

# PHILOSOPHIE, THÉOLOGIE, LITTÉRATURE

HOMMAGE À XAVIER TILLIETTE, SJ  
POUR SES QUATRE-VINGT-DIX ANS

textes réunis par

MIKLOS VETÖ



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SUPÉRIEUR DE PHILOSOPHIE  
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l'unité limpide et radicale d'une identité sans dualité et sans activité, une unité archi-passible qui ne peut en aucun cas être déduite d'une dualité des termes, mais exprime au contraire, avant toute forme de connexion ou de liaison dans la vie, un commencement immémorial, une lumière inaccessible<sup>90</sup>, qui s'engendre elle-même et se «sur-prend» par son éclat: un vouloir «in-actif», une volonté qui ne veut rien<sup>91</sup>, la passibilité originaire.

«Regardez un enfant, ignorant en soi toute différenciation, et vous connaîtrez en lui une image de la plus pure divinité»<sup>92</sup>.

## IMMANENCE AND FREEDOM IN THE *FREIHEITSSCHRIFT*

Ashley VAUGHT

Schelling's *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom* (1809) engages the problem of immanence in a truly novel manner. Immanence, as it was identified with Spinozism, was the perennial target of early modern German philosophy. The modern German tradition sought to defend Christianity from the threat of immanence, particularly in regard to the damage done to the revealed concept of God but also to the concept of human freedom. In the *Freiheitsschrift* Schelling overturns that inheritance by reclaiming the concept of immanence for both an account of divine revelation and human freedom. In other words, Schelling employs "immanence" to overturn the consequences of immanence.

Immanence had traditionally been opposed to transcendence because it threatened divine eminence and human freedom, by submitting God to mutability and externally determining human action; transcendence was held to protect these. Schelling quickly dispatches this tradition, arguing that *only* immanence provides a coherent account of God's revelation and of human freedom. The eminence of the divine must be produced — it cannot merely be posited — according to Schelling, and the immanence of human freedom to the divine is the key to that ultimate revelation. Two steps lead to this conclusion: first, Schelling redefines immanence as the greater *Selbstständigkeit* in proportion to the proximity of a created being to God; and second, he makes a distinction between the ground of God's existence and that existence, the former being the condition for the latter (and the former in turn conditioned by the production of the latter). Created beings are the more *selbstständig*, alive and free the more they are "in God".

In what follows, I trace out the history of the concept of immanence, foregrounding the acosmist and fatalist critiques of it. I show that among different conceptions of immanence, Schelling thinks that traditional immanence cannot overcome the acosmist critique. Yet in addition, neither immanence, nor transcendence, nor even emanation can successfully explain human freedom as a capacity for good and evil without contaminating God. In the *Freiheitsschrift* Schelling surmounts these difficulties

<sup>90</sup> *Die Weltalter, Urfassungen* (1811), p. 16; trad. citée, p. 28.

<sup>91</sup> *Die Weltalter, Urfassungen* (1811), p. 22; trad. citée, p. 35.

<sup>92</sup> *Die Weltalter, Urfassungen* (1811), p. 15; trad. citée, p. 27.

by making the capacity for good and evil an act of self-actualization which is wholly free from external determination, and which gains its freedom by its immanence to the dark ground of God's existence.

### The Historical Problems of Immanence

When Schelling is writing the *Freiheitsschrift*, the threat of Spinozism, or immanence, had been significantly mitigated. Nonetheless, Schelling is very aware of this history, as Père Tilliette notes: "Sa propre entreprise fait justice de cette conception historique".<sup>1</sup> Pierre Bayle's article on Spinoza for the *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* (1697) initially formulated the threat, especially through its portrayal of Spinoza's "systematic atheism". The article was enormously influential in Germany because it was one of the primary ways that students encountered Spinoza.<sup>2</sup> Bayle represented immanence as an incoherent metaphysical view in which finite and infinite things were indistinguishable from one another, upon which absurd consequences ensued. "Thus, in Spinoza's system all those who say, 'The Germans have killed ten thousand Turks,' speak incorrectly and falsely unless they mean, 'God modified into Germans has killed God modified into ten thousand Turks'".<sup>3</sup> The root of this incoherence, according to Bayle, lies in the identification of God with an infinite extended substance and the coincidence of God with the finite beings that compose the infinite extended substance. Spinozism was the "most monstrous hypothesis" because it submitted the divine being to the corruption of the material world.<sup>4</sup> This is one of the principal features of pantheism — and immanence — as it came to be understood. Immanence conflated God with the materiality of nature, such that God became subject to the conditions of space and time. God was then judged to be composed of an aggregate of finite beings.

From a cultural and religious point of view, the problem with immanence was the denigration of divine eminence and immutability; from a strictly metaphysical point of view, it was the failure to explain the

<sup>1</sup> Xavier Tilliette, *Schelling: Une philosophie en devenir*, 2 vols., 1st ed. (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1970), 1:515. Hereafter SUP.

<sup>2</sup> David Bell, *Spinoza in Germany from 1670 to the Age of Goethe* (Leeds: University of London, 1984), 3; Max Grunwald, *Spinoza in Deutschland* (Allen: Scientia Verlag, 1986), 24.

