the same time is still intimately aware of the possibilities the Kantian system itself has to solve the problem of two types of philosophy, which seek to explain intelligibility in opposite ways. For these two opposite approaches Schelling, as will be shown in the first chapter, uses the terms positive and negative philosophy. The more positive side of Kantian philosophy is largely forgotten in modern philosophy and can be shown to be highly relevant, I claim, in explaining why reality is intelligible in the first place. The main aim of my paper is to show how Schelling's innovative account of the will can solve the dichotomy between the above-mentioned notions of intelligibility. In this way a possibility for reinterpreting Kant's ideal of pure reason emerges as the actually constituting basis for grounding the intelligibility of reality.

In order to succeed in the task of explaining this problem two elements of Schelling's philosophy must be explored which are rarely commented upon. These two elements are the notion of intelligibility as developed in Schelling's philosophy of revelation and Schelling's notion of the will in relation to the ontology developed in the *Freiheitschrift*. Although more work has recently been done on Schelling's late philosophy the way it relates to the theoretical side of his philosophy, particularly the role the will plays within it, has largely been unexplored. This means that this thesis explores areas which have been largely forgotten. Because of this fact my explication of the relation between Schelling's conception of intelligibility and the will largely has to rely on an examination of the primary texts. Although, as I hope to make clear in this thesis, on the role the will plays in Schelling's ontology great work in English has already been done by Markus Gabriel.⁵

³ Ibid., A 571/B599-A 572/B 600

⁴ PdO, 97.

⁵ Particularly the second lecture of his Aarhus lectures. See Gabriel 2015

If people are familiar with Schelling's notion of the will this is often based on the 1809 work the *Freiheitschrift*. This work is nowadays rightly seen by most scholars as Schelling's most important work, especially when it comes to his view of human freedom. The problem with this text is, however, that one requires an understanding of other texts by Schelling in order to understand some of the most significant ontological statements made in the text. It is for this reason, I think, that it is important to engage with Schelling's later philosophical works in order to understand the philosophical context behind the notion of freedom displayed in the *Freiheitschrift*. Specifically in relation to the question of how the will can be used to reevaluate Kantian philosophy Schelling's 1830/31 and 1841/42 lectures are important. In these Schelling develops a project of grounding a new positive philosophy, a philosophy of revelation, which opposes what Schelling sees as the largely negative understanding of philosophy that, according to Schelling, has been prominent in Western philosophy. The most important element grounding Schelling's distinction between these two types of philosophies is that they have two contradictory ideas of what constitutes the intelligibility of thought. Negative philosophy follows the Kantian line of understanding the fact that thought can have universal and necessary truth as the basis for its knowledge through the constitutive role thought itself plays in grounding a space in which the understanding is applicable. An important point about this approach to philosophy is that the realm of what is intelligible for thinking is not constituted by the object we are thinking about, but via the fact that thinking itself must presuppose a certain way of understanding in order to come to think about anything at all. Although Schelling thinks this approach to intelligibility is an important part of understanding why thought is intelligible, specifically because it takes the freedom of thought as its starting point, he thinks we lose the role the external *Sache* plays in grounding intelligibility. For this reason, Schelling seeks to ground a new positive philosophy which allows both the role of the externally constituted intelligibility of positive philosophy and the freedom of thought produced by negative philosophy to play a role in the constitution of intelligibility. In order to do this, he needs to seek a way of explaining how intelligibility arises. The main claim this thesis will defend is that it is primarily through the notion of the will that Schelling manages to ground a new understanding of the arising of intelligibility.

In my assessment, specifically in Germany, there have been great advancements in recent years in starting to reevaluate Schelling's contribution to philosophy. Certain philosophers have given thorough explications of the ontology of the late Schelling, but the way in which these insights help to explain the philosophical content of Schelling's late thought has been incomplete. Especially the philosophers Markus Gabriel and Wolfram Högrefe have made important contributions to understanding Schelling's ontology. Specifically, Gabriel has shown the important role the will plays in allowing Schelling to rethink the constitution of the ontological relation, between existence and what grounds that existence, as being constituted by a retroactive dialectic, which is based on the fact that a grounding relationship between a determination and what determines it is only established by the fact that there is something being determined in the first place. Gabriel's idea is that something only gains the status of being the ground of something else via the fact that there is something determinate to ground it. As Gabriel himself characteristically puts it, '*the transition from x to F(x) has the peculiar double aspect of having established determinacy and yet lying outside of determinacy. For this reason the transition must be willed.*'⁶

⁶ Gabriel 2011, 89.

This model of how determinations come to be grounded is radically different from the traditional model of an independent cause that necessarily underlies all the ideas which follow from it. Gabriel traces this notion of determination, as primarily being established through willing, back to the core of Schelling's idea that the fact that reality can come to ground anything at all is based on the prior establishment of determinacy over and against the pure actuality of reality. The role this dynamic plays in allowing Schelling to rethink the relationship between the intelligibility of positive and negative philosophy has not yet been explored. A lot of the work done on Schelling's late philosophy has been focused on either understanding his critique of Hegel or on how his positive philosophy relates to contemporary approaches, particularly phenomenology.⁷ The problem with these interpretations is that Schelling's own positive contributions in rethinking the Kantian notion of intelligibility, and his attempts to solve the problems associated with it, are missed. In this way stating Schelling's own views in relation to contemporary philosophical debates becomes difficult. Instead of this approach I seek to discover the way in which Schelling himself tries to overcome the problems he has with the post-Kantian philosophy of his time. Examples of scholars which I feel have done a great job of emphasizing the way Schelling overcomes certain problems inherent to Kantian philosophy are G. Anthony Bruno and Sebastian Gardener.⁸ Specifically Gardener's paper, on the relationship between Kant's examination of proofs of God's existence in the *Beweisgrund* and Schelling's understanding of how to rethink traditional attempts to ground intelligibility in rational theology, is a great attempt to see the important link between Kant and Schelling.⁹ As I will show in this thesis, by focusing on the way Schelling reinterprets the Kantian notion of intelligibility, we can see how he revitalizes notions essential to Kant's philosophy. Specifically, Kant's idea of transcendental affirmation, as a fundamental postulate without which we are unable to think of our thought as being intelligible, plays a central role in Schelling's reappraisal of a positive notion of intelligibility. According to Kant it is necessary for us to believe that all the determinations made by our concepts are grounded in reality actually affirming those determinations, even though we can only confirm that this is the case in our experience, which therefore limits this idea to a mere ideal that we must believe to be true. Kant conceives of an idea that comes close to Schelling's notion of positive philosophy, the external grounding of intelligibility, yet this remains an idea which one can only believe to be true through the fact that we seem to have to believe in it, given the fact that empirically we cannot know its validity. According to Gardener it is essential to understand the turn towards the positive in late Schelling in relation to the problems raised by Kant's views worked out via the idea of the transcendental ideal in the dialectic of pure reason. *'It would not be much of an exaggeration to describe Schelling's philosophical development as an extended attempt to work out what is right and what is wrong in this innovation of Kant's.'*¹⁰

⁷ For a good example of this see Tritten 2012.

⁸ See Bruno 2020.

⁹ See Gardener 2020.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 219.

I think one of the greatest achievements of Schelling's late philosophy is that he manages to solve the dichotomy created by Kant between the necessary affirmation of our thinking by reality and the lack of a connection between this affirmation and our own thinking. The will is the main mechanism which can solve this problem for it allows us to reinterpret the way anything at all is affirmed in reality as based on the dual logic that reality grounds all our ideas, but that reality only comes to affirm these ideas in a determinate way once an actual affirmation is made, which reality can then ground. This allows us to think of the constitution of intelligibility as giving space to both positive and negative philosophy. In this way Schelling helps us to think in a new way about the question of the relation between thought and the way it's constitution is grounded in reality. Instead of seeing the will as an external reality being opposed to thought and freedom Schelling's notion of the will, as the dual constitution of thought and affirmative reality, allows us to think thought and freedom together in a new way.

Schelling manages to transform the notion of the affirmation of reality by showing how the will causes a grounding relation to emerge only once an actual determinate affirmation is made. In order to show that the will in this way allows Schelling to give a new account of grounding intelligibility I will, in my first chapter, discuss the different ideas of intelligibility behind what Schelling calls positive and negative philosophy. After this I will use Schelling's discussion of the modalities of actuality and possibility to show the ways in which both positive and negative philosophy traditionally conceived fall short. The conclusion of this discussion will be that pure possibility and pure actuality by themselves cannot ground anything determinate. This is because by themselves neither pure actuality nor pure possibility can exclude something, which is why they cannot determine anything at all. Given the fact that positive and negative philosophy traditionally either ground themselves in pure actuality or pure possibility we can see why they fail in allowing any notion of determinacy to arise. Finally, it will be shown that only something that can unify both modalities can ground a notion of intelligibility.

In the second chapter I will explore how the will solves the problem of thinking something as being both capable of actuality and possibility at the same time. This I will do by showing the way the will solves the paradox of self-grounding which according to Schelling lies at the heart of ontology. By using Gabriel's explication of the way Schelling's ontology explores the possibility of a pure actuality coming to ground something, while itself remaining groundless. The paradox here is that actuality only gets to be determined as the ground of something determinate once something determinate is established in relation to it. The will solves this paradox by embodying the dual transition which is necessary for the actual ground to become a ground and for something determinate to become a grounded existence.

In the third chapter I will show how this dynamic allows us to rethink Kant's idea of transcendental affirmation. The will allows the necessity of the idea, that all concepts have to be grounded in their affirmation by an independent reality beyond thought, and the idea, that only once something is actually affirmed affirmation takes place, to coexist. It's only once both moments are recognized that an idea which can explain how reality is grounded makes sense. The will allows us to reinterpret the grounding of intelligibility as primarily being based on the fact that reality as such affirms what is thinkable by us. This affirmation remains both fully actual and possible at the same time, because it shows itself only by actuality letting itself appear through possibility and vice versa. This idea of affirmation will finally allow us to think intelligibility as being grounded both in the fact of external affirmation, positive philosophy, and our thinking's affirmation of what we conceive, negative philosophy. It is in this way that Schelling radically rethinks the question of how our thinking can have an intelligible picture of reality at all.

By showing how the will gives us a new way of conceiving how reality becomes grounded I hope to explain how Schelling allows us to revitalize the Kantian idea of intelligibility. By placing the will in between the realm of the possibility of thought and the actuality of reality Schelling allows us to see how (post)Kantian thought can respond to its unsatisfying answer to the question of realism, or how the ideal of reason comes to be embodied in reality. Through this revitalized picture we can make the Kantian idea of transcendental affirmation a viable option in contemporary debates on what ideas are the most fundamental in allowing us to gain the truth of reality. It also allows us to bridge the gap which has emerged between Kantian philosophy and later philosophical approaches to the question of intelligibility. Schelling shows, I claim, that Kantian philosophy itself can give a satisfactory answer to the question how the internal and external constitution of thought can be combined. In this way Schelling gives us a new way of reevaluating modern philosophies which seek to overcome the deadlock of Kantian philosophy, with its enclosed notion of thought, by opening it up to its prior conditions. By positing the will as the dual ground for, both the external affirmation of something in reality and the internal affirmation of something through concepts in our thinking, a space opens up in which intelligibility can be reconceived as internally and externally constituted at the same time.

Chapter 1: Positive and Negative philosophy

Introduction

In order to give the proper context for answering the question, why Schelling introduces the will as a new way of grounding intelligibility, I will first examine the idea of intelligibility Schelling presents in his late philosophy. In my interpretation Schelling divides ideas about how the intelligibility of thought can be grounded into two general approaches. One Schelling calls negative philosophy and the other he calls positive philosophy. The distinction between positive and negative philosophy should be seen as the most important background for understanding Schelling's famous 1841/42 Berlin lectures. According to Sean J. McGrath the distinction between positive and negative philosophy was understood by Schelling's contemporaries as one of the most important parts of his critique of Hegel.¹¹ The distinction between positive and negative philosophy is thus crucial for understanding Schelling's new ideas about how to ground the intelligibility of thought

The problem with understanding the distinction that Schelling makes between positive and negative philosophy is that it isn't always obvious how one should understand the general characterizations he gives about what distinguishes the two types of philosophy. This is why there have been wide ranging interpretations of what the appropriate content of the distinction between positive and negative philosophy is. I think the philosophical core behind the distinction between positive and negative philosophy is based on the distinction between the notions of the internal and external constitution of intelligibility I already examined in the introduction. Broader interpretations of Schelling's late philosophy tend to overlook the role the distinction between positive and negative philosophy plays in Schelling's own philosophical argument. It is precisely via this distinction that Schelling, I think, explains the problems he sees inherent in the Kantian answer to the question of what grounds intelligibility.

