SCHELLING'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

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Dedicated to the memory of my Uncles Don, Norm, and Carl Bruff

Abstract

In der vorliegenden Dissertation entfalte ich die These, dass F.W.J. Schelling (1775-1854) vom Anfang bis zum Ende seiner denkerischen Entwicklung das Projekt einer politischen Philosophie verfolgt. Meine Rekonstruktion der politischen Philosophie Schellings verteidigt ihn somit gegen den Vorwurf, er sei ein „apolitischer" Denker (J. Habermas, H. J. Sandkühler). Der Eindruck, Schelling habe keine politische Philosophie, wird durch den Umstand verstärkt, dass er – im Unterschied zu den meisten seiner berühmten Zeitgenossen – nie ein eigenständiges Werk über den Staat oder über ein spezifisches politisches Thema verfasst hat. Erschwerend kommt hinzu, dass Schellings politische Äußerungen bisweilen unzusammenhängend sind. Gleichwohl soll im Folgenden gezeigt werden, dass eine kohärente politische Philosophie aus seinen Schriften rekonstruiert werden kann.

An verschiedenen Stellen seines Werkes verteidigt Schelling die These, dass die Existenz des Staates für die Verwirklichung menschlicher Freiheit notwendig ist. Der Staat sichert den möglichen Raum individueller Freiheitsverwirklichung und gewährleistet diese Freiheit unter intersubjektiven, endlichen Bedingungen. Aber der Staat bezeichnet nicht den Höhepunkt von Schellings politischer Philosophie. Schelling schlägt vielmehr vor, Menschen könnten durch die Verwirklichung der Freiheit werthaltige Beziehungen aufbauen, die das Potenzial haben, eine „freiwillige und darum höhere Gemeinschaft" *jenseits* des Staates zu bilden. Seine politische Philosophie betrifft hauptsächlich die Möglichkeit, genauer das freie Zustandekommen einer gerechten menschlichen Gemeinschaft zu eruieren, die über den Staat hinausgeht. Während der Staat die Individuen durch Notwendigkeit zueinander in Beziehung setzt, können die freien Entscheidungen der Individuen im Rahmen einer breiteren, moralisch-existenziellen Ordnung qualitativ verschiedene und höhere, freiwillige Bindungen erwirken.

Schelling bietet vor 1831 keine genaue Beschreibung der endgültigen Form einer freien, freiwilligen Gemeinschaft an. Allerdings behandelt er seit den frühesten Werken der 1790er-Jahre und während seiner ganzen Karriere immer wieder sporadisch Fragen des Politischen. Ich versuche in der folgenden Arbeit zu zeigen, dass Schellings Auseinandersetzung sowohl mit der Frage nach der individuellen Freiheit als auch (ab 1809) mit der Frage der Persönlichkeit und der Liebe seine Moralphilosophie in einer Weise strukturiert, dass er ein ums andere Mal die Existenz des Staates postulieren muss. Dieser Staat allein ist jedoch nicht hinreichend, um eine

moralische Gemeinschaft herzustellen. Schellings Überlegungen zu Staat und Gemeinschaft stehen immer in einem wichtigen, wechselnden historischen und politischen Kontext, den ich durchgehend mit einbeziehe.

Die Entwicklung der politischen Philosophie Schellings verläuft nicht gradlinig. Ich beginne meine Dissertation daher mit der Beschreibung einer Ausnahme in Schellings politischer Philosophie, die ansonsten beständig eine Trennung des Staates von der freiwilligen, menschlichen Gemeinschaft postuliert. Diese Ausnahme ist die Konzeption eines organischen Staates, wie er in Schellings früher Identitätsphilosophie (1801-1804) präsentiert wird. Gemäß dieser Auffassung gibt es außerhalb des organischen Staats keine freie Gemeinschaft. Dass sich eine solche Abweichung findet, ist keineswegs überraschend, wird doch die Debatte über die Einheit in Schellings Werk und darüber, ob sein Denken in verschiedene, unterschiedliche oder sogar widersprüchliche Perioden unterteilt werden sollte, heute so intensiv ist wie vor siebzig Jahren geführt. In dieser identitätsphilosophischen Darstellung des Staates bewertet Schelling das Bild eines Staates als positiv, der hierarchisch organisiert, organisch und geschlossenen ist, und in dem Freiheit und Notwendigkeit vollständig identifiziert werden. Die eindrücklichsten Beispiele für diese Staatskonzeption entwickelt Schelling 1802 und 1804. In dieser Konzeption des Staates verschwinden Schellings frühe Experimente mit möglichen Formen einer außerstaatlichen freiwilligen Gemeinschaft (z. B. als moralische oder ästhetische Einheit in der Zukunft, die sich von jeder zeitgenössischen Politik verabschieden würde). Ich beginne die Dissertation mit dem Nachweis, dass der organische Staat schnell zu einem Problem für die Verwirklichung individueller Freiheit wird. Diese Staatskonzeption wird zu einem Hindernis, nicht zu einer Grundlage für Schellings Beschreibungen möglicher Formen der freiwilligen Gemeinschaft vor 1801 und nach 1806.

Schelling, der immer ein dynamischer Denker ist, erkennt um 1807, dass der organische Staat für ihn ein Problem darstellt. Im Zuge dieser Erkenntnis erneuert Schelling sein bereits vor 1800 artikuliertes Interesse am Begriff des Individuums, insbesondere desjenigen Individuums, das Notwendigkeit überwinden kann. Sein erneutes Interesse an Endlichkeit und Besonderheit, das 1804 beginnt und 1809 voll durchbricht, macht es für Schelling unmöglich, seinen Begriff des organischen Staats weiter aufrechtzuerhalten. Nach der *Freiheitsschrift,* die die dynamische Struktur der individuellen Freiheit aufzeigt, verzichtet Schelling endgültig auf die Konzeption eines organischen Staats. 1810 propagiert er stattdessen einen Staat, der sich durch eine

minimale Präsenz auszeichnet und der lediglich die freie Selbstbestimmung der Individuen jenseits der Strukturen der Staatspolitik unterstützt. Damit kann er seine frühen politischen Thesen Gemeinschaft wieder produktiv aufgreifen und weiterentwickeln, die einerseits das freie Individuum und dessen Rolle in der freiwilligen Gemeinschaft jenseits des Staates und andererseits die notwendige Rolle des Staates für die Verwirklichung der menschlichen Freiheit betrifft. Die Teilnahme an der freiwilligen Gemeinschaft wird durch einen Staat ermöglicht, der dem Streben nach individueller Freiheit *dient*, nicht umgekehrt. Ich argumentiere, dass sowohl Schellings früheres mechanisches Staatsmodell (1800) als auch seine spätere Auffassung des Staats als Verwirklichung einer tatsächlichen Vernunftordnung (1847-1852) eine Begründungsfunktion für die Verwirklichung der Freiheit und damit für die mögliche Realisierung einer freiwilligen Gemeinschaft besitzen. Dementsprechend behaupte ich in meinem ersten Kapitel, dass Schellings wachsendes Interesse am Individuum von 1804 bis 1807 dazu führt, dass er sich zunehmend von der Konzeption eines organischen Staats entfernt, in dem Freiheit und Notwendigkeit, Gemeinschaft und Staat vereint sind. Stattdessen wird die Gemeinschaft zu einer freien Aufgabe dynamischer Individuen, die ihre Persönlichkeit entwickeln.

Bevor ich mich in Kapitel 4 mit Werken aus Schellings mittlerer Periode befasse, gehe ich zurück zu seinen frühesten Schriften, um die Wurzeln seiner politischen Philosophie nach 1809 herauszuarbeiten. Kapitel 2 handelt daher von Schellings Darstellung des Staates als Garant von Freiheit, die er in seinem *System des transzendentalen Idealismus* von 1800 entwickelt. Ich stelle diese Konzeption des Staates in den Kontext von Schellings früher Natur- und Freiheitsphilosophie und weise auf wie Staat zur Philosophie der Geschichte und der Politik des *Systems* im Verhältnis steht. Kapitel 3 führt noch weiter zurück zu einer Freilegung der romantischen Wurzeln von Schellings politischer Philosophie in seinen Schriften von 1792-1797. Hier zeige ich, dass Schellings experimentelle Versuche, das Verhältnis des Rechts – auch des Staatsrechts – zu einer höheren freien Einheit insbesondere durch Ästhetik zu bestimmen, von Rousseau, Kant und Schiller beeinflusst waren, insbesondere während seiner Zeit im Tübinger Stift.

Als Nächstes zeige ich, dass diese aufklärerischen und frühromantischen Einflüsse in Schellings moralischer und politischer Philosophie in seinem Werk nach 1809 zum Tragen kommen. Schellings Begriffe von Persönlichkeit und Liebe und seine Beschreibung der

Entwicklung von Tugenden liefern die Grundlage, die Möglichkeit des Schaffens einer freien moralischen Gemeinschaft jenseits des Staates anzuvisieren. Diese mögliche Gemeinschaft erfordert eine Trennung zwischen dem Staat als Rechtsordnung und der Gemeinschaft, die aus freien Beziehungen besteht, wie sie Schelling sonst auch im Kontext seiner Terminologie der Liebe bezeichnet. Ausgehend von diesen Überlegungen fängt Schelling nicht nur an, den Staat zu kritisieren (am berühmtesten und schärfsten 1810), sondern ihn auch als Vernunftordnung zu beschreiben, die Ausdruck einer Idee a priori ist (SW XI, 540). Diese Konzeption unterscheidet sich von seinen früheren Darstellungen des Staates als mechanisch (1800) und organisch (1801-1804). Ich zeige, dass dieser Begriff des Vernunftstaates am besten verstanden wird, wenn er mit dem christlichen Versprechen der Erlösung und der mögliche Wiederherstellung der verlorenen Einheit zwischen Mensch und Gott in der Zukunft in Verbindung gebracht wird. Der Sündenfall stellt eine Lücke dar, die der Staat selbst niemals schließen kann.

Mein fünftes und letztes Kapitel bietet eine ausführliche Darstellung von Schellings endgültiger Form der menschlichen Gemeinschaft, die er „die Kirche des heiligen Johannes“ nennt. Dies ist eine Gemeinschaft der Zukunft, in die alle frei eintreten werden und in der Wissen und Offenbarung vereint sind. Schelling findet die textliche Grundlage für diese Kirche und das Zeitalter der Zukunft, d. h. die Kirche des „Apostels Johannes“, des „Apostels für die letzte Zukunft“ (Schelling, *Urfassung*, 703), in einer Vielzahl neutestamentlicher und theologischer Quellen. Die Verbindung des Johannesevangeliums mit einem Zeitalter des Wissens nach dem Zeitalter des Glaubens ist typisch für die millenaristische Tradition. Schelling bezieht sich dabei insbesondre auf Joachim von Fiores der in dieser Tradition einen großen Einfluss besitzt (SW VIX, 298, n. 1). Nach Schellings Darstellung ist die allgemeine Kirche die letzte Gemeinschaft der gesamten Menschheit. Schelling behauptet, jeder Mensch werde schließlich auf seinem eigenen, individuellen Weg zu dieser Kirche gelangen. Diese Kirche werde eine universelle Kirche der gesamten Menschheit sein. Die neue Gemeinschaft der Kirche sei die totale Einheit der menschlichen Gemeinschaft und die schöpferische Praxis einer überkonfessionellen, „philosophischen Religion“, einer Religion, die noch nicht existiert.

Indem er die Versöhnung der Menschheit auf eine zukünftige Zeit verschiebt, schließt sich Schelling Marxisten, Utopisten, Denkern der kritischen Theorie und Dekonstruktivisten an, die den aktuellen Zustand der Gegenwart heftig kritisieren und sich eine gerechtere und durch Einheit geprägte Zukunft der Menschheit vorstellen. Obwohl die alternative zukünftige

Gemeinschaft Schellings in ihren Wurzeln unbestreitbar christlich ist und mit einem Zeitalter verbunden ist, in dem die Menschen unter Johannes dem Apostel vereint sind, ist sie nicht „religiös“ im traditionellen Sinne. Es gibt keine Glaubensbekenntnisse oder Kulte, die die zukünftige Gemeinschaft vereinen; vielmehr hat sich das menschliche Bewusstsein kollektiv so verändert, dass religiöse Vermittlung nicht mehr benötigt wird. Indem Menschen ihr eigenes Leben führen, ihre Freiheit ausüben und danach streben, tugendhaft zu handeln, tragen die Menschen zu der Schaffung einer harmonischen Gemeinschaft bei. Aber nach Schelling kann der Mensch letztlich nicht alle Antagonismen einer solchen Gemeinschaft alleine auflösen.

Ich schließe die Dissertation mit einer Zusammenfassung zu der wechselnden Rolle der Notwendigkeit, die einerseits in Schellings unterschiedlichen Konzeptionen des Staates, der als Grundlage einer freien Gemeinschaft verstanden wird, und andererseits in Schellings Überlegungen zur Persönlichkeit zum Tragen kommt. Im Schlusskapitel schlage ich vor, wie wir Schellings politische Philosophie heute lesen könnten: Schellings politischer Pessimismus besitzt eine Affinität zur Tradition der kritischen Theorie, da seine politische Philosophie einerseits eine radikale Kritik des Status quo und andererseits die Möglichkeit einer Transformation bestehender gesellschaftlicher Beziehungen beinhaltet, die auf einem Begriff des Transzendenten beruht.

Abstract

In his commitment to the preservation of human freedom, Schelling repeatedly defends the existence of a minimal state, which he claims is necessary for freedom's realization. But the state is not the apex of Schelling's political philosophy. Schelling instead proposes that through the exercise of freedom, human beings can forge meaningful human relationships, which have the potential to form a 'voluntary,' or consensual, free community *beyond the state*. His political philosophy, therefore, concerns first and foremost the possibility of the free establishment of a just human community, which transcends the state.

Schelling does not give a clear, coherent account of the final form of a free, voluntary community before 1831. However, he sporadically writes about the political throughout his entire career, from his earliest works of the 1790s onwards. In this dissertation, I reconstruct Schelling's entire political philosophy. I argue that his commitment to individual freedom and, in 1809 and after, personhood and love, structures his moral philosophy in such a way that it necessitates his repeated postulation of a minimal state. However, this state is insufficient on its own to bring about a moral community. Schelling's reflections on the state and the community are always couched in a shifting historical and political context, which I describe throughout.

Schelling's political trajectory is non-linear. I thus open this work by describing the exception to Schelling's otherwise consistent separation of the minimal state from the voluntary, human community. This exception is the organic state as postulated in Schelling's early Identity Philosophy (1801-1804). I argue that Schelling's growing concern for the individual from 1804-1807 leads him to progressively move away from this organic state, in which freedom and necessity, community and the state, are unified. Instead, the community becomes the free endeavour of dynamic, developing individuals on the road to personhood.

Before moving on to Schelling's middle thought in Chapter 4, I backtrack to his earliest writings to unearth the roots of his post-1809 political philosophy. Accordingly, in Chapter 2, I give an account of Schelling's first clear presentation of the state as the guarantor of freedom in his 1800 *System of Transcendental Idealism.* I situate this presentation of the state in the context of Schelling's early philosophy of nature and freedom and show its role in the *System*'s philosophies of history and politics. Chapter 3 takes us even further back to an excavation of the romantic roots of Schelling's political philosophy in his very young writings, from 1792-1797.

Here, I show that Schelling's experimental attempts to ascertain the relationship of the law—including state law—to a higher, free unity, particularly through aesthetics, were influenced by Rousseau, Kant, Schiller, especially during his time at the *Tübinger Stift.*

I subsequently demonstrate how some of these early romantic insights come to fruition in Schelling's moral and political philosophy in his work after 1809. Schelling's accounts of personhood, love, and the development of virtues create the possibility of the establishment of a free, moral community beyond the state. This endeavour requires a division between the state as a legal order and the community, which consists of free relations, otherwise described by Schelling in the terminology of love. Once Schelling settles on this insight, he begins not only to critique the state (most famously and harshly in 1810), but also to describe it as a rational order which is an expression of a divine idea. This differs from his earlier presentations of the state as mechanical (1800) and organic (1801-1804). I show that this concept of the rational state is best comprehended when related to the promise of redemption and the reestablishment of the lost unity between humanity and God. This loss presents a gap which the state itself can never close.

My fifth and final chapter offers a detailed presentation of Schelling's final form of the human community, which he calls the "Church of St. John." This is a community of the future, into which all will enter freely and in which knowledge and revelation are united. It is characterized by the total unity of the human community and the creative practice of a non-denominational, "philosophical religion"—a religion which does not yet exist. I conclude the dissertation with a summary of the role of necessity in Schelling's different forms of the state (now understood as the ground of the free community) and in personality. I also offer a brief account of how we might read Schelling's political philosophy today. Schelling's political pessimism, I suggest, finds an affinity with the critical theory tradition, as his political philosophy involves a radical critique of the status quo and the possibility of a transformation of existing socio-political relations that relies on a notion of the transcendent.

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Abbreviations for primary Schelling texts:

AW1	*The Ages of the World (1811).* Translated by Joseph P. Lawrence. Albany: SUNY Press, 2019.
AW2	*Ages of the World (second draft, 1813).* Translated by Judith Norman. In *The Abyss of Freedom/Ages of the World: An essay by Slavoj Žižek with the text of Schelling's Die Weltalter,* Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997.
AW3	*The Ages of the World, Third Version (c. 1815).* Translated by Jason M. Wirth. Albany: SUNY Press, 2000.
APH	"Schelling's Aphorisms of 1805." Translated by Fritz Marti. *Idealistic Studies* 14, no. 3 (1984): 237–58.
CL	*Clara, or, On Nature's Connection to the Spirit World*. New York: SUNY, 2002.
GR	*The Grounding of Positive Philosophy: The Berlin Lectures 1841/1842*. Translated by Bruce Matthews. New York: SUNY Press, 2012.
HCI	*Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*. Translated by Mason Richey and Markus Zisselsberger. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2007.
ID	*Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*. Translated by Errol E. Harris and Peter Heath. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
ND	"New Deduction of Natural Right." In *The Unconditional in Human Knowledge: Four Early Essays (1794-1796),* translated by Fritz Marti, 221-246. London: Associated University Presses, 1980.
OTI	"Of the I as Principle of Philosophy, or On the Unconditional in Human Knowledge." In *The Unconditional in Human Knowledge: Four Early Essays (1794-1796),* translated by Fritz Marti, 63-128. London: Associated University Presses, 1980.
OUS	*On University Studies.* Edited by Norbert Guterman. Translated by E.S. Morgan. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1966.
PAR	*Philosophy and Religion*. Translated by Klaus Ottmann. Putnam, Connecticut: Spring Publications, 2010.
PI	*Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*. Translated by Jeff Love and Johannes Schmidt. Albany: SUNY Press, 2007.
PL	"Philosophical Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism." In *The Unconditional in Human Knowledge: Four Early Essays (1794-1796).* Translated by Fritz Marti, 156–218. London: Associated University Presses, 1980.
PMR	*Schelling's Philosophy of Mythology and Revelation. Three of Seven Books Translated and Reduced with General Introduction*. Translated by Victor C. Hayes. Armidale: The Australian Association for the Study of Religions, 1995.
PR	*Philosophy of Revelation (1841-42) and Related Texts*. Translated by Klaus Ottmann. Thompson, Connecticut: Spring Publications, 2020.
PRP	"Schelling's Late Political Philosophy: Lectures 22-24 of the Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy." Translated by Kyla Bruff. *Kabiri* 2 (2020): 93–135.
SS	"Stuttgart Seminars (1810)." Translated by Thomas Pfau. In *Idealism and the Endgame of Theory: Three Essays by F.W.J. Schelling*, 195–243. Albany: SUNY Press, 1994.
STI	*System of Transcendental Idealism (1800)*. Translated by Peter Heath. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1978.
TI	"Timaeus." Translated by Adam Arola, Jena Jolissaint, and Peter Warnek. *Epoché* 12, no. 2 (2008): 205-248.
UR	*Urfassung der Philosophie der Offenbarung*. Edited by Walter E. Ehrhardt. Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 2010.

Introduction

In this dissertation, I shall defend the thesis that F.W.J. Schelling (1775-1854), from the beginning to the end of his career, has a political philosophy. By reconstructing his political philosophy from start to finish, I hope to defend Schelling against the repeated charge that he is an "apolitical" thinker.[1] Contributing to the widespread misconception that Schelling does not have a political philosophy is the fact that, unlike most of his significant contemporaries, he never wrote a standalone treatise on the state or any other specifically political theme. Moreover, it is hard to dispute that Schelling's political remarks are, at times, incohesive, even if a single, coherent political philosophy can indeed be extracted from his writings. Reconstructing Schelling's political philosophy accordingly requires that we embark on a journey through a corpus of work spanning roughly sixty years, noting his points of divergence and reconvergence from his main political thesis: that the state can and must support the exercise of individual freedom, but it cannot itself form a community of united individuals. This they must do on their own, as they develop as persons genuinely capable of loving one another and striving for justice. This dissertation makes a significant contribution to the existing Schelling literature and studies of the politics of the German Idealist tradition, as no monograph currently exists on Schelling's political philosophy in English. Unfortunately, to date, favourable evaluations of Schelling's political philosophy, including analyses of its constructive force and relevance, are rare.[2]

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[1] See, for example, Hans Jörg Sandkühler, *Freiheit und Wirklichkeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1968), 10-11. Jürgen Habermas, "Dialectical Idealism in Transition to Materialism: Schelling's Idea of a Contraction of God and Its Consequences for the Philosophy of History," in *The New Schelling*, edited by Judith Norman, trans. Nick Midgley and Judith Norman (London and New York: Continuum, 2004), 43.

[2] In German, the few existing, extended studies of Schelling's political philosophy tend to fall into one of two categories: historical or Marxist. These studies typically begin from the premise of the internal inconsistencies in Schelling's remarks on the political, and suggest that either (a) Schelling's political philosophy *cannot* be analyzed as a systematic whole, and we should therefore limit our focus to its historical context (for example, Alexander Hollerbach, *Der Rechtsgedanken bei Schelling* [Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1957]; Martin Schraven, *Philosophie und Revolution. Schellings Verhältnis zum Politischen im Revolutionsjahr 1848* [Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1989]; Günter Zöller, "Church and state: Schelling's political philosophy of religion," in *Interpreting Schelling: Critical Essays*, ed. Lara Ostaric, 200-215 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014]) or (b) Schelling's political philosophy as a whole fails and Hegelian-Marxism offers a more promising direction for political philosophy (Sandkühler's *Freiheit und Wirklichkeit* and Habermas' famous essay "Dialectical Idealism in Transition to Materialism" arguably fall into this second category; however, despite his negative appraisal of Schelling's internal inconsistencies, Habermas nevertheless develops an emancipatory, Marxist line of interpretation of Schelling's political philosophy. Ryan Scheerlink's recent book on Schelling's political philosophy in 1804 is an exception to the two types of analyses above in its positive appraisal of Schelling's political philosophy. However, Scheerlink confines his study to a specific period of Schelling's thought, and does not deal

In a word, Schelling's political philosophy concerns primarily the possibility of the free establishment of a just human community beyond the state. In his final work, he calls this the "voluntary and therefore higher community" (SW XI, 541/PRP, 114). However, Schelling simultaneously defends the necessary existence of a minimal state, which grounds the very exercise of human freedom and the creation of strong communities. On Schelling's account, human freedom and the concept of a free community cannot exist without the state, which has a necessary, limiting function and an objective, structuring role for conscious, intersubjective life, a role philosophically familiar to us from the concept of nature.

The state is therefore not the apex of Schelling's political philosophy. Schelling rather proposes that through the exercise of their freedom, human beings can forge meaningful human relationships that could potentially form the aforementioned 'voluntary,' or consensual, free community, which transcends the state. These bonds are described as 'inner' or 'free' relations, in contradistinction to 'external' relations, which join human beings by necessity. While the state can link individuals to one another involuntarily, or in relations based on necessity, it is in a broader, moral-existential realm that their contingent, free choices can forge qualitatively different, arguably 'higher,' voluntary bonds. In view of this, Schelling devotes particular attention to the structure, exercise, and possibilities of freedom, especially insofar as freedom cannot be captured by, or exhaustively exercised through, the laws, institutions, norms and discourse of the state. However, the latter nevertheless contribute to determining the possible scope of the exercise of individual freedom in intersubjective, finite conditions. In view of his dynamic theory of human freedom and of the development of personality—which entails both working with and overcoming the conditions and factors by which one is determined—in relation to the state and community, Schelling can be considered as a politically and existentially relevant virtue ethicist.

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with his political philosophy as a whole. See Ryan Scheerlinck, *"Philosophie und Religion": Schellings Politische Philosophie* (Freiburg and Munich: Verlag Karl Alber, 2017). Finally, there is a small number of essays which pave the way for positive analyses of Schelling's political philosophy. For example, Christian Danz positively evaluates Schelling's separation of the state and religion in Christian Danz, "The State as 'a Consequence of the Curse of Humanity': The Late Schelling's Philosophy of Religion and of the State," *Journal for the History of Modern Theology* 21, no. 1-2 (2014): 28-46. Additionally, Manfred Frank and Sean J. McGrath have offered creative, constructive analyses of the political potential of Schelling's late philosophy. See Manfred Frank, *Der unendliche Mangel an Sein: Schellings Hegelkritik und die Anfänge der Marxschen Dialektik* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1992); Sean J. McGrath, "Populism and the Late Schelling on Mythology, Ideology, and Revelation," *Analecta Hermeneutica* 9 (2017).

However, there is one major exception to the inner consistency of Schelling's political philosophy, namely, his 1801-1804 defence of the organic state, outside of which there is no free community. This deviation is not a surprise, as the debate concerning the degree of consistency in Schelling's work and over whether his thought should be divided into different, distinct, even potentially conflicting periods is as intense now as it was seventy years ago.[3] This exception is marked by Schelling's exposition and positive appraisal of a hierarchically-organized, organic, enclosed state, in which freedom and necessity are completely identified.[4] In this state, Schelling's very young experimentations with possible forms of a desirable, extra-state voluntary community (e.g., as a moral or aesthetic unity of the future, which would transcend the politics of his time, which I detail in Chapter 3) disappear. I open the dissertation by demonstrating that the organic state, which Schelling once espoused, quickly becomes a problem for the realization of individual freedom. Accordingly, it serves an impediment, rather than a ground, to Schelling's pre-1801 and post-1806 descriptions of possible forms of the voluntary community.

Schelling, a dynamic thinker always in movement, himself recognizes that the organic state is a challenge for him to maintain in approximately 1807, at which point he renews his pre-1800 commitment to the individual, specifically to the individual who strives for that which is higher than necessity. Throughout his growing commitment to finitude and particularity from 1804 to 1809, it becomes impossible for Schelling to continue to uphold his concept of the organic state, the most vehement cases for which we find in 1802 and 1804. After the 1809 publication of Schelling's most famous text, the Freedom Essay, which gives an account of the dynamic structure of individual freedom, in 1810, Schelling definitively and explicitly renounces the organic state in favour of a minimally-present state that can support the free self-determination of the individual beyond the structures of state politics. With this move, he is able to productively retrieve and further develop his early political insights regarding, on the one hand, the free individual and her role in the voluntary community beyond the state, and on the

[3] I am referring here to the famous debate between Walter Schulz and Horst Furhmans, explained in more detail below. Conventionally speaking, Schelling's early period is considered to be from 1792-1808, his middle period from 1809-1831, and his late period from 1831-1854. Although I reject any clear distinction between the middle and late periods, one cannot deny the significant shift that occurs in Schelling's work with the publication of the 1809 Freedom Essay. In this text, Schelling turns away from immanence and towards transcendence. In this essay, Schelling presents his doctrine of evil, redefines freedom, and posits God as transcendent, rather than completely immanent to, humanity. Schelling never returns to the immanentism of his youth. This has major implications for his political philosophy.

[4] Franck Fischbach also highlights the singular, exceptional character of Schelling's political philosophy during the Identity Philosophy period in "La pensée politique de Schelling," *Les études philosophiques* 1, no. 56 (2001): 31-48.

other hand, the necessary role of the state for the realization of human freedom. Participation in the voluntary community is facilitated by a state which *serves* the individual's pursuit of freedom beyond it, not the other way around. I argue that Schelling's earlier mechanical state model (1800) and later view of the state as the factual realization of a rational order (1847-1852) could both occupy this grounding function for the exercise of freedom and thereby for the potential realization of the voluntary community.

At the end of Schelling's entire philosophy, we accordingly find a clear exposition of the voluntary community of the future, which Schelling calls the "universal church" of St. John (SW IV, 328/ PMR, 334).[5] This 'church' is the last community of the entirety of humanity, which, on Schelling's account, *all* human beings will eventually join, each by way of their own, individual paths. In putting forth this thesis, Schelling joins the likes of Marxists, utopians, critical theorists and deconstructionists who are vehemently critical of the present and imagine, describe and hope for a more just, unified future of humanity. Although this alternative, future community is undeniably Christian in its roots and associated with an age in which individuals are united under John the Apostle, it is no longer 'religious' in the traditional sense of the term. There are no creeds or cults that unite the future community; rather, human consciousness has collectively transformed such that religious mediation is no longer needed. Schelling claims everyone comes to the Church of St. John through their "own volition" (SW XIV, 328/PMR, 334). By living their own lives, exercising their freedom, and aiming to act virtuously, human beings work toward the creation of a harmonious society. However, for the final Schelling, human beings cannot resolve all of the antagonisms of such a society on their own. On the late Schelling's account, Christ will become the inward possession of all, and his mediation of divinity will render the political and

[5] Schelling finds the textual basis for this church and age of the future, i.e., the church of John the Apostle, in a variety of New Testament and theological sources. The most direct source is the promise of the return of Christ and the coming of "the Spirit of truth" in the Gospel of John (John 14:17). The association of the Gospel of John with an age of knowledge after the age of faith is a typical of the millenarianist tradition. Schelling acknowledges his indebtedness to this tradition, which begins with Joachim of Fiore's 12th century theology (SW VIX, 298, n. 1). Just as crucial for Schelling is Paul's anticipation of a final age in which the world shall become freely subject to Christ and God shall become "all in all" (1 Cor 15:28), to which Schelling notably refers three times in the Freedom Essay (SW VII, 403/PI, 66; SW VII, 405/PI, 68; SW VII, 408/PI, 70) and the *Original Version of the Philosophy of Revelation* (Schelling, UR, 708). Staying true to the millenarianist tradition, Schelling perceives a political significance in Paul's account of the summing up of all and the undoing of all previous wrongs in Christ as redeemer (Ephesians 1:10). With the Church of St. John, a "second future" begins, in which all are united through their own free collaboration in a final age of peace. In the Book of Revelation, this final age of history is prophesied to last 1000 years (Revelation 20:4) and to end with the last judgment. Schelling thus describes this age as beginning with the sending of the Spirit and the inauguration of the Church of St. John and ending with the judgment of the Lord. See Schelling, UR, 704–7.

religious differences of the past irrelevant. This final voluntary community, which marks the inauguration of a qualitatively different time from our own (a third age), is at the core of Schelling's turn to political eschatology in his final works. In consideration of this final goal of the human community, to which all ascend freely rather than by coercion or necessity, one sees the return of the question of freedom and necessity in history, with which Schelling already occupied himself in 1800. In Schelling's last and definitive treatment of this theme is, unlike in his early work, the teleology of history is supplanted with an eschatology, in which Schelling is critical of the present in view of a radically different future.