<sup>3</sup> Pierre Bayle, *Historical and Critical Dictionary: Selections*, trans. and ed. Richard Popkin (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1991), 312.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 300.

actuality of finite beings as a result of their inherence within God. That is, if God is the infinite being that exists necessarily, how can a finite being be anything other than a derivative modification (of the infinite being) that lacks actuality for itself? This is the acosmist critique consistently reaffirmed by Spinoza's German readers, albeit through numerous variations. The critique appeared in Christian Wolff's *Widerlegung*, which was written in 1737 and published with the first German translation of the *Ethics* in 1744,<sup>5</sup> as well as in an implicit, ironically apologetic form in Moses Mendelssohn's *Philosophical Dialogues* (1755).<sup>6</sup> F.H. Jacobi presents Spinoza in this manner in *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza in Letters to Herr Moses Mendelssohn* (1785),<sup>7</sup> the essay that ignited the *Pantheismusstreit*. As well, as we will see, it was repeated by Schelling's erstwhile Tübingen friend Hegel and his colleague at Jena, Friedrich Schlegel.

For our purposes, the most powerful reiteration of the acosmist critique is found in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), because it extends beyond Spinozism to include Schelling. Hegel carries the critique to a new level when he claims that Schelling's system, like that of Spinoza, lacks an adequate principle of determination. For Hegel only negativity has the power to sufficiently determine finite beings. Hegel thinks that Schelling's beginning from the Absolute — as in the 1804 Würzburg lectures, for example<sup>8</sup> — forecloses just this possibility:

In itself, that life is indeed one of untroubled equality and unity with itself for which otherness and alienation, and the overcoming of alienation, are not serious matters. But this in itself is abstract universality, in which the nature of the divine life to be for itself, and so too the self-movement of the form, are altogether left out of account.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Ursula Goldenbaum, "Die erste deutsche Übersetzung der Spinozaschen Ethik," *Spinoza in der europäischen Geistgeschichte*, eds. Hanna Delf, Julius Schoeps and Manfred Walter (Berlin: Edition Hentrich, 1994), 107.

<sup>6</sup> I say *ironically apologetic* because Mendelssohn tried to salvage Spinoza by making him merely an aborted Leibniz. That is, Leibniz claims the existence of monads outside of the divine intellect, whereas as Mendelssohn presents him, Spinoza has simply failed to present finite beings apart from the divine intellect (Moses Mendelssohn, *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Daniel O. Dahlstrom [Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1997], 101).

<sup>7</sup> F.H. Jacobi, *The Main Philosophical Writings and the Novel Allwill*, trans. and ed. George di Giovanni (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 188.

<sup>8</sup> "In philosophy the idea of the absolute comes first" (F.W.J. Schelling, "System of Philosophy in General ...", in *Idealism and the Endgame of Theory*, trans. and ed. Thomas Pfau [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994], 152. F.W.J. Schelling, *Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. K.F.A. Schelling, 14 vols. [Stuttgart and Augsburg: J.C. Cotta, 1856-61], 6:155. Hereafter SW).

<sup>9</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 10-11.

Since the divine life never alienates itself in finite beings, these finite beings can never have achieved genuine actuality and therefore Hegel claims "otherness and alienation ... are not serious matters." The consequence of this view, however, is that the divine life is never "for itself". For Hegel the critique of acosmism therefore implies not only the failure to account for the actuality of finite beings, but also the negation of the actuality of God. In short, acosmism is atheism.<sup>10</sup>

In addition, the problem of immanence had another, not wholly unrelated face: the threat to human freedom. Since God was an infinite extended being, there was no hope for any extended thing to possess its own causality. Rather, the finite thing was set within an infinite series of immediate causal relations, albeit with other finite beings, such that its own movement was always outside of it. In other words, immanence made human freedom impossible and submitted all finite "things"<sup>11</sup> to an external necessity. The history of this critique has a similar cast of characters. Leibniz and Wolff both tried to show that freedom and necessity did not contradict one another and that their views did not amount to Spinozism, as their detractors claimed. Jacobi picks up this critique as the centerpiece of his attack on philosophical reason, in which he brashly claims that all philosophy amounts to Spinozism. Although the critique of Spinozan fatalism had been around since the late 17th century, Jacobi's appropriation was especially resonant, perhaps precisely because it was linked to philosophy's fate *in toto*. The effect of his polemic countered Jacobi's intentions, as numerous intellectual lights undertook Spinoza's (and philosophy's defense). One of the last of those defenders was Schelling and that in the *Freiheitsschrift*, although his esteem for Spinoza is visible in even early works.

The mediator in the *Freiheitsschrift*'s engagement with the legacy of immanence is Friedrich Schlegel. Père Tilliette notes the importance of Schlegel from the beginning of his chapter on the *Freiheitsschrift*.<sup>12</sup> Schlegel's relationship with Schelling had soured as early as their time

<sup>10</sup> Thus, Hegel's view coincides with Jacobi, Wolff and Bayle, although the latter do not necessarily draw this conclusion for the same reasons. Nor is the point of Hegel's critique to attack apostasy, either in Spinoza or Schelling.

<sup>11</sup> Not beings, but "things", Schelling insists. "The error of his system lies ... in the fact that they are things" (F.W.J. Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*, trans. Jeff Love and Johannes Schmidt [Albany: SUNY Press, 2006], 20. Hereafter FS. SW, 7:349. Hereafter I will use parenthetical citations to refer to the *Freiheitsschrift*, and will include references to the *Sämtliche Werke*.