As I will show in this chapter, according to Schelling, Kantian philosophy depends too much on a negative answer to the question of what grounds intelligibility. Schelling thinks Kant's view of the intelligibility of thought is too much dependent on only explaining the potentiality of thought to think something. In this way it cannot answer what constitutes an actual moment of knowing.¹² The reason why positive and negative philosophy are problematic according to Schelling is that both have as their principle either mere potentiality or pure actuality. According to Schelling it is only the unity of actuality and possibility which can serve as the ground for anything determinate. Only once we conceive of the ground of intelligibility as neither based on pure actuality nor mere possibility does understanding something make sense. This means that philosophy must conceive of what this unity, which Schelling calls spirit, might look like.¹³ In the following chapters I shall argue that Schelling introduces the will precisely because it can conceive of this unity between actuality and possibility.

¹¹ See McGrath 2021, 3-4.

¹² See UpO, 101.

¹³ See PdO, 56.

In order to show why according to Schelling the will is required as a new way of grounding intelligibility I will first explain what should be understood by the question of grounding intelligibility. Through examining this question, we shall see how Schelling's distinction between positive and negative philosophy should be understood. In relation to this discussion, I will also briefly explain why it is essential not to already interpret this part of Schelling's late philosophy through the lens of a larger philosophical approach such as phenomenology. After this I will show how Kant, according to Schelling, came up with a notion of intelligibility which is self-grounding. Schelling thinks this is the great achievement of Kant, but he also thinks its limits are thinking merely to the realm of negative philosophy. The problem with thoughts self-grounding intelligibility is that it only grounds the potency to know something not the actuality of a thing. Because of its focus on mere potentiality this intelligibility always remains relative, which is why it is called negative philosophy, for it needs an external reality to affirm it. In the last part of this chapter, I will explain why according to Schelling the concepts on which positive and negative philosophy are based fail in grounding anything. Schelling thinks that pure actuality, on which positive philosophy is based, and mere possibility, on which negative philosophy is based, are both incapable of excluding something. Without the possibility of excluding something nothing determinate can arise, which means that no determinate being can become grounded through mere actuality or possibility. In this way we come to understand how only a unity between both modalities is capable of grounding intelligibility as such. Explaining this fact is the main aim of the other chapters of this text.

1.1 Positive and Negative Intelligibility.

The idea of Intelligibility, at least as I understand it, is the fact that thought can come to understand something in the first place. This means that the question of how intelligibility is grounded can be understood as the question of how there comes to be a realm where things can be understood by thinking. Philosophy can be understood as a general attempt to make this idea, that there is an intelligible realm for us, intelligible. Getting to grips with the question, of how a realm of intelligibility is grounded, requires us to get a hold of what Schelling in his system of transcendental idealism calls a '*Prinzip des Wissens*.'¹⁴ Such a principle of knowing is what '*im Wissen absolut fesselt und bindet*.'¹⁵ If thought wants to know what in knowing allows it to understand something in the first place it needs to find the principle which in all acts of knowing grounds the act as being true knowledge. This principle, which is true a priori knowledge, should allow us to understand why thought has the capacity to make what is, being, intelligible.

¹⁴ STI, 24.

¹⁵ Ibid.

In order to explain the possibility of such a principle one can use Schelling's explanation of the old definition of philosophy as *ἐπιστήμη τοῦ ὄντος*, knowledge of being.¹⁶ Schelling has a problem with this definition because he thinks it commits us to having to designate what in all being remains the same, which he thinks has to necessarily be done in two opposed ways. Schelling understands the Greek term episteme as referring to the fact that something remains. This is because he translates the Greek word from which episteme derives *ἐπίσταμαι* in German as '*ich bleibe stehen*,' which means that having knowledge of being means understanding something which underlies the being of a thing.¹⁷ In this way Schelling thinks episteme is linked to the Germanic word *Verstand*, which he links in a speculative etymology, following Jakob Böhme, to the meaning of being an '*Urstand*', an original way of standing.¹⁸ Knowledge of being implies therefore finding what in all being originally remains the same.

According to Schelling you must approach this question in two ways, which are both necessary for understanding something, but are also opposed to one another. First there is being as '*quid sit*', what a being is, and second there is '*quod sit*', that a being is.¹⁹ It is easy to understand why both of these elements are necessary to understand the existence of something. For in order to really know something I must know both the qualities which delimit what a thing is and whether that thing occurs in reality. The first way of understanding knowledge of being can be described as based on the potentiality of something to be. The question, what something is, is ultimately a question about what possibly applies and does not apply to a thing. If someone asks the question - what is a bee? - I must answer this question by giving a possible determination of the genus bee, for example a flying yellow thing. I cannot answer this question by merely stating that bees exist. This would convey no knowledge of the essence of a bee. The second way of understanding knowledge of being can be described as based on the question whether something actually exists. If someone asks the question - do bees exist? - I must answer this question by pointing to the reality of a bee in the world. I cannot answer by saying that bees are yellow things.

Positive philosophy is the philosophical approach which takes the actuality of something as being the primary base for grounding the knowledge of being, while negative philosophy starts from the mere potentiality to know something.²⁰ The problem with both approaches is that they take either mere actuality or mere possibility for their starting point. The above-mentioned example of the bee shows how both approaches give differing knowledge about what a bee is. In order to understand the reality of what a bee is I must use both approaches, yet you cannot base the truth of one upon the other.

Schelling associates positive and negative philosophy with two differing faculties. Positive philosophy is based on the capacity to recognize something. It is based on the faculty of experience or recognition (*Erkennung*). This faculty allows me to say whether or not something in actuality exists. Negative philosophy is based on the capacity to understand in general what something is. Negative philosophy is thus based on the pure understanding (*Verstand*), the faculty which allows me to a priori say what a thing consists of.²¹ In wanting to know the ordinary being of something I have to use both faculties, but neither the one nor the other can ground the necessity of the other. Given that we want a unified principle for all acts of knowing the philosopher must resolve the tension between these two faculties. At this point it seems natural to say that one grounds the possibility of the other.

¹⁶ See PdO, 99.

¹⁷ Ibid., 187.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., 99.

²⁰ See Ibid., 101.

²¹ See Ibid.

The traditional approach of philosophy in Schelling's lifetime was taking the pure capacity for understanding something and using it to explain the possibility of experience. Schelling thinks this approach is natural because, *'experience does not reveal to us what is universal, necessary, and unchanging, but rather only what is particular, contingent, and transitory in things.'*²² By the fact that I have experienced a bee I cannot claim to know what in general a bee must be. Added to this fact is also the idea that in order to have recognitions of things I must first have the capacity for recognition in my own thinking. *'Wohl kann ein Begriff ohne ein Erkennen möglich sein, aber nicht umgekehrt, ein Erkennen ohne Begriff. Das Erkennen ist ein Wiedererkennen (dessen was schon im Begriff enthalten ist).'*²³ In order to recognize something I must first know what the thing I am looking for is. By seeing how the capacity for understanding seems to be prior to the capacity for recognition we see why one would want to try and ground the intelligibility of experience in the capacity or potentiality for understanding. According to Schelling this is precisely what Kant's Copernican revolution consisted of and in the next part of this chapter I will show how it can lead to a notion of a self-positing intelligibility.²⁴ We can already see the problem with this self-positing intelligibility by the common sense fact that, however capable my intellect might be of conceptualizing the essence of a thing, I still require outside affirmation to claim that my conceptualization has any reality. In the last chapter of my thesis, I will show that Kant did in fact incorporate this idea into his theoretical philosophy. The problem is that he was incapable of seeing how this fact of external affirmation could be unified with the understanding actively using its own potentiality to determine things. Before going on to the next part of this chapter I must first say a little on other prominent interpretations of what positive philosophy is. Prominent claims about the nature of positive philosophy are made by McGrath, who thinks that what he calls *'the turn to the positive'* is primarily an attempt to formulate a Christian existentialism, and Tyler Tritten, who claims that positive philosophy is an early form of phenomenology.²⁵ The problem with both these interpretations is that they obfuscate the theoretical problem Schelling himself tries to solve. As we shall see the reason why positive philosophy at first is seen as the primary way of constituting intelligibility is because of the theoretical failures of negative philosophy. The theoretical notion of positive philosophy used initially by Schelling is much more closely linked to the Kantian division between experience and the understanding. Neither existentialism nor phenomenology simply claim, I think, that the ultimate intelligibility of things is explained by the fact that things exist. Of course, ultimately positive philosophy also becomes Schelling's answer to the question, mentioned in the introduction, of how philosophy can be true to actual life. In this way Schelling may indeed be seen as a precursor to existentialism or phenomenology. This does not imply that we should forget about the immediate role positive philosophy plays in allowing Schelling to ask his own philosophical questions. The background for the resolution of these problems, I claim is, mainly Kantian.

²² GPP, 115.

²³ PdO, 99.

²⁴ See Ibid., 152.

²⁵ McGrath, 47. See Tritten 2012, 31.

1.2 Kant's Negative Philosophy

It is easy to understand how both positive and negative philosophy relate to Kant's theoretical philosophy. Kant's famous quote, '*Gedanken ohne Inhalt sind leer, Anschauungen ohne Begriffe sind blind*', shows clearly that both the understanding and experience are necessary in order to know something.²⁶ When it comes to the question of what allows me to have knowledge in the first place, however, Kant firmly places the understanding as more important than experience. As Kant makes clear, when it comes to the realm of what can be known, it is the a priori rules of the understanding which ground the possibility of knowledge gained from experience, not the other way around.²⁷ Critical Philosophy can therefore be understood as an attempt to ground knowledge gained from experience about whether or not something exists, positive philosophy, in the capacity for understanding the possibility of something, negative philosophy.

There are two reasons which are important to understand, I think, why Schelling both praises this approach and sees it as fundamentally unsatisfactory. One advantage of grounding the fundamental intelligibility of our thinking in the capacity for understanding is that the understanding gives us an independent basis for grounding other knowledge. Another advantage is that the intelligibility of the understanding is self-constituted. One of the reasons why Kant favors putting the primacy for grounding intelligibility in the understanding is that one can ground its principles without having to depend on something else. The understanding gives us rules, '*noch ehe mir Gegenstände gegeben werden*,' which experience must necessarily follow.²⁸ Experience can never give us such independent principles. In order for me to recognize something in reality I already have to be able to conceptualize what that which I want to recognize consists of.

Another thing experience is unable to do is constitute its intelligibility purely by itself. If an object in experience is intelligible this is not because experience itself made that thing intelligible, but because it just happens to be so. When it comes to the understanding as conceived by Kant, however, the very condition for having experiences also conditions the objects of that experience, meaning that the intelligibility of the understanding is constituted by itself. '*Die Bedingungen der Möglichkeit der Erfahrung überhaupt sind zugleich Bedingungen der Möglichkeit der Gegenstände der Erfahrung und haben darum objective Gültigkeit in einem synthetischen Urteile a priori*.'²⁹ According to Schelling, because of the capacity for self-constitution and giving itself independent principles, making the understanding the principle for grounding intelligibility makes sense. The understanding itself can ground the potentiality to know something. In this way Kantian philosophy is able to find a science of pure reason which is grounded in the '*unmittelbaren Inhalt der Vernunft*'.³⁰ This content is, according to Schelling, however merely based on the '*Potenz des Erkennens*'.³¹ Although the understanding can be understood as itself grounding its potentiality to understand something it does not follow from this that the actual capacity to know something is constituted. It can never be guaranteed from the outset that what by the mere capacity to understand something is constituted is actually affirmed by reality. This is acknowledged by Kant himself when he states that the content of all concepts is still constituted by their relation to objects.³²

²⁶ KrV a51/B75

²⁷ Ibid., B XVI.