Nevertheless, the state anchors the exercise of freedom and the production of community, and therefore all of Schelling's political philosophy. Schelling's most important exposition of the state occurs in his 1800 *System of Transcendental Idealism.* This text stands at an important juncture in Schelling's political philosophy. On the one hand, it leads directly to the organic state, i.e., the teleological politics of the Identity Philosophy, as Schelling already here proposes that objectivity, and through it, necessity, drives the history of subjectivity and freedom. The *System*'s drive to render all individual expressions of freedom in history identical with necessity is one of the goals of the Identity Philosophy. On the other hand, the state, together with unconscious free activity, as presented in the *System,* retains a significance beyond the conclusions of the *System* itself. When interpreted through Schelling's work after the Freedom Essay, the state, which Schelling presents as a 'second nature,' is seen as a necessary condition of the mutual exercise of freedom by its citizens. In both the *System* and the Freedom Essay, the individual has a constitutive role to play in the necessary unfolding of history. Similar to the "Spirit" which guides the community in the Church of St. John, unconscious necessity coordinates the ends of history in the *System.* But the strong, existential notion of human freedom in the Freedom Essay results in an emerging critique of the impersonal and unfulfilling nature of the state that we do not find in his earlier work. While the goal of the Church of St. John is to render the state irrelevant so that humans can transcend it in love, in the *System,* the state has a more stable, facilitating function in bringing about the federation of states. Nevertheless, rather than doing away with the state, Schelling continues to see it throughout his middle and late philosophy as a necessary structure to support, but not mediate, the exercise of freedom.

Although the *System,* in one sense, acts as a catalyst for the immanent merge of freedom and necessity that the remainder of Schelling's political philosophy after 1807 painstakingly tries to avoid, the text is also permeated by the early influence of Fichte and Spinoza. These two influences allow Schelling to ascribe a primordial role to unconscious freedom in his metaphysics, which introduces contingency into being (the genesis of which is dependent on the former). Schelling remains committed to this thesis of an unruly, unbridled free will at the origin of everything that exists during his middle period. However, in his Identity Philosophy, he temporarily turns towards a necessary, *a priori,* system of reason, devoid of an eventful philosophy of history. Alternatively, the middle Schelling, while remaining committed to the necessary existence of the state and the contingency of consciousness upon unconscious, free activity, redefines human freedom to itself involve an overcoming of necessity in its very realization. With this, the entire, teleological, historical development detailed by Schelling in the *System* can be at best relegated to a prolonged moment of history. It is descriptive only of the politics of our current period, which Schelling will eventually describe as the 'Church of St. Paul,' or the "church of the freedom Apostle (*Freiheitsapostels*)," in distinction from the 'Church of St. John' of the future (UR, 693). In short, by tracking the relationship of freedom to both the involuntary community (the state) and the voluntary, moral community—along with the divergence, convergence, and subsequent re-divergence of these two concepts of community—throughout Schelling's entire corpus, his political philosophy from beginning to end can be reconstructed.

From his earliest to his latest writings, the political insights derived from Schelling's practical—more specifically, moral—philosophy are rooted in his metaphysics of freedom. Schelling repeatedly situates unlimited freedom at the heart of his system—positioning it as more fundamental than being itself.[6] As *the* philosopher of freedom, it should thus come as no surprise that Schelling claims, "The first speculative concepts are also the first moral concepts, and a true philosophy cannot be conceived without morality" (UR, 39).[7] Freedom and unconscious willing are at the core of *both* his metaphysics and his moral philosophy. Furthermore, returning to his post-Kantian roots, Schelling critically interrogates reason's capacity to adequately describe being, and correspondingly, the scope of possible state authority

[6] For example, in the *System of Transcendental Idealism,* the Freedom Essay, and the *Stuttgart Seminars*.
[7] Translation here courtesy of Sean J. McGrath.

and intervention in human life (Schelling calls the state an "order of reason" in his final work, the *Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy*). He is notably critical of the possibility for reason and the state to direct and mediate human experience. This amounts to the metaphysical thesis that all worldly affairs, including *reason and politics themselves,* are deeply contingent.[8] The question of the fundamental, ontological contingency of any system repeatedly occurs for Schelling. Each time it reappears, it has political consequences for how we see the state and human affairs in general. In the second half of his career, Schelling articulates a meontological argument with moral consequences; namely, that the metaphysical domain of potentiality in the universe *cannot* be exhausted by reason (and for that matter, by the concept of being [*Seiende*]). The result is that no matter how soundly we use our capacity to reason—to allocate resources, to develop our knowledge, to direct our political affairs—it will never be adequate to bring about peace. For Schelling, politics finds no rest or resolve in a corrupt—or 'fallen'—world. Accordingly, Schelling's political philosophy makes an important contribution to political ontology, for the latter concerns the commitments and presuppositions about reality that shape political analyses.

To summarize, the destiny of the human community for Schelling exceeds that which is structured and codified in the state. Moreover, the voluntary community he envisages at the end of his career depends on the exercise of freedom by each and every human person. Every individual is on a journey to overcome that which impedes them from developing as a person who is capable of loving other human beings. Schelling's key political question, therefore, is: how can individuals, by exercising their freedom, enter into meaningful relationships with others in such a way that could bring about justice in the form of a single human community? The unity Schelling envisages in this human community can only happen outside of the state and in a state of affairs qualitatively different from the status quo. In real terms, the consequence is that justice and the stable reconciliation of all of humanity, are deferred to a different period of history, after the current period of "secular," finite history, which will arrive in the future. Schelling can therefore, with qualification, be considered alongside Derrida and Adorno as a messianic political theorist of the deferral of justice and redemption.[9] But we must nevertheless continue to

[8] See Tyler Tritten, *The Contingency of Necessity: Reason and God as Matters of Fact* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017).

[9] See Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life* (London and New York: Verso, 2005) and Jacques Derrida, "Force of Law: The 'Mystical Foundations of Authority,'" *Deconstruction and the Possibility*

strive to bring about justice in our singular encounters in our current period, even if we can never, by our own, political efforts, achieve a stable, just condition of all of humanity.

Schelling's political philosophy displays a prolonged commitment to a critical re-evaluation of the role of the state in bringing about a just society. The state, throughout most of Schelling's political remarks, legitimately facilitates, but also limits, the exercise of individual freedom. However, it only does so in an attempt to engender the best *transitory* conditions of realization of the freedom of all of its citizens at a given time. There is no one, perfect form of the state. The state, in its historical instantiation, must always be open to revision and critique. This is because freedom is not confined to its realizations within the contingent limits of the inside of political structures—it rather extends "beyond the state" (SW XI, 551/PRP, 121). By reading Schelling's final articulation of the perfect community of the future (the Church of St. John) through his pre-Identity Philosophy writings, which are rife not only with Fichtean and Spinozistic undertones, but are also heavily influenced by early romantic thinkers (i.e., Hölderlin, Schiller), its relevance for contemporary debates in political ontology and political existentialism come to the fore. In so doing, I propose that what seemed to be off-hand political remarks in Schelling's very early work are the actual seeds of the later politics, especially as presented in the 1810 *Stuttgart Seminars* and the 1847-1852 *Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy*. These seeds could not be detected in, and as such we remained beguiled by, the organic state of the Identity Philosophy (which is admittedly more developed than the political philosophy of Schelling's very early works). In view of these early works, Schelling's late return to speculative pietism, romantic political ideas of unity, and especially to Kant on both the grounds and limitations of reason—all early interests of Schelling—takes on new significance in the context of his political philosophy as a whole.

Throughout this dissertation, I reference both Schelling's translated and untranslated works. For each direct Schelling reference, I have included the volume and page number of his German *Sämtliche Werke* (*Collected Works*), abbreviated as SW, in-text. The corresponding English references are also included in-text after the SW reference, using the abbreviations listed

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of Justice, ed. Drucilla Cornell, Michel Rosenfeld, David Gray Carlson (New York: Routledge, 1992), 3-67. Despite that the infinite deferral of justice, as made famous by Derrida in particular, provides a good contemporary reference for the broad category of messianic politics under which Schelling's political philosophy falls, it is not a perfect analogy for the latter's position. Although the infinite deferral and displacement of justice suggest an always-unfulfilled possibility that universal justice *could* come, but will not, Schelling's position is that we have reason to hope that infinite justice will be achieved in a qualitatively different future period.

above, when available. The fourteen volumes of Schelling's *Collected Works* were edited by his son, K.F.A. Schelling and include the original Schelling texts to which I refer throughout this dissertation, with the exception of the 1831/1832 *Original Version of the Philosophy of Revelation* (*Urfassung der Philosophie der Offenbarung*), Schelling's 1792 Magister thesis on the *Origin of Human Evil* and the short fragment, the "Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism," whose authorship is debated.

In Schelling's very early period, which is the major focus of Chapter 3, I refer primarily to his 1792 dissertation *Origin of Human Evil,* 1795 "Of the I as Principle of Philosophy," the 1796 "New Deduction of Natural Right," and the 1796 "Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism" to describe Schelling's early commitment to the striving of the individual beyond the state and his first attempts to describe the voluntary community from the consequences of the fall of man as told in Genesis. Schelling's presentation of the state as a second nature in the 1800 *System of Transcendental Idealism* composes the majority of Chapter 2. To describe and problematize Schelling's view of the organic state in his 'Identity Period' in Chapter 1, I refer to the 1802 Lectures *On University Studies* and the 1804 *Würzburg System.* I begin the dissertation anachronistically with Schelling's notion of the organic to precisely show why this shortly-maintained position is unsustainable for him and to which much the rest of his political philosophy critically responds. The 1806 "Aphorisms on Nature Philosophy" and the 1807 "On the Essence of German Science" are also drawn upon as short, key transitory texts between Schelling's notion of the organic state presented in his Identity Philosophy on the one side, and the new notions of transcendence, freedom, personality and love that he advances in the 1809 Freedom Essay on the other. The latter is the most important text Schelling published in his career, and I draw upon it frequently throughout this dissertation—particularly in Chapter 4, which delineates the individual's journey beyond the state and towards a free, moral community. At this point in the dissertation, I also rely upon the 1810 *Stuttgart Seminars,* in which Schelling puts forth his theory of the minimal state in relation to the notions of 'inner unity' and therefore love as presented in the *Freedom Essay*. The metaphysical conditions of Schelling's politics of the deferral of justice are grounded in his 1841 *Paulus Transcript* (*Paulus Nachschrift*), newly translated into English under the title of the *Philosophy of Revelation* (*1841-1842*). I also reference Schelling's 1841/1842 Berlin Lectures (translated into English as *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy,* Lectures 1-8).

Finally, to reconstruct Schelling's view of the perfect, voluntary community in my fifth and final chapter, I mainly rely on the *Original Version of the Philosophy of Revelation* (henceforth *Urfassung*), where we find the first presentation of the three 'Churches,' 'ages,' or historical communities: St. Peter (the age of the external authority of the law, from Christ to the medieval period), St. Paul (our current age of freedom, secularism, and modernity), and St. John (the final age of spirit, or of a unified community). To describe Schelling's final view of the relationship of the 'rational state' and community, I also refer to Lectures 22-24 of Schelling's final work (dated 1852-1854)—the *Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology/Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy*—which I have translated myself under the title "Schelling's Late Political Philosophy." These lectures were never delivered and written by Schelling over a multi-year period at the end of his life. The final lecture, with Schelling's very last position on the political, was finished by his son K.F.A. Schelling, who, we can presume, found it important to publish his father's final political views. I supplement my descriptions of Schelling's political philosophy with evidence from the *Stuttgart Seminars* where helpful. The *Stuttgart Seminars* is a fragmentary text that does not completely hang together as a whole. But its clarity, especially on the state, make it important for anyone seeking to reconstruct Schelling's political philosophy. Finally, I support my reading of the late Schelling's politics with references to Lectures 9-37 on the *Philosophy of Revelation* (SW XII-SW XIV) when helpful.

Throughout Schelling's whole career, with the exception of 1801-1804, he presents the state as a reluctantly-conceded legal order that is the necessary condition for moral life, but which is always inadequate to it. The shift away from an organic notion of the state, connected to a holistic view of philosophy and the Absolute, is a result of the philosophical changes that occur in Schelling's work during his particularly tumultuous time in Würzburg, which follow him to Munich. I describe this context in the next section below. As Schelling progressively distinguishes between God and creation, culminating in his philosophy of freedom in 1809 in which he gives accounts of divine and human freedom only in reference to the real presence of evil in the world, he moves away from his early immanentism. His notion of the transcendent God, who reveals himself in history, means that he ultimately takes seriously the anticipation of a non-political solution to the human situation, which he reads in the Christian scriptures. In this way, although Schelling finds resonances with secular thinkers in the critical theory and post-

structuralist traditions, his final view of the voluntary community is ultimately grounded in Christian theology.

Schelling's Life

I will now provide an overview of Schelling's life, detailing the shifting political contexts in which he was writing, which framed his philosophical development and corresponding views of the state and aspirations for politics. Schelling was born in the territory of Württemberg—then a duchy known for its resistance to French attacks—on January 27, 1775. As a minister's son who attended a Protestant theological seminary, it would be impossible for Schelling, from the very beginning, *not* to have been influenced by religion. This influence comes through in his political philosophy. His father was a theologian, and Schelling studied Latin and Greek with him as a young child. Schelling retains close personal ties to Württemberg and keeps in close contact with his family throughout his early career, which, after his student years at the famous *Tübinger Stift,*[10] take him to Leipzig (1796-1797), Jena (1798-1803), Würzburg (1803-1806). I refer to Schelling's philosophy during these years as his 'early period.' I argue that Schelling's personal view of Württembergian politics and the French influence in Germany during these youthful years influences his political philosophy, especially his view of the scope of power and control of the state. As mentioned above, during this turbulent early period, his political philosophy undergoes numerous shifts. He begins with a minimalist concept of the state—which, he claims, inaugurates a "second nature"—the legal state in which human beings can exercise their freedom (1796-1800). This thesis, as I show, serves as the foundation for Schelling's political philosophy in the middle and late works. However, he then moves on to a Platonic, hierarchically ordered, all-encompassing state, which he defends from roughly 1801 to 1806, during his so-called "Identity Philosophy" period, after which point he renounces it.

[10] Schelling's formative years at the *Tübinger Stift* were marked by youthful enthusiasm and a rebellious attitude towards the old orthodoxy of the *Stift.* Many of the *Stiftler* compared the institute to "a forced internment and a torture - including Schelling himself" (Frank, *Eine Einführung,* 11). Instead, during this time, Schelling tries to find creative ways in his own writing to subvert the conservative orthodoxy of the *Stift,* including reading "the myths in the spirit of the critique of reason." Manfred Frank, *Eine Einführung in Schellings Philosophie von Manfred Frank - Suhrkamp Insel Bücher Buchdetail* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985), 15.

Schelling maintained a keen interest in politics throughout his life and faithfully read newspapers.[11] Furthermore, the momentum of his political interest was propelled forward by the intense political events, particularly revolutions, through which he lived. Throughout his career, Schelling holds numerous academic posts; his decisions to move and take up these posts are often influenced by the political conditions in which he finds himself. Any reconstruction of the development of his political philosophy, together with his philosophy of religion, must therefore be contextualized within these often politically-driven displacements. Furthermore, his political thought is also conditioned by his experiences of three sets of revolutions—the French Revolution, the 1830's revolutions in Europe, and the German revolutions of 1848-1849. Schelling's own experience of these revolutions likely influenced the anti-revolutionary character of his political philosophy. In the aftermath of the French Revolution and the ensuing processes of secularization and "modernization" of the German lands,[12] Schelling marries Caroline Schlegel and moves to the largely Catholic Würzburg in 1803. He stays there until 1806. These years are full of strife and discovery for Schelling. He enters into intense, public conflicts with a number of civil servants and academics who frequently scrutinize him openly in *die Jenaische allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*.[13] After Würzburg is transferred to Austria in the Peace of Pressburg on 26 December 1805, Schelling, like many other Protestant Professors in the area, leaves his position for Munich in 1806.[14] This is a particularly tumultuous year in Germany, as it saw the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire. Furthermore, Würzburg joins Napoleon's Confederation of the Rhine in 1806, thus becoming a kingdom. This is followed by a series of Napoleonic reforms in Württemberg, which resulted in the concentration of power in a central government. Schelling vehemently opposes these reforms, and expresses his anti-Napoleonic

[11] Sandkühler, *Freiheit und Wirklichkeit*, 29.
[12] The effects of the modernization of Germany continued into the first years of the new century. These changes affected the Germanic cultural and political spheres, especially in relation to religion. Nevertheless, one must equally be careful not to attribute every development in Germany after 1800 to the French Revolution. T.C.W. Blanning, for example, questions the extent to which German historian Thomas Nipperdey's opening statement in his massive *Deutsche Geschichte 1800-1866*, "In the beginning was Napoleon," can truly serve as the foundational principle behind the modernization of all of Germany. For example, Blanning points to the history of secularization, literacy level, the evolution of the impersonal state and the changing value system in Prussia as being "well advanced long before 1800." T.C.W. Blanning, "The French Revolution and the Modernization of Germany," *Central European History* 22, no. 2 (1989): 114.
[13] See F.W.J. Schelling, *Briefe und Dokumente*, ed. Horst Fuhrmans (Bonn: Bouvier, 1975).
[14] See Fiona Steinkamp, "General Introduction," in *Clara or, On Nature's Connection to the Spirit World* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2002), xxvi.

stance and view for a new Württembergian constitution in many letters, especially those to the theorist and civil servant Eberhard Georgii.

Schelling's middle period roughly corresponds to his time as an administrator in different posts in academia and the arts in Munich (1806-1841). Three years after his arrival in Munich, Schelling publishes his most famous work in 1809, the *Philosophical Investigations on the Essence of Human Freedom* (henceforth referred to as the Freedom Essay). This marks a turning point in Schelling's thought towards transcendence and personality. Schelling can be described, to varying degrees, as a philosopher of immanence and follower of Spinoza up to 1804—and, depending on one's interpretation of his exposition of creation and revelation between 1804 and 1807, even as late as 1807.[15] However, this is not the case in the Freedom Essay and in all of Schelling's work thereafter. It is indisputable that in 1809, Schelling's God is a personal, living God that transcends his creation.[16] Nevertheless, I argue that one can detect transcendent elements in Schelling's descriptions of the striving of the individual for unity with God and critique of the state in view of a free, moral community in some of his pre-1801 work. Nevertheless, the notion of divine transcendence first explicitly and without question appears in the 1809 Freedom Essay, and from this point until the end of his life (1854), Schelling's transcendent, personal God conditions and relativizes worldly, state politics.

Schelling's wife Caroline dies unexpectedly approximately four months after the publication of the Freedom Essay in 1809, leaving Schelling devastated. After this point, he publishes almost nothing.[17] In a state of grief, he temporarily moves to Stuttgart with his brother in 1810 for approximately one year. During this time, Schelling holds a significant set of lectures for his political philosophy in the form of private seminars (known as the *Stuttgart Seminars*)—in which he first clearly presents his minimalist, largely negative view of the state—for a small circle of statesmen, politicians and friends at the house of his friend Eberhard Georgii. Georgii

[15] Schelling gives multiple indications of the importance of *distinguishing* between God and creation between 1804 and 1807, beginning with the short 1804 text *Philosophy and Religion.* However, reason and politics do not definitively acquire an outside until the advent of the concepts of the "Ungrund" (the groundless ground before any identifiable ground of being or the existence of opposition) and the "indivisible remainder" (the 'irrational' surge of being that can never be absorbed into concepts) in the 1809 *Freedom Essay*. I explain both of these concepts in more detail below.

[16] For an account of the "1809 personalist turn" in Schelling's thought, see Sean J. McGrath, *The Dark Ground of Spirit: Schelling and the Unconscious* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 5.

[17] After the *Freedom Essay,* Schelling only publishes the *Monument to Mr. Jacobi's Writing on Divine Things* (*Denkmal*) (1812), The *Deities of Samothrace* (1815), and the "Preface to Victor Cousin's *On French and German Philosophy"* (1834). His extensive body of post-1809 work is composed of drafts (for example, the three drafts of the *Ages of the World*), manuscripts, and transcripts of lectures.

was a state politician and intellectual, commonly known as the "last Old Württemberger," who shared Schelling's initial enthusiasm and subsequent negative view of the politics of the French Revolution. The two thinkers share a common anti-Napoleon sentiment, married to a nostalgia and longing for the old Württembergian regime.[18] Schelling expresses his anti-Napoleonic opinions to the Württembergian state in letters to Georgii as late as 1813.[19] As I show in more detail in the next chapter, we can conclude that during the Würzburg years, Schelling's thought undergoes a fundamental shift, as he comes to realize that a harmonious unity between human beings cannot be achieved by earthly politics, but instead *transcends* the bonds of citizenship in love.

In addition to his year in Stuttgart, Schelling's interruption to his time in Munich continues with seven years of lecturning at the University of Erlangen from 1820-1827. In his 1821 *Erlanglen Lectures,* Schelling describes the process of reason acknowledging its own limitations and dependency relationship vis-à-vis its outside, or the "real." Reason recognizes its own limits and therefore steps *outside* of itself, in a process Schelling calls the "ecstasy" of reason (SW IX, 229-233). From this point forward, reason can be applied to history and human existence, but with a different method –one which is speculative, abductive and while fallible, nevertheless informative. Through this approach, reason can be used to speculatively analyze history and revelation, which, according to Schelling, is the way of "positive philosophy."

In his middle period, Schelling suffers. And as he suffers, his work becomes increasingly existential, creative and religious in nature. Upon the publication of the *Freedom Essay,* evil is considered by Schelling to be an active, present fact, always threatening the coherence of conscious life. The constant striving of the human being to choose good over evil is crucial for how we evaluate the limits of state politics and how we assess irrational suffering in history. Schelling models the freedom of the human being on the absolute, anarchic freedom of God, with the difference that for God, evil, by definition, is always subordinate to the good. This is, of course, not a given for the human being. Schelling's treatment of transcendence in the *Freedom*

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[18] See Hollerbach, *Der Rechtsgedanken bei Schelling*, 263ff; Erwin Hölzle, "Der letzte Württemberger," *Württemberg. Schwäbische Monatshefte im Dienste von Volk und Heimat* 3 (1931): 157–63. I am grateful to Thimo Heisenberg for directing my attention to the strength of Schelling's anti-Napoleonic views and for pointing me to the Hölzle reference.

[19] F.W.J. Schelling, *Aus Schellings Leben. In Briefen. Zweiter Band. 1803-1820.*, ed. G.L. Plitt (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1870), 339. I am again indebted to Thimo Heisenberg for drawing my attention to this letter, in which Schelling describes the time as an "evil" one to be overcome, and compares the life in Germany during the time of the Napoleonic wars to "Egyptian servitude."

Essay marks his first explicit introduction of the outside of reason, or absolute transcendence. Just one year later, in the *Stuttgart Seminars,* Schelling clarifies that the "higher and spiritual motives" required to unify humanity "lie beyond [the state's] domain and cannot be controlled by the state, even though the latter boasts with being able to create a moral setting" (SW VII, 461/SS, 227). At this point, Schelling definitively renounces the political goal of the organic, unified, harmonized state on earth—a position exceptional to the rest of his philosophy which he held from roughly 1801-1804.

Schelling's inner turmoil during this middle period (which was exacerbated by his public break with Hegel, as the latter—quite unexpectedly—publicly criticized him in his 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit*) can be detected in his almost manic re-writings of his failed *Ages of the World* manuscript. In the *Ages of the World*, three drafts of which we have, Schelling details the emergence of the personal, creator God and the intelligible world from the depths of an immemorial past—which is also the dark ground of his existence. It is here that Schelling first describes the process of creation via his theory of three potencies. As I explain below, the first of these three potencies becomes—along with the initial act of creation—a crucial concept for describing the foundation of Schelling's late political philosophy.

The delivery of Schelling's 1841/1842 *Berlin Lectures,* and the publication and circulation of their transcription, which was controversially completed by H.E.G. Paulus in bad faith, roughly marks the beginning of his late period.[20] Here Schelling explicitly presents his "positive philosophy," or his philosophy of history, mythology and revelation. Philosophically, there is no definitive break or turn between Schelling's middle and late periods. Many of the main ideas of Schelling's late philosophy of revelation were already outlined in his 1831 *Original Version of the Philosophy of Revelation* (1831)—a manuscript based on lectures Schelling gave in Munich—and more generally foreshadowed in the *Freedom Essay.*[21] By firmly

[20] Schelling continued to lecture on the Philosophy of Revelation at the University of Berlin each year until 1846. For more details on Schelling's time in Berlin, including his attempt to sue Paulus for publishing Schelling's 1841/1842 lectures in the now famous form of the "Paulus Nachschrift," see Bruce Matthews, "Schelling: A Brief Biographical Sketch of the Odysseus of German Idealism," in *The Palgrave Handbook of German Idealism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 454.

[21] As Thomas Buchheim explains, it is noteworthy that while there is no major shift or transition in Schelling's middle and late works, Schelling's work after 1827 is rife with revisions and scrutiny of his own work. Schelling notably critically reassesses the demarcation line between the domains of "negative" and "positive" philosophy. Buchheim claims that Schelling's son, Karl Friedrich August Schelling, creates confusion by positioning *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy,* which is the *Berlin Introduction* from the 1842/1843 lectures, as the introduction to his philosophy of mythology and revelation in his compilation of Schelling's Collected Works. This was against

situating the state in the realm of reason and necessity, the late Schelling clearly demarcates the provisional unity of the state's citizens from the absolute unity of the perfect ecclesial community which he locates in a church of the future, the Church of St. John.

The specific political conditions of Schelling's departure for Berlin are well documented. They provide a contentious but important historical ground for much of Schelling's influence on materialism and existentialism. In 1841, Schelling was called by the conservative King Friedrich Wilhelm IV to occupy Hegel's chair in Berlin, which had been unoccupied since Hegel's death in 1831.[22] Schelling was expected to expel "the dragon-seed [*Drachensaat*] of Hegelian pantheism" from Prussia.[23] This was Schelling's last post before his death in 1854, which he also took "at least partly to escape restrictions imposed upon his own teaching" in Munich.[24] Many left-Hegelians saw Schelling's call to the chair in Berlin as a conservative and regressive "Christian restoration."[25] Among the "democratic, socialist or communist" thinkers who "attacked Schelling as the ideological pioneer of restoration and reaction" in his time include "Becker, Engels, Heine, Marx, Strähl and Weitling."[26]

Nevertheless, on the first day of Schelling's lectures in Berlin in 1841, the lecture theatre was full of prominent intellectuals in anticipation. Engels, Bakunin, Kierkegaard, Burckhardt,

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Schelling's last testament, in which rather the "the *Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy* [*Darstellung der reinrationalen Philosophie*] was, together with the treatise *On the Source of Eternal Truths* [*Über die Quelle der ewigen Wahrheiten*], supposed to constitute a (negative-)*philosophical* introduction to the complete system." Thomas Buchheim, "Schelling's Late Philosophy (Forthcoming)," trans. Kyla Bruff and Majk Feldmeier, in *The Palgrave Schelling Handbook*, ed. Sean J. McGrath, Kyla Bruff and Joseph Carew (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022).

[22] Fred Rush discusses the conditions of Schelling's appointment in Berlin in detail in Fred Rush, "Schelling's Critique of Hegel," in *Interpreting Schelling: Critical Essays*, ed. Lara Ostaric (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 216–17. He writes that Friedrich Wilhelm IV was "attracted to Romantic reverie about the Middle Ages" and was a "staunch conservative concerned to make sure that those whom he took to be dangerous, left-wing intellectual agitators were put down. Berlin was at a boiling point in his estimation. He chose a velvet-glove approach to the problem, more print than police baton, and appointed a philosopher to do the job of subjugation" (Rush, 216). The philosopher in question was of course Schelling. Rush is "unaware of another example of a monarch directly and by act of state appointing a philosopher to a university." The king, Friedrich Wilhelm IV, on behalf of the state, "brought Schelling to Berlin to realize the King's project of philosophical restoration." Rush, 217.

[23] Bruce Matthews, "Introduction," in *Grounding of Positive Philosophy* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2012), 6.

[24] Manfred Frank, "Schelling's Critique of Hegel and the Beginnings of Marxian Dialectics," *Idealistic Studies* 19, no. 3 (1989): 253.

[25] André Schmiljun and Volker Thiel, *Schelling und die Antipolitische Moderne: Ist die Parlamentarische Demokratie in Gefahr?* (Berlin: Logos Verlag, 2017), 13.

[26] Hans Jörg Sandkühler, ed., "F.W.J. Schelling - ein Werk im Werden. Zur Einführung.," in *F.W.J Schelling*, by Hans Jörg Sandkühler (J.B. Metzler, 1998), 32. Engels' critical, satirical view of the late Schelling's Christian philosophy can be read in his anonymous pamphlet he authored in 1842. See Frederick Engels, "Schelling, Philosopher In Christ: Or The Transformation Of Worldly Wisdom into Divine Wisdom For Believing Christians Who Do Not Know the Language of Philosophy," *Marx/Engels Collected Works* 2, 191.

and Humboldt were among them. But they were, for the most part, gravely disappointed upon hearing Schelling's systematic defence of Christianity in his philosophy of revelation, which seemed outdated and reactionary to them. Although Schelling does not say much about the state in his lectures in Berlin *per se*, he is clearly on a path towards the socio-political. The politico-religious community, which would be the aforementioned perfect community of the Church of St. John, was already presented in the 1831 *Original Version of the Philosophy of Mythology*. But the consequences for Schelling's view of the state are detailed in his very final work, the *Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy* (1847-1852). Schelling worked on these lectures, in which we find an explicit, definitive critique of the state, after he finished lecturing at the University of Berlin (1846) until shortly before his death.[27] In these lectures, Schelling sees the state as necessary for accountability, responsibility and the realization of freedom,[28] but at the same time closely affiliated with necessity characteristic of the "dark ground" of nature found in the *Freedom Essay*. The state, or ground, is a necessity, Schelling reiterates time and time again, that must be overcome by the person. In this way, it is comparable to nature. The state, therefore, is a "burden" (SW XI, 548) which "raises the individual to a person" (SW XI, 546/PRP, 118-119). At the end of his life, Schelling's position is that the state establishes the condition for freedom—and we must therefore value and defend it—but it is also just a transitory "entry-point" to the higher order of a perfect and righteous human community (SW XI, 553/PRP, 122).