<sup>12</sup> Tilliette, SUP, 1:499.

as colleagues in Jena at the turn of the century.<sup>13</sup> Not long before the composition and publication of the *Freiheitsschrift*, Schlegel published *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier* (1808), which both repeated the acosmist critique of pantheism as well as claimed that pantheism, or immanence, neutralized the possibility of good and evil. Schelling took himself to be the target of this critique and saw the *Freiheitsschrift* as his explicitly polemical response.<sup>14</sup>

In a letter to Windischmann, Schelling indicated the primary problem in Schlegel's work: "His highly crass and general concept of pantheism doesn't allow him to sense the possibility of a system in which the immanence [*Immanenz*] of things in God, freedom, life, individuality as well as good and evil exist."<sup>15</sup> Schelling thinks that Schlegel adopts a dualistic account in order to explain good and evil,<sup>16</sup> yet this leads to the reason's "self-laceration", as he will observe in the *Freiheitsschrift* (24/7:354). Instead, Schelling promotes a form of pantheism — contrary to Schlegel's conflation of all forms — in which the freedom and actuality of finite beings capable of good and evil is consonant with their immanence within God.

### Different Concepts of Pantheism

The first page of the *Freiheitsschrift* immediately engages the platitudes that haunt pantheism. "According to an old but in no way forgotten legend, the concept of freedom is in fact said to be completely incompatible with system" (FS, 7/SW, 7:336). That is, the thoroughgoing determination of the system, such as pantheism, leaves no room for a spontaneous causation such as freedom. But such views are philosophically vacuous, Schelling writes, especially insofar as what is understood by system remains unclear. The first task of the essay is to provide this clarity,<sup>17</sup> which Schelling does by examining three concepts of pantheism.

<sup>13</sup> Xavier Tilliette, *Schelling. Biographie* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1999), chap. 3-4.

<sup>14</sup> Tilliette, SUP, 1:510. In a letter to Schubert he writes, "I wish for nothing more than that the matter comes to a manifest and decisive debate through what I have done in the text" (F.W.J. Schelling, *Aus Schellings Leben in Briefen*, ed. G.L. Plitt, 3 vols. [Leipzig: Hirzel, 1869; Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2003], 2:153). Hereafter ASL. My translation.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 2:156. My translation.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 2:156-57.

<sup>17</sup> In the aforementioned letter to Windischmann, Schelling compliments himself on achieving a "*nie erreichter Deutlichkeit*" in this matter. Schelling, ASL, 2:157.

The first posits a God reducible to the totality of finite beings; the second thinks God as the individual finite being; and the third grasps finite beings as derivative modifications of the infinite being.

The first concept views pantheism as the "complete identification of God with things" (12/7:340), in which God is nothing more than the aggregate of all finite beings — that is, the cosmic totality. The problem is that God, traditionally conceived as "by nature" infinite, could never be conflated with this dispersion of created beings. The sum of finite beings would never amount to divine infinity. Even if somehow this aggregate were infinite, this infinite, as constituted by an aggregate, would be divisible. Consequently, God would lose the attribute of unity. This conception must be distinguished from acosmism as being, rather, a kind of metaphysical atheism, insofar as finite beings subordinate divine unity.

In response to this concept, Schelling replies that Spinozism, which is presumably the paragon of this form of pantheism, describes the most "total differentiation of things from God" (Ibid.). This is a rather stunning moment in the history of Spinoza reception. Whereas hitherto Spinozism had been defined by acosmism, or the view that finite beings were indistinct from God, Schelling insists upon the radical generic distinction between substance and modes. For him, the definitions of substance and modes make substance self-caused and "by nature original", whereas all created things are "by nature derivative".<sup>18</sup> "Precisely because of this difference, all individual things together cannot amount to God" (12-13/7:341). According to Schelling, such critics have simply misunderstood Spinozism, which is not a metaphysical atheism, as it was described above. Instead it comprehends a dualism in which both substance and modes maintain their ontological integrity, although to their mutual disadvantage. On these grounds, Joseph Bracken claims that for Schelling Spinoza is only "apparently pantheistic".<sup>19</sup>

Far from a sort of ontological indistinction, as immanence had traditionally been critiqued, Schelling implies that transcendence might better

<sup>18</sup> Consider the third and fifth definitions of the first part of the *Ethics*. "By substance I understand what is in itself and what is conceived through itself, that is, that whose concept does not require the concept of another thing from which it must be formed. ... By mode I understand the affections of a substance, or that which is in another through which it is also conceived" (Benedict de Spinoza, *A Spinoza Reader: The Ethics and Other Writings*, trans. and ed. Edwin Curley [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994], 85).

<sup>19</sup> *Freiheit und Kausalität* (Freiburg: Verlag Karl Alber, 1972), 37.

define the relation of substance and modes in Spinoza. This is the first clue to the transformation Schelling makes of the concept of immanence. As we will see below, the ontological consequences of immanence and transcendence are substituted for one another.

The second concept claims, "in Spinoza [or pantheism] the individual thing is equivalent to God" (13/7:341). This view coincides with that of Bayle in the *Dictionary*. The upshot of this view is that identity means unmediated sameness. The finite thing is at the same time an infinite thing. Schelling responds by showing how an inadequate grasp of the logical form of identity generates this confusion. Indeed, this sounds like a simple violation of the principle of contradiction. Schelling shows that a tautological proposition is never a merely declaration of sameness, and the proposition of identity is always a description of differentiation or modification.