²⁸ Ibid., B XVII-XVIII.

²⁹ Ibid., A 158/ B 197.

³⁰ PdO, 100.

³¹ Ibid.

³² KrV, B XVI.

Schelling goes further than Kant in acknowledging the potentiality of pure thinking or the understanding, because he thinks the potentiality of thought to understand something needs to correspond to an actual potentiality which being itself has.³³ If thinking has the potentiality to determine something this capacity must correspond to a potentiality in being to either affirm or deny what thinking thinks it understands. As we shall see later from mere potentiality no determined being can be produced. Only if there is an actuality grounding it can possibility relate to any determined concept of a thing. This means that the potentiality of recognition must acknowledge the actuality of being at some point. The problem we are now faced with is that the understanding is capable of grounding intelligibility, but that this is only a potential intelligibility, which needs to be externally affirmed.

The untenable nature of Critical Philosophy shows itself in the fact that it seeks to ground a completely independent intelligibility entirely in the understanding, but that it also needs this intelligibility to be affirmed from the outside. *'Darin liegt der Unterschied von Kant, daß die negative Philosophie zwar mit Kant am Schluß alles Positive abweist, aber nun das Positive zugleich in einer andern Erkenntnis setzt.'*³⁴ Negative philosophy shows itself therefore to have a purely relative nature. By merely focusing on the potentiality to understand something one can arrive at an independent content for reason, but this content only makes sense when at the same time it is constituted by an external actuality.

Were philosophy capable of being content with merely concerning itself with the negative domain of the understanding this wouldn't be such a problem. Given that, as was made clear earlier, philosophy seeks to find one principle for all knowledge, however, it cannot content itself with mere possibility and must try to incorporate external actuality into its domain as well. This is the fundamental deadlock of modern philosophy according to Schelling.³⁵ It can formulate an independent idea of reason based on possibility but needs reality to affirm it. This deadlock ultimately boils down to the problem of how one can found a notion of intelligibility which is not founded on mere potentiality, the whatness of a thing, nor pure actuality, whether something exists.

³³ PdO, 100.

³⁴ Ibid., 152.

³⁵ Ibid., 107.

1.3 The Three Potencies

In order to resolve the deadlock between positive and negative philosophy we need to introduce a perspective outside of these two conceptions of philosophy. *'But in order to decide we must return to a standpoint that lies beyond this antithesis and is, thus, still completely free of it'*.³⁶ To achieve such an independent perspective, Schelling introduces his theory of the potencies. The concept of potentiality plays a crucial role in Schelling's discussion of the history of negative and positive philosophy. It is precisely the relationship of potentiality as such to the possibility of existence which can explain how a new perspective between these two philosophies is possible. Schelling therefore wishes to discover how our conception of the potentiality of thought must be understood in relationship with being and thought. In order to show how Schelling does this, I will lay out three fundamental ways in which a being potentially is, three potencies, which explain how the potentiality of thought might be conceptualized. As I hope to show it is only the third of these potencies which can ground a proper intelligible object for philosophy. When we get a grasp of the failure of both pure actuality and potentiality to ground something we will see why both negative and positive philosophy fail in grounding intelligibility. For insofar as neither of them excludes something else no ground for something to arise is given.

Schelling's discussion of potentiality as such is grounded in a deep understanding of the relationship between the modalities of actuality (*Energeia*) and possibility (*Dunamis*). As Aristotle already made clear in chapter 8 of Book Θ of the *Metaphysics* the relationship between possibility and actuality must be understood as one in which actuality in all essential matters is prior to possibility.³⁷ Were we to think possibility as prior to actuality we would have to think the transition from possibility to actuality as being based on some kind of act, which decides what in that which is merely possible would become actual. This act itself must, however, already be actual for it to be able to transition into something else.³⁸ This means that it seems that actuality, at least conceptually, always comes first.

This priority of actuality over possibility goes directly against the main idea of negative philosophy, which states the priority of that which has the potency of being, the mere possibility of being, over actuality. We gain knowledge of what is actual through experience and experience cannot constitute its own intelligibility. That which is actual for thought is only what is already determined beforehand in experience and not what thought can constitute by itself. For us to think thought as self-determining we must, therefore, posit the origin of thought not in that which is already determined, being, but in that which has the capacity to be, or as Schelling calls it *das Seinkönnen*. If thought should be thought as that which is not already actual, but also not as nothing, the only candidate for what its relationship to being might be is as that which can be. *'Das nächste Verhältnis des noch nicht Seienden, aber sein Werdenden, ist das, das sein Könnende zu Sein.'*³⁹

³⁶ GPP, 193.

³⁷ See *Metaphysics* book Θ , 1049b.

³⁸ Gabriel 2011, 67.

³⁹ UpO, 26.

In this way, the origin (*Quelle*) of being in thought must be seen as that which is only potential being at first and afterwards comes into existence. This is thought's initial conception of potentiality, or the first potency. The capability of that which at first is only possible to come into being in the future. Negative philosophy must understand being in this sense, because it can only be conceived as the movement of the capacity to know towards its actual knowing. The problem with this conception of the relationship between actuality and possibility is that in order for that which is possible to be thought of as prior to what is actual the possible first has to actually exist. In this sense that which has the capacity to be can only be understood as that which must become being, given that its prior status can only be understood as that which transitions into actuality. By the pure potency of something to be nothing can be determined. This is because if something is determined as only possible no division in order to determine what a thing is can be made.

*'Die Urpotenz (die unendliche Potenz des Seins) schließt nicht aus und läßt zwei kontradiktorische Gegenteile zu. Das was potentiâ das Übergehenkönnende ist, ist potentiâ zugleich das schlechterdings sich Gleiche und Identische. (Wer nur potentiâ krank ist, ist auch potentiâ gesund, und umgekehrt.)'*⁴⁰

This is why the mere potency of being must always turn into that which actually is. If we are going to think the initial potency as in any meaningful way determined we must think it as being related to either A or B. For something which has the potentiality to either be sick or healthy to become something determined it must become either sick or healthy. In other words, the capacity of being to potentially be can only appear once it has already become a being. In this way it becomes *'nicht mehr die lautere Macht des Seins, sondern dem Sein verfallen, ein ἐξιστάμενον, das sich selbst verlor.'*⁴¹ In its first determination as mere possibility potentiality can therefore only be thought as that which has to move over into being. In this sense *das Seinkönnenden* has failed us in achieving a position in which being is not already determined being or being which already exists.⁴²

As the potentiality for existence it is determined as that which has yet to come into existence, but it can only be the potency for existence when it is determined relative to the actual existence of that possibility. *Das Seinkönnenden* therefore only remains that which has the potency of being insofar as it is that which will transition into being and this transition is only brought about by a blind necessity, which turns that which is not yet into that which is. The first potency is therefore not really determined by itself at all and must transition into a second movement. In this sense, *'the first potency as merely Seinkönnendes is unmediated and not in possession of itself.'*⁴³

In order to escape from the necessary movement into actual being, which merely potential being must undergo, Schelling thinks we need to introduce a second potency of being which is opposed to the first. The mere possibility of something can only be determined relative to the coming into existence of something. In order to find that which isn't subject to this necessary move *a potentia ad actum* we need to introduce that which is not determined through any possibility at all. As I have shown possible being, which has the mere capacity to become being, is determined through its possibility to become actual. Already determined being is likewise determined through something being partially actual and partially possible. *'Alles endliche Sein ist ein aus Potenz und Actus Gemischtes, also auch ein aus Sein und nicht Sein zusammengesetztes.'*⁴⁴

⁴⁰ PdO, 102.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² See UpO, 50.

⁴³ Tritten 2012, 117.

⁴⁴ UpO, 44.

When a being exists in relationship to a determinate content, this determinate content can only be made sense of given the negation of other possibilities which have not been actualized. In this sense determined being is both partially actual and at the same time understood through the simultaneous existence of a potency of being something else which in actuality is negated. It only makes sense to posit a man as being sick if he can also potentially be healthy. Only in considering the possibilities of man does the actuality of being sick make sense. If man only had the possibility of being sick the predicate sick wouldn't make any sense, for there would be nothing which it negates. For this reason, we must look to that which is purely actual, without being mediated through any possibility, in order to find that which is not already determined. Schelling finds this in what he calls that which is pure being. *'Dieses Gegenteil des sein Könnenden ist das rein Seiende. Rein Seiendes ist das, was nicht a potentia ad actum übergeht, sondern was schon von selbst, natura sua, purus actus ist, d.h., ein Akt, dem keine Potenz vorausgeht.'*⁴⁵ This pure actus is the capability of being something, not in the sense of that which has the possibility to transition into an actually determined being, but precisely as that which can be, because it must always be what it is. It is only this type of being, which can be understood as not necessarily presupposing a movement from that which is possible into that which is actual in order to exist. This mere being can never be thought of as actually existing as a determined something, for in order to come into actual existence it would need to be understood relative to a negated possibility. Instead, it is a kind of pure positivity which does not allow for any negation and therefore can never come into actual positive existence. This potency of being, as being that which is entirely independent of any mediation, is the first understanding of being which gives philosophy an object which can be conceived of as entirely free, insofar as there is no potential being within it which must transition over into actuality. In this sense there is no becoming which negates the understanding of such an object, like the Eleatic conception of being it entirely stands on its own, without any possibility having to bring it about.⁴⁶ The problem with this second potency of being is that no actual existence can be produced from it without relating it to a potency. Potentiality is the only thing it absolutely excludes. In this sense pure being is that which can be only as that which is indifferent to any possible determination of what it is and, in that sense, can both include and exclude any determination. The simple X of pure being can be determined as both A and B precisely because it is completely indifferent towards that which might become A or B, and therefore never excludes anything from being either A or B. This pure indifference can however never become anything determined without becoming something possible and therefore something which is not indifferent anymore. This means that no positive conception of such an object can ever be thought. The fact that something positive might result from it is also not excluded, however, which shows that this concept by itself in our thought is merely impotent. Or as Markus Gabriel puts it:

*'Actuality or the "Actus", as Schelling says, cannot rule out possibility, because it cannot maintain any relation with it without eo ipso becoming something determinate and therefore possible, that is, something that could be otherwise.'*⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Ibid., 34.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 48.

⁴⁷ Gabriel 2011, 67.

In this way, we have arrived at two basic potencies of being which exclude both the existence of anything which actually exists and each other. The first potency, mere possibility, has the power, *potestas*, to come into existence, but cannot itself become the act of coming into existence without losing this power. Whereas the second potency, pure actuality, insofar as it cannot relate to anything possible, has no power to come into existence at all. *'Where the first potency is pure power, it is entirely ineffectual for it cannot emerge into act. Second potency is curiously more real and at the same time less powerful than first potency.'*⁴⁸

Negative philosophy starts from the potentiality of being which is the mere potentiality of something to become actual. In this way, insofar as a concept is actually produced by negative philosophy, it is only done by relating its concept to something actual, which is not produced by it. In this sense negative philosophy will always only get a determined content relative to the actual existence of its concepts. Positive philosophy starts from actual existence, but insofar as it determines this existence only from experience it is only finite being mediated through possibility and therefore only a being mediated in relation to a potency. On the other hand, insofar as it might take pure actuality for its object, it has to conceive of an object out of which no positive determination can be produced.

