

# Review of Lara Ostaric (ed.) “Interpreting Schelling: Critical Essays”

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Critique

[LARA OSTARIC \(ed.\) | Interpreting Schelling: Critical Essays | Cambridge University Press 2014](#)

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By G. Anthony Bruno

That Lara Ostaric’s *Interpreting Schelling: Critical Essays* is the first English-language collection of papers devoted to the philosophy of F.W.J. Schelling is timely, yet overdue. Renewed Anglophone interest in German idealism has been in full swing since the turn of the century, exposing scholars and students to the continuing relevance of the problems tackled and solutions offered during the tract of time stretching *von Kant bis Hegel*. Longstanding inaccuracies resulting from heavy reliance on this refrain—neglect of the positions and challenges that enabled Hegel’s attempt to overcome Kant, misperception of Hegel as the culmination of German idealism—have been slowly corrected by increased attention to figures falling within this tract, including Jacobi, Maimon, Reinhold, Fichte and, gradually, Schelling. A large portion of Schelling’s massive oeuvre has received English translation over the past fifteen years alone. Yet he is the least understood or studied of the idealists. One can read commentaries and attend conferences on German idealism with little or no mention of him, despite his role in this tradition’s inception and his impact on Kierkegaard, Marx, Rosenzweig, Cassirer, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Adorno and Habermas. Ostaric’s volume casts Schelling in a charitable and informative light, bringing together experts on post-Kantian philosophy to demonstrate his contribution to the basic insights of German idealism, his role in the critique of the same and in the course of subsequent European thought, and his innovative responses to questions of lasting metaphysical, epistemological, ethical and aesthetic import. This edition yields compelling reasons for regarding Schelling as one of Kant’s most incisive interpreters, a nuanced thinker of freedom and nature, and perhaps Hegel’s most effective critic. In doing so, it uncovers philosophical commitments that unify an otherwise protean corpus.

Ostaric’s Introduction illustrates how Schelling’s earliest motivations reveal the basic character of the German idealist tradition, central to which is the idea of a first principle. In a letter in early 1795, Schelling tells Hegel: “Kant has given the results: the premises are still missing. And who can understand the results without the premises?” (SW, III.1:16). If some variety of transcendental idealism is the conclusion to a successful argument against rational dogmatism and empirical scepticism, it is only because we can discern its first principle, i.e., the ultimate premise from which to derive the premises that Kant assumes regarding the divisions of reason and the forms of the faculties. Schelling identifies this principle with freedom, which in ‘Of the I as Principle of Philosophy’ (1795, hereafter *Ich-Schrift*) he calls “the beginning and end of all philosophy” (SW, I.1:177). While Schelling does not consistently construe freedom in terms of personality or individual will, his overall understanding of freedom-as-first-principle is that it expresses the kind of person one is. He therefore takes Fichte’s famous dictum more literally than Fichte. The kind of person one is, for Fichte, is either authentically or inauthentically idealist because the only first principle is the I, which transcends “personal I-hood” (SW, IV.2:220) and is indifferent to personality (SW, I.4:505).

Whereas Fichte is committed to absolute freedom, Schelling is continually committed to the plurality of possible forms of freedom. Hence his claim in ‘Philosophical Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism’ (1795/96) that “[i]f we want to establish a system and, therefore, principles, we cannot do it except by an anticipation of the practical decision”,

that is, the “proleptic assertions” of persons, which are nothing but “*original insuperable prejudices*” (SW, I.1:312–13). Hence his claim in the 1841/42 Berlin lectures that “[n]othing could more enrage a youthful and fiery sensibility, burning for the truth, than the intention of a teacher to prepare his audience for some one special or particular system” (SW, II.3:16). Hence, too, his claim in *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom* (1809, hereafter *Freiheitsschrift*) that the “Fichteian impetuosity” of demanding crystal clear insight into an unrivalled principle is no better than Spinozism: “The God of pure idealism, as well as the God of pure realism, is necessarily an impersonal being, of which the concepts of Spinoza and Fichte are the clearest proofs” (SW, I.7:360, 395). While it is common to contrast Schelling with Fichte’s alleged subjectivism, Fichte’s real error is his absolutist pursuit of the sole, correct first principle, a pursuit that in the ‘Anti-Critique’ (1796) Schelling calls “ill-fated” (SW, I.1:243). Such statements of philosophical pluralism reflect Ostarcic’s main assertion that Schelling’s constant reformulations evince “his *modesty* and his recognition that, while rigorous and systematic, philosophical reflection is not omnipotent before the complexity of the human condition” (p. 5).