The third concept properly states the acosmist critique: "pantheism ... speak[s] ... about the fact that things are nothing, that this system abolished all individuality" (15/7:343). In terms of existence, this view holds that nothing other than God exists, precisely because the existence of all things is derived from God's existence. Schelling extends this critique, such that the derivative or negative existence of things in turn reflects poorly on their creator:<sup>20</sup> "how can he be all things, other than merely in words, so that the whole concept [of God] seems therefore to dissolve and vanish into nothingness?" (15-16/7:344). Schelling thus anticipates the corollary of the acosmist critique, that a God without creation is no God, that acosmism is atheism. If God is to be all things, they must be independently living things.

This is why traditionally transcendence has been conceived as the condition for the actuality of created beings. The ontological distinction of the creator from the created allowed for the autonomy of the created. Or, as Schelling puts it, in the interdependent concepts of ground and consequent, the dependence of the consequence on the ground does not necessarily annul the autonomy of that consequent (17/7:346). The dependence of human being on God as the ground of their existence does not necessarily annul their autonomy.

Schelling's response to the third conception is unique, promptly attending to the crucial problem in rethinking the concept of immanence. While he used his own understanding of Spinozism to rebuff the first

<sup>20</sup> As such, Schelling reiterates the critique that Hegel made of him in the *Phenomenology*.



concept, here he criticizes Spinoza: "[I]f besides substance, [Spinoza] recognizes nothing but mere affections, which he declares things to be, then this concept is admittedly a purely negative one that expresses nothing essential or positive" (16/7:344). In other words, the concept of a mode, which Schelling refers to as an "affection", is negative insofar as it is purely derivative of the former concept.<sup>21</sup> Thus he will claim that the relation of mode to substance can be thought as A/a to A, respectively. The positivity in A/a derives wholly from A. In fact, "if substance dwelt only momentarily in its other consequences A/b, A/c ... it would surely dwell in that consequence, in the human soul = a, eternally, and therefore A/a would be divided from itself as A in an eternal and irreversible manner" (16/7:345). Although this explanation allows a part of the human mind to be eternal, as Spinoza argues in the fifth part of the *Ethics*, it cannot overcome acosmism.<sup>22</sup> Schelling seems indifferent to this critique: "This is of course not set out in Spinoza; but here we are speaking first about pantheism in general; hence, the question is only whether the view presented is inconsistent with Spinozism itself. This will be asserted with difficulty, since it has been admitted that Leibniz's monads ... are not a decisive aid against Spinozism" (Ibid.). Not only Spinozism, but also Leibnizianism falls to the acosmist critique! It is striking that the modern German paradigm of philosophical transcendence, namely Leibniz's system, inadequately resolves this problem.<sup>23</sup>

Although Schelling does not address acosmism explicitly, the critique, as I have shown in the previous section, is manifestly in the air. Schelling has shown that pantheism, or immanence, does not necessarily annul God's identity (contra the first concept) and that it does not amount to unmediated sameness (contra the second concept), but he has not yet shown how pantheism survives the acosmist critique. In fact, instead of responding to acosmism, Schelling turns to examine another critique of pantheism: its supposed fatalism and in particular its failure to conceive good and evil. Freedom becomes another way of addressing pantheism's

<sup>21</sup> Certain readers may object to Schelling's simplified reading of Spinoza, specifically insofar as it fails to acknowledge the function of the attribute. His reading is particularly unique in comparison to Hegel's, since the latter uses the distinction between the attributes to anticipate the dialectic. Regardless, my intention is merely to explicate.

<sup>22</sup> Cf., Spinoza, *Ethics*, E5P23 ff./256ff.

<sup>23</sup> This is one of the primary reasons why it is difficult to admit Heidegger's claim that Leibniz is of greater importance in the *Freiheitsschrift* than is Spinoza (Martin Heidegger, *Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, trans. Joan Stambaugh [Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1985], 5, 38). The acosmist critique, which according to my argument is the anchoring problem of the *Freiheitsschrift*, finds no solution in Leibniz.

threat to the actuality of finite beings and of refuting acosmism. That is, insofar as beings lack freedom, they lack actuality. Schelling's investigation of the essence of human freedom is at the same time a defense of immanence against acosmism. Thus, the rest of the *Freiheitsschrift* is actually aimed at overcoming acosmism, and is therefore a defense against the critiques of Hegel and Schlegel (as well as the other historical figures advancing the critique of pantheism). The questions of the possibility of human freedom and of the actuality of finite beings is now inseparable as one single challenge to immanence.

### Immanence, Transcendence and Emanation vis-à-vis Evil

Up to this point in the *Freiheitsschrift*, everything indicates that Schelling shall advance an immanent metaphysics. Consider, for example, this passage from the opening pages: "if pantheism denotes nothing more than the doctrine of the immanence of things in God, every rational viewpoint in some sense must be drawn to this doctrine" (11/7:339). Despite this single-mindedness of intention and the tendentious manner in which Schelling dispatched the critiques of pantheism, he delays the actual beginning of his investigations to compare the views of immanence, transcendence and emanation in their effects on the actuality of evil. This is important because human freedom is understood by Schelling to be a capacity for good and evil.<sup>24</sup>

To show what is necessary for this "real and vital concept of freedom", Schelling begins with the presupposition that we cannot posit evil in God. Otherwise, we approach dualism, or the "self-laceration" [*Selbsterreißung*] of reason,<sup>25</sup> which is the curse of modern philosophy since Descartes. Yet this is precisely what immanence does: "it is inevitable that evil be posited within the infinite substance of the primal will itself"

<sup>24</sup> Such understanding supersedes the merely "formal" notion of freedom found in Kant, in the separation of freedom from the conditions of phenomenal existence, namely space and time, and in particular, the causal principle complicit with successive temporality (21/7:351). Only as the capacity for good and evil may human freedom distinguish itself from the will of any other living thing. In other words, all living things as they are in God share the will of the ground, which stands separate from the conditions of space and time as a basis for their existence, but only in human being has the will of the ground become an autonomous principle of self-actualization. I will explain these issues below.