Schelling's Consistency as a Political Thinker

This dissertation makes a contribution to the longstanding debate over the degree of consistency in Schelling's work. On the one hand, by maintaining that Schelling only develops his earliest political insights once he turns *away* from his Identity Philosophy project in 1806-1809 and towards his "positive philosophy"—i.e., the living philosophy of history and revelation— I am arguing against claims that Schelling is a completely consistent thinker. I challenge, for example,

[27] See Ralf Borlinghaus, *Neue Wissenschaft. Schelling und das Projekt einer Positiven Philosophie* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1995), 92. It is worth noting that although Schelling stopped lecturing at the University of Berlin in 1846, up until 1852 he gave lectures at the Prussian *Akademie der Wissenschaft*.
[28] See Thomas Buchheim, "Grundlinien von Schellings Personbegriff," in *„Alle Persönlichkeit Ruht Auf Einem Dunkeln Grunde". Schellings Philosophie der Personalität*, ed. Thomas Buchheim and Friedrich Hermanni (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2004), 31.

the consistency claim underlying interpretations of *all* of Schelling's philosophy as a philosophy of nature[29] or power ontology.[30] On the other hand, by limiting the period of exception to Schelling's political coherence to his Identity Philosophy years (roughly dated from 1801-1806), I am simultaneously maintaining that there is a higher degree of consistency in his political philosophy than Habermas, for example, who claims there are three distinct, incompatible political Schellings,[31] and Fuhrmans, who sees the middle Schelling as presenting an original philosophy of history and personality, that, as an antidote to dogmatic idealism, stands alone from the rest of his philosophy.[32]

While Schelling's philosophy changes course with his departure from his Identity Philosophy and subsequent defence of the transcendent aspects of God after 1809 in the transition from negative to positive philosophy,[33] I locate the seeds of his early political philosophy in his pre-Identity Philosophy works, specifically the 1795-1797 writings. I am not alone in identifying the origin of some of the insights of the mature Schelling's philosophy in his youthful works. Manfred Frank, Saitya Brata Das, and Kirill Chepurin, for example, have all identified the roots of some of Schelling's post-1809 theses in his earliest period. As Frank has shown, Schelling carries out a final return to Kant, grounded in his early, pre-1800 insights, characterized by the claim that "thinking" is a "projecting of the possible" that cannot have its ground in a "pre-conceived potency."[34] Schelling's famous late thesis on the inability to acquire direct access to the ground of being is already present in his repeated discussions of the impossibility for a finite human being to achieve complete and total identity with the Absolute

[29] Iain Hamilton Grant, *Philosophies of Nature After Schelling* (London and New York: Continuum, 2006).
[30] Charlotte Alderwick, *Schelling's Ontology of Powers* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021).
[31] See Habermas, "Dialectical Idealism in Transition to Materialism: Schelling's Idea of a Contraction of God and Its Consequences for the Philosophy of History," 43-47. These three political Schellings are exemplified by their three different views on the state, according to Habermas. The first is a rational, perfectly just order on earth (1800), the second is a restrictive punishment for sin which should eventually cease to exist (1810), and the third is a supportive order of law and force on earth which makes possible the flawed human being's moral disposition (1847-1852).
[32] Horst Fuhrmans, *Schellings letzte Philosophie. Die Negative und Positive Philosophie im Einsatz des Spätidealismus* (Berlin: Junker und Dünnhaupt, 1940); Horst Fuhrmans, *Schellings Philosophie der Weltalter. Schellings Philosophie in den Jahren 1806-1821. Zum Problem des Schellingschen Theismus.* (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1954).
[33] Sean J. McGrath, *The Philosophical Foundations of the Late Schelling: The Turn to the Positive* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021), 13-14.
[34] Manfred Frank, "Schelling's Late Return to Kant: On the Difference between Absolute Idealism and Philosophical Romanticism," in *6/2008 Romantik / Romanticism, in Internationales Jahrbuch des Deutschen Idealismus / International Yearbook of German Idealism*, ed. Jürgen Stolzenberg, Karl Ameriks, and Fred Rush (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 29.

in, for example, the "Of the I as Principle of Philosophy" (see especially SW I, 201/OTI, 99), "Philosophical Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism," and the *System of Transcendental Idealism.*[35] Furthermore, Das and Chepurin have demonstrated that Schelling's view of the persistence of that which is unconditioned outside of the closed system of 'reason' or 'predication,' and his commitment to the precedence of God or the Absolute before creation, are all precipitated by his 1795-1797 works.[36]

The broader debate concerning Schelling's consistency as a thinker, especially in view of the question of whether his late philosophy of revelation and return to Kant are reconcilable with his early and middle works, can be seen to have publicly started during the controversy ignited by Schelling's Berlin Lectures in 1841. There was no consensus even when Schelling was alive regarding whether or not his late positive philosophy marked a clear departure or a mere supplement to his earlier works. It is clear, however, that the disappointment and eventual disinterest reported by many of the now-famous intellectuals present in the lecture theatre to hear Schelling in 1841 at minimum suggest that the eschatological philosophy of revelation he expounded in Berlin was a betrayal of expectations based on his earlier philosophical work.[37] Although Kierkegaard expressed initial enthusiasm and was influenced by Schelling's philosophy, he grew to be critical of Schelling.[38] More specifically, despite his early positive

[35] See, for example, Schelling, OTI, 99.

[36] On the early roots of the late Schelling's return to Kant, see Manfred Frank, "Schelling's Late Return to Kant." Frank moreover notes that Schelling already saw the primacy of "absolute reality" over "absolute negation" and the transitory nature of being (*Seinede*) in his 1795 "Of the I as Principle of Philosophy" (SW I, 191). That reflection cannot ground its own existence is a key insight of Schelling's "positive philosophy" in, for example, the *Paulus Nachschrift.* See Frank, *Der unendliche Mangel an Sein*, 239; On the similarity between Schelling's view of the break between the limitations of knowledge and the absolutely unconditional in 1795 compared to 1841-1842, see Saitya Brata Das, *The Political Theology of Schelling* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 44; Finally, on the persistence of bliss as a "utopic force" in Schelling's early and middle works, see Kirill Chepurin, "Indifference and the World: Schelling's Pantheism of Bliss," *Sophia* 58, no. 4 (2019): 613–30, 615-617.

[37] On Engels critique of Schelling in particular, see, for example, Friedrich Engels, "Friedrich Engels (Oswald), from the 1841 Telegraph für Deutschland," trans. Haydo Gerdes, in *Phlosophie der Offenbarung 1841/1842*, by F.W.J. Schelling (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), 457–60; Friedrich Engels, "Schelling, Philosopher in Christ: Or the Transformation of Worldly Wisdom into Divine Wisdom for Believing Christians Who do not Know the Language of Philosophy," in *MECW*, vol. 2, 1842, 191. Regarding the desire of Schelling's Berlin audience for wisdom and truth in the form of absolute knowledge, which Schelling could only deliver eschatologically, see McGrath, *The Philosophical Foundations of the Late Schelling*, 3.

[38] See Søren Kierkegaard, "Nachschrift der Schelling-Vorlesung von 1841," in *Schellings Seinslehre und Kierkegaard*, trans. E. Schlechta-Nordentoft (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 1962), 98–179. On the influence of Schelling on Kierkegaard, see Lore Hühn and Philipp Schwab "Kierkegaard and German Idealism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Kierkegaard.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013; Lore Hühn, *Kierkegaard und der Deutsche Idealismus*, Tübigen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009. Regarding Schelling's positive influence on Kierkegaard, Hühn and Schwab explain that "the motif of the incommensurability between existence and the concept" in Kierkegaard's work "points to Schelling's ‚positive philosophy'" (Hühn and Schwab, 62). Furthermore, "Kierkegaard's criticisms

judgment of Schelling's 1841 treatment of the key concepts of his positive philosophy, such as reality (*Wirklichkeit*) in November 1841,[39] by February 1842, Kierkegaard had declared that he had "completely given up on Schelling."[40] Schelling was aware of this general, negative judgment of the work he presented in Berlin, and more specifically, of the charge that he was doing something utterly different in Berlin than in his pre-1800 *Naturphilosophical* works—and for that matter, than in the 1809 Freedom Essay. Notably, the only period of Schelling's philosophy that Marx and Engels saw as having any value was the very early *Naturphilosophie*.[41]

As we move into the twentieth century, the consistency debate emerges anew out of the following question: how does Schelling conceive of the scope of application of reason to reality, especially in the context of his turn to a Christian philosophy of revelation during his early Munich years (1806-1821)? This question of the limits of the reach of reason simultaneously concerns the roots of Schelling's last political insights and the controversy over whether there is a fundamental break between Schelling's middle philosophy—especially the Freedom Essay and the *Ages of the World* drafts—and the late philosophy, in which Schelling returns to Kant and the power of reason to understand revelation and history. Its answer was debated most famously between Horst Fuhrmans and Walter Schulz in the 1940s and 1950s in Germany.

These two scholars disagreed on whether Schelling, on the one hand, brackets the scope of reason, therefore taking a step outside of idealism (Fuhrmans), or, on the other hand, develops idealism to its full conclusion—doing an even better job of it than Hegel (Schulz). Fuhrmans lauds Schelling's treatment of freedom, existence, personality, history and love *beyond* reason as a result of his Christian turn towards revelation during the middle period.[42] For Fuhrmans, the exercise and consequences of human freedom cannot be deduced, or even recognized, *a priori*.

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concerning the distortion of the actuality of existence by logic can be traced back to Schelling's late thought. So too can his criticism of the treatment of 'beginning' and 'movement' in Hegel's *Logic*" (Hühn and Schwab, 63). Regarding Kierkegaard's modification of Schellingian ideas, they add, "Schelling's projected 'philosophy of revelation' is changed by Kierkegaard into an analysis of the facticity of an ethical existence that is always singular." Hühn and Schwab, "Kierkegaard and German Idealism," 63.

[39] "When [Schelling] mentioned the word '*actuality*' [*Virkelighed*] concerning philosophy's relation to the actual, the child of thought leaped for joy within me." Søren Kierkegaard, "Notebook 8," trans. Alistair Hannay, in *Kierkegaard's Journals and Notebooks*, ed. Niels Jørgen Cappelørn *et al*., vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 229. Cf. Søren Kierkegaard, "Tagebücher, 22 November 1841," trans. Hayo Gerdes, in F.W.J. Schelling, *Phlosophie der Offenbarung 1841/1842* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), 452–53.

[40] Søren Kierkegaard, "Letter to Emil Boesen, 6. Febuary 1842," trans. Hayo Gerdes, in F.W.J. Schelling, *Phlosophie Der Offenbarung 1841/1842* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), 455. English translation in the main text is mine.

[41] See Manfred Frank, "Schelling's Critique of Hegel and the Beginnings of Marxian Dialectics," trans. Joseph P. Lawrence, *Idealistic Studies* 19, no. 3 (1989): 251–68.

[42] See Fuhrmans, *Schellings letzte Philosophie.*

The accountability of the human being to himself and God in the Freedom Essay and the *Ages of the World* is thus irreconcilable, according to Fuhrmans, with the strong notion of necessity present in Schelling's early idealism. Schelling treats freedom adequately only when free of the "will to system," the main characteristic of idealism to which Fuhrmans claims Schelling returns in his late philosophy.[43] With his late turn to Kant, Schelling returns to a systematic approach to existence and therefore loses the core of the insights won during the middle period, which, again, stands out so prominently for Fuhrmans. Schulz, on the other hand, sees Schelling as completing a project of the total mediation of experience by reason to its logical end.[44] In other words, he claims that Schelling's thought was one single movement that reached the end (*Vollendung*) of Idealism.[45] Accordingly, Schulz maintains that Schelling *was* a consistent thinker—a champion of Idealism through and through—whereas Fuhrmans defends the opposite position in the debate concerning Schelling's inner consistency as a thinker.[46]

The spark generated by the debate concerning reason's scope vis-à-vis reality (*Wirklichkeit*), which reignited the consistency debate as described above, is more political than it may initially appear. This is especially because the Schelling of the Identity Philosophy (1801-1806) *and* in the final Philosophy of Revelation/Purely Rational Philosophy (1841-1854) defends the state as a rational, intelligible order. However, in the former, the state is identified with civil society and the realization of the human community, where is the latter, the state is separated from the latter. Since I claim that Schelling, during his short 'Identity period,' pursues a political position altogether different from the rest of his political philosophy, the result is that, in tracking the scope of reason's application to experience through a rational state, my thesis poses a challenge to both Fuhrmans and Schulz. Schelling, as a philosopher of the state, is neither consistent through and through, as maintained by Schulz, nor does he lose the hard-won insights of the Freedom Essay in his late philosophy.

But what makes these two theories of the rational state so different? In 1802-1804, Schelling's theory of the state as a rational order is characterized by a necessity with which all human beings, in their most personal and everyday exercise of freedom, should seek to conform.

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[43] Fuhrmans, *Schellings Letzte Philosophie. Die Negative und Positive Philosophie*, 22.
[44] Walter Schulz, *Die Vollendung des Deutschen Idealismus in der Spätphilosophie Schellings* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1955).
[45] For a summary of the Fuhrmans-Schulz debate, see Axel Hutter, *Geschichtliche Vernunft: Die Weiterführung der Kantischen Vernunftkritik in der Spätphilosophie Schellings* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1996).
[46] Fuhrmans in fact maintains there were four Schellings. See Fuhrmans, *Schellings letzte Philosophie*.

There is no 'life beyond this state'—no hope for something more. The identity of freedom and necessity in the Absolute, as facilitated in and through the state and the progressive work of reason in the world, is the final goal. However, in the final lectures of the *Purely Rational Philosophy*, which was compiled together by Schelling's son on the basis of final conversations with his father, Schelling defines the state as an "external order of reason equipped with coercive power" (SW XI, 533/SS, 108). The instantiation of such a rational order occurs through a "constitution in which domination and submission occur" (SW XI, 533/SS, 108). But the word *external* here is not incidental. In contrast to that which unites human beings *externally* (the state), there is also an *internal*, higher unity that transcends the state. This means that the state is relativized in the course of history in favour of the voluntary community of the future (the Church of St. John). The distinction between external and inner unity, and the privileging of the latter over the former in Schelling's post-1809 philosophy, differentiates the late Schelling's presentation of the state as a "rational order" from the perfect rational state of *On University Studies* and the *Würzburg System.* Both states are guided by reason and include the instantiation of hierarchy; however, Schelling's view of the perfect, higher, internally-unified community in the late philosophy *transcends* all hierarchy. It also transcends the concept of the state itself. The teleological unity of freedom and necessity within an organic model is not the goal of the eschatological politics of the future of the late Schelling. Instead, the reconciliation and justice of all human beings is deferred to a different time and dependent on the work of God outside of finitude (in the "third age"). This reconciliation does not happen immanently in the Absolute. As a result, the application of reason in political situations, for the late Schelling, has a limited scope of what it can achieve.

But to understand this political position, we need to understand Schelling's philosophy of religion, and specifically, of revelation. Das, Christian Danz and Sean J. McGrath have all shown the importance of Schelling's philosophy of revelation for his political philosophy.[47] Revelation *is* Schelling's late political philosophy insofar as the most extensive explanation we find in all of his work of the key concept of the "voluntary community" is the Church of St. John—the political community of a qualitatively different time in the future, to which all come freely (UR,

[47] Das, *The Political Theology of Schelling*; Danz, "The State as 'a Consequence of the Curse of Humanity': The Late Schelling's Philosophy of Religion and of the State"; McGrath, *The Philosophical Foundations of the Late Schelling*; McGrath, "The Tyranny of Consumer-Capitalism and the Third Age of Revelation," *Analecta Hermeneutica* 5 (2013): 1–14.

700; SW XIV, 328/PMR, 334). Schelling's late political philosophy, which crowns his philosophy of revelation, has points of similarity with Marxist-inspired critical theory. The relativization of the present, of the determination of being in the world in which we live, in relation to the eschatological future, to hope in a voluntary community to come, i.e., hope for real, qualitative change, maximizes the possibilities for social critique. Manfred Frank has shown, for example, that the late Schelling's treatment of existence prior to essence, and the choice presented to us to either realize our own contingency and dependency upon a ground that is ontologically prior to our own existence (which can equally be conceived as nature or the environment), or to selfishly live only for ourselves and destroy these conditions (which is, in a sense, is 'evil' for Schelling), make Schelling an important forerunner to Sartre and Marx (specifically on alienation). The concept of a 'dark' ontological ground, which is prior to our existence and upon which the latter depends, is one of the most important concepts to emerge from Schelling's turn towards transcendence in 1809, and to which he remains committed, in various forms, throughout his philosophy of revelation.[48]

Schelling's late political philosophy irreducibly values each individual's right to make her own decisions, develop her own virtues, and perhaps most importantly, choose her own religious affiliations and beliefs. It does so while affirming that the relative context of beliefs, cultures, and desires, and by extension we could say contemporary capitalism and its constant generation of new wants, is not the end for humanity. Schelling's political eschatology offers us resources to critique the status quo and to hope for a better world. While the resonance with Marxist critical theory is clear, we must be careful not to deny that the distinctly Christian context of Schelling's late philosophy. More specifically, Schelling's three ages of the church—including the final, perfect voluntary community—are developed as part of a philosophy of history which presupposes the claim that God redeems humanity, specifically through Jesus Christ. God becomes one with humanity in Christ, and through the latter's death and resurrection, offers us salvation and eternal life. After Christ, human beings are allotted a fundamental role in the history of this God's self-revelation. The perfect community, or the third age of the church, is the final form of society, in which humanity will be united in the full

[48] This dark ground is predicated upon an even more fundamental premise in Schelling's philosophy, notably presented in the Freedom Essay as the "*Unground*" or" non-ground." For an account of the persistence and transformation of this principle in Schelling's late philosophy, see Philipp Schwab, "Nonground and the Metaphysics of Evil: From Heidegger's First Schelling Seminar to Derrida's Last Reading of Schelling (1927 2002)," *Analecta Hermeneutica* 5 (2013), 25.

personalization of the spirit, the third person of the Trinity, and through the spirit, the medium of the final return of all of things to God. Schelling repeats numerous times a phrase taken from St Paul that in the end God will be "all in all" (UR, 708; SW VII, 403/PI, 66; SW VII, 405/PI, 68; SW VII, 408/PI, 70). While this is a surely Christian theological politics, the fact that Schelling defends the secularization and pluralization of religious expression within Christianity itself, in view of a critique of the present time, means that it could offer productive points of comparison with approaches to political philosophy that positively invoke concepts of transcendence or the messianic.

Is Schelling an Apolitical Conservative or Ally of Critical Theory?

The consistency debate lends itself to the question of how to read Schelling today. Is Schelling an apolitical, conservative thinker, or can we read him as an ally of the Marx-inspired, critical theory tradition? Should we regard him as a disgruntled 'state philosopher,' appointed by conservative King Friedrich Wilhelm IV, to put an end to the "dragonseed of Hegelian Pantheism" and its "facile omniscience,"[49] or as an overlooked, unique political thinker who is vehemently committed to a critique of the status quo and the pursuit of justice? The two need not be mutually exclusive. Whether one reads Schelling through a conservative lens, focusing on the Christian and reformatory elements of his thought, or through a progressive, critical-theory inspired lens, his political philosophy is a powerful and viable alternative to, on the one hand, forms of libertarianism and anarchocapitalism, in which the market, not the state, would regulate the distribution of public goods and services. On the other hand, it also stands apart from political programs pushing for a revolution or high levels of state control. Schelling's political philosophy, I suggest, can be read as an anti-revolutionary critique of the reach of the state and the appeals of consumer capitalism, which champions the exercise of individual freedom beyond the state without thereby suggesting a hasty dismantling of the state. However, the state should not mediate all aspects of human life. So long as we remain in our current spatio-temporal conditions, Schelling thinks we *need* the state. But the goal of history should be to collectively transcend it, that is, render it irrelevant. We ought to pursue a universal condition of justice in

[49] Matthews, "Introduction," 6.

which we no longer need the state . Schelling is a conservative who finds productive resonances with Marxist-inspired schools of thought, which criticize inequality under capitalism and the reach of the state,[50] while at the same time, he expresses hesitancy towards revolutions.

Schelling's political conservatism is linked not only to his philosophical anthropology, i.e., view of corrupt nature of the human being due to the fall, but also to the philosophy of religion.[51] Schelling became increasingly committed to the philosophy of religion over the course of his career in a series of highly politically-charged contexts. Indeed, Schelling's political remarks are, after 1809, always presented in connection to his view of God, the church, and the future possibility of a freely unified humanity. Schelling hopes for redemption beyond the state while at once disapproving of attempts to directly overturn the state in its current form (and to replace it with an instantiation of any superior, emancipatory blueprint).

It is true that there are anarchist undertones to the critique of the state in the *Stuttgart Seminars,* in which Schelling articulates the contradictory nature of the state vis-à-vis freedom, together with its insufficiency for a "free spirit." It is impossible, on Schelling's account, to "find a true and absolute unity" in the state (SW VII, 461-462/SS, 227). Furthermore, it is noteworthy that Mikhail Bakunin engaged with Schelling's work.[52] However, the limitations of the state's capacity to emancipate human beings, according to Schelling, does not mean we should overthrow it. The state effectuates a "natural unity," a "second nature … to which man must necessarily take recourse" (SW VII, 461/SS, 207). This requirement is due to the fall of man, i.e., the "separation" of the human being from "God," which causes a struggle in nature (SW VII, 460/SS, 208). As a result of the fall, the 'dark' unconscious ground within each person, to use Schelling's terminology, is active, and threatening to usurp his conscious control at any time in the name of evil. Schelling therefore distrusts human beings to design the perfect edifice in

[50] Including Marx himself. See Marx's *The German Ideology (*1846), in which he critiques the function of the state as an apparatus which serves to further bourgeois interests.

[51] Markus Hofman and Marc Maesschalck have analyzed links between Schelling's anthropology, political philosophy, and philosophy of religion. See Mark Maesschalck, *L'anthropologie politique et religieuse de Schelling* (Paris and Leuven: Vrin and Peeters, 1991) for an interpretation of Schelling's anthropology and philosophy of freedom, with emphasis on their relation to politics and religion. Additionally, Hofman emphasizes that Schelling's late conception of the law in particular relies on Schelling's view of Christianity. See Markus Hofman, *Über den Staat hinaus. Eine historische systematische Untersuchung zu F.W.J. Schellings Rechts- und Staatsphilosophie* (Zürich: Schulthess Juristische Medien, 1999), 187ff.

[52] See Jared McGeough, "Schelling 'After' Bakunin: Idealism, Anarchism, Post-Anarchism," *Symposium* 19, no. 1 (2015): 80–93. Cf. Manfred Frank's claim that "Schelling unmasked the state as an association of force and did so with an acidic tone that only anarchists like Bakunin or Proudhon could reiterate." Frank, "Schelling's Critique of Hegel and the Beginnings of Marxian Dialectics," 265.

which they can peacefully live—i.e., the nation state. The state is always imperfect and always needing to be reformed. This dual attitude towards the state, namely, that it is at once insufficient and necessary, and that it should be reformed, not torn down, is maintained by Schelling throughout all of his political philosophy, with the exception of 1801-1804.

Historian of Russia and the Soviet Union Richard Pipes describes the theological undertones of a, what I would call 'Schellingian,' conservative position towards revolutions. It is in this manner that I would suggest we see the political relevance, theological hope, and indeed the passion of Schelling's anti-revolutionary position. By considering Schelling's distrust of the state (and thereby nationalism), together with a hesitancy towards revolutions, in the context of real political struggles, we can see his relevance as a political thinker.

> Post-1789 revolutions have raised the most fundamental ethical questions: whether it is proper to destroy institutions built over centuries by trial and error, for the sake of ideal systems; whether one has the right to sacrifice the well-being and even the lives of one's own generation for the sake of generations yet unborn; whether man can be refashioned into a perfectly virtuous being. To ignore these questions, raised already by Edmund Burke two centuries ago, is to turn a blind eye to the passions that had inspired those who made and those who resisted revolutions. For post-1789 revolutionary struggles, in the final analysis, are not over politics but over theology.[53]

Schelling's opposition to any 'rational' ordering of sacrifice, the bio-political judgment of who lives and who dies in the name of a better future, is a topic he shares with many thinkers of romanticism and the critical theory tradition. It is grounded in a deeply pessimistic view of the capability of human beings to bring about a just society through revolutionary means.[54] With this opinion, Schelling thus finds unlikely allies beyond the conservative tradition.

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[53] Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), xxiii.

[54] I develop a comparison between Schelling's political pessimism and that of the romantics at the end of Chapter 3. Schelling shares an affinity with the critical theory tradition in his skepticism towards what can potentially be achieved for humanity and justice through politics. On the late Horkheimer's lack of faith in revolution, and politics in general, to rectify the suffering of the world, see Horkheimer, *Die Sehnsucht nach dem ganz Anderen.* Adorno expresses his apprehension towards revolutionary activity in 1969, stating "for someone who is ensconced in safety to advise others to start a revolution is so ridiculous that one ought to be ashamed of oneself." Gerhard Richter and Theodor W. Adorno, "Who's Afraid of the Ivory Tower? A Conversation with Theodor W. Adorno," Monatshefte 94, no. 1 (2002): 19. In the original German, see Theodor W. Adorno, "Keine Angst vor dem Elfenbeinturm: Spiegel-Gespräch mit dem Frankfurter Sozialphilosophen Professor Theodor W. Adorno," Der Spiegel, May 5,

That conservatism need not distrust in or be dismissive of progressive, critical politics should be self-evident.[55] Schelling can accordingly be considered alongside other traditional conservatives that advocated for gradual, reformatory social change and were critical of the status quo. In line with the citation above, one could compare his political thought to the conservatism of Edmund Burke, especially insofar as both are skeptical towards the possibilities of "a priori reasoning and revolution" in politics, instead placing "trust in experience and in the gradual improvement of tried and tested arrangements."[56] Experience and its analysis *per posterius* are important for the late Schelling's view of state reform, the exercise of freedom, and the need to limit and check political power.[57] Based on experience, the state should continuously be scrutinized and gradually reformed, in order to ensure it serves, rather than overdetermines, human life.

Schelling's supposed disinterest in politics is nevertheless maintained by Habermas and Hans Jörg Sandkühler, both from within the Marxist tradition. Habermas bluntly writes, "Schelling is not a political thinker,"[58] while Hans Jörg Sandkühler claims Schelling purges the political of any substance. Sandkuhler suggests there is a "loss of the political" in Schelling's philosophy,[59] in which hope has no relation to reality.[60] When proposing that Schelling does not have a political philosophy, Habermas highlights the discordance he perceives between Schelling's "sketches" of the state in 1800, 1810, and 1854, which, on his account, together cannot amount to a coherent political philosophy. In this dissertation, I maintain that these three

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1969. Compare this anti-revolutionary stance with Schelling, SW XI, 551: "The state itself is the stable (the thing of the past). It should rest in silence, allowing only reform (not revolution). Schelling, "Lectures 22-24 of the Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy," 120–21.

[55] Edmund Burke's conservatism, for example, focused heavily on the possibility of the state to transform and society to improve itself. On Alexis de Tocqueville and Edmund Burke as "liberal conservatives," for example, see Sanford Lakoff, "Tocqueville, Burke, and the Origins of Liberal Conservatism," *The Review of Politics* 60, no. 3 (1998): 435–64.

[56] Anthony O'Hear, "Conservatism," in *Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 170.

[57] Schelling links the necessary limits on political power with the shortcomings of our knowledge vis-à-vis experience. He argues against asserting any level of 'dogmatic certainty' in politics, as well as the possibility of attaining political perfection. As a result, Schelling develops a critique of despotism in the *Stuttgart Seminars.* See SW VII, 462/SS, 227. Despotism, in Habermas' paraphrasing of Schelling, can be attributed to the "most rigorous theorists of the Idea" (Habermas, "Dialectical Idealism," 45). Despite Schelling's own critique of despotism, Günter Zöller suggests we be wary of potential despotic tendencies that could be present in the realization of an "ethico-religious rule of the church" that amounts to a "theologico-religious understanding of freedom and its order" beyond the state, such as described by Schelling himself (Zöller, "Church and State," 215).

[58] Habermas, "Dialectical Idealism in Transition to Materialism: Schelling's Idea of a Contraction of God and Its Consequences for the Philosophy of History," 43.

[59] Sandkühler, *Freiheit und Wirklichkeit,* 12-13.

[60] Sandkühler, *Freiheit und Wirklichkeit,* 168.

are in fact cohesive. Habermas has a vested interest in clearly separating Schelling's three concepts of the state. Reading Schelling as an apolitical, disjointed thinker, who produces only momentary musings on the state, puts Habermas in a position to isolate and analyze Schelling's brief, but strongest, rejection of the idea of the state in the 1810 *Stuttgart Seminars*, in which Schelling claims the state is a "consequence of the curse that has been placed on humanity" (SW VII, 461/SS, 207). As noted above, eventually, we will no longer need the state, for we will have achieved the transcendent, voluntary unity of which Schelling speaks. Habermas notes that Schelling does not seek to defend an account of the state which would support the fallen condition of the human being, but rather presents a "crisis" which demands an alternative, Marxist form of political response.[61] Habermas, however, does not acknowledge that Schelling has his own political and community-oriented resources that can construct that very response, instead opting to turn to Marx.

The criteria of what makes a genuinely political thinker are debatable. My account of Schelling as a political thinker relies on my claims that (a) he has a sustained, full political philosophy, most notably through his developed concept of the state and understanding of its relation to the community, which I aim to reconstruct, (b) his political philosophy is rooted in the philosophical anthropology of the conservative tradition, and (c) that the analyses and conclusions of his political philosophy resonate with those of certain other important social and political philosophers emerging from the Marxist tradition. Habermas denies (a), but addresses the philosophical anthropology mentioned in (b) without relating it to the conservative tradition. He himself performs (c) by reading Schelling's theological metaphysics through Marx.