Eric Watkins’ essay ‘The Early Schelling on the Unconditioned’ seeks to explain Schelling’s interest in a first principle or unconditioned condition and to trace this interest to Kant, supplementing scholarly preoccupation with its Fichteian, Jacobian and Hölderlinean inspirations. In ‘On the Possibility of a Form of Philosophy in General’ (1794, hereafter *Form-Schrift*), the unconditioned represents “the very foundation and possibility of all philosophical thought” (p. 6). According to Watkins, Schelling seeks this foundation, not simply to provide the missing premise for Kant’s conclusions, but to vindicate Kant’s own systematic ambition (p. 11). In Kantian terms, Watkins explains, reason syllogistically seeks to uncover the basic premises of its logical use, which, in its real use, consists in seeking the unconditioned condition of the totality of the conditions of objects of cognition (p. 14). Reason’s peculiar desire is to convert its interest in systematic cognition from subjective maxim to objective principle, i.e., from a regulative idea to an act of knowing constitutive of cognition as such. Aided by Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre*, Schelling pursues this conversion in the *Form-Schrift* by arguing that the elements of the unconditioned must also be unconditioned on pain of being conditioned and so mutually limiting, undermining its status as first principle (p. 23). Thus, what the unconditioned posits—its content, which is the I—how it is posited—its form, which is  $A=A$ —and what posits it—itsself, lest it depend on something else—all must be unconditioned. Might this third element better reflect Fichte’s practical concern for self-positing than Kant’s theoretical concern for systematicity? Watkins thinks not, claiming that the *Ich-Schrift* argues, with Kant but against Fichte, that intellectual intuition of the unconditioned belongs, not to our reason, but to reason itself (p. 26). This would agree with Kant’s assertion in the A-Preface of the *Critique* that human reason is barred from systematic cognition and fated to ask unanswerable questions (Avii) and the Amphiboly’s dismissal of the complaint that we lack a superhuman faculty of cognition (A278/B334).

But Watkins’ claim does not account for Schelling’s view in the *Ich-Schrift* that philosophers can “elevat[e] themselves” (SW, I.1:183) to intellectual intuition. By this act, we make a “practical transition into the supersensuous domain” of “freedom but also all philosophy itself”. Intuiting the I is thus “the most immanent of all assertions: indeed, it must be the condition of all immanent philosophy” (SW, I.1:205). To be sure, often “the unconditional within us is clouded by the conditional”; still, we are capable of “self-attained insight” (SW, I.1:216). Watkins’ claim finds better support in the Würzburg lectures, published as *System of Philosophy in General and of the Philosophy of Nature in Particular* (1804). There, Schelling calls the unconditioned “reason”, argues that it is the identity of knower and known, and attributes intellectual intuition of it to itself: “It is not *me* who recognizes this identity, but it recognizes itself, and I am merely its organ” (SW, I.6:143). These lectures mark the height of Schelling’s philosophy of identity, according to whose doctrine of intellectual intuition human subjectivity is the negation of reason (SW, I.6:153). One reason the *Ich-Form* is not as bold as Watkins suggests is that unlike the Würzburg lectures—which build on the idea in *Further Presentations from the System of Philosophy* (1802) that, *qua* first principle, intellectual intuition belongs to itself alone (SW, I.4:370)—it precedes by less than a year Schelling’s first critique (in the “Letters”) of his intermittent doctrine.

Hegel’s attack in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) on philosophers who begin with absolute knowledge “like a shot from a pistol” (§27) is a thinly veiled criticism of Schelling’s doctrine of intellectual intuition. Michael Forster argues in ‘Schelling and Skepticism’ that Hegel’s image of the night in which all cows are black (comparable to

Meister Eckhart's image of the desert into which no distinction enters) accurately captures *Presentation of My System of Philosophy* (1801) and *Further Presentations*, during which period Schelling offers dogmatic assurances for a first principle that admits of neither proof nor teaching and takes no interest in scepticism (pp. 32–3). Forster contrasts this period with an evolving relationship toward scepticism as it passes through Fichtean, Hegelian and Romantic phases. In his Fichtean phase, Schelling shares Reinhold's concern for the sceptical threat posed by Kant's lack of a principle from which to derive the categories' unity and completeness and Schulze's sceptical charge that Reinhold fails to provide this principle (p. 35). He endorses Fichte's intellectual intuition of the I as a dual solution in the *Form-Schrift* and *Ich-Schrift*, but then abandons what Forster calls its continuity with the "Cartesian" strategy of founding knowledge on the "first-person psychological perspective of the subject" (p. 38). It should be noted, however, that Fichte explicitly rejects this strategy, contrasting the I with the Cartesian subject and with subjectivity generally (SW, I.1:100; I.4:459, 505; IV.2:179, 220). Furthermore, there is a distinct Cartesian strategy in the *Ich-Schrift*, one Schelling never fully abandons. There he credits Maimon with observing that Reinhold secures the possibility, but not the reality, of a first principle (SW, I.1:208n). This raises a Cartesian doubt about whether that whose idea is necessary really exists, a doubt that guides Schelling's critique of negative philosophy in the Berlin lectures regarding whether philosophy's first principle is not only rational, but actual.