<sup>25</sup> SW, 7:354. This translation comes from Priscilla Hayden-Roy's translation of the *Freiheitsschrift* ("Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom and Related Matters", in Ernst Behler, ed., *Philosophy of German Idealism* [New York: Continuum, 1987], 234).

(23/7:353). If God is unified with the world, then there can be no distinction that separates God from the implication in human evil. As in the first and second concepts of pantheism, the problem here concerns the difference between the finite and the infinite. Once God is ontologically inseparable from evil he is lost. Yet, above we saw Schelling successfully defend Spinozan pantheism from the imputation of sameness. Does it not follow that immanence could be thought such that evil would be an effect of the finite world, perhaps of finitude itself, and that God would be free of evil? But this view comprehends evil as privation, and then evil as well as freedom loses all reality. For this reason, we must conclude that immanence cannot pass the test of the reality of evil, because it cannot maintain the separation of God from evil.

This failure does not mean, however, that transcendence solves the problem: "The difficulty is no slighter though, if even the most distant connection between God and beings in the world is assumed" (Ibid.). Transcendence can never mean that creation is wholly separate from God. Created beings shall always depend on God for their existence. This "*concursum*" of creation with God results in divine culpability. The options for making sense of this *concursum* are no more promising than those of immanence. First, if what is positive in creation comes from God and it is the basis for creation, and if evil is "good insofar as it is positive", then evil is not explained. "If what has *being* in evil is good, whence *that in which* this being is, the *basis* that actually constitutes evil?" (24/7:353) Schelling's question foreshadows his conclusion that there must be a separate positive principle at the basis of evil. Second, if what is positive comes from God and evil does not exist at all, then good and evil are distinguished only in degrees of perfection. The opposition of good and evil is wholly lost. Schelling ultimately identifies this option with Spinozism. Third, if in the transcendent account of God as positivity, this positivity is freedom, which is indifferent to good and evil, then God is responsible for evil. Consequently, if "this indifference [is] not merely negative yet rather [...] a vital, positive capacity for good and evil, it is not comprehensible how a capacity for evil can result from God who is regarded as pure goodness" (24/7:354). If, fourth, there is then a separate principle for this evil, thereby acquitting God of evil, we are forced towards dualism, whose defects are already clear. In the end, transcendence, like immanence, cannot satisfy Schelling's demands.

Emanation, the ostensible alternative to immanence and transcendence, produces even more difficulties. Emanation allows us to think the Fall, yet the Fall itself requires explanation that are either confounded or

end in divine culpability, albeit indirectly. From this analysis we see why Schelling will abandon the traditional versions of immanence and transcendence. While the former advances the problem of system, which realistically considered is not merely an alternative but the only complete explanation of the existent world, only the latter maintains the independent ontological subsistence of the finite apart from the infinite, however fecklessly. This subsistence or actuality of the individual is necessary for the actuality of the system. But as we have seen, Schelling is committed to pantheism, to immanence.

### Rethinking Immanence

In the preceding sections, we observed Schelling's analysis of the concept of immanence and its consequences in depth, as well as his views of transcendence and emanation. Now we will consider the novel sense Schelling ascribes to immanence (and transcendence) by redefining it. We will then observe this new concept of immanence in the actuality of human evil, specifically in the strategic role this concept plays in overcoming acosmism.

Traditionally transcendence and immanence oppose one another, as their spatial connotations demonstrate. Finite beings must be either *in* or *outside* of the infinite. But these spatial connotations merely confuse the ontological and causal implications at issue. Immanence makes the finite ontologically derivative and externally<sup>26</sup> causally determined, as it inheres within the ontologically prior and causally independent infinite. These are the reasons it is charged with acosmism, fatalism, and atheism. Transcendence, in contrast, grants an ontological integrity to the finite and the infinite, it seems, and so secures God from contamination with temporality, finitude, and evil.

Yet Schelling's dialectical analysis of these concepts dissolves the semblance of conceptual rigor. Neither transcendence nor immanence grasps the actuality of evil and thereby the "real and vital concept of freedom." To avoid the limitations of the traditional immanence and exploit the possibilities of immanence, Schelling counter-intuitively redefines

<sup>26</sup> This word admittedly seems poorly chosen. I use it only because of the mechanism traditionally attributed to Spinozism and the external causation implied therein. Certainly it seems inscrutable how inherence — if we choose to think immanence as such — could think something like external causation. Here I am merely setting up a more elaborate analysis.

immanence. Immanence pertains to a being [*Seiende*], he contends, insofar as it is free and *selbstständig* — and to this degree it is “in God.” Transcendence thus describes that being, insofar as it is un-free and presumably, which is dependent on God. “[O]nly what is free [*frei*] is in God to the extent it is free, and what is not free is necessarily outside of God to the extent that it is not free” (18-19/7:347).<sup>27</sup> This reconceptualization clearly owes a great deal to Schelling’s unusual reading of Spinoza, as should be clear. Above we saw Schelling describe Spinozism as a system in which a great gulf separated substance and modes. Spinozism is fatalism because modes are *too* separate from God, such that they have lost all freedom. As odd as it sounds, Spinozan immanence means *external* causal determination, because it is separated from the principle of autonomy that is within God. Thus, the immanence Schelling promotes avoids this problem through the proximity of the finite being to God.