1.4 The Unity of Actuality and Possibility

The only solution Schelling sees to this deadlock is to understand that, however opposed *das Seinkönnenden* and pure actuality are, they do not exclude each other and therefore nothing prevents them from becoming identical with each other in reality. The mere potentiality of being doesn't exclude any pure actuality, because it is that which can only be understood in light of an actual existent fact, and pure actuality cannot exclude any possibility, for if it were to do so it would itself become negated by possibility. This non-exclusion, which both pure possibility and pure actuality exhibit, and Schelling designates by the term *Lauterkeit*, means that were anything to actually come into existence, nothing prevents mere possibility and pure actuality to become grounded as actually existent determinations.⁴⁹

Insofar as possibility and actuality come to oppose each other in reality they can, through negation of each other's possibility, determine or exclude how something positively exists. This union is what Schelling calls the third potency of being, which he also describes as *Geist*.⁵⁰ This third potentiality is the possibility of something which is possible through its own actuality and actual through its own possibility. In one sense this third potency is the product of the earlier potencies, because it is the union or identity of both, on the other hand it is that which is beyond them, because unlike that which is merely possible or merely actual, it can exclude or positively determine its own existence.⁵¹

⁴⁸ McGrath 2021, 38.

⁴⁹ See UpO, 44.

⁵⁰ See PdO, 56

⁵¹ See UpO, 59.

Given that its own actuality is its own possibility, what it excludes is not determined by something other than it, like mere possibility, nor is it as pure actuality that which can never exist. Instead, it must be understood as that which, insofar as it exists, can be said to exist in a truly free manner, through its own capacity to exist.⁵² Schelling's point is not that the concept of the initial two potencies necessarily grounds the existence of the third. In their pure non-excludability, however, nothing can prevent that once something actually exists the first and second potency will ground the possibility of that existence as being freely both possible and actual.⁵³

Considering the abstract relationship between the modalities as they appear before they are actually capable of exclusion, and therefore grounding actual existence, the notions of mere possibility and pure actuality show the inadequacy of both positions taken by themselves. It's only once they both emerge as mediated by a third term that they can ever be thought to ground existence. By themselves, however, they remain only as two necessary elements which can come to ground reality once something actually exists. This means that the notion of potentiality by itself shows the necessity of a moment of something coming to actually exist outside of the mere potentiality for things to exist. In this way one can show that negative philosophy, insofar as it is based merely on the potentiality of thought to come to think what actually exists, can only remain limited to the realm of pure thought itself. A notion of intelligibility which is purely based on thought's capacity to make its own object intelligible will therefore require another notion of intelligibility which can explain how possibility and actuality can first of all become unified in reality.

Kantian philosophy discredited what Schelling calls positive philosophy by showing how experience by itself can never give us universal and certain knowledge. The notion of intelligibility which is behind positive philosophy is based on the idea that something external to thought comes to ground our knowledge. In order for this to happen thought first needs the capacity to recognize what is given to it empirically. Because of this negative philosophy, which understands intelligibility as being based on the capacity of thought itself to recognize things, has a clear advantage over a simple notion of positive philosophy. Given, however, that negative philosophy is entirely based on the movement of the potentiality to recognize something in experience, and not the actuality of its object first and then its understanding, negative philosophy remains only capable to make something intelligible *post factum*, after something has already come into existence.⁵⁴

Schelling's conception of the modalities of possibility and actuality shows that one can only make sense of them in light of the fact that something capable of both being actual and possible has come into existence. Negative philosophy can never prove the existence of such an object given that it only conceives of the relation between potentiality and actuality as one in which something moves from being possible into becoming actual.

⁵² See Ibid.

⁵³ See Ibid., 83.

⁵⁴ See PdO 109.

I think the three potencies can be seen as the three fundamental ways in which being might be made intelligible to us. Being can be made intelligible, as the potentiality of that which becomes to become actual, merely negatively, or as the pure actuality of a thing before any possibility, merely positively. From the a priori exclusion of all determination, which is the only way to conceive of these two principles, it can be shown that actual existence can only be made intelligible by the union of these two principles. This means that both negative and positive philosophy as traditionally conceived fail in actually bringing about a conception of a totally free actuality, which can be said to be truly intelligible insofar as it actually exists. Only a positive philosophy which explains how something in actuality can come to exist both actually and potentially has the capability to ground this notion of intelligibility. Traditional empiricism fails on this account because it only understands that which is external to thought as the pure actuality of experience. Because pure actuality is not capable of relating to itself as something which at the same time is also possible empiricism reduces the object of thought to something which is merely given and therefore not self-constituted. Only once we can find an object which can account for the fact that knowledge requires an object which is both actual and potential can a true new positive philosophy be grounded, which both leaves negative philosophy alone insofar as by itself the intelligibility of thought is still guaranteed, while at the same time explaining why the potentiality of thought is no mere illusion, but a necessary element in something becoming intelligible.

The object which is produced when we try to conceptualize the union of actuality and possibility, I claim, is for Schelling the concept of the will. It is for this reason that Schelling understands the very possibility of intelligibility as something which is only possible through the existence of a will in reality. The will in its most primary conception must be conceived of as that which can exist or not exist, this element is what we normally conceive of as choice. In this sense the will can remain possible once it becomes actual and possible once it has actualized itself. *'Ein solches, dem es frei steht, nicht Etwas zu sein oder nicht zu sein, sondern zu existieren oder nicht zu existieren, ein solches kann nur selber und seinem Wesen nach Wille sein.'*⁵⁵ The will is radically self-grounding, for insofar as it is freely both actual and possible nothing can force it to become actual. It is this possibility for self-grounding which both negative and positive philosophy lack. Now I hope to explain why according to Schelling the will can provide the idea of a self-grounding object. This will be the main aim of the next chapter.

⁵⁵ SW 4, ii 45.46.

Chapter 2: The Paradox of Self-Grounding and the Will

Introduction

The will plays a central element throughout Schelling's late philosophy. The most famous example of the importance of the concept of the will is, perhaps, the quote in which Schelling states that original being is original will. '*Wollen ist Ursein, und auf dieses allein passen alle Prädikate desselben: Grundlosigkeit, Ewigkeit, Unabhängigkeit von der Zeit, Selbstbejahung.*'⁵⁶ The main aim of this chapter is to explain what Schelling means by this statement. The result of the last chapter was the idea that philosophy must explain the intelligibility of reality by finding an object which is not necessarily already grounded within the potentiality of thought, but still has the capacity to freely ground what thought can potentially know. Only the will, as I will try to show in this chapter, is the appropriate object for thinking such a union, because it is the only object which can be thought to remain possible while actual and vice versa. Its capacity for self-grounding is what makes the notion of the will important for trying to rethink the relationship between actuality and possibility. This is why it makes sense for Schelling to claim that original being is willing, because, according to him without willing no relationship between actuality and possibility can be conceived.

The aim of this chapter is to argue how the will can be thought of as self-grounding. In order to achieve this, I will first explain the background of the notion of the will as it is found in Schelling. As I hope to show Schelling's idea of the will and the related notion of self-constitution are largely derived from Kant. After this I will examine how the will solves Schelling's paradox of self-grounding as it is found in his ontological distinction between ground and existence. Schelling thinks that in trying to think of the essence of a thing one must always distinguish between the essence as ground and as existence. The essence itself, as the unity of both ground and existence, must however not be understood as either the ground of existence or existence itself. Instead, the essence itself must be conceived as the paradoxical groundless ground of grounds, or what Schelling calls the *Ungrund*.⁵⁷ In order to make this ontological distinction between ground and existence more clear I will examine the reason for introducing this notion via Schelling's conception of identity statements. In Schelling's examination of identity statements we can also see how a new relationship between the modalities, as seen in chapter 1 in the notion of spirit, is possible.

Finally, I will show that any way of conceiving the relation between ground and existence leads to the thought that the ground of this distinction itself must be groundless. This groundlessness can, however, retroactively still come to ground existence once existence is contingently established in relation to it. This paradoxical relationship between the will, as the only object which can become conditioned by its own capacity to ground existence while remaining possibly different or contingent, I will at the end show to be the only concept which can think the transition from such a groundless ground of existence into actual existence. It is for this reason that the will stands at the center of Schelling's late philosophy. By giving an account of self-constitution which is not based on a pre-existent self-grounding ground, like in the traditional conception of a *causa sui*, Schelling's conception of the will can explain how intelligibility emerges from a notion of pure actuality which is by itself groundless. The consequences which follow from this idea will be explored in the next chapter.

⁵⁶ SW 3, VII 350.

⁵⁷ See SW 3, VII 406.

2.1 The Background of Schelling's conception of the Will

In a famous set of lectures on the origin of the notion of free will Michael Frede has argued that it was only in late Antiquity, through a conflict between Aristotelian and Stoic theories of choice, that the notion of a will as an independent capacity emerged in philosophy.⁵⁸ Michael N. Foster argued, on the basis of Frede, that Kant's notion of the will comes out of a combination of the Stoic idea of choice as self-determination and the late Aristotelian conception of a faculty of the soul which is purely spontaneous.⁵⁹ Foster is essentially right, I think, in his characterization of this historical background to Kant's notion of a free will grounding all practical thought. It misses however a dimension of Kant's notion of the will, which indeed is derived from the historical development of the idea of a will in ethical thought but plays a unique role in Kantian philosophy. This dimension is the role the will plays in giving us an idea of what a causality might look like which is self-grounding. The concept of causality that Kant employs in the first critique is based on an ideal necessity in which every effect is necessarily caused by a cause which itself, insofar as it itself is an effect, is also caused by an external cause.⁶⁰ This creates the idea of an infinite chain of causation in which no object can be conceived of as self-grounded or free, because it is only causal by being caused through an external cause. In both the First and Second critiques Kant also shows, however, that this idea of causality is only limited to the objects of our experience and does not extend to things in themselves. Kant states that the theoretical concept of causality gets deduced '*nur in ansehung der Gegenstände möglicher Erfahrung.*'⁶¹ This means that the theoretical notion of causality only applies to what in the last chapter was characterized as negative philosophy, the science of pure thought. In this way Kant leaves room for the idea that in practical thought, where we must conceive of ourselves as a thing in itself or a *causa noumena*, we can think of the will as an object which outside of the causal chain of nature can determine itself.⁶²

In the *Freiheitschrift* Schelling explains his surprise at the fact that, if the only way Kant could conceive of a *ding an sich* playing a positive role for reason was as a *causa noumena*, he did not treat the idea of a thing in itself as inherently related to a *causa noumena*, or independent will.⁶³

The reason for Kant's hesitation to make such a move probably lies in the fact that for him attributing the capacity for self-causation goes beyond the limits of rational thought. From Schelling's perspective one might say, on the other hand, this hesitation shows the fact that the will as fundamental cause does not appear like an empirical object, but still as something primarily outside of the realm delimited by the mere potency for thought. The will is therefore something neither empirical nor reducible to the capacity of thought to individuate itself.

⁵⁸ See the introduction to Michael Frede's *A Free will. Origins of the notion in ancient thought*, 2011. p. 1-18.

⁵⁹ See Michael Foster. *Free will in Antiquity and Kant*, 2018. p. 10-12.

⁶⁰ See KpV, A 88

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, A 94.

⁶² See *Ibid.*, A 97.

⁶³ See SW 3, VII 352.

In the final chapter of this thesis, I will defend the idea that Kant himself already conceived of a relation between positive and negative philosophy as fundamental to thought becoming intelligible. In his conception of the will as a *causa noumena* we can already see how Kant tries to think the primary ground of the intelligibility of practical philosophy as based on an object which constitutes both the pure actuality and possibility of its existence. This idea prefigures what Schelling's notion of spirit, as the unity between actuality and possibility, seeks to unify. Given the fact that Schelling seeks to examine the possibility of how a self-constituted object can relate to both modalities at the same time, it is logical that he chooses the will as the concept which might solve the contradiction between pure actuality and possibility. The question which Schelling now must answer is how ontologically this self-grounding object might be conceived?