Forster next observes that Schelling's dogmatic period is succeeded by a Hegelian phase in which, particularly in *Lectures on the Method of Academic Study* (1803), he adopts Hegel's view that philosophy requires subjecting finitude to sceptical destruction (p. 42). Schelling's Romantic phase in turn rejects Hegel's project of converting love of wisdom into pure *sophia*, endorsing endless progress toward regulative ideals on the grounds that the desire for wisdom necessarily excludes wisdom (p. 45). Forster's periodisation is complicated by the fact that this feature of the Romantic phase finds expression in the 'Letters', which argue for the necessary incompleteness of any philosophical system (SW, I.1:306). Notwithstanding Schelling's early and continual resistance to what Forster suspects is a recalcitrant dogmatism, the picture offered helps to determine the precision of Hegel's infamous attack.

In 'The Concept of Life in Early Schelling', Ostaric corrects associations of Schelling's philosophy of nature with Kant's deduction of the categories, arguing that it rather attempts to realize the Third *Critique's* idea of a common root of nature and reason. Focusing on *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* (1797), *On the World-Soul* (1798) and *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature* (1799), Ostaric discerns this root in a principle of life, according to which nature is analogous to reason insofar as it is self-determining. Schelling arrives at this idea in the wake of Kant's struggle to define natural force in the First *Critique* and in *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*. In *Ideas*, Schelling conceives life in terms of natural forces that function as conditions of cognition whose equilibrium accounts for the sensibility of matter (p. 56). Natural forces constitute a whole (nature) in virtue of which its parts (material objects) are sensible. The principle of life that these forces constitute is thus an application of the Third *Critique's* notion of an intuitive understanding, which generates particulars from a synthetic universal (p. 57). The *World-Soul* extends this idea to a formative drive in nature that manifests itself in organic formations that are cause and effect of themselves. While Kant proscribes knowledge of such a drive, Schelling claims we are entitled to it insofar as we 'construct' or exhibit it in the whole-part structure of organisms. We thereby proceed with an intuitive understanding.

This raises the question of why Schelling retains the opposition between contingency and necessity that characterizes a discursive understanding. Ostaric explains that contingency reflects the impermanent equilibrium of natural forces that constitute the unity of a material object (p. 61). This suggests a way of including Schelling in neo-Hegelian debates about the concept of life even as the *First Outline's* account of experimentation implies their relative limitations. In this text, Schelling argues that constructing the concept of life involves *a priori* judgements about the structure of nature, which we pose as hypotheses that nature must confirm (SW, I.8:33). Our conceptual constructions accordingly depend on experimentation for their validation. This dependence illustrates the limitation of what Schelling later calls Hegel's 'negative philosophy' and anticipates his case for 'positive philosophy', the roots of which Ostaric's essay traces earlier than most scholars have so far done.

Paul Guyer's essay 'Knowledge and Pleasure in the Aesthetics of Schelling' reconstructs from *System of*