But before we consider the actuality of human freedom, let us briefly turn to the difference between God as ground and as existence, in which the new concept of immanence functions quite elegantly. By the ground-existence distinction Schelling hopes to displace the ground-consequent relation implied in Spinozan immanence.<sup>28</sup> The latter implies an asymmetrical causal determination that results in acosmism.<sup>29</sup> Against this, the ground-existence distinction implies a creative synthesis, or better, an active differentiation. The “will of the understanding”, or existence, emerges out of the ground, but in so doing constitutes the ground as ground, which possesses a will of its own, albeit a purely desiring, non-intellectual will (28/7:359). The differentiation of the wills of the ground and the understanding is the movement within God that “gives birth” to God. This differentiation does not contradict Schellingian immanence. Immanence as a “dead containment of things” must be replaced by the notion of a becoming [*Werden*] (Ibid.). Becoming resonates with immanence, as the latter implies *Selbstständigkeit* and freedom. In turn, becoming harmonizes with Schelling’s repeated statements that God must be of the living, not of the dead, and that the creatures most capable of revealing him are, like him, living.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> To be fair, Schelling does not sufficiently explain transcendence according to this reversal of logic.

<sup>28</sup> Miklos Vetö, *Le Fondement Selon Schelling*, 2nd ed. (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2002), 146. Tilliette, SUP, 1:519.

<sup>29</sup> Alan White, *Schelling: Introduction to the System of Freedom* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 111.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. 18/7:346, 28/7:359, 56/7:392, 62/7:399.

Schelling attributes to immanence a kind of ontological affinity between the divine and terrestrial, such that created beings only reveal God if they are free and independent. In other words, there could be no dependence if the dependent creature were not also *independent*: “That of which the eternal is a ground through its being is in this respect dependent [*abhängig*] and, from the point of view of immanence, also something contained within the eternal. But dependence [*Abhängigkeit*] does not abolish autonomy [*Selbstständigkeit*], it does not even abolish freedom” (17/7:346).<sup>31</sup> The finite being depends on the ground for its existence and is in this limited sense dependent on something in God, which is not God. But Schellingian immanence is directed increasingly toward the autonomy [*Selbstständigkeit*] of the finite being. Thus, we can see how this new immanence aims to resolve the two problems that anchor the *Freiheitsschrift*: how created beings are *actual* as immanent within God and how human freedom can have a “real and living basis.”

Human freedom is the capacity for good and evil and the possibility of evil consists in the orientation of the spirit according to the particular or universal will (the will of the ground or of love, respectively). But beyond the possibility of evil, the question of its actuality remains. Human will shares in equal portions the will of the ground and that of love. Because of the “equilibrium” between principles (the *immanence* of human will to them), spirit must overcome indecision. To overcome this indecision, a “general ground of solicitation” tempts spirit. This “solicitation” is a “consciousness” (in a qualified sense) of the omnipotence of the universal will over the particularity of the individual: “The fear of life drives man out of the *centrum* into which he was created: for this *centrum*, as the purest essence of all willing, is for each particular will a consuming fire; in order to be able to live within it the man of all particularity must become extinct” (47/VII:381). This solicitation, however, does not determine the will externally, but rather prompts the necessity of its act, which I term an act of self-actualization.<sup>32</sup>

Absent external determination, the act of self-actualization is absolutely free in determining itself. This does not mean that self-determination is a movement from indeterminacy to determination — this movement is as inexplicable as that from the infinite to the finite. Schelling insists that the movement is not a “groundless” act precisely because the

<sup>31</sup> I have made minor changes to the Love-Schmidt translations. Hereafter an asterisk will mark modifications \*.

<sup>32</sup> I will explain below.



will does not inexplicably move from a state of indetermination into one of determination (49/VII:384). The will is in its essence determining, but what the will determines is itself. Both the very *form* of the will as a force of determination and the *content* of the will as the object determined are implied in this description (50/VII:385).<sup>33</sup> Therefore, the will is grounded in its determination by its own act.

In its affinity to the creative act of God, the free act of determination "precedes consciousness just as it precedes essence, indeed, produces *them*" (7:386\*).<sup>34</sup> Thus, freedom concerns an ontological determination.<sup>35</sup> Freedom is, in other words, ultimately indistinguishable from the actualization of the essence (*Wesen*). For this reason, I have called it an act of self-actualization; it is an act whereby the finite being becomes actual (*wirklich*). The free act is an ontological event, and remains outside the temporality and causality governing human experience — indeed, it makes the moral human being possible. This free act, this ontological event, is a transcendental ground.<sup>36</sup>

Thinking about the free ontological event as a transcendental ground for human experience presents a major problem, and it opens up questions about immanence and transcendence, traditional or Schellingian. Transcendental grounding, although immanent to the object grounded, frequently results in dualism: e.g. Kant's division between the sensible and intelligible. Schelling avoids dualism by insisting that the free act of creation is a transcendental ground in a peculiar sense that becomes visible when we observe the act of human freedom in eternity and in its relation to human life or history. This act "does not temporally precede life but goes through time (unhampered by it) as an act by nature eternal"

<sup>33</sup> J.G. Fichte, *Science of Knowledge*, trans. Peter Heath and John Lachs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 35, 98-99.