In the remainder of this Introduction, I first recover the roots of Schelling's conservatism in Hobbes and Locke, from which point I move to the link between Schelling and Marx as first established by Habermas and Manfred Frank, especially concerning the relation of Schelling's metaphysics to the emancipation of human beings from material oppression. I conclude by noting Schelling's proximity to the critical theory tradition, especially to the work of Adorno, on the topics of experience and the critique of totality and Hegel. I hope this will help spark interest in different hermeneutical readings of Schelling's political philosophy in today's context and dispel unfair judgments of Schelling as an a-political, cynical, intolerant, conservative thinker.

[61] Habermas, "Dialectical Idealism," 47.

Schelling's negative view of human nature signifies that, as flawed beings, we cannot bring about absolute justice and peace on our own. He perceives the human being's nature as corrupt, for they have fallen from God, and as a result, as finite, sensuous beings, we can only form a precarious unity with one another through the state. The *fallen* human being's relationship to God and the state is at the centre of Schelling's political philosophy.[62] Through sin, according to Schelling, human beings have strayed from their original unity with God, and the state can never restore this unity. The state, like the Law for St. Paul, is established by God to reveal to us how far from the ideal we have fallen. The restoration of humanity in a new form at the end of history is only possible, on Schelling's account, through a final redemptive act of God that we cannot ourselves summon or effectuate. This redemption already began, according to the middle and late Schelling, in Christ. It retrospectively explains why and how the unity between God and the fallen human being could be possible, as it presented a point in finitude when God became real. After this event, all things, both infinite and finite, will become fully actualized in a new way, the endpoint of which is the final redemption of humanity, which for Schelling means the restoration of the unity of the human race, lost with the mythic birth of nations and the inception of the political, a fall that was the external effect of a primordial alteration of collective human consciousness. The political begins when we lose our intimacy with the divine and fracture into warring nations; it cannot therefore be the means of the restoration. Despite the fact that the final end of history is out of our hands, we must nevertheless continue to strive for this inner unification with one another. By considering human beings as having fallen from God, and accordingly, as inherently sinful beings with a capability for evil, Schelling returns to the question of human nature that underlies the distinction between Hobbesian conservatism and Rousseauian liberalism.

In reference to the relation of our corrupt human nature to the state, Schelling positively refers to Hobbes' description of life prior to the state as a "*war of all against all*" (SW XI, 536). This helps Schelling to express why, based on his view of human nature, we *need* the state.

[62] Schelling's focus on the human being also leads him to a modest position vis-à-vis the limits of propositional knowledge. This modest epistemological position ought to be adopted by those in political positions of power, that is, towards the reach, potential, and radicality of politics. See Markus Gabriel, *Der Mensch im Mythos, Untersuchungen über Ontotheologie, Anthropologie und Selbstbewußtseinsgeschichte in Schellings "Philosophie Der Mythologie"* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), 23. Gabriel explains that the "anthropological components of cognition" are always at the center of Schelling's "grounding of metaphysics." Human beings occupy a "central position," Gabriel explains, in all of Schelling's thinking (especially his middle period, but also already in the *Ideas of a Philosophy of Nature*).

Hobbes famously describes the state of nature as "a time of war, where every man is enemy to every man."[63] Building on this philosophico-theological anthropology, Schelling shares Hobbes' position that human beings in any sort of imagined state of nature would be *without responsibility*. The state raises the individual to the status of a responsible person. Therefore, outside of the factually existing, rational state, "there would be no imputation of guilt [*Zurechnung*] and the individual would be responsible for nothing" (SW XI, 536/PRP, 110). However, Schelling also criticizes Hobbes' presentation of the state of nature and social contract tradition in his *Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy* (SW XI, 536/PRP, 110). We can thus simultaneously detect Schelling's sympathy with the Hobbesian view of human nature, and his rejection of the idea of the social contract.

The capacity to be held accountable for oneself in a context with others is, particularly as presented in Schelling's Freedom Essay, the necessary condition for the human being to become a *person* and to be capable of love. Entering into genuinely willed relations of love is the way we approximate the 'higher unity' of the voluntary community beyond the state. Despite his counter-position to Hobbes' thesis,[64] Rousseau, too, claims that the human being in the state of nature—much like Adam and Eve, before their rebellion in Eden—does not yet have knowledge and therefore does not have moral responsibility.

In his very early texts, including his Rousseau-inspired 1796 "New Deduction of Natural Right," Schelling does not yet present an explicitly negative view of human nature. This changes by the time the Freedom Essay is published in 1809, at which point Schelling follows Kant in *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (1793) by affirming the existence of radical evil in the world and the possibility for one to have a fundamental, radically, morally corrupt disposition. Schelling then comes to the conclusion that a definitive unity and justice for fallen human beings requires a personal act of redemption outside of consciousness. We cannot bring about a completely and permanently reconciled state on our own. This is the anthropological and theological background to Schelling's explicit distinction in the 1810 *Stuttgart Seminars* between the necessary unity of the state (external or involuntary unity) and the genuinely forged, stable

[63] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 83–84.
[64] Distinguishing his position from that of Hobbes, Rousseau explains that in their "original condition of independence," human beings "are not naturally enemies." There is no war between individual human beings; war, rather, is "between state and state." Moreover, he famously emphasizes the human being's original, free condition prior to the state as he writes, "Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains." Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "The Social Contract," in *Discourse on Political Economy and The Social Contract*, trans. Christopher Betts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 51, 45.

and just political unity of human beings, that is only truly possible in a future time (inner or voluntary unity). Schelling's view of the impossibility of human beings to achieve inner unity and reconciliation through our own means is definitive for his eschatological, anti-revolutionary politics. Until a future time is initiated, in which the stability of such a unity can be secured, we need the state. It is the state that "first makes a moral disposition possible for the individual. But it itself never demands it" (SW XI, 514/PRP, 113).

Schelling's proximity shares a certain proximity to that of David Hume. Hume, who is influenced by Hobbes,[65] also maintains that human beings are not inherently good. The "*selfishness and confin'd generosity of man, along with the scanty provision nature has made for his wants*" is what motivates us, on Hume's account, to seek justice.[66] Neither Hume nor Schelling is a social contract theorist, but each could more fittingly be described as 'conventionalists'. This means, in short, that we approximate justice only through the progressive establishment of conventions. People enter into conventions, or informal arrangements, to resolve conflicts. Hume explains that once all have entered into conventions regarding the retaining of possessions, "there immediately arise the ideas of justice and injustice; as also those of property, right and obligation."[67] Thus, in a state without the basic convention regarding property, there would be no justice at all, on Hume's account. This is an alternative to social contract theory, and Schelling accordingly directly praises Hume for having identified some of the shortcomings of the social contract (SW XI, 537/PRP, 111). Moreover, in his *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* (1797), Schelling praises Hume's skepticism for setting the stage for the problem he must solve regarding causality and succession.[68] This can be related to the link between Hume and Schelling's political thought, insofar as custom and convention precariously secure fundamental political stability in the state. For both Schelling and Hume, the artificial in

[65] See Paul Russell, "Hume's Treatise and Hobbes's the Elements of Law," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 46, no. 1 (1985): 51–63. Russell demonstrates that Hume's *A Treatise of Human Nature* is influenced by Hobbes' elements of natural law.
[66] David Hume, "A Treatise of Human Nature," in *Moral Philosophy* (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2006), 94.
[67] Hume, "A Treatise," 91.
[68] Schelling begins his treatment of the issue of causality with the fact that Hume "leaves it undecided whether our ideas correspond to things outside us or not" (SW II, 34/ID, 26). He neither locates causality in things-in-themselves, nor posits the succession of our ideas in a representative mind to be an explanation of nature. Hume proposes that we think of the cause and effect relationship, as well as succession, as necessary because of custom – we have become used to seeing the appearances follow in this order, and we thus expect it in the future as "second nature." SW II, 34-35/ID, 26-27.

political life thus becomes natural ('second nature') through habit and customs.[69] The role of habit in Humean causality can therefore provide important insight on how we come to see our political condition as naturalized.

Schelling's negative perception of human nature does not only place him in the company of Hobbes and Hume. Habermas also takes up Schelling's anthropology of the fall in the context of his Marxist interpretation of Schelling's metaphysics. Habermas reads Schelling's treatment of the fall of man and his description of the theogonic process in which God contracts, or retreats into himself, in order to reveal himself through Marx (the latter thesis is most prominent in Schelling's *Ages of the World*). Therefore, according to Habermas, the fallen state of human beings can be understood in a secular, Marxist sense. The fallen state of the human was initiated by an "'egoistic' principle." This egotism, in both moral and economic terms, refers to the corruption of ordered creation by an act of will, that is, original sin. Marx first sees the formative role of the 'egoistic principle' as a source of corruption of the human being. However, the "'egotistic' principle" refers economically to the "order of property defined by the private appropriation of social labour. Schelling's cosmological 'egoism' is deciphered as capitalism."[70]

More generally, this fallen condition, explains Habermas, also describes how human beings definitively alienated from their origin and 'species being.' The fall of man concerns, as Schelling points out time and time again, the possibility of the state (or any political formation) to establish a form of harmonious, political unity on earth. The fall is an event "beyond experience whose consequences are forced upon us."[71] The break with the initial unity of the

[69] Building on Hume, Schelling claims the reason *why* appearances appear in a necessary order for everyone is due to our common nature, which can be related to his later work on intuition (the political role of which I explain in the context of the *System of Transcendental Idealism* in Chapter 2). Because of our common nature, we all see the same causes and effects. Schelling then applies Kant's category of community objectively as the fundamental ground of the causes and effects we perceive. In the *organic* realm of *nature,* Schelling claims the mechanical linkage of cause and effect ceases. "The organic, however, produces *itself,* arises *out of itself,* every single plant is the product only of an individual of *its own kind,* and so every single organism endlessly produces and reproduces only its own species. Hence no organization progresses forward, but is forever turning back always into itself. Accordingly, an organization as such is neither *cause* nor *effect* of anything outside it…" (Schelling, *Ideas,* 30). As Bruce Matthews explains, "the multivalent causality of nature as a dynamic whole provides Schelling with an understanding of life, as absolute self-action, as the schema of freedom. And it is this absolute self-action—articulated through Plato's triad of forms and Kant's category of community and reciprocity—that Schelling then uses to articulate his interpretation of Fichte's formula of identity, 'I = I.' The end result is the application of Kant's inverted categories, beginning now with the dynamic categories of experience and relation, not mathematics and numerical identity, to articulate the Platonic form of self-organization." Bruce Matthews, *Schelling's Organic Form of Philosophy: Life as the Schema of Freedom* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2012), 19.

[70] Habermas, "Dialectical Idealism," 79.

[71] Habermas, "Dialectical Idealism," 45.

human with his or her conditions of origin cannot be completely reconciled or restored through human efforts. By trying to create ideal states on earth, human beings, in vain, "look for their own unity without being able to find it."[72]

Habermas' connection of Schelling's account of the corrupt state of the human being, and thereby contemporary society, with Marx's analysis of social labour and the drive for emancipation in Marx's philosophy is an important step in the literature advancing post-Marxist, agnostic readings not only of Schelling's ontology, but also of his theology. The emancipation of human beings from their oppressive conditions (an equally political and theological theme), requires, claims Habermas, an 'overcoming of materialism' by practical materialist means. This position, on Habermas' account, is theologically articulated by Schelling, but its political consequences are pronounced by Marx. Habermas' reading of Schelling therefore serves as an important gateway to the possibility of interpreting Schelling as an ally of the post-Marxist critical theory tradition, particularly the Frankfurt School. The mutual compatibility of Schelling's conservatism and the progressive politics of critical theory suggests that his political philosophy transcends polarizing, political dichotomies.

Marxist-materialist readings of Schelling have consumed numerous works of German secondary literature in the twentieth century,[73] and have recently become a focus in the English literature as well (particularly in the work of Slavoj Žižek).[74] The two most important

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[72] Habermas, "Dialectical Idealism,"45.

[73] Ernst Bloch was famously called the "Marxist Schelling," and Habermas identifies Schellingian tendencies throughout his whole corpus of work. See Jürgen Habermas, *Philosophische-Politische Profile* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973), 147. In addition to Frank's studies of Schelling, consult the various articles in Sandkühler's edited volume *Natur und geschichtlicher Prozeß*. *Studien zur Naturphilosophie F. W. J. Schellings* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1984) especially Sandkühler's "Einführung" (13-80), Jiří Černý's "Von der *natura naturans* zum 'unvordenklichen Seyn.' Eine Linie des Materialismus bei Schelling?" (127-44), Manfred Buhr's "Geschichtliche Vernunft und Naturgeschichte. 'Neue' Anmerkungen zur Differenz des Fichteschen und Schellingschen Systems der Philosophie" (227-258). Moreover, for a critical perspective on the claim to continuity between Schelling's philosophy of nature and late philosophy of revelation, see, in the same volume, Walter E. Ehrhardt, "Die Naturphilosophie *und* die Philosophie der Offenbarung. Zur Kritik materialistische Schelling-Forchung," 337-359. Materialist readings of Schelling were seminal in their reception by the tradition of critical theory notably through the work of Habermas (see Jürgen Habermas, "Das Absolute und die Geschichte. von der Zwiespältigkeit in Schellings Denken." Bonn: PhD. Diss. Rheinische Friedrich Wilhelms Universität, 1954, and Habermas, "Dialektischer Idealismus im Übergang zum Materialismus — Geschichtsphilosophische Folgerungen aus Schellings Idee einer Contraction Gottes," in *Theorie und Praxis* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1963), 108-262.

[74] Slavoj Žižek interprets elements of Schelling's philosophy, such as the subject, in materialist terms, and develops his reading of Schelling out of his own commitments to a merge of dialectical materialism and Lacanian psychoanalysis (see Žižek, 1996, especially pp. 70-73) and Žižek, "The Ages of the World," in Slavoj Žižek and F. W. J. Schelling, *The Abyss of Freedom/Ages of the World*, trans. Judith Norman (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997) (especially pp. 30-36 and 56-61). It is noteworthy that in the English-speaking world, Dalia Nassar has noted her explicit disagreement with materialist interpretations of Schelling's thought which attempt to

philosophers for Marxist readings of Schelling's political philosophy are Habermas and Manfred Frank. They work from the same metaphysical premise in Schelling's philosophy, namely, that reason itself depends on a ground other to itself. Reason is not self-grounding, and the idealist philosophy of reason alone cannot adequately account for *its own* existence, or, for that matter, for all of material existence. This is foundational for Schelling's critique of Hegel's metaphysics,[75] and also for a new merge of idealism and empiricism, or in Schelling's words, a "metaphysical empiricism," that places a high, irreducible value on material experience (SW XIII, 115/GR, 171ff.).[76] The position rests on the objection to the sufficiency of idealism as a complete philosophy.[77]

In *Der unendliche Mangel an Sein,* Frank accordingly explains that Schelling goes beyond (or "overthrows [*Umsturz*]") the limits of reason as established by Hegel through his analysis of Hegel's blind presupposition of Being [*Sein*] "assumed from the beginning" and his refusal to ever leave the "sphere of the concept."[78] Concerning this point, Schelling argues that there is no *real opposition* between Being and Nothing [*Sein und Nichts*] in Hegel. Frank here reminds us of Schelling's statement that everything is "peaceful" (SW I, 10, 137), so long as we remain in the movement of concepts and thought.[79]

Habermas, for his part, claims that Schelling never adequately developed the materialist, anarchistically-inspired, systematic conclusions of the theological concepts of the *Ages of the*

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draw a line from his *Naturphilosophie* to his late philosophy, arguing that Schelling's "emphasis on nature or the material reality of nature does not imply that there is no reason or ideal that underlies and constitutes material nature." She reiterates her thesis that the early Schelling's "material form of nature" and its "ideal form" are inseparable. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that Grant's interpretation of Schelling's work as a philosophy of nature from beginning to end fails to construct an argument linking Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* and Schelling's politics. On the possibility of reading Schelling's early *Naturphilosophie* through a political lens, see Černý, 1984.

[75] Many commentators such as Manfred Frank and Žižek have argued that in Schelling we find the historical origin of a long line of materialist critiques of Hegel. "At the outset of the materialistic rejection of idealism, the only philosophy that could boast a truly revolutionary critique of Hegel's idealist dialectics was Schelling's" (Frank, 252).

[76] See Schelling's chapter on "Metaphysical Empiricism" in F.W.J. Schelling, *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy: The Berlin Lectures 1841/1842*, trans. Bruce Matthews (New York: SUNY Press, 2012), 171–92.

[77] Žižek asserts that Schelling "was the first to delineate the contours of a *materialist* notion of the subject" (*The Indivisible Remainder*, 71). This subject is denoted as a *material* subject for, instead of existing as an ideal subject transparent to itself, it acknowledges its own opacity to itself, and is defined by its ability to have a free, genuine self-relation to its own existence in time (Žižek, 70-71).

[78] Frank, *Der unendliche Mangel an Sein*, 226.

[79] Frank, *Der unendliche Mangel an Sein*, 226–27. Here Frank notes that Feuerbach accepts the criticism of the abstraction and lack of externality and time of Hegel's philosophy, calling it "a true masterpiece of speculative arbitrariness" (Feuerbach, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. W. Schuffenhauer, vol. 9, Berlin 1970. 252-253, quoted by Frank, 227).

World project (the first draft of which is dated in 1811).[80] It was rather Marx who "drew the consequence that Schelling shied away from," namely, that "the materialist perversion," initiated by the egoism of the first act of sin, can be fully apprehended only through a material understanding of the development of society.[81] The consequences of sin should be grasped through social labour, for social labour presents an "anthropologically essential" relationship that is not "ontologically immutable."[82] Through social labour, how we *use* the world of things (which corresponds with the "devaluation (*Entwertung*) of the world of man" [83]) can be reconfigured. The "reproduction of social life" can be freed of its determination by commodity owners through private property.

In short, according to Habermas, Marx in general picks up where Schelling left off regarding the idea of "radically abolishing political domination."[84] While Schelling anticipates the current of historical materialism, he does not go far enough in his commitment to its consequences within the realm of the politics of emancipation and critique of capitalism. In his echoing of what is "anticipated mythologically in Schelling's doctrine of the fall,"[85] Marx supplements Schelling's theological metaphysics with normative directions for a practical politics.

For both Marx and Schelling, history will eventually not end in consumer capitalism, but will eventually lead to a state of equality and liberty. Marx has much in common with material history with Schelling. In this way, as Frank has shown, Marx shares much with Schelling's late political philosophy, although he was largely dismissive of it and does not seem to have directly engaged with it.[86] Both Marx and Schelling seek to do away with competitive, consumerist,

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[80] Habermas, "Dialectical Idealism," 78.
[81] Habermas, "Dialectical Idealism,"81.
[82] Habermas, "Dialectical Idealism," 81.
[83] Habermas, "Dialectical Idealism," 79.
[84] Habermas, "Dialectical Idealism," 78. Habermas here claims that Schelling leaves the idea of the eradication of domination behind in his later philosophy. Whether Schelling in fact completely abandons his political views in the *Stuttgart Seminars* in his final works is debatable.
[85] Habermas, "Dialectical Idealism," 79.
[86] Manfred Frank identifies four major points on which Marx could have been directly influenced by Schelling, especially in the context of Marx's critique of Hegel. They concern: (1) The Absolute Idea (Marx follows Schelling in claiming the unification of the real and the ideal in the Absolute Idea is false, since self-referential negation always stays on the side of the ideal); (2) The status of the thinker (the thinker cannot be reduced to a cog in the system and their experience is significant in the creation of a system); (3) boredom (the boredom with abstraction and an "adventurous spirit) is what causes the philosopher's shift from system to reality; (4) alienation (the conviction that our own rationality, rather than material conditions, is the ground of being causes us to deprive ourselves of the possibility of a free space for the development of life, as we are "alienated" from our natural species). Frank, "Schelling's Critique of Hegel and the Beginnings of Marxian Dialectics," 261-267.

capitalist politics and to work towards a human condition in which all human beings are free from structures of oppression. However, to reiterate, Schelling, in his anti-revolutionary stance, is not a Marxist. Despite their mutual compatibility on many points, Schelling remains committed to an eschatological, religious politics of the future, not communism. They therefore fundamentally disagree on whether freedom can be realized in this world.

Reading Schelling together with thinkers of the Frankfurt School, such as Horkheimer, Adorno and Habermas, brings forth the possibility of considering him as a 'political existentialist.' By this I mean that he is a political thinker who emphasizes the personal, unique realization of individual freedom *within the collective*, prioritizing existence and historical experience in shifting political conditions over essence or even reason. The injustice of the world connected to the oppression humans inflict on one another as a result of the fall is also a real, *experienced* injustice. Historical experience is the first source of criticism of contemporary political conditions. Habermas saw this in Schelling's philosophy, writing that Schelling allowed himself to be "guided by experience of the corruption of our world."[87]

However, this dissertation stands in a critical relationship to Habermas on two levels. I first take issue with Habermas' claim that Schelling's presentations of the state in 1800, 1810 and 1847-1852 are mutually incompatible. Secondly, and more importantly, I propose that staying faithful to the continuity of the philosophy of the middle of the late Schelling requires one to concede that the 'fallen' individual (in Habermas' terms, humanity alienated from nature) will not find peace through political means. Schelling's pessimism with regards to humanity's ability to reconcile a broken unity leads him to offer a religious solution to political problems.

As noted above, Habermas claims that Schelling's notions of the state as presented in the *System*, the *Stuttgart Seminars*, and the final lectures of the *Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy* are incompatible.[88] While Habermas is right that the final "absolute synthesis of all actions,"[89] facilitated by the state and presented as the end of history in the *System* is not Schelling's view of the end of history after 1809, I argue that the early presentation of the function of the state as a second nature is *not* incompatible with Schelling's negative appraisal of the state in the *Stuttgart Seminars*, nor does it contradict Schelling's mostly positive presentation of the temporary, transitional state as an order of reason in the *Presentation of the Purely*

[87] Habermas, "Dialectical Idealism," 54.
[88] See Habermas, "Dialectical Idealism," 43-47
[89] Habermas, "Dialectical Idealism," 44.

Rational Philosophy. Although Schelling admittedly exercises more caution in the latter text than in the *Stuttgart Seminars* with regards to the abolition of the state, in the *Stuttgart Seminars* he does not advocate its hasty, intentional, destruction. Habermas' strong contrasting of these two presentations of the state makes the middle Schelling sound like an anarchist, which he is not. It is in Habermas' interest to amplify Schelling's critique of the state in the *Stuttgart Seminars*, for, as he says, it is here that Schelling comes in closest proximity to the aspect of the *Ages of the World* most important to Habermas: namely, the thesis that a metaphysical process prior to the state and to our (egoistic, capitalist) experience, provides the promise of the possibility of not only critiquing the state and capitalism, but also of moving beyond them in history.

Furthermore, Habermas advances a political, specifically Marxist, alternative to Schelling's religious solution to the fractured state of humanity. Habermas, following Marx, completely immanentizes God and the promise of salvation—or of a final state of peace. The role of Schelling's acting, personal God of redemption is therefore substituted by Habermas with a "historically acting humanity"—a humanity which can take matters into its own hands to bring about its own redemption through the social transformation of labour.[90] While this helps to show Schelling's relevance for questions of alienation and exploitation in a contemporary context, one must remember that Schelling is not Marx. Schelling does not think political solutions can bring about a unified state of peace on earth. For Schelling, the restoration of the unity that was lost in the separation of the human being from God can only happen by God himself through Christ. I discuss this in detail in the final two chapters of this dissertation.

With Schelling, Habermas concedes that humanity experiences a moral impotence to restore the lost unity. However, for Habermas, the "mis-relation" between this impotence and the lost control over our collective social condition, *can* be restored by humanity on its own. Human beings can progressively eradicate their desire to dominate one another, gain control over nature, and improve their social conditions.[91] Society, claims Habermas, "mediates itself with nature in social labour."[92] For Schelling, on the other hand, this is the work of an "acing God," which stirs in us a desire not for politics, but for religion (SW XI, 132/PRP, 132). It should be noted that

[90] Habermas, "Dialectical Idealism," 69.
[91] Habermas, "Dialectical Idealism," 66.
[92] Habermas, "Dialectical Idealism," 65.

Habermas is well aware of his own interpretive move, for he states that the political, materialist conclusions he draws from Schelling's political philosophy "lead us far away from Schelling."[93]

In short, critical theory offers the tools to expand upon the significance of Schelling's notion of the individual within today's political context. However, comparisons between the critical theory tradition and Schelling must always be mindful of their general divergence on the questions both of transcendence and immanence. Schelling's transcendent, personal, acting God, and his incarnation into one specific man, Christ, has political consequences that are foreign to most critical theorists. For not only are concepts such as peace, justice and redemption deferred, but their possibility depends on God's ability to redeem humanity. Nevertheless, not only does Schelling identify similar political challenges and injustices in a way comparable to thinkers such as Habermas, but he also preserves a notion of the individual—who is on her own, unique journey to personhood—that offers us a point of resistance against the status quo. He shares with Adorno, for example, a view of the primacy of individual experience.[94] The individual's potential to transcend her own context, even for fleeting moments, for both Schelling and Adorno creates a possibility to resist oppression. The individual can break through the continuum of the fleeting dialectical reconciliation of antagonists in the state and the seemingly rational development of history. She is the locus of resistance to oppression, as repeated and enforced by the status quo, and ideology. With her unique, ineffable, irreducible nature and abilities to hope and resist, the individual opens us to the possibility of hoping for a better and more just future. The relation of such a notion of the individual to different concepts of transcendence (admittedly, the nature of the transcendent is different for Adorno and Schelling) is examined in the conclusion of the thesis.

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[93] Habermas, "Dialectical Idealism," 66.

[94] In the secondary literature on Schelling and Adorno, one can identify the proximity between the two thinkers on four specific themes (in which the individual is contextualized): art, nature, mythology and the non-identical. These topics notably appear throughout the *English* literature on Schelling and Adorno. See Peter Dews, "Dialectics and the Transcendence of Dialectics: Adorno's Relation to Schelling," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 22, no. 6 (November 2, 2014): 1180–1207; Camilla Flodin, "Adorno and Schelling on the Art-Nature Relation," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 26, no. 1 (January 2018): 176–96; Franck Fischbach, "Adorno and Schelling: How to 'Turn Philosophical Thought Towards the Non-Identical,'" *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 22, no. 6 (November 2, 2014): 1167–79; Andrew Bowie, "Nature and Freedom in Schelling and Adorno," in *Interpreting Schelling: Critical Essays*, ed. Lara Ostaric (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Alison Stone, "Adorno, Hegel, and Dialectic," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 22, no. 6 (November 2, 2014): 1118–41. Stone's focus is more specifically Adorno and Hegel rather than Schelling and Adorno, but she raises important points that Adorno has in common with Schelling's Hegel critique.

Schelling's concept of individual freedom in the Freedom Essay calls on each of us to take individual responsibility for who we are and the politics we endorse, whether silently or aloud. Both Schelling and Adorno therefore together see Hegel as suppressing the individual. Adorno can help draw out the political significance of this position, which is admittedly only indirect in Schelling's philosophy. For example, Adorno writes, "social analysis can learn incomparably more from individual experience than Hegel conceded, while conversely the large historical categories, after all that has meanwhile been penetrated with their help, are no longer above the suspicion of fraud."[95] The return to the ineffability and irreducibility of the individual puts us in a position to constantly scrutinize the applicability and reach of logical categories. Although he suggests the individual, in modern social conditions, is in "the period of its decay," Adorno proposes that if we want to find remnants of the individual, we ought to look at moments of protest.[96] Nevertheless, it should be noted that in the end, there is no resolve—or, on Schelling's account, bliss—for the individual outside the collective. This is why the future, for Schelling, is described as a form of community, a form of the church, not simply as a direct validation or even resurrection of each human being in isolation from one another.

Both Adorno's and Schelling's critiques of Hegel's state draw upon experience. Specifically, they both suggest that Hegel lost himself as a living, experiencing being within the very logical system he created. Schelling accordingly criticizes Hegel for becoming "the author of a system" that did "not lay claim to anything actual" (PR, 76). Schelling had already articulated the basis of this position in the "Philosophical Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism," a text he penned in his youth. Here he explains that one's susceptibility to adopt one philosophical system over another—in this case, between Spinozist 'dogmatism' and Fichtean 'criticism'—is a real choice. It comes down to a *decision* of the will of an individual, not a logical deduction.[97] Adorno similarly argues that although Hegel's own "experience did indeed ascertain the limits of bourgeois society," nevertheless, "as a bourgeois idealist he stopped at that

[95] Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, 17.
[96] Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, 17.
[97] As Norbert Guterman explains, "The choice between the two systems is the result of a free act, which Schelling calls 'aesthetic,' and which today might be called 'existential.' The true philosopher rebels against being the prisoner of any system. The moment he thinks he has completed his own system, he ceases to be creator, is degraded to the role of an instrument of his own creation. 'How much more intolerable the idea that a system could be forced upon him by someone else!' (SSW: I, 306). The highest dignity of philosophy, Schelling declares, consists in staking everything on human freedom … 'A universally valid philosophy is an inglorious figure of the imagination' (SSW 2, 7)." Norbert Guterman, "Introduction," in *On University Studies* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1966), x–xi.

boundary because he saw no real historical force on the other side of it. He could not resolve the contradiction between his dialectic and experience."[98] If only Hegel had actually allowed his individual experience, perhaps particularly of revolutions, to penetrate the content of his philosophy to a stronger degree than he did, perhaps he would not have allotted such a strong mediating function or held on so tightly to the concept of sublation (*Aufhebung*). Adorno takes this point to be political, as constitutional antagonisms and violence in society are never, for Adorno, resolved or sublated.

Schelling's political philosophy presents an alternative to Hegel's. Like Adorno, Schelling would reject Hegel's concept of the state, especially as it relates to his concept of totality. According to Schelling, Hegel fails to effect a "logical" transition from thought to reality [*Wirklichkeit*][99] and thereby to prove the existence of the absolute and thereby the world itself). Hegel's logic remains on the level of the *essence* of beings, i.e., on the level of the "whatness" of being, and does not provide an account of the "thatness" or "existence" of Being.[100] This critique marks the beginning of the aforementioned tradition of materialist challenges to Hegel. In a word, Schelling argues that Hegel's logic, as a system of reason which deals in concepts, depends on certain external conditions outside of itself as the conditions of its very existence. All forms of political order are subject to the same contingency. This position requires that Schelling interrogate the basic, fundamental premise of all systematic thinking, which he calls, in the late philosophy, the *unprethinkable being.* It is the task of history to ascertain whether this absolute ground, this unconditional premise, is God. In the openness of this question, Schelling can be said to have postulated a meontological, historical beginning, i.e., a "non-being that is not reality, and yet undeniably has a fearful reality,"[101] which gives us grounds to seek to overcome the current order and to believe that a different end of history, in comparison to that which would logically follow from the status quo, is possible.