*Transcendental Idealism* (1800) the thesis that, contra Kant, aesthetic experience consists, not in the free play of the faculties, but in release from the pain of human life. To show how judgements of taste can express both subjective pleasure in the beautiful and universal validity for all who may judge it, Kant appeals in the Third *Critique* to a mental state unrestricted by determinate concepts. Our faculties' free interaction in this state is pleasurable, which state is imputable to others who share these faculties. According to Guyer, Schelling modifies this view by arguing that aesthetic experience is both cognitive and a negatively pleasurable relief from pain (p. 77). The *System* distinguishes epistemic laws and natural laws—products of consciousness and unconsciousness, respectively—from art, which while consciously intentional is unconsciously inspired, dependent on our agency yet exceeding voluntary action. Since artistic production is both conscious and unconscious, it reveals an absolute identity that we artificially divide into mind and nature, which divide is the source of life's pain. By suspending this divide, art gives us "infinite satisfaction" and "tranquility" (SW, I.3:615). Insofar as it manifests the "original identity of the conscious with the unconscious activity" (SW, I.3:606), art would therefore seem to function as intellectual intuition as it is conceived in the *Form-Schrift* and *Ich-Schrift*. Indeed, the *System* states that the "incontestable objectivity of intellectual intuition is art itself" (SW, I.3:624). This implies what is, in fact, a textually supported relation between relief from pain and intellectual intuition. The 'Letters' argue that the latter is both philosophy's highest goal and akin to "a state of death" in which resisting the world and struggling for freedom ceases in a "moment of annihilation" (SW, I.1:324–5). In this text, 'intellectual intuition' denotes perfection exceeding the bounds of life, which precedes its reinvention in the *System* as a temporary aesthetic release from life's pain. This wider interpretive context allows us to see how Guyer's essay illuminates continuity between Schelling's early and middle periods.

Schelling's philosophy of identity trades the *System's* parallelism of subjectivity and objectivity for the Absolute, from which the former are to be 'constructed'. In 'Exhibiting the Particular in the Universal: Philosophical Construction and Intuition in Schelling's Philosophy of Identity (1801–1804)', Daniel Breazeale outlines eight features of construction:

1. Since the Absolute cannot be constructed from oppositions (e.g., subject/object, ideal/real), construction begins with the Absolute, conceived as the identity of knower and known.
2. Construction explains particulars by exhibiting their unity in absolute identity.
3. Construction's starting point is neither inferred nor hypothetical (on pain of opposition), but rather is an immediate intuition.
4. Construction's method is demonstrative, displaying the absolute's identity in each particular and thus never transcending this identity.
5. Construction treats particulars, not as objects (again, on pain of opposition), but as ideas that instantiate absolute identity.
6. Construction exhibits particulars in a systematic whole.
7. Construction's completion coincides with its starting point.
8. Construction cannot be learned.

These features characterise the philosophy of identity as much as they underline deficiencies Schelling will detect in (his own former) negative philosophy, e.g., ignoring the question 'why something rather than nothing', assuming reality follows from a system's self-enclosed rationality, and effacing the philosopher's decision to endorse a system. Breazeale anticipates related problems, e.g., the self-sufficiency of an absolute that we nevertheless construct, and the very idea of assessing the correctness of intuition-based construction (p. 117–18). As critical as Schelling is of Fichte and Hegel after the philosophy of identity, the latter clearly lies in his crosshairs.

Manfred Frank's "'Identity of Identity and Non-Identity": Schelling's Path to the "Absolute System of Identity"' traces the philosophy of identity's early modern background. Leibniz defines identity metaphysically by the denial that objects can differ in number alone, which Hume charges with tautology since it is uninformative to say an object is identical with itself. Kant infers that identity must be sensitive to difference and so must involve a relation among objects. Frank shows that this orients Schelling toward a fivefold definition of absolute identity:

1. It is a bond that unites a multiplicity of predications.
2. It is dynamic.
3. It is predicate-less.
4. It is presupposed by conscious predication such that prior to it nothing is thinkable, i.e., it is unprethinkable.
5. It is 'reduplicated' in each predication—as Schelling says in *Ages of the World* (hereafter *Weltalter*), “A is B, can only be this: *that which* is A is *that which* is B, or *that which* is A and *that which* is B are one and the same”, namely, absolute identity, denoted by “x” (Schelling 2000:8).

Frank observes that this shows how we can identify mind and nature: it is not a simple identity, but redoubles the identity that each term bears with x and that therefore is not cancelled by the other term's identity with x. Thus, mind is nature, not *qua* mind, but *qua* x. (Compare the *Freiheitsschrift*: “‘This body is blue’ does not have the meaning that the body is, in and through that in and through which it is a body, also blue, but rather only the meaning that the same thing which is this body is also blue, although not in the same respect”; SW, I.7:341.) Mind and nature are the same identity from different aspects (p. 140). Frank infers from this Schelling's subsequent critique of Hegel: absolute identity is not a mere moment of logic, for the latter stands to the former as thinkable consequent to unprethinkable ground (p. 142). This expresses the methodological standpoint of the Berlin lectures: negative philosophy displays the absolute from an individually necessary yet insufficient perspective.