<sup>34</sup> I modified Love and Schmidt's translation because it implies that only essence is determined by this free act. In the original, the passage reads: "In dem Bewußtsein, sofern es bloßes Selbsterfassen und nur idealistisch ist, kann jene freie Tat, die zur Notwendigkeit wird, freilich nicht vorkommen, da sie ihm, wie dem *Wesen*, vorangeht, es erst *macht*".

<sup>35</sup> On my view, to this "ontological determination", I oppose a rational or causal determination. Rational determination would require a reasoning subject, but such a subject is precisely what is being brought into being by the act. I exclude causal determination because it belongs to temporality, whereas this ontological determination co-exists within eternity the entire temporal series that constitutes the life of the individual.

<sup>36</sup> Miklos Vetö describes the ground as revisiting of the "transcendental problematic" (*Le Fondement*, 61), and I follow him in this interpretation. On this view, the *Freiheitsschrift* is not a mystical flight of fantasy, but a continuation of the "transcendental problematic", (albeit by other means), namely, accounting for the conditions of the possibility of human existence, experience, and moral being in a unique, divine world.

(51/VII:385-86\*). In one aspect, the free act is an eternal act, while in another aspect it is the becoming of an individual. As such, the way in which a free act could "go through time" becomes comprehensible without reducing this free act to temporality. We must remember that Schelling takes Kant's transcendental freedom, the absolute spontaneity irreducible to temporal schematization, to be the model, in part, for freedom (22/VII:351).<sup>37</sup> On this dual aspect theory, the relation between temporality and eternity is not wholly a transcendental relationship. While one is the ground for the other, neither is reducible to the other.<sup>38</sup> This aspectual explanation also extends to the relation of the "two creations." The creative act of God is repeated by the free act of human actualization. Yet the consequences of these two activities are not the same. While the creative act of God was necessary to give birth to himself in the image of creation, that image of creation finally actualizes itself in the free act of human actualization. Divine revelation only enters its ultimate phase with human being. Here we have an account in which "that through which the One is generated may itself be in turn begotten by it" (28/VI:359).<sup>39</sup>

The complexity of the aspectual relation should cause us to ask about the degree to which traditional versions of transcendence and immanence can comprehend it. The aspectual relation suggests that God and human being are bound by a reciprocity undercutting any privilege by which immanence or transcendence would be judged. The ground is that which, in God, is not God, and yet founds God's existence. Existence contains human being, yet it is not the cause of human being. All existence requires the ground as the condition for its existence, but this existence cannot be confused with the individual human essence. What is unique about the actuality of human freedom is the independence of its self-will (which is the will of the ground raised to a higher opposition as an evil will). Human freedom is the *centrum* of all creation, of all what

<sup>37</sup> Andrew Bowie, *Schelling and Modern European Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 94.

<sup>38</sup> I draw this concept of a dual aspect theory of temporality from one interpretation of Spinoza's understanding of the attributes. In other words, extension and thought are different aspects of substance and modes. This interpretation is problematic in Spinoza, for reasons I will not address here.

<sup>39</sup> If we return the analogy back to its original object, a startling consequence comes into view: the eternal act of self-actualization whereby a person determines themselves is somehow susceptible to the temporal transformations of moral being that occur in human life. I make this argument in my "When Time Preceded Eternity: Schelling's Conversion to History", *Ph: The Warwick Journal of Philosophy* 21 (2010): 26-40.

exists. Thus it is immanent to creation, in the traditional and Schellingian senses, as it provides the centerpiece, the ultimate point of development for phenomenal nature: "Man is hence the redeemer in nature toward which all archetypes [*Vorbilder*] in nature aim" (72-3/VII:411\*). The evolution of the created world occurs through the increasing division of the wills of the ground and of the understanding, which achieve a final separation in the human soul, such that both wills are equal in force (31/VII:362). This is where the difficulties, and the reasons for Schelling's dissatisfaction with the traditional concepts, begin.

While in general human existence may be the final result of a development of nature, for Schelling this process of development does not bear on the essence or soul of the individual, which is distinguished in relation thereto.<sup>40</sup> The separation of principles achieved in the human soul allows an independence that actualizes that individual — a self-actualization that is completely spontaneous. But neither the ground as the "real and living basis" for human being, nor the relation between human being and created nature makes human being either causally or ontologically derivative. Thus, in neither sense does traditional immanence bear on this account.