In *Hegel: Three Studies* (*Drei Studien zu Hegel*), Adorno draws a strong link between a critique of Hegel's political philosophy and materialism, which one could argue is indirectly prefaced by the legacy of Schelling's Hegel critique. According to Adorno, Hegel's concept of the state is a hasty, inflated absolutization of reason which blocks the continuation of the

[98] Theodor W. Adorno, *Hegel: Three Studies*, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: The MIT Press, 1993), 80.
[99] Frank, *Der unendliche Mangel an Sein*, 227.
[100] Throughout this dissertation, I use "beings" to refer to *das Seiende* and Being to refer to *Sein.*
[101] Habermas, "Dialectical Idealism," 53.

antagonistic unfolding of dialectic. Adorno writes, "As though the dialectic had become frightened of itself, in the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel broke off such thoughts by abruptly absolutizing one category—the state."[102] Adorno claims that although Hegel did indeed understand that civil society is sustained by irreconcilable antagonisms, he was mistaken to present an "idolized" state as a solution for their reconciliation. Adorno critiques Hegelian civil society as the state's domain of mediation, instead claiming that the internal antagonisms of civil society cannot be "resolved" through its own logical movement.[103]

For Adorno, the dialectical method, the concept of civil society outside the state, and the notion of totality are all irresolvably antagonistic. "Civil society," writes Adorno, "is an antagonistic totality. It survives only in and through its antagonisms and is not able to resolve them."[104] Adorno departs from Hegel in his interpretation of civil society, claiming it is unable to find reconciliation or adequate solutions to its antagonisms in and through state structures. Civil society therefore has the potential to be a powerful space of dissidence and arguably hope—one which is compatible with the domain of self-determination and morality beyond the state in Schelling's philosophy. But we must be fair to Hegel here. Adorno claims that Hegel *did* indeed present civil society as sustained by contradictory terms that are irreconcilable. Although Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* is "most notorious for its restorationist tendencies, its apology for the status quo, and its cult of the state," Adorno notes that the irreconcilability of the antagonisms of civil society, even by Hegel, "is stated bluntly."[105] In short, the specifically antagonistic character of civil society itself is not what Hegel gets wrong in the *Philosophy of Right.* It is rather the "idolization" (*Vergöttlichung*) of the state presented as the *solution* to the irresolvable contradictions characteristic of civil society which is problematic.[106] The state in Hegel is the postulation of a false, systematic, totalizing unity, which, according to Adorno, limits the dialectic.[107] Hegel accordingly presents the antagonistic nature of civil society and recognizes the

[102] Adorno, *Hegel: Three Studies*, 80.
[103] Adorno, *Hegel: Three Studies*, 28.
[104] Adorno, *Hegel: Three Studies*, 28.
[105] Adorno, *Hegel: Three Studies*, 28.
[106] Adorno writes, "Hegel's idolization of the state should not be trivialized by being treated as a mere empirical aberration or an irrelevant addendum. Rather, that idolization is itself produced by insight into the fact that the contradictions of civil society cannot be resolved by itself movement" (Adorno, *Hegel: Three Studies*, 28).
[107] According to Adorno, in the movement of Hegelian spirit and its culmination in the affirmation of the whole, the class relationship has been absolutized through the systematic treatment of labor. However, Adorno thinks labour is the condition of relationships of domination; a "humankind free of labor would be free of domination." He adds that this is a hard fact which spirit "knows without being permitted to know it." Adorno, *Hegel: Three Studies*, 26.

fundamental role of labour in how human beings relate to one another, without providing an adequate theory of emancipation from the institutionalized dominance, which is often facilitated by the state.

Adorno can thus be seen as espousing a Schellingian argument regarding the limits of Hegel's system. Spirit cannot provide, on its own, the sole metaphysical foundation of labor and philosophical knowledge. Spirit gives an illusion that material conditions disappear within it, as it presents itself as self-grounding. Adorno concludes that the "quintessence of coercion"—that is, the coercion of all material possibilities into the boundaries of an epistemological project presented in the form of self-containing spirit—is passed off by Hegel "as freedom."[108] In my view, this prompts the need to return to an analysis of individual freedom in the Schellingian sense. Furthermore, there is a link between Adorno's political critique of Hegel and the metaphysical-materialist readings of Schelling on their shared critique of totality. Both Schelling and Adorno testify to the inadequacy of concepts to the whole. In consideration of the proximity of Schelling and Adorno on this point, Schelling's various iterations of the 'minimalist' state and his skepticism about state power take on a new relevance. His conception of the state is deeply rooted in his account of individual freedom, his critique of totality, and view of the contingency of reason in reference to its grounding (material) conditions—which he shares with Adorno.

By reading Schelling through critical theory, concepts and arguments found in his metaphysics and political philosophy can be mobilized to contribute to an important critical response not only to Hegel, but also to nationalist state ideologies and the appeals of populism we observe today. Any personal identification with the structures and operations of an oppressive nation state—or with the contradictory, anti-pluralist concept of 'the people' of a state—is to be opposed according to the consequences of Schelling's political philosophy. Such conclusions are beyond the labels of 'conservatism' or of 'critical theory.' With the recent successes of populist political programs based on nationalism on both sides of the political spectrum,[109] there is a

[108] Adorno, *Hegel: Three Studies*, 26.

[109] On the rise and critique of populism on the right, see Tino Heim, "Der politische Rechts(d)ruck, die prozessierten Widersprüche des Neoliberalismus und die Strukturkrisen kapitalistischer Vergesellschaftung," in *Autoritäre Zuspitzung. Rechtsruck in Europa*, ed. Isolde Aigner, Jobst Paul, Regina Wamper (Münster: Edition DISS, 2017); Cornelia Koppetsch, "Aufstand der Etablierten? Rechtspopulismus und die gefährdete Mitte?," *Soziopolis* 12 (April 2017); Volker Weiß, *Die autoritäre Revolte. Die Neue Rechte und der Untergang des Abendlandes* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2017). On the rise and rejection of populism on the left, see Eric Fassin, *Populisme: le grand ressentiment* (Paris: Textuel, 2017). Fassin's position is in tension with Chantal Mouffe's *endorsement* of left populism in *For A Left Populism* (London: Verso, 2018).

pressing need to rethink the possibilities of individual and group resistance to anti-pluralist, state-based movements. Schelling's return to the significance of individual experience and his critique of the unifying potential of the state (i.e., his interrogations of the limits of the involuntary community) could offer a perspective from which to effectuate this task. The state, or 'the nation,' on Schelling's account, cannot provide the basis of a genuinely willed, stable unity amongst human beings. His political philosophy is therefore more relevant today than it may initially appear.

Schelling's relation to critical theory helps us to see why his religious turn in the context of the political is not a reason to discount what he has to say on the moral and the political. Schelling is deeply aware of the problems of exploitation and hubris with regards to the avenues of political possibility offered within a competitive, capitalist status quo. Although the political situations of Schelling's time were markedly different from our own, he was concerned with the strife and division of society on the one hand, and the rise of revolutionary activity on the other. He repeatedly criticizes the hope we may be tempted to invest in the state and politicians to redeem our lost connection to one another and to restore a just state of society. He finds resonance with certain thinkers of the critical theory tradition on the issues of the need to preserve a specific concept of the individual, the deferral of justice, the demand to critique the norms and laws of the state and contemporary society, and a complex theory of transcendence.

However, Schelling, especially from 1809 onwards, is a distinctly religious thinker. The solution he proposes to the social issues is explicitly drawn from the Christian tradition, albeit altered to suit his speculative ontology. This turn to religion comes with Schelling's hope in the establishment of a genuinely moral, voluntary community of the future, which is beyond the state. Schelling calls this community the final form of the church. It is a community of those who know they have been redeemed by Christ. Through the incarnation of God in man, the redemptive process has in fact already begun. This is obviously not found in the thought of Habermas or Adorno. While Schelling sees us in a period of secular disarray, our movement towards a non-denominational church community offers the possibility of a unification through religion that is higher than any unity achievable through the state.

Schelling's opposition between church and state (SW VII, 463/SS, 228) in fact opens up a hope in community relations that we voluntarily choose and which bring us closer to one another in a global society. Schelling's ambitions for the "universal church" are much higher

than his ambitions for politics. The Church of St. John will be the locus of a *freely chosen* unity of the hearts and minds of everyone in the entire world. This is not something that can be brought about by coercion or by the church as an institution. The achievement of this community is part of a philosophy of history that includes three different 'ages' of the Church, and which is the same history as the revelation of God in the world. On Schelling's account, we thus must work to improve our local communities in view of a final, voluntary, world, 'church, ' community, for we will likely not know we have already entered the final age of history—the age of the perfect, moral community—until we are already there. This is humanity effectuating the work of spirit in the world. In so doing, it is part of a project much larger than itself. The culmination of this work—and therefore of Schelling's social philosophy—is the return of all things to God. Our political and social efforts will culminate in "a distant future," "the time when God will be all in all things, that is, when he will be fully realized" (SW VII, 404/PI, 66).

Chapter 1: The Problem of the Organic State

In this chapter, I begin anachronistically, reconstructing the young Schelling's endorsement of the organic state, specifically as presented in the 1802-1803 lectures *On University Studies.* I then delineate his first steps away from it as he increases his commitment to a notion of the individual who cannot be fully accommodated by the state. Schelling's brief defence of the organic state, in which each individual ought to fulfil their determined 'role' in society, is influenced by Plato. It entails the claim that human life should be organized according to *a priori* Ideas. However, Schelling's increasing commitment to the particularity of individuals between the years 1804 to 1809, especially considered in the context of the turbulent political conditions in Würzburg, leads him to challenge his proposal of the organic state as a goal for politics and to eventually abandon it. As religion, not politics, grasps particularity and speaks to the individual, from 1804 onwards, religion holds an increasing importance for Schelling's vision of how humanity could become unified. Tearing organic unity away from the concept of the organic state, Schelling asserts that only through religion, and not the political means of the state, can we come to an 'organic'—or a holistic, secure, healthy—unity of human beingssNeedless to say, after this point, an organic, Platonic, role-oriented republic is no longer desirable. But, Schelling maintains throughout the rest of his years that the state is nevertheless necessary to secure the base condition of human freedom.

To demonstrate this shift, after describing Schelling's early endorsement of the organic state in the context of the political conditions in which he lived, the second half of this chapter delineates Schelling's chronological journey away from the organic state towards his positive philosophy of history. I outline this departure beginning with Schelling's focus on the fall of finitude from the Absolute (in the 1804 *Philosophy and Religion*), then moving on to his emphasis on particularity (in the 1806 *Aphorisms as an Introduction to the Philosophy of Nature*), which coincides with his ascription of a unique role of religion vis-à-vis particularity and unity (in both the 1806 *Aphorisms* and 1807 *On the Essence of German Science*). These works all preface Schelling's 1809 proposition that the unity achieved by love is higher than necessity in the Freedom Essay. After this point, Schelling permanently moves away from his earlier idea that the state should mediate the genuine, communal relations between human beings and accordingly that it could produce the unity that is the goal and destiny of the human project.

The shift in Schelling's position from advocating to abandoning an organic approach to the state can be analyzed through his reconsideration of the dynamicity of particularity and the impossibility to encapsulate the latter within a stable, coherent, systematic whole in which difference is contained. This leads him to turn away from his Identity Philosophy and towards religion. The Identity Philosophy and its positive endorsement of the organic state represent, as Franck Fischbach has also noted, an exception to Schelling's general consistency with regards to his view of the state as a necessary constraint on individual freedom.[110] In a word, the force of individuality, specifically the questions of finitude and freedom, push Schelling to rethink the relation between the systematic whole and its individual parts in metaphysics and politics alike. The difficulties Schelling comes to have with the organic state can largely be attributed to an increased attention to the independence of the parts of the whole—or particularity—which grows into Schelling's vehement commitment to individual freedom.

Schelling's endorsement of the organic state in *On University Studies* is grounded in the whole-parts relation, which is one of the major themes of his Identity Philosophy (his work roughly from 1801-1806). The claim that there is a coherent, rational order, which is greater than the sum of all of its parts, is a metaphysical claim, insofar as it implies that being is ordered rationally. Any difference internal to being is subordinate to the unity of the whole. But this is also a moral claim, for it normatively suggests the possibility of regulating one's individual will—and thereby one's individual action— and one's carrying out one's vocation in reference to universal, rational principles. These metaphysical and moral dimensions intersect on the question of evil, its systemic value (if any), and the individual's capacity to choose it. They raise the question whether and how evil can be contained or managed by the systematic ordering of the whole. For example, if evil is attributed the status of negativity or non-being in a whole which is held together rationally, and in which only that which is rational has being, we run the risk of maintaining that evil negatively works in favour of the good (or, at least, the rational development) of the whole. This position also undermines the rational individual's capability to genuinely choose evil for herself.

Stepping away from his Identity Philosophy, in 1809, Schelling testifies to the real existence of evil in the world. Now a proto-existentialist philosopher of the individual decision

[110] Franck Fischbach, "La pensée politique de Schelling," *Les études philosophiques* 1, no. 56 (2001): 31-48, here 44-46. Fischbach provides an account of the potential influence of Hegel on Schelling's identification of state politics with philosophy in an "ethical totality" during this time. See Fischbach, "La pensée politique," 46-48.

between good and evil, he completely abandons the organic state as a goal for humanity. In both the 1809 Freedom Essay and the 1810 *Stuttgart Seminars*, Schelling actively works with human beings not only as spiritual beings, but also as natural beings. This thesis is grounded in his view of the fall of the human being from an initial unity with God. So long as we remain natural, earthly, beings, we are capable of only 'inorganic' unity, at least in the political arena. The state therefore cannot be the end or high point of history. This marks a turn away from Schelling's earlier endorsement of the organic unity of human beings as attainable *in* the state. His position in 1810 is incompatible with his 1802 statement that, "The consummation of history is an ideal nature, i.e., the state conceived of as the ideal organism of a freely achieved harmony between necessity and freedom" (SW V, 306-307/OUS, 104). Contrastingly, in 1810, the 'consummation of history' is a spiritually unified condition *beyond*—or better, *after*—the state. History is now a dynamic, complex "process of the coming-to-consciousness, of the complete personalization of God," in which a persistent, unconscious, irreconcilable darkness is turned "into light" (SW VII, 433/SS, 206-7). Analogous to God, humans should devote themselves to overcoming their inner darkness and "soliciting the superior and properly divine [dimension]" (SW VII, 434/SS, 207). But we constantly fail at this task, and in the absence of an external, unifying act of God, the state can only provide us with an *inorganic, precarious* unity. In the state, human beings, in their fallen, natural, free condition, seek a "natural unity" that "remains but a temporal and finite bond, analogous to that bond of all entities and that which binds together inorganic nature" (SW VII, 461/SS, 227). The temporality and finitude characteristic of human beings and their unstable politics precludes the "true unity" that can arrive only in and through God in a future time (SW VII, 460/SS, 226-27). This is the core of Schelling's eschatological politics, to which he remains publicly committed from 1810 to the end of his life in 1854.

But how does Schelling, in 1810, arrive at such a radically different position regarding the state and its (im)possibility to organically unify its citizens in comparison to his 1802 and 1804 defences of the organic state (which appear both in his *On University Studies* [1802], along with the *Würzburg System* and *Würzburg Lectures* of 1804)*?* What changes take place in his philosophy between 1804 and 1809 to produce such a shift? The answer lies in both Schelling's experience of his historical context and his philosophical developments towards a commitment to particularity during this period. These lead him to a devotion to the individual and an importance of religion. Specifically, Schelling's reconsiderations of finitude, the particular, and the role of

religion in view of particularity and unity lead him to abandon the organic state as a desirable political project. Schelling's progressive move towards the acknowledgment of individuality and the particular-in-religion happens in three key transitory works: the 1804 *Philosophy and Religion,* the 1806 *Aphorisms as an Introduction to the Philosophy of Nature,* and the 1807 *On the Essence of German Science.*

Although these are not explicitly political texts, they all concern the delimitation of the scope of what human beings can achieve in their finite, natural condition—which one can also interpret as a *political* condition. As a political condition, it concerns the possible legitimate configurations of self-governance by flawed beings. What can we attain through the state? How can we ensure the structures we put in place for ourselves and those in positions of power in governance do not in turn oppress us? In this sense, the aforementioned works can be seen as initiating a reconfiguration of the possibilities and aspirations of the state. The state, its laws and its norms constitute the objective order (sometimes called 'second nature') which stands between metaphysics and morality, or between God and human activity. Changes in Schelling's metaphysics between 1804 and 1809—such as his account of a breaking away of the natural, finite domain of human activity from God—accordingly reconfigure the state and morality. During this key transition period, Schelling's confidence in the possibility of the unification of human beings through a rationally unified political order wanes, and his view of the state migrates towards a precarious and fallible project of flawed, largely disconnected, human beings.

Schelling comes to realize that the divine, spiritual, transcendent unity he seeks for all of humanity cannot be achieved inside the bounds of the rationally configured state. His assessment of the state thus changes from positive (during his Identity Philosophy period) to negative; in 1810, the state is a "consequence of the curse that has been placed on humanity" (SW VII, 461/SS, 227). Schelling concludes from this point in the *Stuttgart Seminars* that, "[b]ecause man no longer has God for his unity, he must submit to a material unity" (SW VII, 461/SS, 227). Rather than imposing the domination of a rational, hierarchical order on ourselves, we should attempt, suggests the middle Schelling, to reduce the state to the smallest version of it possible that could conceivably secure a formal condition of human freedom. Human beings are thereby given a free hand in their self-determination and moral decisions. The result is that they can engage in alternative free relations with others (which Schelling calls love in the Freedom Essay), but as a single humanity, they cannot achieve total, reconciled unity on their own. The

state cannot mediate or even structure human relations in such a way as to bring about stable unity.

In view of these limits of state politics—and of fallen, finite human life in general—from 1804 onwards religion takes on more importance in Schelling's thought. Religion becomes superior to state politics (a) in its possibility to firmly unify human beings, and (b) its ability to reach the particularity of the individual. The result is a shift away from the position Schelling espouses from 1802 to 1804, namely that the state and morality could be philosophically determined by the 'realm of Ideas.' Contrary to Schelling's claim in *On University Studies,* he later comes to conclude that Ideas alone cannot determine moral action (SW V, 259).[111]

Schelling's shift away from rational ideas as the basis of politics occurs against a very specific historical background, which could have contributed to his shift in political ideas. Therefore, in what follows, I will first outline the major events of this historical context before reconstructing Schelling's view of the perfect, hierarchical organic state in *On University Studies.* I then highlight some of its problems. From this point, I show that Schelling's first philosophical step away from his endorsement of a perfectly functioning, hierarchized, organic state as a goal for society occurs in the introduction of the fall in the 1804 *Philosophy and Religion*. The break Schelling introduces between the Absolute and the finite world in this text prompts important reconsiderations of the limits of the state and the nature of morality and evil. Human beings are now seen as having fallen from God, but they long for a return to unity and 'indifference.'

The next part of this chapter aims to show that Schelling takes an additional step away from the perfect, organic state in his 1806 *Aphorisms as an Introduction to the Philosophy of Nature.* Here, Schelling proposes the transcendence of divine revelation, and highlights a new importance of the particular and accordingly religion. Finally, I explain that in *On the Essence of German Science,* Schelling presents the highest and most desirable form of unity among persons as having a distinctly *religious* character. In this text, Schelling claims that only a transcendent, religious bond—as distinct from a material, state legislated bond between atomized individuals (e.g., in the perfect, hierarchical, organic state)—could unify the German people. Updating this argument, I argue that for the late Schelling, such a unity should not be the aim of any single

[111] In *On University Studies,* Schelling claims, "[A]ll moral action is moral only as an expression of Ideas." SW V, 259/OUS, 53.

nation, but rather of all of humanity. It should be remembered that despite my remarks on this politically important transitionary period in Schelling's thought, he does not completely and explicitly renounce the organic state until 1810.

Historical Background: Strife in Würzburg

In this section, I will describe the historical context in which Schelling proposes and then abandons his notion of the organic state. This development plays out during his time in Jena (1798-1803) and Würzburg (1803-1806). Specifically, the texts in which Schelling defends the organic state include the lectures *On University Studies,* which were delivered in Jena in 1802, and the *Würzburg System* (published under the title *System der gesammten Philosophie und der Naturphilosophie insbesondere*) and the *Würzburg Lectures,* which were composed and delivered in Würzburg in 1804.

In numerous places in the 1802 lectures *On University Studies,* Schelling presents his view of the organic state, which comes across as largely oppressive. These lectures may have influenced the early developments of Hegel's political philosophy, as he was familiar with them.[112] It is clear at this point, Schelling no longer finds the spark of a revolution pushing for change enticing, as he did in his very young years in the *Tübinger Stift.* Schelling's conservatism and anti-revolutionary, anti-French, anti-Fichtean approach to the state during these years was *not* antithetical to the academic climate in Jena, where Schelling would take up his first professorship in 1797. In fact, once in Jena, Schelling's "anti-revolutionary" behaviour was complimented. His "good manners" were commended and the absence of any revolutionary spirit of his youth was well received.[113] Indeed, it was preferable for the institution that Schelling not be a political philosopher. For example, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe approvingly expressed to the minister responsible for Schelling's hiring, Christian Gottlob Voigt, that Schelling gave no

[112] On the basis of this familiarity, Joshua Lambier makes a case that Hegel could have been influenced by Schelling's presentation of the organic state in the lectures *On University Studies.* See Joshua Lambier, "The Organismic State against Itself: Schelling, Hegel and the Life of Right," *European Romantic Review* 19, no. 2 (2008): 134.
[113] Xavier Tilliette, *Schelling: Biographie* (Paris; Calmann-Lévy, 2014), 60-61.

impression of being a disheveled sympathizer of the French Revolution—he displayed "no hint of being a sansculotte."[114]

Schelling holds strong ties to his home, Württemberg, throughout these years. In fact, before going to Jena, Schelling contemplated returning to Tübingen (in Württemberg), where he would be closer to his family—despite his disdain for the old orthodoxy there.[115] Schelling's concern with the local events in Württemberg during his time in Jena and Würzburg go hand in hand with his increasingly negative view of French revolutionary politics. They can be juxtaposed with Hegel's preoccupation with the possible unification of Germany in his early years and the latter's hope that Napoleon might help this process. While Hegel, like Schelling, vehemently opposed the terror and horror of the French Revolution, he also maintained that "only revolution could clear the path for the building of a new modern state atop the ruins of the old."[116] Schelling never espoused such a positive view of revolution.

Schelling continues to defend the organic state during his first years in Würzburg. However, the move away from the organic state in his written works corresponds with his increasing dissatisfaction with his personal situation in Würzburg and his growing negative sentiments towards the influence of Napoleon in Germany. Schelling's time in Würzburg was arguably the most fraught, tumultuous time in his life. It is therefore not surprising that major changes in his political philosophy happen during these years, as Schelling faced attacks on both his philosophy and person at the time. "The sharp, polemic tone of *Philosophy and Religion* [1804]," explains Klaus Ottmann, was directed at Schelling's critics in Würzburg, which were "led by two influential high-school teachers from Munich, Kajetan Weiller and Jacob Salat."[117] These critics made it their mission to disparage Schelling.[118] Many of their disputes with Schelling played out in public—in reviews, commentaries, letters to journals and publications.

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[114] Letter from Goethe to Christian Gottlob Voigt (29 May 1798) in *Goethes Briefe* (Hamburg Edition), ed. Karl Mandelkow, 4th ed., 4 vols. (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1988), 2:349, quoted in Robert J. Richards, *The Romantic Conception of Life: Science and Philosophy in the Age of Goethe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 148.

[115] Tilliette, *Schelling,* 60.

[116] The old order, Hegel suggests, had to be overthrown for a new constitution of a new state to be possible. See Daniel Lee, "The Legacy of Medieval Constitutionalism in the 'Philosophy of Right': Hegel and the Prussian Reform Movement," *History of Political Thought* 29, no. 4 (2008): 608. Lee provides the following corresponding reference in Hegel's *The Philosophy of History*: G.W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History,* trans. John Sibree (New York: Dover, 1956), 450.

[117] Klaus Ottmann, "Translator's Introduction," in *Philosophy and Religion (1804),* by F.W.J. Schelling, trans. Klaus Ottmann (Putnam, Connecticut: Spring Publications, 2010), xiv.

[118] Ottmann, "Translator's Introduction," xiv.

The strife in Schelling's personal life during his Würzburg years helps us understand his initial commitment to and subsequent abandonment of his organic, Platonic presentation of the state. As he approaches the end of his time in Würzburg, Schelling inches away from the organic state. Contrastingly, during his final years in Jena and first two years in Würzburg, Schelling embodied a politically conservative approach and exhibited a desire to explicate the unity of all free activity with necessity *beyond politics but through reason.* This results in the postulation of the state as a structure under which individuals could strictly or in pursuit of this harmonious state of affairs. While he initially hoped the state could be a unifying force of disparate individuals, this hope waned as he came under increasing attacks in Würzburg—particularly from Catholics. It is in 1804, while under intense strife in Würzburg and responding to his critics, that Schelling first begins to distinguish God from creation, and thereby to stats see the existence of the state as a contingent rather than essential ordering structure of human affairs. The aspirations of the state, Schelling begins to see, must be limited.

Schelling's departure from Würzburg for Munich in May 1806 was a result of external political circumstances, which arguably affected the unique developments in his thinking detectable around the time the 1806 *Aphorisms* were composed. Schelling departed Würzburg precisely due to "the Peace of Pressburg on 26 December 1805, according to which Würzburg was indeed 'bartered' to a new territorial ruler."[119] Describing this situation, Schelling's wife Caroline wrote in 1805, "[W]e are yet again being unsettled by war cries and bartering! And truly, I know not where the next moon — not to speak of the next sun — will find us."[120]

Furthermore, Schelling's changing appraisal of the value of religion for philosophy from negative to positive during his time in Würzburg seems to affect the changing role of religion in his metaphysics and, indirectly, his politics. The young Schelling, an immanentist deeply concerned with the relation of the individual will to the general will, does not concern himself with the possible distinction and relation between the will of God and individuals. In 1796, for example, he presents an almost atheist, 'Rousseauian' view of the relation between the individual and general will in the context of the state. More generally, during his early years, Schelling is concerned with the relation of the individual to a self-enclosed whole. But the individual, and

[119] Doug Stott, Translator's Notes, in Caroline Schelling, "Letter: Caroline [Schelling] to Pauline Gotter in Gotha: Würzburg, August 1805," trans. Doug Stott, 2017, https://www.carolineschelling.com/letters/volume-2-index/letter-395/.
[120] Caroline Schelling, "Letter to Pauline Gotter."

specifically individual choice and the exercise of human freedom, become of greater concern to Schelling in his middle period, and with this, his need to distinguish the fallible human will from God's will increases. With this comes his critique of the reach of the state. Not surprisingly, then, the critical language describing the state in Schelling's 1810 *Stuttgart Seminars* is unquestionably religious. "The [modern] state is," Schelling writes in 1810, "a consequence of the curse that has been placed on humanity. Because man no longer has God for his unity, he must submit to a material unity" (SW VII, 462/SS, 227).

The Perfect, Hierarchical Organic State in the Identity Philosophy

Schelling's comments on the perfect, organic form of the state do not appear in a single place—they are rather scattered throughout multiple texts at the height of his Identity Philosophy period. In this section, I have therefore taken a systematic, conceptual approach to explaining his perfect, organic state in *On University Studies,* referring also supporting material from the 1804 *Würzburg System* and *Würzburg Lectures*. In these works, Schelling posits the hierarchized, organic state as a goal for society. However, while his presentations of this concept are relatively consistent and coherent during this time period, the organic state has a different systematic position in the aforementioned works. The presentation of the state in *On University Studies* appears in different lectures, seeming to serve a supporting role to his view of the university as one of the state's institutions that should contribute to the pursuit of absolute knowledge (and accordingly, the 'purification' of the soul). However, in his presentation of the full system of the Identity philosophy grounded in indifference in the *Würzburg System,* the organic state appears on the final two pages as the culmination of the system.

In Schelling's Identity Philosophy, the ideal, organic state works like an organism: each part is necessary for the functioning of the whole.[121] Like a human body, the whole of the state cannot be reduced to its individual, separate parts. Moreover, once whole, the functioning organism transcends the totality of its particulars. It is not a mechanically functioning order of

[121] It is noteworthy that Schelling first outlines what he means by the organic in the 1798 text "On the World Soul." Here we see the inseparability of matter and form, and the way that the individual only exists in unity. Schelling says, "in every individual, the whole of the organization can be recognized and expressed in it. However, this whole consists only in the unity of the life process" (SW II, 520). The organization and its unity pre-exists its parts (SW II, 520).

laws, but is rather organized according to 'Ideas,' or forms of absolute identity. Our real, lived experience should aim to conform to these ideas. One could also say the state here is based on "essential" divisions in a manner comparable to Plato's *Republic* (SW V, 235-236/OUS, 29).[122] Schelling is clear that his notion of the organic state is founded in Plato's philosophy. He writes, "the genuine construction of the state deduced from the Ideas [is] a task which so far has been carried out only in Plato's *Republic*. Although the differences between the modern world and antiquity must be taken into account, this divine work will forever remain the archetype and model" (SW V, 315/OUS, 112). In the state, differences should become unified in the form of an "external organism of a freely achieved harmony between necessity and freedom" (SW V, 307/OUS, 104). In suppressing individuality and forcing divisions among people based on capability, the erasure of the individual in this state could not be more apparent (SW V, 345/OUS, 145).

Schelling's view of knowledge during his Identity Philosophy period plays a crucial role in how he conceives of the organic state and why he proposes it in the first place. More specifically, the unity of freedom and necessity in the organic state rests on Schelling's opposition to the "antithesis between knowledge and action" (SW V, 235/OUS, 28) or between theoretical and practical philosophy. Schelling claims that any discord between the two sides should disappear as knowledge and action each "approaches its perfection, its absoluteness" (SW V, 235/OUS, 28). "Adequate knowledge of God," Schelling writes in the *Würzburg System*, is one and the same as the "absolute principle of action … absolute knowledge and absolute action are one" (SW VI, 555).