In the *Freiheitsschrift*, Schelling defines freedom as the capacity for good and evil, a concept that has “the original undecidedness of human being as idea in its favour”. He denies that this capacity applies to individual actions, which would lack compelling reasons, making Buridan's asses of us (SW, I.7:382). Rather, it applies to the will's decisive ability to commit to a way of living in which certain reasons can show up as compelling. As Schelling says in the *Weltalter*, “absolute freedom [...] is not freedom for a particular deed” (Schelling 2000:304). In ‘Idealism and Freedom in Schelling's *Freiheitsschrift*’, Michelle Kosch traces this definition of freedom to a critique of Kant and Fichte, who conceive of freedom as autonomy of will. On this conception, evil is heteronomous, not autonomous, which seems to make imputable failure of will incoherent. Hence Schelling's complaint that philosophy “pushes its philanthropism to the brink of denying evil” (SW, I.7:371). If freedom is more than a will to do good, evil can be neither passive nor privative, but must be a positive capacity. Schelling thus conceives the good as our free subordination to a systematic order and evil as our free domination of the same. Kosch claims that this account is psychologically rather than theologically theodical, leaving open the question of why God creates evil-apt wills (p. 158). But this neglects Schelling's distinction between God and the ground of God's existence, which latter he identifies with the “human will” (SW, I.7:363). We might resist the idea that our will grounds God's existence, but it is crucial to notice that the *Freiheitsschrift* seeks to replace Spinoza's fatalistic, mechanistic pantheism with one whose ground is dynamic and living (SW, I.7:349). This ground is freedom, whose unconstrained capacity is to serve or exploit the systematic order that articulates God's existence.

In ‘Beauty Reconsidered: Freedom and Virtue in Schelling's Aesthetics’, Jennifer Dobe reads the *Freiheitsschrift* as arguing that beauty's attraction lies in its contingency, which in turn discloses the possibility of virtue (p. 162). In the philosophy of identity, Schelling reduces reality and ideality to a necessary identity. But he now views their relation as contingent on whether the will *qua* real ground subordinates itself to an ideal moral order (p. 169). The will's unrestricted capacity in this regard avoids the consequence that evil's origin is inscrutable because neither autonomous nor merely natural. Dobe suggests that the 1807 Munich speeches anticipate the *Freiheitsschrift*'s account of the good as subordination while also revealing the good's relation to aesthetic experience. Moral action requires self-limitation, which is analogous to the creative act whereby an artist denies herself by serving her work, allowing aesthetic ideas to manifest in it (p. 172). A tempting comparison is to Kierkegaard, a student of Schelling's, who defines communication as ethical solicitude constituted by self-control and ‘artful’ openness (Kierkegaard 2009: 65). By representing a contingent aesthetic bond among things, art symbolises the moral bonds for which we strive (p. 175). Our attraction to beauty thus has the potential to strengthen our confidence in pursuing virtuous ideals.

Against Hegelian attempts to understand freedom intersubjectively as self-legislation under shared norms, Andrew Bowie's essay 'Nature and Freedom in Schelling and Adorno' contrasts Schelling and Adorno's denial of definitive accounts of freedom. Bowie locates the *Freiheitsschrift's* strength in its insight that no description of the world is complete since it cannot make sense of its own motivation without raising the demand for sense-making anew. Making sense of motivation assumes a "prior decision of sense-making" (p. 187). Our investigations have explanatory value, but are "motivated by something that is not explained by the investigation itself" (p. 189), namely, the freedom that expresses the wonder in which all investigation begins. Explanatory incompleteness spoils Hegelians' claims to a complete account of freedom, while shedding light on their inability to show how rational progress harbours barbaric potential. Schelling's response to incompleteness is not to abandon reason, however, but to pursue "a further self-critical turn" (p. 192). We see this in the idea that critical commitment to presuppositionlessness presupposes its own motivations for critique. Hence the *Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy* (1847–52) asserts that reason is as unfree under religious law as "when it follows uncomprehended natural cognition" (SW, II.1:266). This recalls Kant's warning in the essay on enlightenment against domestication by "mechanical instruments of a rational use", i.e., precepts that "become almost nature" to us (AA 8:36). As Bowie says, self-critique resists "rationality that can rigidify into repressive mechanisms, so becoming 'natural' in the negative sense of being apparently immutable in the manner of causal laws" (p. 197). Adorno's own commitment to incompleteness is discernible in his thesis that we are no longer part of nature when we notice we are part of nature (Adorno 1996:124). This vision excludes itself from what it sees, or else widens its purview to behold this vision and thereby excludes its new vantage. The motivation this keeps from view is potentially barbaric, a possibility to which Schelling is especially sensitive, but which Hegelian views of freedom underestimate.