The only ambiguity on this point appears in the resemblance between the free act of human self-actualization and the creative act of God in giving birth to himself in the created world. The resemblance here is based on the epochs to which each creation gives birth: God's creative act inaugurates the whole of existent nature and the free act of human individualization institutes history. Yet this resemblance extends to the function of the ground in each. God establishes his existence only on the basis of a ground that, while being "in" him, is not him. Similarly, the free act brings the human essence into being through the autonomy of the principle of the ground — that is, the principle separate from the universal will, dominant within all of nature: "[Human will] is will that beholds itself in complete freedom, being no longer an instrument of the productive universal will in nature, but rather above and outside of all nature" (33/VII:364). Yet here the will of the ground forms the possibility

<sup>40</sup> I must note that Schelling's "higher opposition" might seem like a transposition of "materialistic" forces that shape existent nature into a "spiritual," i.e., non-material, realm. For me, this raises the question of whether Schelling's dialectic of creation is in fact a merely genetic account of Kantian dualism. In other words, is it the case that Schelling is not surpassing the potential dualism of Kant's transcendental problematic but explaining it? As I have shown above, I think there are definitely vestiges of the transcendental project as well as limitations to it within the *Freiheitsschrift*.

of self-will. Thus, we might be tempted to ask about a causal connection between these "two creations." Would the anarchic ground be the *cause* for the existence of creation and for human essence? In fact the ground is the cause of neither. Creation is dominated by the will of the understanding, but this will does not stand above creation as an external principle. Again, this is not traditional immanence. Moreover, according to the standard critique of pantheism, human being is ontologically derivative of the plenitude of God's being. But in the *Freiheitsschrift*, practically the opposite is the case: human freedom is not derivative of God, but in fact human freedom is the condition for divine actualization, for God's revelation in creation. This is not to say that the human being becomes infinite or radically overcomes its dependence on God, as creation, for its existence. Yet that existence does not nullify the independence of human freedom.

In order to appreciate this unique property Schelling accords to human being, we must return to the passage excerpted above. Human self-actualization "is will that beholds itself in complete freedom, being no longer an instrument of the productive universal will in nature, but rather *above and outside all nature*" (33/VII:364). According Schelling's definition of immanence, human being is most *immanent* to God insofar as it is free to the highest degree. Going further, we might also say that human being is transcendent in the traditional sense in relation to created nature, and even that human being transcends this becoming God. That is, if God is dependent upon the destiny of creation that lies tied up with human history, then human being becomes the eminent finite existent. In this last sense, finitude no longer denotes what is ontologically secondary, but strangely, what is ontologically primary. And therefore, we see that traditional transcendence again cannot assist Schelling's aim in the *Freiheitsschrift*. Along these lines, God seems to be demoted by the consequences of his generosity in creation.<sup>41</sup> The freedom he gives to human being submits his destiny to human history. This is the reason why Schelling must redefine immanence and transcendence. Both concepts elevate human freedom towards divine being, but divine being remains the insuperable basis upon which human freedom is judged.

<sup>41</sup> I make the argument elsewhere that Schellingian pantheism is atheism ("Pantheism and Atheism in Schelling's *Freiheitsschrift*", in, Anthony Paul Smith and Daniel Whistler, eds., *After the Postsecular and the Postmodern: New Essays in the Continental Philosophy of Religion* [Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge Scholar's Press, 2010]), 64-80.

In conclusion, Schellingian immanence represents a new conceptualization of the relation between human freedom and God as a unique, infinite being. Pantheism, or immanence, had been stigmatized by its apparent acosmism — that is, the derivative status it attributed to finite beings and the actuality it thereby denied to human freedom. Schelling's reconceptualization circumvents such ontological derivation and awards a certain radical independence to human being, and does so proportionally to the degree that the human being is "in" God.

# LA CRITIQUE DU POLITIQUE DANS LE CONTEXTE D'UNE PHILOSOPHIE DE LA LIBERTÉ. POUR UNE RELECTURE DE LA PHILOSOPHIE SCHELLINGIENNE

Hans Jörg SANDKÜHLER

Pour des raisons qui relèvent de la théorie, mais aussi de l'histoire et de la politique, la morale, le droit et l'État furent des questions considérées comme centrales par les protagonistes de l'idéalisme allemand.<sup>1</sup> Bouleversements sociaux, révolutions, politique et philosophie sont étroitement liées entre elles.

Néanmoins, dans le champ de l'idéalisme allemand, la philosophie morale et les théories du droit et de l'État se développent en passant par des voies différentes. Chez Kant comme chez Fichte pendant sa période d'Iéna la philosophie morale est une partie importante du système. Chez Schelling et Hegel, elle est reléguée dans l'ombre des théories de l'histoire, du droit et de l'État; la morale est «historicisée»; son importance relativisée par rapport à celle de l'État et du droit. Pourtant, tous les idéalistes allemands adoptent deux idées directrices: celle de *liberté en tant qu'autonomie* et celle du *droit à la différence*.

Mon étude s'articule en six points et ce qui m'intéresse au premier chef ne ressortit pas à l'historiographie. La question que je pose est plutôt de savoir si précisément la critique schellingienne de l'État ne pourrait pas guider notre présent. Mes réflexions se rangent à double titre sous l'étiquette de «critique de l'État»: il s'agit, tout d'abord, de critiquer la facticité de l'État, qui reste en deçà du niveau de l'État de droit; et, en deuxième lieu, de proposer une critique au sens kantien du mot, à savoir un examen des conditions de possibilité de l'État et du droit. Schelling apporte deux réponses: l'État est, pour des raisons de liberté humaine, possible mais aussi, parce qu'il existe une liberté pour le mal, nécessaire; il a pour seul but de protéger la liberté.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. sur ce sujet les chapitres 6 et 7 du *Handbuch Deutscher Idealismus* par Jean-François Kervégan, Georg Mohr et Hans Jörg Sandkühler, in: H.J. Sandkühler (éd.), *Handbuch Deutscher Idealismus*, Stuttgart/Weimar, 2005. Trad. franç. éd. par J.-F. Kervégan et H.J. Sandkühler, Paris, Éditions du Cerf, à paraître en 2011.