2.2 Indifference as the Ground of Identity

In the *Freiheitschrift* Schelling introduces a fundamental ontological distinction between an essence (*Wesen*), '*sofern es existiert,*' and an essence, '*sofern es bloß Grund von Existenz ist.*'⁶⁴ This ontological distinction plays a central role throughout the *Freiheitschrift*. In order to grasp the full significance of this distinction it is best to start by considering this distinction in relation to Schelling's explanations on why identity statements can be understood as meaningful synthetic judgements. In this way, I will show how the ground which underlies the identity of two different representations itself comes to be grounded in a relation to something which is indifferent to them both. This primary indifference should be understood as the primal ground of the unity of a duality both between subject and predicate in a judgement and existence in relation to its ground. In his Aarhus lectures, in which Markus Gabriel explains what according to him are the guiding ideas behind Schelling's ontology in the freedom essay, Gabriel relates the ontological distinction between ground and existence to what he calls the "identity riddle."⁶⁵ He defines the identity riddle thus: '*I understand by the "identity riddle" the question of how an expression of identity can be both informative and free from contradiction.*'⁶⁶ The riddle is that in our common understanding of an identity statement we seem to imply that an identity statement, such as the "cat is black," expresses the idea that cat and black literally have the same extension, or, as Schelling puts it, are *einerlei*.⁶⁷ Saying that the representations cat and black are literally the same thing seems either to be a mere tautology, conveying nothing but $x=x$, or, if the representations do have a differing extension, a contradiction, for in what sense can they then be the same. '*At first glance, $A=B$ appears to mean that A is not really B, that it is in fact only A (or B), or it amounts to a contradiction. "A" and "B" each refer either to the same thing (that is A or B, respectively) or they really refer to A and B – if the latter is the case, then the expression is, however, false or contradictory.*'⁶⁸ Schelling's solution to this problem is most coherently displayed in a fragment from *die Weltalter*. Based on Kant's idea that only synthetic judgements can truly convey new knowledge, Schelling interprets the subject and the predicate of an identity statement as having to be two entirely different representations which get connected by their relationship to a third term.⁶⁹ In this way Schelling invents an entirely novel way of interpreting identity statements.

⁶⁴ SW 3, VII 357.

⁶⁵ See Gabriel 2015, 87-97.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 87.

⁶⁷ See Ibid., 38.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ See KrV 134 B.

*'Der wahre Sinn jedes Urteils, z.B. des, A ist B, kann nur dieser sein: DAS, was = A ist, IST DAS, was = B ist, oder: DAS, was A ist und DAS, was B ist, ist einerlei. So liegt schon dem einfachen Begriff eine Doppelheit zu Grunde: A in diesem Urteil ist nicht A, sondern X, das A ist; B ist nicht B, sondern X, das B ist, und nicht diese, für sich oder als solche sind einerlei, sondern das X, das A und das X das B ist, ist einerlei. In dem angeführten Satze sind eigentlich drei Sätze enthalten; erstens A ist = X, zweitens B ist = X und erst hieraus folgend der dritte, A und B sind dasselbe, beide nämlich dasselbe X.'*⁷⁰

In this way, the identity of A and B is understood through the fact that there is an X which has doubled itself into being both A and B. This explains the fallibility of a statement such as "the cat is black." According to Schelling, because the statement "the cat is black" breaks down into two independent judgements, when I say "the cat is green" or "the lion is black," I can still be partly right. For, even though the cat is not green, I am still right in stating that the subject of the judgement is a cat, and vice versa, even though I am stating something about a cat and not a lion, my identification of the predicate which applies to that subject is still correct. The fact that we can split the fallibility of the judgement into two independent truth statements implies that the judgement is not a mere tautology. For both X=A and X=B convey their own independent truth. From the fact that the subject is A it does not necessarily follow that the predicate is B. Because of this the predicate can truly be said to add an independent, not yet anticipated, determination to the subject. Identity statements therefore gain their significance through the grounding of the subject and predicate in a third term. The difference between the judgements A is B and X is B is that, whereas A and B are both determinations which individuate each other, X is not itself a determination which individuates something, but merely stands for the fact that the predicate B, as such, has a subject, whatever determined thing that might be. The X is not yet something determined, but something which can get determined once a predicate is added to it. For this reason, Schelling designates the X as an *Indifferenzpunkt*.⁷¹ The point of the X is not to itself be something individuated, but that which is indifferent towards the predicate, so that it could be both that to which the predicate applies or not. It is that which has the potency to be either A or -A and is therefore independent from it. *'Ohne Voraussetzung einer dem Prädikat entgegengesetzten Potenz ist jede Aussage eine tautologische.'*⁷² The X which is both individuated as subject and predicate is precisely capable of being both because it is the general indifference which stands over and against them. In order to do this the X cannot be already something determined in the judgement, but must remain precisely the independent potentiality to which all predicates and subjects could potentially apply. In this sense the third term is not something determined but the determinable as such, *'es ist gleichgültig gegen ihn*(the subject and object), *welche Gleichgültigkeit wir eben auch sonst, unter dem Namen der absoluten Indifferenz von Subjekt und Objekt, als das schlechthin Erste bezeichnet.'*⁷³

⁷⁰ SW 4, ii, 41.42

⁷¹ See SW 3, VII 406.

⁷² UpO, 53.

⁷³ SW 4, ii, 45. 46.

As Schelling makes clear he understands the concepts of the subject and potency to be equivalent.⁷⁴ In this sense the subject of a judgement can be understood as the potency which is able to be actualized in the predicate when the predicate truly belongs to it. The subject, as that which stands as one of the relata of the relationship between predicate and subject, is however only determined as potency in relation to the predicate, which may or may not be actual in the subject. Because of this both the subject and predicate are determined relatively as partially actual and partially potential. The subject is that which makes the possibility of the predicate applying possible, whereas the predicate is that which actualizes the potentiality of the subject to be individuated by the predicate.

The point of indifference, which can relate the subject and the predicate, can be described as the true subject of the judgement, for it is the pure potency through which both relata are related. As indifference, however, it is this potency not as that which is already determined, but as that which can potentially be that which is related through predication. As we saw last chapter that which is at first itself determined as potentiality, *das Seinkönnende*, is not indifferent to its determination in relation to a determined being, in fact it is that which must become a determined being. The only thing which can truly be said to be first, as that which is indifferent towards it becoming something determinate, is that which is pure actuality, the *Actus*. The pure *Actus* is truly indifferent towards its own determination because it is characterized by the lack of any necessary potency which it must express. In this sense the first subject cannot be determined as potentiality as such, but only as the '*potentia potentiae*', that which in something potential is the potential as such.⁷⁵

Therefore, in positive philosophy the *Prius* is different from negative philosophy. In negative philosophy, as the science of the potentiality of thought, the *Prius* is the potentiality to understand. In a philosophy which seeks to ground its basis outside of thought the *Prius* instead has to be the pure *Actus*. The problem with this pure *Actus* is, however, that from the general indifference of the initial act no potentiality to be follows. The X which grounds the distinction between the predicate and subject itself in no way necessarily represents itself in either. It stands completely over and against them as that which could ground both. It therefore also doesn't have to exclude any determinations, which means it doesn't necessarily have to be either A or -A. The indifference which grounds the judgement is therefore merely the determinable of that which can be determined. It itself does not stand in a determinate relationship, for then it would have to be either subject or predicate. Instead, it is the determinable ground which, once a determinate judgement is made, comes to represent both.

⁷⁴ 'Ich behandle den Begriff von Subject und Potenz als gleichbedeutend.' UpO, 51-52.

⁷⁵ PdO, 174.

2.3 The Ungrund

If we extend this thought about identity statements to the ontological distinction between essence as ground and essence as existence we see a similar problem emerge. In order to think of something as existing, according to Schelling, we must also think of the ground in relationship to which that something exists. If we think of the original Latin meaning of existence, being derived from *ex-*, which means “out,” and *sisto*, which means “to stand,” we see that existence originally means that which stands out. The ground of existence can then be understood as the background against which that which exists stands out. In this way to think of existence we must think of two moments which, like the subject and a predicate of a judgement, stand over and against each other, as that which is determined, existence, and that which can determine what is posited in relation to it, the ground. Schelling’s crucial move is to think the essence which unites both these moments considered by itself, not as that which necessarily must ground the distinction between ground and existence, but as that which is not yet grounded at all. *‘Es muß vor allem grund und vor allem existierendem, also überhaupt vor aller Dualität, ein Wesen sein; wie können wir es anders nennen als den Urgrund oder vielmehr Ungrund?’*⁷⁶

Both in a judgement and in the determination of something as existent there must be a non-eliminable original essence which can either be posited as a determined something or not. This moment Schelling also calls *‘das unvordenkliche Sein.’*⁷⁷ This being is unprethinkable because in any thought one might have it is something one has to presuppose.⁷⁸ It is therefore something one cannot but think as being there before there is any thought at all. Like how in judgements an indifferent third term has to be presupposed, which can, because it is indifferent towards both, be the ground of the subject and predicate, existence itself has to be thought in relation to an external essence (*Wesen*) which is present in both the ground of existence and existence itself. This ground however by itself does not ground anything, but exists only as a pure actuality. This is why it can best be described as an *Ungrund*, a non-ground, because by itself it is merely groundless. As stated in the first chapter pure actuality, or existence, cannot exist as pure actuality in a determinate context. In order for it to be determined it would have to be thought as somehow also potential in relation to something determinate. This can, however, only occur once it is established in relationship to potentiality, something which it cannot do without becoming something merely potential.

⁷⁶ SW 3, VII 406.

⁷⁷ PdO., 160.

⁷⁸ I take the translation of unprethinkable being for Markus Gabriels essay *Schelling’s Ontology of Freedom*. See Gabriel 2011, 60-101.

Unprethinkable being can be said to be a true principle for philosophy. A principle in the sense of the Latin *Princeps*, as that which must be first, '*Prinzip ist nur, was gegen alle erst nachfolgende Möglichkeit gesichert ist*,'⁷⁹ for without it there would be nothing determinable for thought to determine. The paradox here is that, even though unprethinkable being can be said to be the true ground of all judgments, thoughts and everything that exists, as the actuality, which must precede their existence, it only comes to ground something once possibility is established over and against it. It can therefore only become the ground of ground and existence retroactively, with what Gabriel calls belated necessity, once determinacy is established.⁸⁰ This paradox Schelling traces into the heart of the notion of being able to ground determinacy in its determinable ground. The paradox is that, as we must think this determinable ground as pure actuality, its actual grounding is something itself groundless. For in order to become the potentially grounding ground of reality a potency, in relation to which the actuality of the *Ungrund* would be grounded, has to be established. This is the reason why one of the main characteristics of *Ursein* according to Schelling is groundlessness. By belated necessity, Gabriel tries to designate a necessity which, while itself being completely necessary after something has occurred or *post factum*, is of itself entirely contingent. It is only in this way that the *Ungrund* can be said to necessitate all determinations which follow from it. Insofar as it is that unprethinkable being, which must precede all distinctions between ground and existence, it is an absolutely necessary presupposition of all existence. In this sense it is a universal ground for all being over and against which anything can be determined. This position of grounding, however, is only retroactive because its capacity to ground only retroactively becomes established, once a potentiality is posited in relation to it. Nothing excludes that as pure actuality the *Ungrund* comes to ground such a possibility.⁸¹ Such a grounding can, however, only be retroactive. For by itself it is completely groundless. This means that the establishment of the absolute necessity of unprethinkable being is itself entirely contingent.⁸²

Gabriel explains this fact in relation to judgements thus: '*the taking place of judgements reveals a pure dimension of distinction, which is nothing determinate in its own right*.'⁸³ As already stated, any division between subject and predicate shows a prior actuality which establishes the potentiality for the relation between the subject and the predicate without itself being a possible relatum of the relata. Instead it stands absolutely apart from the merely potential as the necessary actuality without which the possibility of the relation itself is impossible. The crucial move, according to Gabriel, is that this axiom itself does not apply to unprethinkable being, '*this ontological axiom does not apply to unprethinkable being itself, to the unknown x. The ontological presupposition of determinacy is not itself subject to determinacy, but rather can only be brought under any determinate criteriology belatedly*.'⁸⁴ In this way the *Ungrund* becomes a paradoxical ground of all intelligibility. For it is both that which absolutely must be presupposed in order for anything real to be determined at all, while at the same time being nothing determinate, and therefore something which only contingently comes to ground existence once it is established.

⁷⁹ PdO., 160.

⁸⁰ See Gabriel 2011, 121.

⁸¹ See UpO, 83.