If morality is in any way higher than the authority of the intellect, according to Schelling, then we do not know what morality is. "There is no morality without Ideas, and all moral action is moral only as an expression of Ideas" (SW V, 259/OUS, 53). Morality is therefore inside, not outside, of state politics and its pursuit of universality. Freedom in this state, as a result, does not

[122] Schelling here describes the 'becoming-ideal' of civil society, the university and the state, which together should aim to produce an "inner identity" of human beings. As explained above, the middle Schelling breaks with this position, claiming that an inner unity cannot be forged by the state. But in 1802, the state, which organizes civil society through mediating structures and institutions such as the university, aims to create this internal identity based on the Idea. In coordination with this, civil society must pursue "absolute ends," in opposition to "empirical ends." The goal is accordingly to create a "true inner identity," not a "empirical and forced" one (SW V, 236/OUS, 29). Universities can benefit from the support and regulation (*Veranstaltungen*) from the state in view of the state's furthering of own interests. But apart from that, Schelling writes, universities need "no further regulations than those rooted in the Idea itself." The "Idea of a scientific institution," he explains, is all that is needed to "make the constitution of a university perfect." The purpose of the university is thus "absolute." SW V, 235/OUS, 29.

really look like freedom at all; each person is free in so far as "each wills only the unconditioned" (SW V, 260/OUS, 54). In this way, on Schelling's account, humans can become unified through their pursuit of knowledge in the state. Unlike in his later philosophy, religion and the church are here included *within* the state (SW VI, 575).[123] To quote Schelling's final words of the *Würzburg System*, the goal of life *in* the state is a "life with and in a moral totality" (SW VI, 576). The state thus contains and supports morality.

Already in 1802, Schelling hopes for a *spiritua*l unity in Germany, i.e., a unity stronger than that of Enlightenment individualism and the negative freedom he perceives in France. In 1802, he writes accordingly: "In Germany, only a spiritual bond, a ruling religion or philosophy, could restore the old national character which has disintegrated and is disintegrating to an even greater extent and which no material union can restore" (SW V, 260/OUS, 54). As we will see, this is remarkably similar to his position in the 1807 *On the Essence of German Science.* However, the key question in the transition I am tracking is whether or not spiritual unity can be achieved *within the state*. In 1802, unity is achieved through the identity of the subjective with the objective, freedom with necessity, and action with knowledge *within the state.* This entails a suppression of individual freedom (especially as it is defined in the Freedom Essay). Unlike in the Freedom Essay, necessity is not something to be overcome by freedom during the Identity Philosophy period. Rather, my actions and role in the state should always contribute to the achievement of universal knowledge and spiritual unity of the whole.

The ontological and political goal of Schelling's philosophy from 1802-1804 is therefore *absolute identity* between human action and the realm of Ideas, which entails a preservation and realization of hierarchical divisions of roles in the state: "To accomplish its aims the state must impose divisions—not such as arise out of inequalities of rank, but far more essential—by isolating and setting in opposition individual talents, by repressing many individualities and directing energies into various channels where they will serve more effectively" (SW V, 236/OUS, 29). Schelling's dependence on philosophy's capacity to determine the "superior and inferior" in this early doctrine of the state displays not only an anti-individualism, but also suffers from an extreme case of elitism (SW V, 261/OUS, 55).[124] This elitism is repeated in

[123] Schelling states here that "without the church, the state would only be in a state of mere secular purposes and institutes; but such is no longer a state." SW VI, 575.

[124] Schelling claims that philosophy should have the power to "arrest the rising tide that ever more visibly is wiping out all barriers between the superior and the inferior—even the rabble has now begun to write, and every plebeian

reference to the ruling class of the free and the ruled class of the unfree presented in his 1804 Würzburg *Lectures*.[125]

Schelling's perfect, organic state in his Identity Philosophy is inherently linked with the quest for absolute philosophical knowledge within the perfect state, which is the goal of history. Schelling writes, "The primary purpose of history is the realization of this community" in the state (SW V, 307/OUS, 104). History aims towards the unity of particularity with universality through absolute knowledge. "[T]he true organic life of knowledge" is the pursuit of all scholarly activity in the state, which requires a united "spirit of cooperation" (SW V, 230/OUS, 24).[126] The state must therefore support the university's research and pedagogy, which should be carried out "in the spirit of universal absolute knowledge" (SW V, 228/OUS, 22). Schelling adds, "The unity of the whole may re-emerge amid the widespread specialization" (SW V, 229/OUS, 21). The historical progression towards the achievement of this absolute knowledge entails overcoming all individuality and attribution of significance to experience. Knowledge, as a fight against "formlessness" in the name of "logic," must transcend individuality by pursuing knowledge of the whole through Ideas (SW V, 231/OUS, 24). "Only the universal as such is the source of Ideas, and Ideas are the life of science" (SW V, 231/OUS, 24).

The result is that, in *On University Studies,* Schelling's state relies on a denial of any and all knowledge derived from individual experience. This shuts down the possibility of significantly reforming the state and the predetermined roles occupied by its citizens. As empirical experience is of little to no value, Schelling does not speak of, for example, learning lessons from our lived, historical past. In this vein, Schelling completely discredits the validity of "ordinary knowledge," or knowledge based on the "common understanding." He claims that if we are to leave "matters of reason" up to the "common understanding," then the result will be the rule of the mob "in the realm of the sciences and sooner or later to mob rule in every other domain"—including politics (SW V, 259/OUS, 53). Any forms of knowledge that are not based

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aspires to be a critic" (SW V, 261/OUS, 55). His elitism is also apparent with regards to his view of sciences and the university: "The realm of the sciences is not a democracy, still less an ochlocracy, but an aristocracy in the best sense of the word." SW V, 237/OUS, 30.

[125] Se F.W.J. Schelling, "Die Konstruktion des Staates und die Unterscheidung von Freien und Nicht-Freien. Ein Auszug aus der Pauls-Nachschrift Schelling über Ideal-Philosophie (1804)," ed. Ryan Scheerlinck, *Schelling-Studien* 4 (2016): 224–26.

[126] Schelling additionally writes, "[A]ll sciences should be treated in the spirit of universal absolute knowledge." SW V, 228. Schelling, 22. Furthermore, universities are "instruments of the state and must be what the state intended them to be." Universities are thus scientific institutions *of* the state, and the state must resist turning them into "industrial training schools." SW V, 229/OUS, 23.

on universal reason are insignificant for politics. Testaments of individual lived experience have nothing to teach us with regards to the constitution of the state.

According to Schelling at this time, the *a priori* should structure experience as we strive to attain absolute knowledge. He believes this so strongly that he essentially attributes negative experiences to the "neglect[ing] of "Ideas," which results in experience that is not "in harmony with them. What is true, real experience, must be determined by the Ideas in the first place" (SW V, 230/OUS, 23). Schelling provides examples from the sciences in an attempt to prove the validity of this claim, including the fact that the physician must treat "disease on the basis of a correct conception derived from Ideas," not experience. Schelling concludes, "What Kant says of practical ideas is applicable to theoretical ideas: namely, that nothing is more harmful or unworthy than appeal to experience, which after all would not exist in the first place, had it not been guided by crude notions" (SW V, 230/OUS, 23). Knowledge always trumps experience, and our commitment to integrating all knowledge into a view and understanding to the whole should also guide our conduct and understanding of our roles in the state.[127]

Schelling holds an oppressive view of civil society during this period, which is linked to his strongly normative, holistic view of state institutions, particularly the university, and their aim to foster the pursuit of absolute knowledge. He claims that the only identity or unity possible in civil society, if it "pursue[s] empirical ends to the determinant of absolute ends," is a false unity—an "apparent and forced unity" (SW V, 235-236/OUS, 29). The pursuit of absolute ends, on the other hand, leads to an establishment of true, inner identity, which is also the goal of the pursuit of the sciences and education in the university. Schelling concludes therefore that universities, as parts of the state, "can only have an absolute purpose" (SW V, 236/OUS, 29).

Schelling's view of civil society at this time implies a dismissive attitude towards dissent. Human activity must leverage "talent and culture" to achieve its ends. He writes, "Men who are there only to assert themselves in other ways—by extravagance, by wasting their time in frivolous amusements, in short, the same sort of privileged idlers are found in civil society (and they are chiefly responsible for rowdiness at universities)—ought not to be tolerated" (SW V, 236/OUS, 29). So what happens to the idlers? And to the people of civil society who cannot

[127] The critique of experience is meant to turn one's focus to the importance of knowledge. "To him who dedicates himself to knowledge it is granted to anticipate experience, to recognize directly and in himself that which after all is the only fruit of the most cultivated, most richly experienced life." SW V, 238/OUS, 31. "Every branch of knowledge, even one dealing with practical, empirical matters, must aim at the universal." SW V, 231/OUS, 24.

productively contribute to the state and its goals? Presumably, they are forced into a life of oppression and servitude. Schelling explicitly claims such individuals are to be "kept down": "The incapables whom nothing but some convenience or other recommends, the ambitious chatterboxes who dishonor the scientific estate with their petty pursuits, should be kept down. Left to their own devices and in no way encouraged, they would receive the contempt that ignorance and intellectual incapacity deserve" (SW V, 237/OUS, 30).

Schelling's dismissal of the activity of the "rabble" and the critiques of the "plebeian" in the state (SW V, 261/OUS, 55), his reinforcement of hierarchy established through Ideas, and his proposition that reason could define what is and is not "idle" are not only painfully elitist—they are dangerous. The extreme suppression of individual freedom in Schelling's structure of the organic state—which purports to rest on *a priori* knowledge, divisions and definitions—protects no one from the charge of idleness.[128] We are all potentially subject to the repressive effects of a state formed on the basis of *a priori* ideas. The main strength of such a state, according to Schelling, would be that it unifies us in a necessary manner. In this state, as we all carry out our duties, necessity is unified with our free activity, and furthermore, knowledge is unified with our free action. Such a powerful, well-founded state protects us against forming arbitrary, "fortuitous" bonds with each other based on experience or interests alone. However, the consequence is the dismissal of any pursuit of the free establishment of bonds between individuals that would form alternative political communities, especially those communities that would stand in a critical relationship to the state. Creative, imaginative activity in civil society is not to be encouraged in such a state. Furthermore, because knowledge becomes objective in the form of the state, subjective, localized or experiential forms of knowledge and individual agency are dismissed and suppressed. So how does Schelling move away from this notion of the perfect

[128] It should be here noted that although Schelling's presentation of the organic state throughout these years can be seen to be totalitarian, especially vis-à-vis the suppression of individuality, this need not be the case for every presentation of the organic state. While Hegel describes the state as "organic" in numerous places in the Philosophy of Right, the *Philosophy of Right* also includes sustained discussions of individuality. While this notion of individuality and the understanding of freedom it entails will not be strong enough for the middle and late Schelling, who can be seen as critically responding to his early notion of the organic state in an existentialist key, it must be taken into account when attempting to asses the viability of different interpretations of the organic concept of the state for politics. For Hegel's presentation of the organic state in the *Philosophy of Right,* see, for example, G.W.F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed. Allen W. Wood, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 314, §276. On the importance of the individual will in the "transition from right to morality," see Hegel, *Philosophy of Right,* 131–32, §104.

organic state that dismisses the value of individual, human experience and has such a limited and structured view of what constitutes moral action?

The Fall in *Philosophy and Religion*

The answer, in short, is that Schelling moves away from the organic state as he commits to a notion of transcendence higher than state and a stronger notion of individuality which cannot be reconciled with a concept of totality. Transcendence and individuality are linked specifically in response to the question of what the individual, who has fallen from grace, can hope for—politically or otherwise. Schelling's account of the eternal "falling-away" of the finite world from the Absolute in the 1804 *Philosophy and Religion* prompts preliminary considerations of the possibility of divine transcendence, which is crucial for Schelling's middle philosophy of freedom. This text marks a critical turning point in the development of his philosophy of freedom, as Schelling proposes a split between finitude, including our finite experience, and the Absolute.[129] With the absolute separation of finitude from the perfection of God, Schelling stops pursuing the immanent identification of the activity of finite beings with the infinite or the Absolute. It is on this point that the Hegelian-Marxist Sandkühler, for example, sees Schelling as totally abandoning a commitment to reality and hope in earthly politics. Sandkühler views Schelling's turn to the fall as tragic, for political hope loses any bearing in reality due to the split between the finite and the Absolute. Hope, he claims, becomes a "fiction with the power (*Kraft*) of belief."[130] On Sandkühler's account, finite beings, now alienated and far from God, can only *hope* for a return to the Absolute without working towards it.[131]

Despite Schelling's commitment to the principle of absolute identity, in 1804 he draws a definitive gap between the infinite and finite which cannot be closed by human activity. Accordingly, Schelling—who describes his *Philosophy and Religion* retrospectively in his 1809

[129] It is noteworthy that Schelling already introduced the language of the fall two years earlier in the text *Bruno* (1802).
[130] Sandkühler, *Freiheit und Wirklichkeit*, 168.
[131] In 1968, Sandkühler thinks the turn to positive philosophy, arguably already initiated in 1804, marks an "end to practical philosophy" Sandkühler, *Freiheit und Wirklichkeit*, 168. He describes Schelling's "relation to reality (*Wirklichkeit*)" as summed up in Schelling's own words: "Die Endlichkeit ist an sich selbst die Strafe, die nicht durch ein freies, sondern nothwendiges Verhängniß dem Abfall folgt [SW VI, 61-62]." Sandkühler, *Freiheit und Wirklichkeit,* 168.

Freedom Essay as marking a significant "beginning" (SW VII, 334/PI, 4)—maintains in the former text that the finite, "sensate" world, *which includes the state and politics*, is separated from God or the Absolute by a gap, which cannot be closed dialectically or progressively.[132] The transition from the Absolute to the finite can occur only by "leap" (SW VI, 38/PAR, 26),[133] which is initiated by an *act* outside of time rather than a continual transition. This accordingly marks a move away from the project of a united humanity in a divine, reconciled, politically facilitated, organic whole.

This theory of finitude offers two ways of thinking about the state: ideally and historically. The ideal state, as I have already explained, for Schelling can in retrospect be considered as the objective realm of Ideas between the Absolute and human activity. The historical state on earth, however, is the human attempt to establish the basic conditions for provisional unity. It is the best we can do in our finite condition due to the gulf that separates us from the divine. Even if we were to talk about ideal, objective ordering principles of politics in accordance with reason, these would be, at best, ideas or forms of "the unmediated real, in the Absolute," which "is also ideal and therefore *idea*" (SW VI, 40/PAR, 28). While Schelling claims that this domain may explain the "*possibility* of the falling away" of finite experience from God (indeed, it may be described as the condition of the fall), "the cause of its *actuality* lies solely in the *fallen-away* itself, which produces the nothingness of the sensate world only *through and for itself*" (SW VI, 40/PAR, 28). As a result, the distinctions and even laws of earthly politics must be distinguished from the process of rendering forms objective in the Absolute, which is a process that is not subject to history. Furthermore, any hierarchy of difference in the Absolute is internal to it and only ideal, not real. This gives us grounds to be critical of the political impositions of hierarchy and the defence of concentrations of power in the finite which claim their origin in the transcendent or the divine. However, as is clear from the previous quote, Schelling still understands finite beings at this point in his philosophy as privation—"the fallen world is … immediately brought into nothingness" (SW VI, 40). It does not affect the Absolute, and in reference to it, "it is the true *Nothing* and is only *for itself*" (SW

[132] There is nothing above the Absolute, which is pure identity; it excludes all limitation by its absolute, eternal nature. The finite world cannot, of course, be described as absolute and eternal. The gulf between the two means that God "can never bear any real relationship" to the finite human world, of which the state is a part. SW VI, 65/PAR, 51.

[133] "There is no continuous transition from the Absolute to the actual; the origin of the phenomenal world is conceivable only as a complete falling-away from absoluteness by means of a leap [*Sprung*]." SW VI, 38/PAR, 26.

VI, 40/PAR, 29). All of the "visible universe," adds Schelling, "is nonbeing" (SW VI, 44/PAR, 32). This implies that even if we could describe the perfect state rationally, there is an 'irrationality' in finitude that imposes a limit on the possibility for philosophy to fully understand and determine it.

This opens certain fascinating questions: if the finite and the political is not the business of the philosopher, then whose business is it? How does this limit philosophy as a discipline? From which standpoint or background can we assess the irrational—and particularly the irrationality of the application of rational principles—in politics? This is, again, where the Schelling of the Freedom Essay differs from the Schelling of 1804—in 1809, the philosopher is permitted to investigate and analyze the irrational, evil and darkness in God and in the world. Although in the 1804 *Philosophy and Religion,* Schelling introduces the language of the fall, he does not yet propose the definitions of the individual, of human freedom and of the person that engender the concepts of moral responsibility and love present in the Freedom Essay. The fall in 1804 does not signify the complete existential, moral fall and struggle of the sinful human being, who can only be saved by God. In 1804, it rather seems that Schelling still upholds that through knowledge and order, we can save ourselves.[134]

One thing that does not change between the Identity Philosophy and Schelling's middle philosophy of freedom, however, is Schelling's refusal of dialectical mediation between the infinite and the finite. The domain of possibility, or the real,[135] does *not* mediate the development of politics and realization of existential freedom in the finite. Schelling upholds this position—which distinguishes him from Hegel—throughout all of his political philosophy. To use the terminology of my dissertation, the outside of state politics (here a 'second' notion of the Absolute, or the objectification of the ideal as the possibility that things could be for themselves), does not mediate the inside of state politics. There is never, for Schelling, a progressive

[134] Ryan Scheerlinck has recently proposed a creative reading of *Philosophy and Religion,* in which he seeks to reconcile Schelling's Identity Philosophy with the Freedom Essay. Scheerlinck claims that Schelling proposes a political philosophy in *Philosophy and Religion* insofar as political philosophy concerns the presentation (*Darstellung*) of the communication of truth to fundamentally different groups of people, and furthermore recognizes religion as a way to unify people. See Ryan Scheerlinck, *"Philosophie und Religion": Schellings Politische Philosophie* (Freiburg and Munich: Verlag Karl Alber, 2017).

[135] The "*real* is now only a mere effect of the form, just as the form is an unmoving and calm [*stille und ruhige*] effect of the ideal." Here, Schelling suggests that from the ideal, form mediates (but not negatively) the real. SW VI, 30/PAR, 19.

graduation from the Absolute to finite difference, or vice versa, mediated by the state as the external instantiation of objective reason.

Despite advancing a theory of evil as pure privation in *Philosophy and Religion,* which does *not* serve a positive systematic role, Schelling does discuss morality in this text in a manner informative for his later development. First of all, unsurprisingly, he explores the question of the origin of the finite as related to the question of why there is evil (*Übel*) in the world (SW VI, 28/PAR, 17). This association is at the origin of Schelling's future explanation of the fall of man. The association of the metaphysical with the moral on the question of evil will play an important role in the accounts of the birth of God and creation in the Freedom Essay. Furthermore, already in *Philosophy and Religion,* Schelling associates the good with positivity and evil (*das böse Princip*) with "the negative, the realm of nothingness" (SW VI, 43/PAR, 31). To act morally is to choose the good, and thereby to recognize God, whose essence is one with morality (SW VI, 53/PAR, 41).[136] Schelling develops and reformulates these insights in 1809 in the presentation of a fundamental existential and moral choice which he sees at the heart of human freedom: the choice between good and evil (SW VI, 53-54/PAR, 42).[137]

The final move in *Philosophy and Religion* away from the aim of attaining a perfect, organic state in this world is his view of history and the human striving towards reconciliation with God within it. Now calling history an "epic composed in the mind of God," he sees it as *necessary* that "ideas" and "spirits" "fall away from their center and insert themselves into the particularity of nature, the general realm of the falling away, so that afterward, and as particularities, they may return to indifference and, reconciled with it, may be able to abide in it without disturbing it" (SW VI, 57/PAR, 45). Moreover, there are environmental and mythical aspects to this theory of history, as Schelling sees the earth and human beings in it as 'gradually deteriorating,' and attributes this condition to the spread of "the evil principle" (SW VI, 59/PAR, 46). At this point in the text, he delves into an explanation of the "deeper potential" of an earlier human race, "which partook of reason unmediated and through itself" (SW VI, 59/PAR, 46). These originary beings [*Urwesen*] existed in a state of harmony and unity. They had "original,

[136] The Spinozist undertones here are palpable: "Only he who recognizes God—in whatever way—is a truly moral person." SW VI, 53/PAR, 41.

[137] "It is one and the same spirit that teaches us to sacrifice finite freedom in order to attain infinite freedom and to die to the sensate world in order to make the spiritual world our home. A philosophy that excludes the essence of morality would thus be as impossible as morality or a moral doctrine without the intuition of ideas." SW IV, 53-54/PAR, 42.

unconscious, natural happiness" and imparted to us a capacity for "science, religion and the principles of law" (SW VI, 58/PAR, 46). As human beings, we long for reconciliation and identity with God in a state comparable to this earlier calm and blissful one. "The ultimate goal of the universe and its history," on Schelling's account, "is nothing other than the complete reconciliation [*Versöhnung*] with and re-absorption [*Wiederauflösung*] into the Absolute" (SW VI, 43/PAR, 31).

Revelation, Religion, and the Particular in the 1806 *Aphorisms*

In the 1806 *Aphorisms,* Schelling turns his attention to particularity while moving towards a more multifaceted dimension of the transcendence of finitude than can be detected in his earlier works. As a result, religion emerges as having a new role to play in its relevance for the individual. In these aphorisms, Schelling implies that not only God transcends the finite, but so do revelation and love. The introduction of revelation in 1806 suggests the possibility of a new account of the immemorial, real beginning of creation.[138] The very first of the 1806 *Aphorisms* accordingly reads: "Be it in science, in religion or in art, there is no higher revelation than that of the divinity of the All, and in fact those three start from this revelation and have significance only through it" (SW VII, 141, n. 1/APH, 244). This contributes to Schelling's progression towards a notion of history as the dynamic revelation of God, which is, of course, a process that takes place outside of the state.

Furthermore, religion takes on a new importance in this text and becomes more of a counterpart to philosophy than simply being subservient to the latter (as in *Philosophy and Religion*). Schelling claims that religion—not science or even state politics—is devoted to the

[138] On Schelling's turn to religion and its relation to the political in 1806, see McGrath, *The Philosophical Foundations of the Late Schelling*, 14-16. McGrath writes, "It is noteworthy that in correspondence at the time of the turn in his thinking, Schelling speaks of religion as primarily a socio-political affair. Because Schelling is repeatedly misunderstood as a mystic, his reasons for reconsidering religion in 1806 are worth citing here. 'In my solitude in Jena, I became more preoccupied with nature and less with life … Since then I have come to learn that religion and public faith are the pivot point of life in the State around which everything revolves, the point at which the lever must be applied which could jolt the moribund masses" (14-15). The citation here is from a letter from Schelling to Windischmann, 16 January 1806, in Schelling, *Briefe und Dokumente*, vol. 3, 294. McGrath continues, "This passage makes it explicit that Schelling's turn to religion in the years 1804-1809 was not a turn inward, not a turn to mysticism and contemplative life after his years as a busy and public academic, but quite the opposite: it was a turn outward, towards socio-political problems, which he believed could only be solved through religion." McGrath, *The Philosophical Foundations of the Late Schelling,* 15.

particular and to the ground of the productive dimension of being. Philosophy, too, must "grasp" this particular "with the same love" as it does universal laws (SW VII, 142, n. 10/APH, 245). This seems to suggest that together, philosophy and religion should concern themselves with finite particulars in a way which seemed precluded for the philosopher in *Philosophy and Religion.*

Schelling accordingly attributes religion a new role in cultivating our care and attention for the particular. While science is the knowledge of the laws of the whole," the task of religion is "the contemplation of the particular in its ties to the whole." Schelling continues, "It is religion that ordains the natural scientist as a priest of nature, owing to the devotion with which he cares for the particular" (SW VII, 141, n. 9/APH, 245). The human being who completely occupies herself with nature after 1809 discovers in nature more than just reason. As the late Schelling writes, "*The philosophy of nature does not wish to deduce any actual plants; any actual plant is here and now*" (PR, 65). However, even here in 1805-1806, Schelling identifies an *individual* element in the human drive [*Trieb*] for the universal, which can be fulfilled by religion (SW VII, 141, n. 9).

In the *Aphorisms,* Schelling contextualizes his new focus on particularity within the political. Specifically, he claims that public life requires "the combination of the universality of legislation with the particularity of all and every one," which is the *artistic* work of an "animating and governing spirit" (SW VII, 142, n. 10/APH, 245). This emphasis on particularity is not to be missed, as it signals the first gestures of Schelling's turn towards the individual. He suggests that the particular should be identified with the universal in a "nonfinite way" (SW VII, 142, n. 14). Indeed, the push for universal laws to completely suppress, rather than incorporate, particularity (as we saw in 1802 to 1804) seems to have disappeared.

Although Schelling still maintains in 1806 that the organic state is like a work of art, he does so with the aforementioned emphasis on particularity and a new role for religion. Schelling now claims philosophy can reach its "divinity" only when, within it, science (the universal), religion (the particular) and art (the combination of universality and particularity) are in unity (SW VII, 142, n. 10). Science is devoted to the discovery of the universal laws of nature, religion is devoted to the relation of the particular to the universal, and art "shapes the universal and the particular into one" (SW VII, 141, n. 9/APH, 245). Schelling therefore upholds his thesis that the state should appear as a work of art—which he also advanced in the 1802 *On University Studies*

and the 1802-1803 *Lectures on the Philosophy of Art.* As will be familiar to most from the 1800 *System of Transcendental Idealism*, the artwork is the ultimate attainment of objectivity through subjective activity for Schelling. This holds for both the state and philosophy.[139] Although we can infer that Schelling has not yet departed from his view of the state as an artwork, his stress on the particularity is new. Furthermore, the imposition of hierarchy on the finite world from above, as we saw in Schelling's most Platonist expositions of the state, is absent here.

Therefore, we must admit that despite this new focus on the particular, love, religion, and revelation in the 1806 *Aphorisms*, Schelling still upholds the possibility, as he did in his earlier Identity Philosophy, that science, religion, history, art and the state could theoretically be unified in a universal rational model. Frankly, Schelling's notion of the state in the *Aphorisms i*s grounded in the same basic conceptual framework of the earlier Identity Philosophy, insofar as a notion of absolute identity is both the presupposition and goal of all difference. The achievement of identity in the state is still discussed in terms of political unity. Schelling writes in the *Aphorisms*, "all elements and creations of the spirit" must "ultimately enter a common life which is higher than the life of each separately" (SW VII, 141, n. 8/APH, 245). In contrast to how it may sound, this is not the common life in another time in the framework of an eschatological politics, but is the "common life [*Gesammtleben*] of science, religion and art" (SW VII, 141, n. 8/APH, 245). Schelling outwardly claims that if humanity were to attain such a unified, common state of affairs, it "would be that state which is shaped in conformity with the divine model [*wäre…der nach dem göttlichen Vorbilde geformte Staat*]" (SW VII, 141 n. 8/APH, 245). Having moved beyond the perfect, yet oppressive, absolutist state by making room for individuality, Schelling still sees the state as unifying the subjective and objective in common life.

The Religious Character of Unity in *On the Essence of German Science*

My final step in this account of Schelling's process of inching away from the perfect, organic state as a goal for this world is to highlight the religious character of unity in the 1807 *On the Essence of German Science.* Schelling makes an important conceptual move in this politically

[139] Schelling writes, "Philosophy in its totality becomes truly objective only in art." SW V, 284/OUS, 79.

motivated, unpublished essay, as he identifies the highest and most desirable form of unity among the Germans to be distinctively *religious*. This religious bond is supposedly stronger than superficial unity that, according to Schelling, links the French (SW VIII, 11-12). Schelling penned this essay "in direct response to the national humiliation by Napoleon's armies."[140] He goes so far as to say that the French influence in Germany was "poison" (SW VIII, 14). The weak unity characteristic of the French state, he argues, is based on "absolute egotism" (SW VIII, 10), as expressed, for example, in the form of the law's provision of negative freedom. The spiritual German unity, on the other hand, is of a religious and deeper nature. Schelling writes, "The German nation is in its innermost essence religious…the German soul needs a devout [*innigeren*] bond" (SW VIII, 13). This religious unity of the Germans would be beyond that which simply "brings security and can be calculated" (SW VIII, 12).

The internal affinity for metaphysics is supposedly shared by the Germans (a metaphysics in which the particular and the whole become one) and makes such a religious bond possible. "Metaphysics is what organically creates states and a crowd of one heart and mind, i.e. a people … Metaphysics is the opposite of all mechanism, it is an organic way of feeling, thinking or acting." (SW VIII, 8, 10). Note that Schelling remains committed to the organic here, but we now have grounds to question the extent to which the *state* can provide or facilitate this unity on its own. At minimum, Schelling now sees the unity of a people as additionally requiring an inner bond, involving hearts as well as minds. This presentation of the unity of the German people foreshadows the religious unity that Schelling thinks is the goal of all humanity in his late *Philosophy of Revelation.*

This religious unity of the Germans relies, on my reading, on a notion of *positive* (as self-determination, or freedom *for*) rather than *negative* freedom (state-established freedom *from*).[141] Its prerequisite is not only a capability for and openness to metaphysics, but, it seems, the notion

[140] John Edward Toews, *Becoming Historical: Cultural Reformation and Public Memory in Early Nineteenth-Century Berlin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 2. Thimo Heisenberg has additionally drawn my attention to the fact that in this text, Schelling is specifically responding to the historian Johannes von Müller, with whom he was in a debate at the end of 1806 over the possible practical purchase of Schelling's speculative metaphysics for German politics. Müller contended that in contrast to history, speculative philosophy was too abstract and had no relevance to earthly politics. See F.W.J. Schelling, *Briefe und Dokumente: 1803-1809*, ed. Horst Fuhrmans, vol. 3 (Bonn: Bouvier: 1975), 356ff. Compare to SW VIII, 17.

[141] The negative freedom of the mechanical state is established through "external compulsion [*äußeren Zwang*]," which knows "no positive actions, but only omissions and only restrictions," and "which everyone accepts only in their original right with the intention of being able to enjoy the remainder of it all the more securely in self-sufficient seclusion." SW VIII, 10.

of particularity suggested in the 1806 *Aphorisms*. This particularity is not the same as aforementioned egoism that negatively distinguishes individuals from one another in the context of the 'mechanistic,' French state. Rather, the *individual* finally gets her due in Schelling's account of German, organic unity. Organic unity, it must be noted, is now distinguished from the organic state. It is outside of the political. As Schelling states, the "extinction of individuality is the direction of an unmetaphysical, merely mechanically shaped state" (SW VIII, 12).