In 'Church and State: Schelling's Political Philosophy of Religion', Günter Zöller relates traditional political concerns to Schelling's religious focus in his Stuttgart lectures (1810). Increasing coordination of religion and politics in eighteenth-century Germany fueled the rationalisation of religion, leading to Kant's subordination of faith to practical reason. The German idealists target Kant's theoretical/practical divide, which confines state authority to the intellect and reduces religion to belief, degrading human freedom by entrenching the intellect in social mechanisms and shutting faith behind closed doors. In *New Deduction of Natural Law* (1795), Schelling deduces right as a condition of the state, which he views as essential to the pursuit of absolute knowledge. But he rejects this view in the Stuttgart lectures, arguing that the state's exploitation of nature undermines reason's unity with nature (p. 209). Freedom's fallen state requires religious feeling to supplement secular thinking, for only this can usher the Absolute's revelation. Intervening between the *Deduction* and the lectures is *Philosophy and Religion* (1804), which Zöller does not mention, but which depicts human reason as having always already fallen away from the Absolute (Schelling 2010:48). This may shed light on Schelling's turn from the deduction of right toward the conservatism to which Zöller compares Fichte's Berlin period.

Finally, in 'Schelling's Critique of Hegel', Fred Rush articulates the Berlin lectures' case for supplementing Hegel's negative philosophy, which derives the necessary structures of the world's intelligibility, with a positive philosophy open to the contingency of there being an intelligible world at all. Hegel espouses what Rush calls an "epistemically charged variant of intellectual intuition", which trades an immediate Absolute for one "*internally articulated*" by dialectical logic (p. 221). Schelling argues that Hegel's logic offers at best a coherent system, one that makes intelligible how the world is, but not that it is. (Compare Wittgenstein: "It is not *how* things are in the world that is mystical, but *that* it exists"; Tractatus, 6.44.) Schelling's critique reflects his ongoing sensitivity to Maimon's sceptical charge that systematic philosophy is merely formal and the related challenge of showing that negative philosophy's first principle "is not merely the highest idea, but is that which actually exists" (SW, II.3:150). Rush suggests this fails to show Hegel's system is incoherent (p. 225), but that misses the point of Schelling's argument: the coherence of Hegel's system is precisely what invites the sceptical charge. Rush nevertheless clarifies the modal problem at issue. Negative philosophy's concern with necessary structures of intelligibility ignores sheer possibility, specifically, the possibility that there is nothing intelligibly structured. The necessity of these structures is simply relative to, because "highly stabilizing" for, thought (p. 231). As Rush says, Hegel's system is "factual" (p. 231), i.e., radically contingent on a way of thinking. Schelling's critique is not that Hegel fails to transcend radical contingency—*per impossibile*—but that he pretends to do so by deploying a logic whose purported presuppositionlessness is belied

by its presupposition of an intelligible world. It is to the contingent existence of an intelligible world that positive philosophy is open, arguments for its necessity being tautological in the absence of experiences revelatory of it.

Rush objects that the regulative idea of its total revelation is simply another structure of negative philosophy (p. 237). This would be problematic if the idea were internally articulated by dialectical logic. However, it operates as an extra-logical presupposition, the pursuit of whose ideal is that for the sake of which articulation occurs. Thus, there is no worry that Schelling's positive philosophy is, as Rush says, "of little consequence to the subsequent development of European philosophy" (p. 237). This is belied by Heidegger's description of Dasein as ecstatically drawn from thought toward being, by Adorno's negative dialectics, which reject the Hegelian promise of deriving positivity from negativity's negation, and by Carnap's idea of practically deciding in favour of a linguistic form whose value is presupposed by its internal structure. Indeed, the worry fades when we hear the question motivating positive philosophy—why there is something, such as an intelligible world, rather than none—as radicalizing Kant's question *quid juris* into an interrogation of philosophical deduction itself, which subsequent thinkers inherit in terms of our right to values given our limited perspectives (Nietzsche), our right to metaphysics after Auschwitz (Adorno), and our right to ontology vis-à-vis the other (Levinas). Positive philosophy, which Schelling crafts over decades and amid crises of conscience, is immensely consequential for the ensuing project of subjecting the Critical philosophy to further, endless critique.

Ostarcic's is a commendable, valuable source of thought-provoking interpretations of many of the philosophical topics with which Schelling engages. It is thus a welcome addition to the continuing Anglophone renaissance of German idealist studies.



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