⁸² See Gabriel 2011, 88.

⁸³ Ibid., 86.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 87.

2.4 The Introduction of the Will

The will becomes crucial in Schelling's ontology because it is the only thing which could possibly transition out of the groundlessness of the *Ungrund* into the grounding of actual existence. This is because the will is the only thing which is entirely free to both ground or not ground a determination. In this way when a determination is grounded by the will the groundlessness of the fact the will could either have wanted it to be so or not remains. The will is an object which both remains groundless, in the sense that nothing anticipates what it will ground, while at the same time being capable of actually grounding something when the will for it emerges.

Like Kant's notion of the *causa noumena*, for Schelling the will bridges a gap between the empty actuality of pure being, something which like the Kantian *Ding an sich* only has the characteristic of existing as such, and the determined being which through the relation to potentiality actually exists. The important thing about this dual existence is the way in which the will imposes necessity on what is determined by it. On the one hand it is the condition without which there would be no being a determination in the first place, for without it nothing would be grounded. On the other hand, the fact that the will determines itself is not anticipated by any prior necessity, but the fact that the will wills the transition into being as such. In this way the fact of willing something remains entirely contingent.⁸⁵

As I have shown in this chapter at the bottom of any notion of determinacy in judgement or ontology lies the non-eliminable paradox that while any determinate distinction we make ultimately has to be grounded in an indifferent point, which stands apart from the determinate relation itself, the fact that such an indifferent point comes to ground a distinction made by thought remains itself indeterminate. Once a determinate context is established nothing prevents that the point of indifference comes to ground this context, but of itself the point of indifference has no necessity to do so. This means that we must think about the fact that there is any determinate being at all as willed to be there. For without the will to posit a determinate context no ground for the ground of determinacy would be there. Only belatedly does the actual base for establishing a determinate context emerge.

*'For this reason the transition must be willed: the transition is resultant of an act of decision that leads to the very idea of a distinction. Insofar as beings are determinate, all such determinations and therefore all beings must be willed, for otherwise the very dimension of sense would never have become established.'*⁸⁶

In the will Schelling has therefore found a way of conceptualizing an object which can constitute itself as the potentiality to be both actual and potential, while at the same time not relapsing back into the notion of a pure actuality which can never become determinate. The establishment of determinacy as such is not given by the prior determinable ground which anything determinate presupposes, but only occurs retroactively once a determination comes to presuppose the determinable ground. The will stands for this paradoxical retroactively grounding relationship. Whenever we will something to be we have to presuppose that a determinable ground exists which can be determined in the way we want. Willing therefore always presupposes that a prior ground comes to ground our willing, yet at the same time it is only by willing that such a presupposing occurs.

⁸⁵ See UpO, 58.

⁸⁶ Gabriel 2011, 89.

Willing shows how the actual existence of anything determinate is resultant of the fact that something has to presuppose a reality for a determination to make sense, while at the same time such a reality only comes to exhibit a relation to anything determinate because something is determined as such.

The will is therefore similar to the traditional concept of a *causa sui* in the sense that it establishes the very possibility of determining something at all in the fact that that which determines itself establishes the potentiality for determination. Unlike a *causa sui*, however, the will does not posit this self-constituting potentiality in a prior actual ground, but in the fact that something comes to be established in contradiction to the prior ground.⁸⁷

The groundbreaking character of Schelling's introduction of the will, as the ground of ground and existence, is that it allows him to think the existence of determinacy as resultant of a not yet anticipated coming to be of a possibility, which at the same time is also imbedded in a reality which independently grounds this possibility. In this way the will exhibits a unique realism towards reality. A realism which is not the placing of everything determinate in an all-encompassing nature to which all things must refer, but a realism which shows how in order for any determinate context to take place a relation to a grounding reality must be posited.⁸⁸ It lies at the very bottom of the notion of something being willed that it only exists once the will for it to either be or not be has emerged. Its existence is therefore not established prior to the fact that a certain determination, A or -A, is expressed. At the very moment that something is willed, however, the possibility of that willing, the reality which grounds whether what is willed is actually possible, becomes apparent as the necessary way in which something determinate relates to its prior reality. For all existent things it can thus be said that their highest moment of reality, *ens realissimum*, becomes apparent in the fact that they are willed.⁸⁹ The will shows the fundamental expression of reality without which the existence of something becomes impossible.

In the preceding chapter, I showed how the only way to resolve the deadlock between positive and negative philosophy was to find an object which remains entirely both capable of being actual and possible in relation to anything which is determined through it. The will can be conceived of as this object because of the paradoxical way in which it becomes the fundamental ground of reality. Unlike the merely actual *Ungrund*, which excludes nothing, the will can come to ground something determinate because by actualizing a certain determination it retroactively posits the necessary ground which grounds anything determinate. In this way the indifference of the *Ungrund* is transformed into a self-grounding principle which in the doubling of existence, into ground and existence, reproduces itself as the essence which in any determination based on negation remains both actual and possible.⁹⁰ In this way the true objective embodiment of what in the preceding chapter was called *Geist* is achieved.

⁸⁷ See Gabriel 2011, 96.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 91.

⁸⁹ See KrV A 606/ B634.

⁹⁰ See UpO, 57.

Whenever something is willed at the same time a predeterminate domain is posited against which the willing of a certain determination becomes possible, what in the next chapter I will call affirmation (*Bejahung*). Both the determinate, the object which is willed, and the determinable become actualized through this process, while at the same time remaining possible.⁹¹ The determinate object of the will is a result of a decision to either affirm or negate a certain possibility. This means that this object, while being actual could always be or always have been different. In the same way the determinable is now determined as grounding the determinations which follow from it, not because these determinations follow from its own nature necessarily, which would ground an object in a way which was pre-given, but from the fact that something else has retroactively determined it to become its ground. This means its actuality in a certain determination does not require it to remain actual in that determination if another possibility turns out to hold true of this ground. This shows us how in any attempt to determine reality such an attempt is always fallible, can always turn out to only be possible in another way. The will therefore turns out to be the ultimate unity of actuality and possibility by explaining how the gap between these two can be bridged. This is done by the retroactive logic of self-grounding which is the only way we can come to comprehend the idea of an external object grounding the intelligibility of reality.

I think one can now justify the claim that the only way, the *conditio sine qua non*, for having an intelligible object at all has to be conceived through the notion of an original will willing a certain determinate context to take place. In order for us to think the transition of the groundless actuality of pure being into any determinate context the will, as the faculty which can presuppose what is determined by it, must emerge. On one level this means that the will can be conceived of as the original essence of all that is. Which is why Schelling is justified in claiming that original being is original willing, for only through the will coming to fundamentally affirm something can there be a being which originally grounds. This must, however, not be understood as a simple metaphysical claim about the nature of all things, but, as I hope to show next chapter, as a commitment made by Schelling to solve the paradox of transcendental affirmation as laid out by Kant in the last part of the dialectic of pure reason. The will itself constitutes the capacity of affirmation because the very domain of distinction which might ground determinacy cannot appear prior to the will to ground something. In this sense there is always a preceding affirmation which precedes the very possibility of establishing a domain of determinacy.

In this way Schelling establishes the possibility of an object which can appear as the union of pure actuality and pure possibility. In doing this the will is at the same time established as an appropriate object for a new positive philosophy which transcends the gap between mere empirical existence and the domain of pure thought. The main aim of the last chapter is to explain how from these facts the will can become the philosophical object which can explain the intelligibility of reality. As we will see we can read Schelling's idea of the will as underlying the possibility of intelligibility as a solution to the problem of asymmetry between the transcendental ideal of reason and actual determinate existence. By understanding Kant's idea of affirmation we can better understand how this leads us to a radically new conception of intelligibility.

⁹¹ See *Ibid.*, 59.

Chapter 3: The Will and Transcendental Affirmation

Introduction

The first chapter's discussion on the modalities ended with Schelling's notion that the only way to resolve the deadlock between pure actuality and pure possibility is to find a third option, which is free from the one-sidedness of these modalities taken by themselves. This third term should have the power to remain actual and possible at the same time.⁹² This notion Schelling calls spirit and in relation to positive and negative philosophy, which seeks to ground its intelligibility by positing either pure actuality or pure possibility as its principle, it can be seen as a principle for intelligibility which can unite both modalities in order to ground intelligibility.⁹³ As I have shown it turns out that both pure actuality and possibility by themselves cannot ground anything at all. Having now looked at what in Schelling's ontology it takes for a grounding relation to emerge we can see what this notion of the intelligibility of spirit might look like.

The only way the paradox of self-grounding can be solved is that a retroactive logic is introduced which turns the groundless actuality of the *Ungrund* into the condition for something determinate to take place. In chapter 2, I showed how it is in order to conceive of an object which can embody this retroactive logic that the will plays a fundamental role in Schelling's account of ontology. The belated necessity of the will solves the paradox of how a ground, which by itself stands apart from the necessity to be anything determined, can become the necessary ground for determination. The will as the enactment of this necessity therefore unites the determinable actuality of the *Ungrund* with the capacity for something actually determined to exist. The question is now how the will can be conceived of as grounding the intelligibility of spirit? My answer to this question will be based on a notion found in Kant's discussion of the transcendental ideal of reason, which I call transcendental affirmation. Like Schelling Kant thinks that intelligibility is grounded in the idea that reality fully affirms or denies the determinations made by concepts. Insofar as a concept gives us the scope to either attribute or deny a determination to a given thing there is a corresponding reality which affirms or denies this determination. Kant conceives of this ideal as being based on the fact that reality itself is completely determined and therefore has a conception of intelligibility, which like positive philosophy, grounds the intelligibility of our thinking externally.⁹⁴ The problem with this ideal is, however, that it can never be made manifest that outside our experience, insofar as it is constituted by our understanding, such an affirmation takes place. In this way, there is an asymmetry in Kant between a transcendental ideal, which gives us a positive grounding for intelligibility, and the actually intelligible realm of possible thought which can never be unified with its ideal.⁹⁵

⁹² See Ibid.

⁹³ See Ibid., 56.

⁹⁴ See KrV, A 572, B 600.

⁹⁵ See Ibid., A 581/ B 610.

Schelling's conception of the will resolves this tension by showing how any notion of determinacy presupposes the coming to be of a real ground which either affirms or denies the affirmation present in something determinate. This ground is, however, not posited beforehand in the pure actuality of reality. Instead, it is only posited as something which emerges by the very act through which something becomes affirmed or denied. In this way, Schelling thinks the ground of intelligibility as being the external affirmation of our conceptions of reality, while allowing it to emerge by the actual potency of affirming or denying performed by thinking. Thereby giving space, unlike Kant, for both negative and positive philosophy to play a role in grounding intelligibility. In order to show how the notion of transcendental affirmation explains the way the will grounds intelligibility, I will first explain Schelling's notion of '*vollkommene Geist*' as the fundamental unity of intelligibility.⁹⁶ Then, I will explain Kant's notion of affirmation as being based on the idea that thought is committed to the idea that reality fundamentally affirms or denies all our concepts. Finally, I will argue that the will as the embodiment of what Schelling calls spirit stands for the fundamental affirmation of all reality as coming about through the act of something becoming determined. In this way, I will show how Schelling let's a new picture of the grounding of intelligibility emerge through his conception of the will. This conception resolves both the tension between positive and negative philosophy and the asymmetry inherent in Kant's account. It also allows us to see the role the will has in establishing intelligibility as primarily being based on the role it plays in giving an account of how an affirmative intelligibility is possible in the first place. It is this affirmative intelligibility which I will claim to be the highest result of Schelling's introduction of the will in ontology.