In view of the shift that occurs in Schelling's later political philosophy towards eschatology, i.e., the idea that humanity cannot bring about a perfectly, unified community on its own accord and thus requires God, we can also infer that the religious unity which could join the German people also depends on God. Their unity, as a "*göttliche Einsetzung*" (SW VIII, 11), is made possible principally by the divine presupposition for spiritual, religious unity. Although they must strive to attain unity through their scientific activity and pursuit of positive freedom, human beings cannot establish and secure divine, spiritual unity by their efforts alone. Schelling could therefore already be seen here as moving towards an acting God, whose will could unity a people. The next step would be to consider divine unity as a possibility not just for the Germans in their organic state, but for *all* of humanity. Schelling will explicitly advocate for this higher unity of humanity in 1810: "The manifold human world strives for unity, and only there it attains completeness and happiness in the same manner as does the manifold of nature" (SW VII, 460/SS, 226). Although in 1807 Schelling describes the unity characteristic of the German *Volk* as a higher, religious unity, in contradistinction to the precarious state unity embodied by the French, as Schelling's notion of the state shrinks, one sees the nationalism wane in his political thought. If nationalism requires that the quality of one's relations be dependent upon a single state (or imagined state), then the late Schelling would see nationalism, and indeed statehood, as a barrier to engaging in multifarious relations of love. His future Philosophy of Revelation alternatively aims at a unity of all of humanity in a church of the future, not the unity of a single people or state. It must be nevertheless be noted that this is a Christian political philosophy, and in his exposition of it, Schelling admittedly devalues, and at times even dismisses, certain non-European peoples and cultural practices.[142]

[142] For one glaring example, see Schelling's abhorrent remarks on South Americans, who Schelling claims have no sense of community. SW XI, 63/HCI, 48.

In this chapter, I have shown the modest steps that Schelling takes as he moves away from an over-inflated, organically functioning, arguably tyrannical state between 1804 and 1807. Once he recognizes the independence of finitude, including finite experience, from the Absolute, along with the validity of the particular and the specific importance of the religious, then finite, political life—especially as codified in the legal system—appears more fragmented, plastic and provisional. Although Schelling continues to describe the spiritual unification of human beings as organic throughout these years (because the unity achieved is greater than the sum of its parts), he gradually stops associating organic, spiritual unity with the state. The perfect state cannot be realized in the fallen, flawed condition of human life on earth.

Schelling's moral plea for the individual to rise above necessity, and to choose love over egoistic, self-orientation (i.e., to decide for the good rather than evil) is the final key in his turn away from the organic state and comes to light in 1809. He then formally renounces the organic state in 1810. From this point forward, Schelling's position is that the state should occupy a minimal role in collective life, clearing a space for positive, non-dialectical, loving relations between persons. The bonds of such relations transcend the structures and institutions of the state and any possible unity the state could provide. As Schelling says near the end of his life, to seek such a concept of unity within the state itself would be to run the risk of slipping into "(apocalyptic) fanaticism" (SW XI, 551/PRP, 121).

Chapter 2: The State as Second Nature

In this chapter, I reconstruct Schelling's account of the state as second nature and thereby the objective ground of freedom in the *System of Transcendental Idealism*. I first show that Schelling's interpretation of the legal state as a 'second nature' indicates that 'first nature' has a key role to play in how we interpret the relationship of the state to individual freedom. The nature-freedom relationship in the *System* finds an analogy in Schelling's presentation of the relation of ground to existence in the Freedom Essay. However, in the *System,* unlike in the Freedom Essay, Schelling sees the state as a vehicle for the resolution of a teleology of history in a world federation of states. This poses a challenge for his earlier, romantic impulse towards a community beyond the state, which I describe in the subsequent chapter. The state prefigures the human community of the church of the world described by Schelling over thirty years later, beginning in 1831 (UR, 673). Therefore, despite some resonances with the Freedom Essay, *Stuttgart Seminars* and the *Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy,* Schelling's teleological view of providence at the end of history in the *System* poses a problem regarding the continuity of his political works. This teleological thesis shows that despite his crucial observations about the role of the state in politics in 1800, the *System* remains a text in political idealism, in which the state contributes to bringing about an objective world order. As is evident in the previous chapter, this preference for the objective over the subjective in describing the development of politics and history will only be exacerbated in Schelling's subsequent Identity Philosophy. However, Schelling breaks with this political idealism in 1810 and after, as he comes to see such a purely idealist view of politics as deterministic. Therefore, despite the importance of the concept of the state as second nature for all of Schelling's political philosophy, the first, detailed iteration of which appears in the *System,* the *System* does not have the definitive word on, and is not even fully representative of, Schelling's political philosophy.

Schelling's very early works (1792-1800) are rife with important, underdeveloped conceptual promises for his future political philosophy. Schelling will ultimately fulfill some of these promises in his middle and later works. Others he leaves behind. Despite the major shifts that occur in Schelling's political philosophy, especially after 1809, I maintain that the concept of second nature as presented in the *System*—which can be understood as the legal state in which

the human right to individual freedom is codified and protected—is the basis for Schelling's entire political philosophy after 1806.

After establishing the crucial role of the state as presented in 1800 in this chapter, in Chapter 3 I backtrack to 1795-1796 to unearth Schelling's 'minor' tendency towards a genuinely willed, voluntary community beyond the state. Such a "voluntary and therefore higher community"—the "bearer" of which is the state—is Schelling's vision of the goal for all of humanity in his last work, the *Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy* (SW XI: 541/PRP, 114). Before he commits to the aforementioned view of an objective will effectuating necessity throughout history in the 1800 *System,* Schelling, together with many of his fellow German romanticists, experiments with a different view of politics and history that envisions a future human community based on a fundamental respect for freedom and the cultivation of moral improvement through aesthetic sensibility. Such a community is presented by many romantics as a preferable alternative to the divisive 'state politics 'characteristic of the German states at the time. This concept of voluntary community, I argue throughout the rest of the dissertation, remains compatible with Schelling's 1800 concept of the state as the ground of human freedom—an insight which he never abandons.

The *System* stands at a critical juncture between Schelling's early philosophical commitments. In 1800, Schelling begins the transition away from his earlier *Naturphilosophical* work and the longing for an impossible unity with the Absolute, characteristic of his post-Fichtean philosophy. The 1800 *System* can accordingly be seen to be the last of Schelling's 'Fichtean' writings as he begins his turn towards the Identity Philosophy, in which, as described in the previous chapter, he seeks to metaphysically and politically unite freedom and necessity in an organic model. I argue that once Schelling leaves the Identity Philosophy and its corresponding thesis on the state behind, he returns to his initial 1800 insight that the state is the ground of the exercise of freedom. However, consistent with his precursory explorations of the concepts of community and voluntary unity in his very early work, after 1806, Schelling claims freely established, voluntarily forged communities are not brought about through the state. But the existence of the former is still dependent upon the existence of the latter. This distinction between involuntary and voluntary communities is not made in the 1800 *System,* even if this text establishes the notion of the state upon which this very distinction is dependent.

Nature and Freedom in the Early Schelling

To fully understand the role of the state as a second nature in Schelling's political philosophy, we must first recognize the primacy of freedom for Schelling and the relation of freedom to nature (or to 'first nature'). Once this relation is established, we can effectively comprehend the relationship between human freedom and the state, the latter of which Schelling considers as largely synonymous with second nature.

Although in his early works, Schelling has not yet reached the existential definition of freedom presented in the Freedom Essay as a choice between good and evil, freedom is nevertheless situated at the origin of the unfolding of the world. Under the influence of Fichte, Schelling first defines freedom as a practical willing, which is absolutely "indemonstrable, authenticated only through itself" (SW III, 376/STI, 33). Freedom in this sense precedes everything, including being itself. However, as discussed below, the unrestricted character of the general notion of unlimited free willing is differentiated in the *System* from the *appearance* of freedom for a finite being in time. This difference, as I will show, has implications for Schelling's political philosophy. Furthermore, despite discrepancies in how freedom is defined between the *System* and Freedom Essay, Schelling exhibits an ongoing commitment to the central role of primordial willing that we also find at the origin of being in the Freedom Essay. It is noteworthy that despite its primarily epistemological, rather than metaphysical, or even political, aims,[143] the *System* itself is first and foremost a *practical* philosophy, whose foundation is in practical activity. This absolutely free, practical activity is accordingly described by Schelling as "immediate self-determining" or "willing" (SW III, 533-534/STI, 155-56).[144]

[143] The *System* is an epistemological project insofar as in it, Schelling attempts to offer a Fichte-inspired answer to a perceived inability of Kant's epistemology to ground itself in subjective thought. Schelling wants to establish the conditions of the possibility of specifically a *priori* knowledge, i.e., how is rational, *a priori* knowledge possible and valid? But he does so while still remaining committed to Kant's practical thesis that we can live our most free life only through the conscious exercise of our own rational capacities, i.e., through the application of the moral law. The middle Schelling expands his moral philosophy beyond Kantian constraints, as he concedes to the reality of evil and integrates it into his existential-moral philosophy in the Freedom Essay. The result is the introduction of a dynamic, complex, ongoing self-relation, which involves the determinism of one's personality by unconscious as well as conscious elements. However, at the time of the *System*, Schelling is committed to the progressive integration of any apparent contingency into the teleology of the objective realization of necessity in history.
[144] Cf. "The self-determining of the intelligence is called willing." SW III, 534/STI, 156.

Let us begin with Schelling's premise that all individuated or conceptual activity has its origin in unbridled free activity. Influenced simultaneously by Fichte and Spinoza, Schelling presents free, productive activity as prior to the limiting activity necessary to give rise to individuated being: "That which in all other systems threatens the downfall of freedom is here derived from freedom itself.—Being, in our system is merely *freedom suspended*" (SW III, 376/STI, 33).[145] By radically situating freedom at the ground of his system, Schelling seeks to preserve the conditions of philosophical knowledge. Knowledge, and *a priori* knowledge in particular, cannot be contingent upon or subservient to speculative, singular presentations or theories of being. Being, which is always already individuated and distinguished from non-being, is contingent upon a basic notion of free activity. Schelling therefore situates the fact of freedom as prior to and more fundamental than being itself.

Freedom accordingly grounds not only knowledge, but also the products of nature. To speak in Spinozist terms, freedom and the unconscious productivity of nature together logically precede nature's products for the early Schelling. The freedom characteristic of pure unconscious willing, i.e., the locus of free productive activity, is at the heart of Schelling's concept of nature. *Natura naturans,* the blind willing or unconscious production characteristic of nature which logically precedes self-consciousness, gives rise to nature's products—conscious nature, or *natura naturata.* Schelling simply states, "Non conscious activity … has brought forth nature" (SW III, 349/STI, 12). However, both of these levels of nature (*natura naturans* and *natura naturata*) are unified in the concept of 'first nature.' In Schelling's words, nature's unconscious activity is identified with "the conscious activity expressed in willing" (SW III, 349/STI, 12). Nature therefore includes at the same time the *objective condition* of self-conscious life, and self-conscious life itself (including all of nature's products).

Analogous to nature's function as an unconscious ground for its own products, the state is the objective ground of our conscious life. But it is not as if we exist independently to it. Rather, we are held within it, and our relations and experience are partially shaped by it. Furthermore, once first nature (nature itself) and second nature (the state) are considered specifically *in time,* their *laws* have a limiting, conditioning effect on the development of life. Schelling accordingly

[145] Schelling goes on to address the problems of a system that treats being itself as the first and most supreme principle. In such a system, he argues, "knowledge" is "reduced to the mere copy of a fundamental being." Moreover, "all freedom likewise becomes merely a necessary deception, since there is no knowledge of the principle, whose stirrings the seeming manifestation of freedom are." SW III, 376/STI, 33.

draws a parallel between the function of the laws of *sensible nature*, in which a *cause* is necessarily followed by an *effect*, and *second nature*, in which an *attack on one's freedom* is necessarily followed by an *immediate counteract* ("*der augenblickliche Widerspruch*") to the self-interested drive (SW III, 582/STI, 195). Therefore, the law of the state, which upholds human freedom, must immediately react to any attack on the freedom of any one of its citizens with the same automatism and immediacy as the laws of nature.

Schelling ultimately settles on a minimal state that operates according to necessity and that is unconsciously present as an extension of nature. He accordingly describes its function as that of an automatic, blind machine: the "legal order," he writes, is a "natural order, which freedom has no more power over than it has over sensible nature … it has to be viewed as a machine primed in advance for certain possibilities, and operating automatically, *i.e.*, entirely blindly, as soon as these cases are presented" (SW III, 583-584/STI, 196). Moreover, he reiterates that despite our role *qua* human beings in establishing the state, the state's laws should operate like the laws of visible nature: "Although this machine is constructed and primed by the hands of men, it is obliged, once the hand of the artificer is withdrawn, to operate like visible nature and according to its laws, and independently, as though it existed on its own" (SW III, 583-584/STI, 196). This comparison reinforces the point that Schelling explicitly makes in 1810 and after, namely, that the state should be *minimally* present in our everyday lives. If it is more substantially present, then the will of those in power could unjustifiably infringe upon individual freedom. At this early stage in his career, Schelling explores this question in terms of the legal system as the necessary condition for the exercise of freedom. He interrogates the justification of the creation of laws that could provide the maximum scope possible for the exercise of human freedom. These laws together can be interpreted in view of his later work as a state's constitution. The legal order, for Schelling, is the core of the state.

Schelling explicitly denounces any state run by the despotic will of a judge or dictator. There are no individual state saviours who can look "into the heart of things" and individually rule according to own their will or judgment, which is by nature fallible (SW III, 583-584/STI, 196). Such interference "with the natural course of the legal process, presents the most unworthy and revolting spectacle that can exist for anyone imbued with feeling for the holiness of the law" (SW III, 584/STI, 196). Schelling is thus averse to direct interference by individual wills in state law. We can venture to speculate that Schelling would see the development of the law over the

course of history as a cautious, collective process, with checks and balances and limitations to the scope of modifications that can be made at a given time. He does not explicitly state or even suggest where the limits of the jurisdiction of the law may lie. However, because the law is grounded in equality through the premise of the guarantee of freedom for *all*, the rule of law could be considered as the regulative principle for future laws to come.

In relation to this comparison—which verges on a merge—of first and second nature, it is helpful to remember Schelling's claim in his earlier *Naturphilosophie* that there is no lifeless, dead matter that can exist independently of freedom or spirit. Nature is always already imbued with spirit, and spirit is always present in nature. As the famous quote from Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* goes, "Nature should be Spirit made visible, Spirit the invisible Nature" (SW II, 56/ID, 42).[146] "Spirit *in us*" is therefore identified with "Nature *outside us*" (SW II, 56/ID, 42), and our own thinking is a part of nature. Analogously, the norms and thought of human beings are always both shaped by and shaping the state. We animate the structures of political life, but we also need these structures. Continuing on from his early nature-philosophical insights, in the *System,* Schelling aims to once again overcome the freedom/necessity, spirit/nature, subjectivity/objectivity dualisms in the account of the development of self-consciousness as well as in political history.[147] Freedom is everywhere in nature. Therefore, on Schelling's account, the whole of first nature, including its products, appears "as a work both consciously engendered and yet simultaneously a product of the blindest mechanism; *nature is purposive, without being purposively* explicable" (SW III, 348-349/STI, 12). In a word, for Schelling in 1800, nature, the development of self-consciousness, history and politics all involve teleology but at the same time spontaneity. The necessity of the law and the unlimited activity of freedom are equally crucial to their development.[148] However, the objective aspect of first and

[146] Translation here slightly modified.

[147] Therefore, for the Schelling of the *System,* the Absolute I is a part of nature. It develops within nature and comes to consciousness as a stage *in* nature. Therefore, the development of the I is precisely the account of nature ascending to self-consciousness. When the I achieves consciousness in the *System*, a second progression of stages begins as it becomes conscious of its very own thinking—*self*-conscious.

[148] The presence of teleology, or necessity, in the history of self-consciousness is a result of Schelling's merge of *Naturphilosophie* with Fichte-inspired transcendental philosophy in the form of a superior "ideal-realism" (SW III, 387/STI, 41). Things Schelling shows that the continual limited, failed determinations characteristic of the objective development of nature and the self in fact are working towards perfection. In order for anything to be at all, it must by confronted by a limitation. "That nature rears itself up from dead matter to sensibility is explicable in natural science (for which the self is merely nature creating itself anew) only by the very fact that even there the product of the first cancelation of the two opposites is unable to endure" (SW III, 400/STI, 52). Things come to be and pass away in the contingent development of nature, which, according to the early Schelling, follows a teleology of

second nature sets real limits on the development of subjective consciousness. Therefore, while "ideal activity," Schelling claims, seems "illimitable," theoretical philosophy (which includes the law) shows that this "can in fact be limited" (SW III, 399/STI, 50)

Analogously to how freedom is at the basis of the development of consciousness, spontaneous activity is at the basis of nature. It grounds and produces all of conscious nature. As a result, the *exercise* of human freedom by conscious beings, including, for example, the freedom of human thought and action, is first made possible by the unrestricted, unconscious activity of nature. In this sense, we could say that nature's unconscious activity is the objective condition of all free action intentionally exercised by human beings in an intersubjective setting.

Schelling identifies unconscious freedom (out of which consciousness emerges) and the freedom of individual wills (SW III, 348/STI, 11) via the concept of a "predetermined harmony" (SW III, 348/STI, 11), or "preestablished harmony" (SW III, 500/STI, 129).[149] Through this concept, the unconscious production of nature is identified with conscious, subjective activity, or of practical and theoretical philosophy (SW III, 349/STI, 12). In predetermined harmony, the "activity, whereby the objective world is produced, is at bottom identical with that which expresses itself in volition, and *vice versa*" (SW III, 348/STI, 11-12). This *predetermined harmony* is a postulate of which we cannot have direct knowledge. It allows there to be a "fundamental identity" of the activity of the primordial will with conscious, free activity. In other words, as a result, the concept of freedom at play in the creation of being is identical to the freedom we exercise in our own practical activity. Freedom pervades all aspects of life (SW III,

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necessity in its ascent to self-consciousness, in which the identity of subjectivity and objectivity is achieved anew in the form of the self-intuiting, self-conscious I. The movement from unconscious nature to self-conscious reflection occurs in the form of a progressive history of the progression from the 'natural I' to the transcendental, self-reflective I through distinct stages. Beginning with primordial, free activity, nature teleologically self-determines in objective stages, at the end of which is self-consciousness. Nature's development in stages is thus prior to and necessary for conscious human life—and, by extension, the practice of any philosophy whatsoever. In the System, Schelling accordingly claims that philosophy is "nothing else but the free imitation, the free recapitulation of the original series of acts into which one act of self-consciousness evolves" (SW III, 397/STI, 49). Recall that the first of these series is real (nature, objective) and the second is ideal (subjective). SW III, 397/STI, 49.

[149] The question Schelling is trying to answer with the concept of preestablished harmony is: "*how can we think both of presentations as conforming to objects, and objects as conforming to presentations?*" (SW III, 348/STI, 11). The process of freely navigating the world as thoughtful beings involves the determination of objects through thought in such a way that changes the world, both on the level of representation and more tangibly with regards to what we actually do in the world. But the objects in the world are also such that they are intelligible (at least in part), and so they conform to thought as well and affect thinking subjects from the outside. By positing a "*predetermined harmony*," Schelling can unite the ideal and the real world in a way which explains this two-way relationship between our presentations of things on the one side (subjectivity/ideality) and the objective world (objectivity/reality) on the other. In short, each side effects the other. SW III, 348/STI, 11.

349/STI, 12). It should thus not only determine the purpose of the state, but guide its development in history.

This primordial function of unconscious activity, together with the creative capacity of the will, is retained by Schelling in the 1809 Freedom Essay. The similarities between the *System* and the Freedom Essay help us to identify the politically relevant theses from 1800 that are retained by Schelling in 1809 and after. The differences between the two texts equally draw our attention to Schelling's radical redefinition of individual human freedom in 1809 and its implications for his political philosophy. In the Freedom Essay, Schelling redefines individual human freedom in terms of the possibilities of the individual will, which is always presented with a real choice between good and evil. I will now draw a brief comparison between the treatments of the structure of nature presented in the *System* and the Freedom Essay to show the similar position this concept holds in both texts vis-à-vis the realization of free, conscious activity. However, I will also differentiate Schelling's concept of freedom in both texts to indicate some of the limits of the *System* for political philosophy.

As the freedom-nature relationship is crucial for Schelling's political philosophy, it is worth looking at the similar relation of these two terms in the *System* and the Freedom Essay. Throughout this comparison it should be kept in mind that, similarly to how the objective aspects of nature precede and condition the emergence of self-consciousness, the objectivity of the state precedes political life. The state, as an objective second nature, grounds the subjective exercise of freedom by human beings in civil society (who, without the state, on Schelling's account, could never be trusted to uphold the principle of the equality of freedom of all). Nevertheless, both first and second nature begin in the unconscious freedom of the blind will for Schelling, which links their origin to their end point (i.e., the subjective exercise of freedom by self-conscious beings who think and act).

If we look at the *Unground*-ground-existence triad of the Freedom Essay, the early Schelling's postulation of the unbridled, blind, unconscious activity at the core of the *System* can be compared to the *Unground.* Firstly, the *Unground* is the locus of the absolutely originary, unconscious willing that gives birth to creation.[150] In the *System,* this could be considered as the

[150] This has led some, including Nikolai Berdyaev, to characterize Schelling's philosophy as a voluntarism. "To Schelling, Being is will. He is the first German philosopher to develop the voluntarism of Boehme" (Nikolai Berdyaev, "Unground and Freedom," *CrossCurrents* 7, no.3 (1957), 257; cf. McGrath, "Populism and the Late Schelling," 11). Berdyaev, following Schelling, also interprets the development of personality out of egoity and

"original act of freedom" of pure willing or self-determining (SW III, 533/STI, 156). The will holds primacy in the determination of consciousness. Schelling writes, "the self-determining of the intelligence is called willing" (SW III, 533/STI, 156). It is how the self (not just the individual self, but the self considered as absolute) determines itself and eventually recognizes its own activity. It is only through willing "that the intelligence becomes an object to itself" (SW III, 534/STI, 156)

Secondly, nature and the state, the latter of which is explicitly described as a *second nature* in the *System,* play an analogous role to the ground in the Freedom Essay. Although the two concepts are united in the *System,* nature is the ground of spirit, just as the state is the ground of civil society. As previously stated, this foundational position of the state and its laws as the ground of free activity does not change in Schelling's future political philosophy. He remains committed to the codification of the natural right of all human beings to freedom in the laws of the state (in second nature). In the state, we therefore see the naturalization of the legal system and the protection of human freedom embodied into the law. Once this "second," objective, temporal world has been created, intelligence can produce "consciously, and so here there begins an entirely new world, which from this point on will extend *ad infinitum*" (SW III, 537/STI, 159). Like nature, the state is the condition of conscious, intersubjective activity.

Not unlike the first unconscious act of the *Ungrund* in the Freedom Essay, which gave birth to the split of the ground of being from being's existence, the first act in the *System*—which resulted in a "world brought about through unconscious production"—"now falls, as it were, behind consciousness, together with its origin," as we—conscious subjects—navigate this second, 'practical 'world, in which the ideal and the real meet (SW III, 537/STI, 159).[151]

Schelling draws an analogy between the two acts, one which spawns the development of nature and the other which ebinsdevelopment of the state himself in the *System*: "Just as, from the original act of self-consciousness, a whole nature developed, so, from the second act, that of free self-determination, a second nature will come forth, whose derivation is the entire topic of the enquiry that follows [the practical philosophy]" (SW III, 537/STI, 159). This second act is

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natural life: "I am an ego before I become a personality … The ego's purpose is to realize personality" (Nikolai Berdyaev, *Solitude and Society,* trans. George Reavey [London: Geoffrey Bles: The Centenary Press, 1938]). He additionally shares Schelling's view of the parallel structure of personality in the human being and God: "Personality is the image and likeness of God in man and this is why it rises above the natural life." Nikolai Berdyaev, *The Destiny of Man,* trans. Natalie Duddington (London: Geoffrey Bles: The Centenary Press, 1937), 55.

[151] Schelling explains that as the original, unconscious act of self-consciousness, this first act also "falls *altogether outside time*." SW III, 537/STI, 159.

the same act which begins "consciousness in time" and is explicable only through an "immediate self-determining" (SW III, 532/STI, 155). It is an absolute act in which "the intelligence raises itself absolutely above the objective" (SW III, 532/STI, 155), and should be distinguished from the original, unconscious act of self-consciousness noted above (SW III, 537/STI, 159). In contrast to the original, first act, this second act "marks … the empirical starting point of consciousness" and thus "necessarily occurs at a particular phase of consciousness" (SW III, 537/STI, 159).[152] Proceeding from the second act, the state emerges as objective condition which grounds subjective human life. Just as was the case with the concept of ground in the Freedom Essay, this ground is always actively present, but cannot and should not usurp the free, moral activity of human beings. Human beings should, on Schelling's account, be directly responsible to others without the direct mediation of the state. Finally, the self-determination of human beings in a collective context can be aligned with personal existence in the Freedom Essay (SW VII, 408-410/PI, 70-71). However, the concept of intersubjective existence remains underdeveloped in the *System.* Schelling does not yet describe relations between human beings as distinctly personal or involving the concepts of love or voluntary 'higher unity,' which would require that one overcome those impediments of determinative character experienced within oneself. Michael Vater therefore suggests we focus on the role of time in the unfolding of consciousness in the *System* in the context of suc a comparison.

In fact, Vater himself notes the possible structural comparison between the *System* and the Freedom Essay. He compares Schelling's account of self-consciousness in the *System* with the *Unground* and ground of the Freedom Essay, including the political resonances of this comparison. Vater argues that the *Unground* and ground *together* can be described as an "unspiritual activity and source of realization," or "a restless, irresistible and infra-intelligible energization."[153] As hinted at above, Vater explicitly links the successive character of the unfolding of consciousness, understood as productivity in time or "the alteration of matter in

[152] Sandkühler explains, in reference to the *System,* that the mythological description of the expression of the individual, arbitrary will (*Willkür*) through the fall of man (*Sündenfall*) (or loss of the golden age) in history causes a shift in the human from the "rule of instinct into the realm of freedom." This is not at odds with the role of the fall in the 1804 *Philosophy and Religion.* However, in tension with Schelling's middle development, at the end of history, according to the *System*, human beings will enter a new "golden age" without contingency or arbitrariness, which would be a re-instantiation of our original, natural state. Hans Jörg Sandkühler, "Die Geschichte, das Recht und der Staat Als 'Zweite Natur'. Zu Schellings politischer Philosophie," *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 55, no. 2 (2001): 172.

[153] Michael Vater, "Introduction," in *System of Transcendental Idealism*, by F.W.J. Schelling, trans. Peter Heath (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1978), xxxv.

nature," with political life in time.[154] The progression of consciousness includes not only the successive stages between nature and self-conscious reflection, but "social movement and political deed in history."[155]

Time is the conditioning factor of the development of self-consciousness in the *System* and the Freedom Essay. It is what allows for the failed determinations of the stages of consciousness and a formative role of finitude. Vater explains that in contrast to Hegel's "Absolute subject," self-consciousness in the *System* is "never fully itself, never being but only becoming, essentially dependent upon appearances and the continued succession of appearances."[156] This dependence on time can lead one to conclude that the "finite endures and resists inclusion within any arbitrary totalization."[157] In view of the teleological aims of the *System*, the conversation surrounding just how much of empirical finitude is left outside of systematization through the movement of self-consciousness in time is open to debate.

Building on Vater's thesis, I want to suggest that the comparison of the infrastructure and development of the *System* to the metaphysics of the Freedom Essay is helpful for understanding Schelling's politics. But on my account, the conceptual distinction between the *Unground* and ground (which, as stated above, Vater discusses together) is important. The blind activity of an unconscious, free will is at the origin of being in both the *System* and the Freedom Essay. However, in the *System,* being is addressed in its appearance from the point of view of a knowing subject who plays a constitutive role in determining the object, rather than ontologically or metaphysically. Once we move to the level of the 'ground of consciousness', i.e.,' nature, we are dealing with that which persists unconsciously to make free, subjective activity *possible.* It is on this level that Schelling also locates *second nature* or the state. This ground of our temporal existence—the state—persists in time, which is precisely that which produces the never-resting character of self-consciousness. An unpredictable and irrational threat to self-consciousness is always present. The political state develops in time, and never achieves a perfect form, according to Schelling in the *System*. The contingent factors of human political coordination in time mean

[154] Vater, "Introduction," xxxv.
[155] Vater, "Introduction," xxxv.
[156] Vater, "Introduction," xxxv.
[157] Vater, "Introduction," xxxv.

that history displays moments of "senselessness," even despite the supposed teleological coordination of its ends put forth in the *System*.[158]

Nevertheless, there are numerous important differences between the *System* and the Freedom Essay that have implications for Schelling's political philosophy. Firstly, what is presented as a metaphysical framework in the Freedom Essay is an epistemological framework in the *System*, i.e., a set of structures in which Schelling can explain the activity of *knowing* and accordingly the persistence of consciousness in time. The self-determination of one's own existence in relation to the real presence of good and evil in the world in the Freedom Essay is completely absent from the *System.* Consequently, the definition and role of individual human freedom in the two texts differ greatly.

In the *System*, freedom is *not*, as in the Freedom Essay, the individual's capacity to decide between good and evil. This definition of freedom in the Freedom Essay allows the individual to overcome that by which she is determined and to develop into a person who can effectively love others. As the project of the *System*, namely, to describe the development of self-consciousness, is radically different from the Freedom Essay, so is its treatment of the concept of freedom therein. In the *System,* Schelling presents two definitions of freedom, both of which are important for his explication of the development of self-consciousness: (1) freedom of the "ideal self," which is characterized as the infinite and unconditioned (SW III, 562/STI, 177) and (2) the *appearance* of freedom for a fully conscious being, or a thinking, acting self (a self that intuits and acts). This second definition of freedom is inherently contradictory, according to Schelling, because once freedom is limited, it is no longer complete and total unrestricted freedom, as per definition 1. However, the appearance of freedom is still necessary for us to make sense of our experience of the world in time. While the *ideal* self is "opened to infinity" by freedom, its activity in the objective world confines it (STI, 177). Once the subject has determined any object for its own perception, including itself, it is no longer unlimited and its freedom is the appearance of the freedom of choice.