3.1 Perfect Spirit

Schelling defines what he calls perfect spirit as the unity of pure actuality and possibility. Both pure actuality and possibility form the ingredients of being able to ground something, yet purely by themselves they cannot ground anything at all.⁹⁷ As was shown in chapter 1, this is because by themselves they are incapable of excluding something. If one cannot exclude this means no affirmative determination can be made about whether something holds true or not of a presupposed thing, for as the ground of the assertion cannot exclude anything it is impossible to say of a thing that it either includes or excludes something. In this sense, only once a determination can be either excluded or affirmed can something be grounded. The basis which makes it possible for something to be either excluded or affirmed of something is the concept of what I will call a scope of a given domain of objects. Insofar as a domain of objects is available for us to make determinate judgements about it there is a scope of determinate things which are included and things which are not included in that given domain. One can therefore state that in general a domain of objects is only available to us to be something determined at all, and therefore something knowable, once a basis for exclusion, a scope, is posited which allows something determinate to either be affirmed or denied of the objects in a given domain.

⁹⁶ See UpO, 70.

⁹⁷ See Ibid., 75.

If one treats the domain of objects as pure actuality no scope for what a domain includes or excludes can be conceived. For when thinking of the ground of a domain of objects as purely actual anything would have to be included in such a domain. If it were to exclude something the possibility to either include or exclude would have to be admitted, which makes the ground not purely actual. If the ground of the scope of the domain is merely possible the ground would necessarily require an actual affirmation to take place in order for that possibility to ground something. Thinking the possibility of determining the scope of an object domain therefore requires thinking the ground of such a domain as capable of being both actual and possible. Schelling describes this capability via the capacity of perfect spirit to remain actual while possible and possible while actual. In this sense spirit is that *'von beiden Einseitigkeiten Freie,'* and can be described as the being *'in welchem der actus nicht die Potenz, und die Potenz nicht den actus ausschließt.'*⁹⁸

Another way in which Schelling describes this dynamic is by equating spirit with the will which in its wanting doesn't stop remaining a will capable of choice.⁹⁹ Schelling uses, I think, wanting as a synonym for potentiality. In ordinary wanting there is a certain determinate situation we wish to bring about. With wanting comes a drive to bring about a certain determination, but insofar as something cannot be brought about just by wanting it, wanting remains a mere potentiality for something to become actual. Wanting can therefore be described as a potentiality requiring an actuality in order to bring something determinate about. When the determinate situation which was wanted has been brought about, however, wanting seizes and has just become a determinate actuality. A wanting which remains a will must therefore be described as a wanting which while wanting remains capable of willing something different. Unlike ordinary wanting, which is committed to bringing about a certain determination, this free wanting can want something determinate while in that commitment remaining capable of not wanting it.

To put it in another way, spirit must be conceived as that which can affirm, want, a certain determination, while in affirming remaining capable of affirming the opposite. The determinate which is grounded in spirit is capable of being both affirmed or denied, because insofar as something is being affirmed or denied it remains possible for this to be reversed. Were the affirmation to result in a pure actuality or pure possibility the affirmation would cease to be freely affirmed or denied, for it could only become fully affirmed as what must be. In spirits' affirmation, the capacity to not affirm needs to remain present. Therefore, all determined being grounded in spirit is only determined while it remains also possible to be otherwise. *'Im vollendeten Geiste ist nämlich das, was sein wird, als solchen festgestellt: es ist gesetzt als Freiheit, auch nicht zu sein.'*¹⁰⁰ Perfect or complete spirit, in its activity of grounding something, has to be thought of as completely free to either be or not be as a certain determination, which is why Schelling calls it the *'Freiheit der Seinsentstehung.'*¹⁰¹ Were this freedom to end determination would fall into the impotent positions of pure actuality or pure possibility.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 59.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 63.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

The question is now how, in actually becoming determined pure spirit, as the ground of determination, is capable of holding onto this capacity for change. As pure ground Schelling describes spirit as *'absolute Wirklichkeit vor aller Möglichkeit,'* but, as we have seen time and time again, for an absolute actuality to ground anything at all it needs to be retroactively posited by something determinable.¹⁰² In order to think spirit as ground we therefore need a notion of affirmation which thinks affirmation as remaining possible while being determined. In order to do this, I will look at Kant's idea of reality as being fundamentally grounded in transcendental affirmation. This notion of affirmation gives us the capability to think the scope of what is determined as being at the same time fully established by the fact that reality affirms what is determined, while allowing this scope to emerge only by the actual negation, the actual establishment of possibility, which affirms as such. In this way we shall see that the will is precisely the ground which is able to unify both these moments.

3.2 Transcendental affirmation

According to Kant a concept, when looked at in relation to its predicates, must be understood as an undetermined basis which gets determined by a predicate. Much like the pure X we discussed in the preceding chapter a concept by itself, in relation to a predicate, is not that which is already determined, but something which becomes determined by the addition of the predicate. Kant calls this the *'Grundsatz der Bestimmbarkeit.'*¹⁰³ In order for such a principle to make any sense, according to Kant, we must presuppose that the concept itself is already fully determined in relation to any predicate which might be related to it. Kant describes this notion of complete determinacy thus:

*'Ein jedes Ding aber, seiner Möglichkeit nach, steht noch unter dem Grundsatz der durchgängigen Bestimmung, nach welchen ihm von allen möglichen Prädikaten der Dinge, sofern sie mit ihren Gegenteilen verglichen werden, eines zukommen muß.'*¹⁰⁴

Without this complete determination, a concept could not function as the determinability for all the predicates which apply to it. For if the concept was itself not fully determined there could arise a situation in which it is undecided whether a predicate applies to the concept. In order to think a representation at all, we need to be able to predicate it of some concept, for otherwise it wouldn't represent anything, and therefore our thinking could never get a hold of a representation, were it to be fundamentally undecidable whether a predicate does or does not apply to a concept. The consequence of the commitment that all concepts are completely determined is that everything which exists must be completely determined as well.¹⁰⁵ For if the thing which a concept individuates wasn't already completely determined the situation described above, where a predication is fundamentally undecidable, takes place. This means that this commitment forces us to think of reality as being fundamentally completely determined, or as Kant puts it, as having all possibilities already fully determined within it, an *'Inbegriffe alle Möglichkeit.'*¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Ibid., 82.

¹⁰³ KrV, A571/B 599

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., A571/B 599 and A572/B 600.

¹⁰⁵ See Ibid., A 573/B 601.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

For Kant, therefore, the very idea of predication presupposes that we think reality as being fundamentally determined by an essence which grounds any possible determinations within it. Fundamental affirmation is a consequence of this insight. As Kant makes clear any negation presupposes that a fundamental affirmation grounds what is negated. *‘Nun kann sich niemand eine Verneinung bestimmt denken, ohne daß er die entgegengesetzte Bejahung zu Grunde liegen habe.’*¹⁰⁷ All forms of relationality and identity presuppose negation.¹⁰⁸ Without the negation of certain possibilities no meaningful notion of identity is possible, for without the negation of certain possibilities the extension of a concept would be infinite. As Frege shows, the further you extend the scope of a given concept the less its actual capacity for individuating something is.¹⁰⁹ If I want to ascribe the sense of “being wise” to the object Solon this predication only makes sense in the first place because certain things are not wise, meaning that the predicate excludes or negates certain objects. *‘Nur durch die Möglichkeit, dass etwas nicht weise sei, gewinnt die behauptung, Solon sei weise, einen Sinn.’*¹¹⁰

The very possibility of the operation described above, of individuating something through negation, presupposes an opposite affirmation which distinguishes that which is included and excluded in relation to a given concept or object. This is why Kant distinguishes between negation insofar as it is a mere logical operation and transcendental negation.¹¹¹ Logical negation does not apply to a concept itself, but merely to the relation of concepts in a judgement. The predicate not-mortal does not individuate any object itself, but merely shows how in relation to the concept mortality certain other concepts do not apply. Transcendental negation is negation precisely as it applies to a concept or a thing itself. This is the type of negation which always stands in relation to the transcendental affirmation which makes the possibility of affirming or denying any determination as belonging to a thing possible. This transcendental affirmation Kant describes as the *‘Sachheit’* through which, insofar as the object it affirms reaches, *‘Gegenstände Etwas (Dinge) sind.’*¹¹² Opposed to the affirmative totality of what belongs to a certain object the opposed negation only appears as *‘einen bloßen Mangel,’* which if it comes to be thought by itself can only be represented as the *‘Aufhebung alles Dinges.’*¹¹³

The best way to describe the idea of affirmation and negation Kant has in mind is, I think, with the concept, which I introduced earlier, of the scope of a given domain of objects. Transcendental affirmation concerns the positive side of certain objects belonging to a certain domain of objects, whereas transcendental negation is the correlated fact that at the same time certain objects fall out of the scope of a given object domain. The reason for taking the affirmation as prior is that without at least some objects which positively belong to the scope of a domain the only idea of such a domain which remains is the idea of a domain to which nothing can possibly belong. This means that if we are to think the operation Kant describes by his notion of transcendental affirmation we have to presuppose a fundamental affirmation first which makes negating this positive determination in relation to other objects or concepts possible. This is why transcendentially we have to presuppose that reality as such is completely determined, for without something having a fundamental determinative affirmation behind it the very operation of affirmation and negation becomes impossible.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., A 575 /B 603

¹⁰⁸ See Gabriel 2011, 87.

¹⁰⁹ Frege 1987, § 29.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ KrV A 574/B 602.

¹¹² Ibid., A 575/ B 603.

¹¹³ Ibid.

As stated above, in order to think positively about such a fundamental affirmation, the negation of certain possibilities, through a predicate for example, is necessary at the same time. For I only come to know what a given domain of objects affirms or denies by ascribing to it a predicate which the object domain either includes or excludes. Therefore, as Wolfram Högerebe puts it, '*In jeder Prädikation sind mithin ursprüngliche Bejahung und ursprüngliche Verneinung zugleich schon beansprucht.*'¹¹⁴ Fundamentally, however, the way in which this union of affirmation and negation is possible is only by the fundamental affirmation which is grounded in the idea of reality being completely determined. According to Kant it is the presupposition of this idea which makes negation in the first place possible, for there would be no borders to what a thing includes and excludes without '*das Unbeschränkte*' grounding something in relation to which a negation can be defined as the limit of an object.¹¹⁵

It is also only through this unconditioned full determination of reality that a thing in itself can be represented as being an essence which stands apart from its contingent determinations. Without the presuppositions of an *omnitudo realitatis*, which already contains the complete determination of all possible determinations, there would be no way for us to distinguish a given thing as essentially being determined by what is most truly said of it, for it would not be fully determined which determinations a thing must have in order to be the thing that it is.¹¹⁶ We therefore only have the idea of a stable essence in our thinking through the presupposition of a fully determined reality. All this fundamentally implies that the fact that reality is intelligible at all for us is grounded in reality coming to fundamentally affirm or deny all determinations. The determination itself would not be able to determine anything if fundamentally it is not determined what the determination affirms or denies.

Through Kant we learn that the only way in which we can conceive of the fact that things are determinable for us is through the idea that there is a transcendental affirmation, which fundamentally determines what is determinable. The problem for Kant is, however, that he can only prove that we must postulate the fact of fundamental affirmation, and the correlated idea of God as an '*ens originarium*', insofar as reason must be committed to the ideal that everything is posited as fundamentally determined.¹¹⁷ Insofar as intelligibility is only limited to the sphere of experience, and as Kant makes very explicit experience only knows things conditionally, we can never know whether reality unconditionally determines our concepts.¹¹⁸ Kant therefore posits an asymmetry between the ideal of positive affirmation and the reality of merely conditioned experience. Kant justifies the belief in the fact that reality positively determines the intelligibility of our thinking, but leaves it only as an abstract ideal to be believed. In transcendental affirmation, however, he does give us a fundamental insight into what a new positive intelligibility might look like.

¹¹⁴ Högerebe 1977, 180.

¹¹⁵ KrV A 575/ B 603.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ KrV, A 578/ B 606

¹¹⁸ Ibid., A 326/B 383.

3.3 The Will and Transcendental Affirmation

In the idea of transcendental affirmation, we see how the possibility to determine anything at all is grounded in a commitment to a fundamental affirmation which establishes what is included and excluded in a given domain. It is only in this way that a scope or range is given to things through which it can be established what is determined by a given concept. Intelligibility must presuppose such an affirmation on the side of the ground of determinacy, for without this fundamental affirming no scope for object domains is given to us, and therefore there is no way in which something can be either excluded or affirmed. Kant gives us the basis for thinking about this idea as fundamentally grounding intelligibility, yet he makes the way in which reality comes to ground the intelligible object of our thought completely unintelligible by withdrawing fundamental affirmation behind the asymmetrical relationship between the ideal and the real.

The will allows a unification between ideal and real intelligibility to emerge because it introduces the way in which the actual ground comes to be retroactively constituted by some determinate thing coming to presuppose actuality. The will unifies the two sides of transcendental affirmation Kant was unable to put together. On the one hand, willing brings about the fact that a ground is presupposed which can affirm or deny the reality of what through willing emerges. On the other hand, willing also contains the actual inclusion or exclusion, the real determination, which brings about the grounding relation in the first place. The will therefore allows us to think the constitution of intelligibility as being the fundamental grounding of everything by an original ground, but at the same time having this grounding come to be through the act of positing it.

Schelling's notion of affirmation therefore doesn't have to commit itself, like Kant, to the idea that it is already completely established in reality whether a determination holds true or not before our act of judging it to be so. For in the will the moment of the active affirmation, which establishes determinately what is affirmed and what not, and the transcendental affirmation, which grounds the possibility of either affirming or negating something, can only emerge together. The truth behind the idea that reality is already completely determined is that when something is affirmed or denied there is always a fundamental affirmation of reality which grounds the truth of that affirmation or negation. This does not mean, however, that we have to commit ourselves to the idea that all things are part of an already completed actuality. For even if this were to be the case the truth of such an absolute actuality would only become apparent by the gradual affirmation or negation of things, without which nothing would be actually determined. The bridging of this gap between fundamental determination and actual affirmation is why the retroactive notion of grounding becomes key in rethinking transcendental affirmation. For it explains precisely how, on the one hand any determination, once it is affirmed, is grounded in a fundamental affirmation, while no affirmation is necessary prior to the actual negation and affirmation of certain determinations. The will therefore allows us to rethink transcendental affirmation by bridging the gap between the affirmation of reality and the act of affirming.

Positive philosophy traditionally has the problem of only being able to conceive of the intelligibility of thought as being passively received by thought. Kant can conceive of the necessity for a commitment for the grounding of intelligibility via the fact that reality must first affirm what is conceived by our thinking, but is unable to think how this affirming can actually come to ground the intelligible object constituted by our understanding. Through the will, Schelling shows a way in which the affirmation by reality and our act of affirming together establish a relationship in which one can ground the other. Thought, or negative philosophy, is not excluded from the establishment of this grounding relationship which can affirm, or ground, determinate things. Insofar as the transcendently affirming actuality only affirms once something is determined for it to ground, the act of our thinking, which determines something in the first place, plays an essential role in bringing intelligibility about. A new way for grounding intelligibility, in a positive philosophy which allows thought to play a central role, is therefore produced.

Schelling can help us rethink the idea of how intelligibility comes to be grounded because he manages to show how a groundless actuality comes to ground our thinking, not either by us entirely constituting it or by it coming to be externally constituted, but by emphasizing the priority of the genesis of the affirmative relationship between ground and existence. This relation contains both the independent affirmation of reality and the determinative act which affirms or denies. The will is the object which manifests this primal relationship of affirmation and affirming.

Everything which is determined by the primal will remains capable of being affirmed or denied, for part of the affirmation of the will is only defined through the act of inclusion or exclusion which constitutes determinacy. This means that the relation of the will to what it determines produces Schelling's notion of perfect spirit. For all determinations produced by the will are only actual insofar as the possibility of a different affirmation is possible. Spirit is free because it has no prior necessity determining it. *'Der Geist ist also grundlos, er ist ohne vorausgehende Notwendigkeit.'*¹¹⁹ The highest intelligible object is therefore conceived by Schelling not as something already grounded in a necessary determinate relationship with what it grounds, which would make it unfree, but by itself only necessary once through it a necessary will, a necessary relationship, is established. In order to bring this necessity about determinacy must be established over and against its ground, but it is precisely through this act that it freely can affirm or deny what it by itself must affirm.

Now it can finally be understood how the will allows Schelling to reconceptualize the way in which we think intelligibility is grounded. The will allows the external determination of intelligibility by positive philosophy, and the internally constituted intelligibility of negative philosophy to coexist in the constitution of the affirming relationship which makes intelligibility as such possible. The will reconceptualizes the basis through which reality comes to affirm what is intelligible. This is not done via the external causation of an ultimate cause, but by the necessary presupposition of transcendental affirmation by all determinate affirmations. Through the will Schelling can conceive how the transcendental ideal of reason is manifested precisely in the process of determining and getting determined which constitutes all actual thinking.

¹¹⁹ UpO, 69.

Conclusion

The problem, according to Schelling, with modern philosophy is that it seeks to ground intelligibility via two methods. On the one hand there is positive philosophy, which is the attempt to ground intelligibility outside of thought in an object like experience or revelation. The main problem with this attempt to ground intelligibility is that thought plays a purely passive role in the fact that understanding comes to understand something. On the other hand, there is negative philosophy which takes the activity of thought, which constitutes its own intelligible object, as the starting point for grounding intelligibility. Within the Kantian tradition, the latter was seen as the most convincing account of grounding intelligibility. The main advantage of negative philosophy is that it takes the potency of thought as the primary principle to explain why thought has an intelligible object. Because the intelligibility of thought is constituted by itself there is no need to explain how an external imposition upon thought can with certainty be the ground for the intelligibility of thought. Thought itself actively constitutes the object of its own intelligibility. The Achilles heel of this approach is, as I showed in chapter 1, that thought can only constitute the potency for the existence of something intelligible not its actual existence. Because of this lack of being able to give itself actuality negative philosophy remains merely relative.

Both negative and positive philosophy are based on a relationship between the modalities of actuality and possibility. As I have shown these two modalities taken merely by themselves cannot ground anything at all. Pure possibility always needs the act of something actual for it to become a ground and pure actuality cannot ground anything without having to relate itself to possibility. In this way one can understand that both negative and positive philosophy, insofar as they are either grounded in pure actuality, like the passive reception of intelligibility through experience in positive philosophy, or pure possibility, like the pure potency of thought to recognize facts in negative philosophy, cannot ground anything at all. It is only the union of both, which Schelling calls spirit, which makes grounding intelligibility possible.

The main aim of this thesis has been to show how the will can solve the problem of intelligibility as shown by the dialectic between positive and negative philosophy. Fundamentally, both philosophies need to think of an object which can unite both possibility and actuality. In order to find such an object, the paradox of self-grounding has to be solved, for only an object which can ground itself can remain both actual and possible. By using Gabriel's discussion of Schelling's ontology, we can understand how such an object can be conceived. The problem behind thinking an object as self-grounding is that something which is conceived as a pure ground, in its pure actuality, can only be thought to ground something once some determined determinable thing is established over and against it. Insofar as we conceive of a ground of all reality as actually grounding something this only happens through the retroactive logic which establishes something determinate over and against the determinable. It is because we must think the transition of the ground into a relationship with the determinable as primary that the will must be thought as being the basis for anything determined to be thought as actual. In this way the will establishes a way of conceiving of the primary way in which a grounding relationship is established.

In my final chapter I showed how the notion, of the will as being ontologically primary in thinking something as being determined, shows a new conception of intelligibility which succeeds in solving the deadlock between positive and negative philosophy. As I have argued Schelling's notion of the will can resolve the problem of grounding intelligibility by showing a way beyond mere possibility and mere actuality as primary in grounding intelligibility. Through the notion of transcendental affirmation, taken from Kant, I attempted to explain how Schelling's notion of the will shows the way in which the complete affirmation of reality, an idea taken from positive philosophy, and the fact that something is only affirmed once we constitute an affirmation, can be unified. A picture of the grounding of why reality is intelligible therefore emerges which, like positive philosophy, grounds intelligibility in an object outside the mere potency of thought, yet, unlike traditional empiricism, this intelligibility only comes to actually determine anything once an actual affirmation by us is made. In this way, I think we can conclude that Schelling's notion of the will manages to solve the various problems associated with the purely negative grounding of intelligibility which is prominent in Kantian thought. He does this not merely by positing a new notion of positive philosophy which can give us another perspective on the emergence of the affirmative in reality, but he also shows the role which thought plays in constituting actual affirmation. Intelligibility is therefore neither entirely grounded in positive nor negative philosophy. Instead, its constitution can be described via a process through which both become necessary.

In the introduction, I stated that one of the main aims of my approach to the late philosophy of Schelling was to use notions taken from Gabriel's and Hogebe's important explications of Schelling's ontology in their own philosophical projects and apply them to the problem of the role the will for Schelling actually plays in grounding the new picture of intelligibility he seeks to create in his philosophy. By seeing how the logic of constitution we see at play in Schelling's notion of the will grounds the distinction between positive and negative philosophy, we also see the important Kantian background for Schelling's grounding of intelligibility. It is in relation to this problem, that Schelling's notion of the will, I think, is most relevant. Schelling's notion of the will solves many of the problems Kant's theory of the absolute determinateness of the absolute ideal has. By introducing the will as the positing or affirming element into Kant's notion of transcendental affirmation it can be reconceptualized in a way in which it is not merely a presupposition of the ideal, but at the same time something only presupposed in the first place through the affirmative reality of actual existence. Schelling can therefore be said to have taken a great step forward in giving a more coherent picture of the notion of intelligibility which the Critical Philosophy tried to produce. Something which is still very relevant for our modern understanding of intelligibility, given how much it is influenced by Kant.

Understanding the late Schelling as already committed to Modern traditions, such as phenomenology, or even understanding his philosophy as primarily a critique of Hegel, the main approach taken by most intellectual historians nowadays, obfuscate Schelling's own independent contribution to the history of philosophy.¹²⁰In relating Schelling's philosophy to phenomenology it is perhaps better not too immediately equate positive philosophy with phenomenology. This is something for which commentators can rarely give any direct evidence. Instead, we should understand how Schelling's reinterpretation of the understanding of intelligibility can show an important way to link Kant to phenomenology. Instead of equating positive philosophy with phenomenology, as Tritten does, because Schelling like phenomenology thinks phenomena should *'never be contorted in order to fit a pre-given schema nor dismissed or "explained away,"'*¹²¹we should understand this commonality as a way in which the results of Critical Philosophy and phenomenology might be brought closer together. Our main emphasis should, however, always remain upon Schelling's thought taken by itself.

The limits of the research conducted in this thesis might be that I did not have the space nor scope of treating the emergence of Schelling's new grounding of intelligibility in his late philosophy as part of his general theoretical development. Other things left out are the way in which Schelling describes his philosophy as a new form of empiricism and as a new vitalized form of idealism. Further research on these topics is particularly interesting, because it relates directly to the modern interest in both continental and analytical philosophy of thinking of a new realism as the ground of philosophy. Schelling's reinterpretation of the primal affirmative relation of us to reality can offer a new perspective on these debates. Likewise, in the modern continental traditions of philosophizing about life Schelling's perspective can offer an interesting new way of conceptualizing the relationship between life and philosophy.

What remains clear in any thorough examination of Schelling's philosophy is that his position, in between Kantian philosophy and later German thought, makes him of great importance in trying to reevaluate some of the most important philosophical ideas within modern philosophy. In the wide-ranging works of someone like Markus Gabriel we can see the transformation of thought which is possible through a close encounter with Schelling's ideas. In my thesis I have attempted to contribute to the overall argument that Schelling's often difficult text, which were written in a very different philosophical context, can still be relevant for philosophy in our age. I hope it can eventually be shown that Schelling should be understood as one of the most interesting and important thinkers in the German philosophical tradition. A philosopher who deserves the consideration of all philosophical traditions.

¹²⁰ Even in his great book on the broad historical context of Schelling's late philosophy McGrath, in his explication of the theoretical part of Schelling's late philosophy, still mainly sees it as purely a critique of Hegel. A view which I think is gladly taken up by most Hegelians today. See McGrath 2021, chapter 2 the Ideal 47-119.

¹²¹ Tritten 2012, 31.

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