Insofar as the self strives to be infinite and in every moment continues to be limited once again, one can accordingly consider it in a dialectical relationship with unconditioned freedom

[158] According to Vater, the ongoing tale of consciousness-in-time of the System ends with "a recognition of the finite and fragmented textures of empirical reality and the multiplicity of its partial intelligible schemata. We are left with a history which equally shows flashes of senselessness and rationality (world political organization), whose goal and purpose cannot finally be decided." Vater, "Introduction," xxxv.

throughout the process of the development of consciousness. This interplay is, according to Schelling, that which makes the continuity of consciousness possible in time (SW III, 562/STI, 178). The persistence of unconditioned freedom creates the condition of the unification of unconscious intuiting (*Anschauen*) with acting, as the self synthesizes its past impressions to achieve knowledge (which informs its future actions) over time (SW III, 562/STI, 17).[159] But the self realizes itself only in the world of phenomena or appearances (SW III, 563ff./STI, 178ff.).[160] Appearance is the "condition under which the self was to appear to itself" (SW III, 566/STI, 181).[161]

While on the level of the subjectivity, the theoretical and practical activity of the subject were unified thanks to unrestricted freedom. But on the level of the whole or objectivity the "appearance" of "absolute freedom" is simply "natural inclination" (SW III, 572/STI, 186). This seems to be a contradictory claim, for Schelling states that a natural inclination could in fact "bring forth" the "causality in my action … even without any freedom" (SW III, 571/STI, 186). But this privileging of natural inclination shows just how weak Schelling's notion of (the appearance of) *individual* freedom actually is in the *System.* On his account, natural inclination, as a drive, brings about the consequences of freedom (e.g., free body movements) even before I am conscious of the fact that I am free.[162] Therefore, natural inclination does not need the appearance of freedom, but the appearance of freedom enables the human to operate in a phenomenal world in which its thoughts and activity appear to be united and his actions *appear* to be completely self-determined. Although the self constructs and experiences a world, this "world itself is merely a modification of the self" (SW III, 563/STI, 180). Any significance of

[159] This unity makes reflection upon past actions and thoughts, and the coordination of all future activity, possible. Freedom allows the self to unify its "intuiting" as a knowing subject and "acting" as an actor or object: "By means of a free action, something is to be determined in the objective world," but "everything in the objective world is present only insofar as the self intuits it therein" SW III, 163/STI, 179-80.

[160] Compare: "All free action rests … on the twofold opposition between the ideal self on the one hand, and the simultaneously ideal and real self on the other." The intuitant self is "at once real and ideal" and therefore "constitutes the objective in free agency." So although the "free-acting" and the "intuitant" selves are different, once we remove the distinction in thought between ideal activity and production, they are one and the same self. SW III, 563/STI, 180.

[161] The attempt to explain how the self that acts can determine something in the self that knows (the coming together of the two selves) "belongs only to the appearance of the self, and not to the self proper. The self must appear to itself as though something were determined, by its action, within its intuition, or, since it is not conscious of this, within the external world." STI, III, 565/STI, 181.

[162] The "intuit[ing] of the drive as natural inclination" comes after the presence of inclination itself. It requires that I "appear to myself as objectively driven to all my acts by a compulsion of my organic constitution (by pain…)," and the requirement for this is the link between "all action" and "a physical compulsion, which itself is necessary as a condition of the appearance of freedom." SW III, 571/STI, 186.

the individual's 'free' activity beyond its own knowledge and the world of appearances is therefore largely determined by an objective teleological development.[163] The capacity for the subject to exercise free activity thus has little to contribute to the objective development of the whole in the *System.* It could be said that the individual determines his own knowledge, but does not thereby determine his existence the world. The objective course of history, or the realization of a telos in the world through an objective will, overpowers the scope of subjective action.[164]

Due to the teleology of the *System,* we ultimately fulfill ends that we ourselves do not directly choose, and thus the appearance of freedom is exactly that—*an appearance*.[165] While the appearance of freedom is important for the coherence of experience of thinking and action in time, it is neither absolute, nor can we invest it with objective significance vis-à-vis the course of history. This is markedly different from the concept of *individual* freedom put forth in the Freedom Essay as the capacity to choose between good and evil (SW VII, 352/PI, 23). However, Schelling describes the existential process in making this choice as one that constantly requires the individual to confront that by which she is determined, and to overcome it in the development of her personality. There is no such notion of personality in the 1800 *System,* which still sees the personal as largely equated with the rational individual.[166]

These differing definitions of human freedom in history raise the question: to what extent, if any, can we alter the macro-level circumstances in which we live? The concept of freedom as exercised by the individual is presented by Schelling in the *System* as a contradiction that presents a specific epistemological problem. If subjective freedom is limitless, by virtue of delimiting an object, the individual synthesizes and internalizes successive representations in time (SW III, 559/STI, 177). While freedom may first appear to be the unrestricted activity of subjectivity, Schelling details how this never appears for the subject without the limitations of objectivity. The activity of knowing is characteristic of individual freedom.

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[163] Habermas makes note of this reduction of freedom to appearance in a critical tone: "In the face of the superior standard of absolute identity, the agent's experience of moral freedom is reduced to mere appearance, just like the knower's experience of natural causality." Habermas, "Dialectical Idealism," 44.

[164] "The change which comes about, through free action, in the external world, must take place entirely according to the laws of productive intuition, as though freedom had no part in it at all." SW III, 564/STI, 181.

[165] See Michelle Kosch, *Freedom and Reason in Kant, Schelling and Kierkegaard* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 79–80.

[166] Kosch, *Freedom and Reason,* 76–77. "[R]ational self-determination" in the *System,* explains Kosch, "no longer requires as a postulate the ability of the agent to separate himself from nature." Kosch, *Freedom and Reason,* 77.

Schelling will at no point in this text or his later work champion revolution. He writes in 1800 "insurrection … ought, in a good constitution, to be no more possible than it is in a machine" (SW III, 586/STI, 198) and similarly in 1847-1852, the state "should rest in silence, allowing only reform (not revolution). Like nature, it can be embellished, but it cannot be made to be otherwise than it is" (SW XI, 551/PRP, 120-21). While the latter statement seems to corroborate the former, the possibility of reforming or redirecting the course of human history is not found in the *System.* Although Schelling's political philosophy in the *System* is anti-nationalist and he shifts his detailing of political and historical activity to the international scale, he nevertheless sees history as the effectuation of objective will in and through the global order. Freedom here primarily concerns the world of subjective appearance and is thus weak in reference to the whole of historical development (SW III, 564-567/STI, 181-82).

Moreover, in 1800, Schelling does not yet advocate for the prescriptive roles fulfilled by individuals based on their 'talents' as he does in *On University Studies*, nor does he describe the *state* as an instrument of the unification of individual, free activity with necessity as he does in his Identity Philosophy. Rather, Schelling emphasizes challenges of finding stability in such an order, which challenges the human being's nature to exercise freedom and resist being "compelled" (SW III, 585/STI, 196-97). He specifically acknowledges that the unification of human beings cannot be founded *a priori* (SW III, 585/STI, 196-97). Political life in the state therefore involves experimentation based on the failed attempts of the latter to forge a successful unity between disparate beings (SW III, 585/197).[167] The subsistence of a state, Schelling claims, either depends on "the good will of those who hold supreme power in their hands" or a "sanction" from a power external to it (SW III, 586/STI, 198). Schelling's reflections on politics at this point must extend to the global level, as no "assured existence is therefore thinkable even for a single regime merely, however perfectly conceived, without an organization extending beyond the individual state" (SW III, 586/STI, 198). This contingency of the state is nowhere to be found in *On University Studies.* Nevertheless, it is important to note that already in the *System,* Schelling claims the downfall of early states was that they were not established through reason, so they therefore were doomed to fail (SW III, 585/STI, 197). This is not a radical

[167] "[T]he link between the idea of the system and its actual execution, is entirely different from the system itself, and must undergo quite different modifications, depending upon differences in degree of culture, in national character, and so forth" SW III, 585/STI, 197.

statement, as the late Schelling, too, describes the state as a rational order (SW XI, 536/PRP, 110).

The State as a Second Nature in the *System of Transcendental Idealism*

Despite Schelling's radical shift in the 1800 *System* towards the endorsement of an involuntary community characterized by the coordination of ends effectuated through the necessity inherent in an objective will that runs through history, the core concept of the *System* upon which his political philosophy is founded—namely, the legal state as a second nature which upholds the exercise of freedom of all citizens—remains consistent. Second nature, or the legal state, is the foundation of the successful, mutual realization of the individual freedom of subjects. Human beings have an active role to play in shaping the form and reach of this state, which holds a permanent role in our life on earth, and which is always changing depending on our historical circumstances. In consideration of this thesis, second nature in the *System* can be seen as setting the bedrock for the rest of Schelling's political philosophy.

In the practical philosophy (Part IV) of the *System*, Schelling describes the emergence of the state's legal system as a second and higher nature.[168] However, the term more generally describes our naturalized, socio-political, cultural condition structured by state laws. The main purpose of the law, which is at the root of second nature, is to uphold the freedom of all (SW III, 583/STI, 195). Although Schelling sometimes suggests that second nature is similar to the "moral order,"[169] it would be more accurate to say that second nature is the *condition* of morality—it makes morality—which we must determine for ourselves through self-legislation—possible. Thus, we act *within* second nature as free, self-determining agents. For this reason, Schelling, in fact, considers the second nature *qua* legal system as 'pre-conscious' and part of theoretical philosophy. The law, Schelling says, is a "theoretical" science, not a "practical science" or a "branch of morality" (SW III, 583/STI, 196).

[168] More specifically, the concept of second nature appears near the end of Part Four of the *System of Transcendental Idealism*, as Schelling explains how "willing" becomes "objective for the Self." SW III, 583/STI, 196.
[169] Schelling states, for example, that "by means of my free action, something else objective, a second nature, the moral order, is also to arise for me. But by free action nothing objective can arise for me, for everything objective arises, as such, without consciousness" (SW III, 596/STI, 205). I take Schelling here to be demarcating the objective aspect of second nature, i.e., the legal system of the state, from that which it enables, i.e., a free, moral order. Free action is determined by conscious beings, who rely on the state, as pre-conscious, to make this free action possible.

Like first nature, second nature serves as an objective condition for the development of self-consciousness. However, as noted above, unlike the blind activity which gives rise to the first act of nature, second nature appears via a second act that marks the beginning of our experience of temporality (SW III, 533-34/STI, 155-56). Through this second act, the finite I sets out on its path of realizing its own activity in an intersubjective, temporal context.[170] Therefore, for Schelling (and for that matter, also Hegel), second nature broadly designates the production of an objective, cultural order in which we exercise our freedom, and moreover, that we largely perceive to be given.[171] However, it should be equally noted that the critique of the concept of second nature that we find in critical theory draws our attention to the problem that individuals forget we are the agents producing the very nature in which we live. This nature, it can be argued, is a naturalized capitalist economic system rife with exploitation that we accept as normal. It interferes with and interrupts our legal system. We thus ought to be attentive to the historical forms which we reify as 'natural.'

Simply stated, for Schelling in the *System,* second nature is the domain of the objective, legal state in which conscious, free individuals interact with one another. Through this function, second nature supports the mutual realization of the freedom of all. By comparing the state to nature, Schelling exposes its mediating function—and yet, *on its own and with regards to action*, its simultaneous impotence—for the realization of human freedom: "Nature cannot *act* in the proper sense of the word. But rational beings can act, and an interaction between such beings through the medium of the objective world is actually the condition of freedom" (SW III, 582/STI, 194). Schelling is clear: the state, as a second nature, is the prerequisite for the exercise of human freedom.

[170] "For by the very fact that the intelligence intuits itself as producing, the purely ideal self separates itself from that which is at once ideal and real [reflective consciousness], and so is now wholly objective and completely independent of the purely ideal." SW III, 537/STI, 158.

[171]As identified by Christoph Menke and others, Hegel, in fact, puts forth two notions of second nature: (1) the domain freedom as created by the development of spirit, and (2) the unconscious, externalized realm of habit. Second nature therefore, writes Menke, represents "spirit's highest peak and its deepest lapse" Christoph Menke, "Hegel's Theory of Second Nature," *Symposium: Canadian Journal of Continental Philosophy/Revue Canadienne de Philosophie Continentale* 17, no. 1 (2013): 31. Menke further explains that second nature in Hegel "is meant to describe the phenomenon, and explain the logic, of the inversion of something the will has freely made for itself into an independent and immediate being to which we—we citizens or members of society—are subjected" (Menke, 34). We are therefore, Hegel says "unconscious" of ourselves in second-nature, as the "unconscious action in spirit" (Menke, 35). Schelling's concept of second nature does not denote the second Hegelian notion, as Schelling speaks little of habit, but it shares much with Hegel's first notion.

In view of the fact that, even in 1800, Schelling locates freedom at the absolute core of the determination of consciousness, it should come as no surprise that the protection of freedom is the first and highest function of the state. Freedom is the most important aspect of human existence, and the state must uphold and defend it. Schelling calls it the "holiest" which "ought not to be entrusted to chance" (SW III, 582/STI, 195). To quote Werner Marx, freedom, understood in the practical philosophy of the early Schelling as the "faculty of self-determination," is the "essence of self consciousness."[172] In fact, for Schelling, the unlimited, boundless character of freedom, and, in turn, our constant striving for it, is that which allows us to experience continuity in self-consciousness.[173] But for freedom to be exercised in time by multiple, competing agents, a legal state is required: the "legal system is a necessary condition for the freedom existing in the external world" (SW III 584/STI, 196).

According to Schelling, the domain of second nature is inaugurated by one, single infrangible law of the state that exists to protect of freedom. "It must be made impossible, through the constraint of an unbreakable law, that in the interaction of all the freedom of the individual should be abolished" (SW III, 582/STI, 195). This, Schelling claims, is the one and only "natural law on behalf of freedom" (SW III, 582/STI, 195). On Schelling's account, the law of the state must protect the *natural right* of each individual to freedom. In short, Schelling's law on behalf of freedom can be interpreted as the law which seeks to prohibit self-interested wills from infringing on the freedom of others, regardless of the person's social status or personal circumstances. For Schelling, preserving freedom is the first purpose of the state and its legal constitution. Furthermore, the law which grounds this tenet has an *authority* which "prevails" in the legal system. This protection of freedom is so integral to Schelling's transcendental system and to his view of collective, conscious life that Schelling states the "legal system" (specifically, the constitution, or "*Rechtsverfassung*," which is now identified with second nature) is "deduced as a condition of the continuance of consciousness" (SW III, 582/STI, 195). Schelling had

[172] Marx explains that because freedom is our essence, "no individual could continue to exist without a guarantee of freedom." As a result, "the species was constrained to organize itself, to construct an order that was governed by laws." Werner Marx, *The Philosophy of F. W. J. Schelling: History, System and Freedom*, trans. Thomas Nenon (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 4.

[173] We are conscious of freedom only because it is limited in the way it can be exercised in time, but Schelling maintains that the nature of freedom is to be unlimited "in respect of its striving." This unlimited nature of freedom has a regulative role in how we find continuity in self-consciousness, according to Schelling. He claims that it is the enduring, unlimited nature of the striving for freedom that links the disparate moments of our self-consciousness together over time. SW III, 562/STI, 178.

already put forth the thesis that the state should uphold the human being's natural right to freedom of action in the 1796 "New Deduction of Natural Right," which I discuss below.

In stating that the natural law of freedom must act as "an instantaneous counter to the self-interested drive," Schelling reveals his conservative view of human nature in reference to politics (SW III, 582/STI, 195). This self-interested drive is the "natural" drive of a free being to exercise his freedom to the furthest extent possible. While Schelling does not yet have a working concept of evil in reference to freedom, he is clear that human beings, on their own, will not instinctively curtail their freedom in view of others. However, by recognizing the second natural law of the state, the human being can rationally understand the limitation placed on her freedom in the name of its exercise. The negative view of human nature in connection to the role of the state to uphold freedom in the *System* foreshadows Schelling's position in the 1847-1852 *Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy*. In the latter, Schelling refers to Hobbes' "*war of all against all*" in claiming that without the state, individuals *could not* be responsible, "morally free" persons (SW XI, 536/DRP, 110). Schelling also here repeats the close relationship of the rule of the law as enforced by the state to freedom, claiming that "the individual has no freedom either to act for or against the law, unless it is made possible for everyone to act against it" (SW XI, 535/DRP, 110).

In 1800, Schelling already identifies that the human being inevitably oversteps boundaries with regard to accommodating the freedom of others in her individualist pursuit of her own free action. Therefore, the objective, natural world, now in the form of a second nature, must oppose the unrestrained exercise of individual freedom with its own natural laws. But the human being, qua *rational* being, can knowingly recognize the legitimacy of the state to oppose the "self-interested drive." This rational recognition of the rule of law is important, for, on its own, the state works with "complete indifference towards the operations of free beings" (SW III, 582/STI, 195). On Schelling's account, the external world compels this natural drive while at the same time providing, through the state, a grounds upon which the individual can recognize the natural law of freedom. The individual therefore rationally recognizes the impossibility and contradiction of its own activity if pursued without constraint. In this sense, Schelling describes the human being as "divided within himself" (SW III, 582/STI, 195).

Schelling's concept of freedom in the *System* is the necessary condition for consciousness to develop and retain its continuity in time. However, once within an intersubjective context in

time, according to Schelling, the "continuance of consciousness" has yet another condition, namely, the legal system which guarantees the highest degree of freedom for all (SW III, 587/STI, 198) If freedom is that which allows consciousness to synthesize its past and continue to think and act in time, such activity is not possible intersubjectively without the laws of the state, which guarantee freedom for each individual. The state is the necessary condition for a moral disposition, i.e., for the free, self-determination of individuals together. But precisely for this reason, "law is no branch of morality" (SW III, 583/STI, 195).

Schelling's pessimistic view of human nature has a direct role in his perspective of the institution of the state in its first instantiations in history. The generation of a legal order, says Schelling, was the result of a "natural compulsion" (SW III, 585/STI, 192). We do not remember when or how the first state really came about, for those who brought it into fruition, on Schelling's account, did so "unawares." The natural tendency to "resort to force" "drove men to bring such an order into being without their own knowledge of the fact" (SW III, 594/STI, 204). In short, we lived in states before we even knew it.

Despite the necessity of its existence, the state is not, on its own, inherently stable. According to Schelling, just because the unity of individuals is formed through legal, state relations does not mean those individuals will not exploit power and react against it. He acknowledges this point with recourse to the concept of human nature: "The mechanism of such a system directs its sanctions against free beings, who will only allow themselves to be compelled so long as they find advantage therein ... the unification of such beings under a common mechanism is one of those problems which can be solved only through innumerable attempts" (SW III, 594/STI, 204). On our own, we do not want to comply with the principle of freedom for all.

Although the mechanistic state exists necessarily and objectively for us, how we execute it is doomed to fail. Schelling attributes such failure in part to culture and national character, and the fact that early states were set up through pressure of circumstances, "not through reason" (SW III, 585/STI, 197). This is even the case for states which seem perfect "in a formal sense," because the distribution of rights and possibilities of citizens would be hierarchically established and never equalized. Schelling reminds us that nature itself "establishes nothing self-subsistent" or "inherently stable" (SW III, 585/STI, 197). The system itself would be open to the threat of other states. States must therefore enter into a universal constitution with other states.

Schelling's theory of the state as a second nature relies on numerous important concepts related to the contextualized position of the state in his account of the progression of self-consciousness in the *System*. Three of these concepts are intuition (understood as an unconscious synthesis that produces a shared disposition), intersubjectivity, and time. As these three concepts link Schelling's political philosophy with his theoretical philosophy in the context of the transition from first to second nature, I will now explain the role of each of the three concepts and their role in Schelling's theory of the state.

Despite its conceptual difficulties and inconsistencies,[174] intuition is undeniably important in Schelling's early political philosophy. Schelling proposes intuition as the pre-conscious element of the human species that has the function of a shared, collective unconscious precondition of the binding together of the human community. He claims that the *intuitive* aspect of acting together in a world with others can be understood as the collective project of the human community, or the unconscious coordination of wills in history (SW III, 596/STI, 205-6). We do not consciously produce the coordination Schelling sees in the human project, as it plays itself out in world history. This is the work of intuition: "The objective factor in history is thus an intuition indeed, but not an intuition of the individual, for it is not the individual who acts in history, but rather the species" (SW III, 596-7/STI, 207). Furthermore, second nature, or the state, emerges through *intuition* (SW III, 596/STI, 205-6).[175] Its existence pre-dates consciousness. As we have seen, the state, in its first instance, is not created consciously. It came about "unintended" as part of the objective world (SW III, 595/STI, 205). Since the state is prior to freedom and thus was not freely created, Schelling sees it as having arisen unconsciously in the intuition of human beings, as an objective condition of consciousness (SW III, 595/STI, 205). Quite simply, if we are now describing the process of the emergence of a world of consciousness, including the world of politics in time, its starting point must be unconscious.

[174] The concept of intuition *is* so often used by Schelling in different places, it is rife with challenges and inconsistencies (especially in its use as a general, standalone concept, and in its qualifications as either 'intellectual' or 'aesthetic' intuition). See G. Anthony Bruno, "The Appearance and Disappearance of Intellectual Intuition in Schelling's Philosophy," *Analecta* 5 (2013): 3ff.

[175] Schelling charts the trajectory of the genesis of the self through theoretical and then practical philosophy in the *System* as follows: theoretical philosophy took us from an unconscious act of self-awareness, through an act of sensation and active of productive intuition, to make a self as an "object to itself" qua a sensing subject. But it is only through "willing" that this self comes to reflect upon itself (that "the self becomes an object to itself as the whole which it is, that is, as at once both subject and object, or as that which produces" [STI III, 595/156]). The "producing function" of the self now "detaches itself" from the "purely ideal self, and can now never again become ideal, but is the external and absolute objective for the self itself" (STI III, 595/156). It is thus through the process of determining itself that the self "becomes an object to itself qua self" (SW III, 596/STI, 157).

Intuition also has a constitutive, theoretical role in the birth of second nature, as Schelling describes it in the context of the developmental stages of self-consciousness. Schelling claims that the self *intuits* in the aforementioned second act that gives rise to second nature. Through this intuiting, the self unites the unlimited activity of nature with the limited activity of consciousness. This allows the self to engage in the practical self-realization that it itself is the one doing the intuiting, i.e., self-reflection. Intuiting is thus an unconscious unification of the self as an object with the self as a subject. Such a unification is the condition for judgment and knowledge[176] and marks the beginning of the *practical philosophy* and second nature, for such an identity of the self and the object was not possible in theoretical philosophy alone. Intuition accordingly stands between nature and consciousness.[177]

Although "the same powers of intuition which reside in the self can also be exhibited up to a certain point in nature" (SW III, 331/STI, 3), nature cannot do the intuiting work of the self. However, the persistence of an outside to consciousness—i.e., nature, objectivity—is the presupposition of intuition having anything to exercise or synthesize at all.[178] Werner Marx accordingly describes self-intuition as unconsciously productive, similar to Spinoza's *natura naturans.*[179] As consciousness seeks to be for itself, such infinite productivity must be limited. Otherwise, nothing would be intelligible at all.

The second concept important for comprehending Schelling's concept of second nature is intersubjectivity, which establishes the ontological reality of our collective life while allowing us to recognize our own individuality. This is the foundation of Schelling's proto-theory of recognition—the mutual acknowledgement of the independent existence of interdependent beings is a "reciprocal" relationship, and "no rational being can substantiate itself as such, save

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[176] It is worth remembering that in the *System,* Schelling maintains his Fichtean allegiance to the self as the productive origin of that which is outside of it. The self, therefore, in a certain sense, is the origin of nature, as nature is the object which is *not* the self. However, nature, too, has a limiting, reciprocal effect on consciousness.

[177] Marcela García has emphasized the link between the early and late Schelling on the pre-conscious or pre-conceptual dimension of being, and the positing of unity of the unconscious with the structures of consciousness as the condition for a theory of judgment. See Marcela García, "Schelling's Theory of Judgment and the Interpretation of the Copula," *Schelling-Studien* 3 (2015): 47.

[178] For Schelling's Kant-inspired account of how intuition unites the positive activity of consciousness with the negative activity of that which limits it, see F.W.J. Schelling, "Treatise Explicatory of the Idealism in the Science of Knowledge," in *Idealism and the Endgame of Theory*, trans. Thomas Pfau (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), 72. Intuition is how spirit comes to *know* objects, and to thereby attest to their reality by knowing them. When the objectivity of nature meets consciousness in second nature, knowledge of objects or of nature is possible. Schelling, "Treatise Explicatory," 72. For more on the relationship of Schelling's understanding of intuition to Kant and Jacobi, see Dale E. Snow, *Schelling and the End of Idealism: The Horizons of Feeling* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996), 58–60.

[179] Marx, *The Philosophy of F. W. J. Schelling: History, System and Freedom*, 39.

by the recognition of others as such" (SW III, 550/STI, 169).[180] Intersubjectivity generally describes how our individual cognition or intelligence intersects and relates with the cognition of others. Schelling locates intersubjectivity at the basis of our knowledge of the external world. In the domain of second nature, individual wills are mutually exercised in a collective context. For Schelling, intersubjectivity provides an answer to the question of how I can be certain of the *existence* of the external world at all. The world outside of me is not just a projection or product of my conscious activity because my perceptions accord with the perceptions of other people.[181] However, Schelling makes no attempt at this point to describe or affirm the real existence of these other intelligences outside of consciousness, ontologically or otherwise.

In second nature, each individual, conscious, finite self lives in a world with others who can confirm that objects outside of oneself are not just in my head. We need these others to know there *is* an objective world. The true existence of an objective world cannot be proven to a "rational being in isolation" (SW III, 557/STI, 174). Schelling explains that such a being "could not only not arrive at a consciousness of freedom, but would be equally unable to attain consciousness of the objective world as such" (SW III, 557/STI, 174). Therefore, "intelligences outside the individual, and a never-ceasing interaction with them, alone make complete the whole of consciousness with all its determinations" (SW III, 557/STI, 174). In short, the negation of each individual's unrestricted free activity by the existence of other minds make consciousness as a whole (along with my own individuality) complete. Despite the initial impression that the *System* may be a solipsistic project, in the end, Schelling rejects solipsism and uses intersubjectivity to affirm that other intelligences in some sense exist. These others confirm the reality of the external world, and *intuitively,* we share the possibility to access the external world with them, as intuition unites the subjectivity of the self with the objectivity of the external world.

Even though Schelling claims that the first negation of unlimited activity is originally unconscious, the external world, and specifically, the existence of others, sets limits on individual freedom and what we can do.[182] I noted above that second nature was established by

[180] Regarding individuality, Schelling explains that the *restrictions* that allow for the self-intuition of one's own free activity "are possible only through intelligences outside me." SW III, 550/STI, 169.
[181] See the section of the *System* entitled "Only through Intelligences outside me does the World become Objective for me" (SW III, 555-556/STI, 173–74).
[182] Although Schelling repeatedly affirms in the *System*, albeit without pursuing an ontology, the 'reality' of the external world, he simultaneously maintains, following Fichte, that the external world is at least in part determined

Schelling as the "condition" for consciousness to persist (SW III, 582/STI, 195). However, another one of these conditions, on Schelling's account, is the "negation of free activity in myself" (SW III, 550/STI, 169). This is the condition of being free, because *human freedom* "only arises with consciousness" (SW III, 550/STI, 169). On Schelling's account, neither the "objective world alone" (including second nature), nor "the first influence of another rational being," is enough to secure this "continuance of consciousness" (SW III, 550/STI, 170). Rather, we need to "become repeatedly oriented anew within the intellectual world" through our "conscious and free activity" as it is "reflected upon" by us as free rational beings in a collective, intersubjective context, and (this activity) "becomes an object to us as free" (SW III, 551/STI, 170). Schelling then suggests that this is ongoing, moral education—a point he shares with Schiller (SW III, 551/STI, 170). But the condition of this education is that our "free actions" must be limited. Schelling says, "a certain quantity of free actions … is negated. The never-ceasing interaction of rational beings, regardless of their ever-increasing freedom, is thus alone made possible by what we call diversity of talents and characteristics," *which Schelling adds to the list of conditions of the continuance of consciousness* (SW III, 551/STI, 170). This, he says, creates restrictedness in our action, but he leaves the question of how we deal with the differences in the abilities and personalities of human beings to something other than transcendental philosophy (SW III, 551/STI, 170).

Thirdly, politics concerns the world of human affairs in time. When we consider questions of hope, political change, the development of the law, and, to use Schelling's language of the *System*, 'epochs 'of history, we are dealing with temporal processes. Indeed, one of the criteria often used to distinguish conservatism and liberalism is the desirable *pace* of social change. Some traditionally conservative positions, such as those put forth by Edmund Blake and David Hume, for example, maintain that political change must be slow, measured, and take into consideration the value of traditions, i.e., what we potentially lose when we let go of the latter. Questions of the possible achievement or deferral of justice in history always refer to time and

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by self-consciousness. The Schelling of the *System* is paying heed to his post-Kantian heritage in his interrogation of how the I subjectively represents this external world to itself. However, he also asks how the external world in turn conditions our representations of it. How does the external world, through necessity, limit what we experience? The external world is not just a negative determination of consciousness. Rather, in view of Schelling's theory of intersubjectivity in his practical philosophy, subjectivity and objectivity are linked in and through the activity of conscious agents.

that which can be accomplished in it. The state and its aims concern human affairs in time. There is no state, or second nature, without time

The first condition for politics and moral responsibility is the beginning of self-consciousness, which, according to Schelling, also marks the inauguration of time. The possibility of self-consciousness and the existence of time are thus prerequisites of the very existence of a state, which itself is also the objective condition of the persistence of consciousness and collective life. I explained above that the *second* act of self-consciousness inaugurates "self-consciousness in time" (SW III, 533/STI, 156). From the *first* unconscious act of self-consciousness, out of which first nature developed, there was no empirical experience of time. But from this second act onwards, every action of intelligence happens in time (SW III, 537/STI, 159). Even though it is unconscious, second nature accordingly emerges at the same moment that consciousness becomes aware of its own reflective activity. From the moment the world appears as objective to consciousness, and the subjective, feeling self can distinguish the object from itself, intelligence begins to produce "consciously, and so here there begins an entirely new world, which from this point on will extend ad infinitum" (SW III, 537/STI, 159). This marks the creation of a "second world, whose gestation begins with consciousness" (SW III, 537/STI, 159), i.e., second nature. To sum up, there is no politics without time. On Schelling's account, time provides the necessary condition for the development of self-consciousness, the possibility of individuality, and relations with others (intersubjectivity).[183] We converge with others on the conclusions of our experiences of the "objective world," as well as of "individual things and events within the same space and time" and ascribe truth to them (SW III, 544/STI, 164).[184] Time is also required for the concept of continuity in conscious experience (and therewith succession), as well as the periodization of history (SW III, 562/STI, 178). As noted above, it is our "common intuition" that makes this possible. Schelling therefore calls intuition the "foundation" and "solid earth upon which all interaction between intelligences takes place; a

[183] For a detailed account of the role of time and its characteristics in the *System,* see Alexander Schnell, *En deçà du Sujet. Du Temps dans la philosophie transcendental allemande* (Paris: PUF, 2010), chap. 3: 'Surgissement du temps et essence du temps dans le Système de l'idéalisme transcendental de F. W. J. Schelling'. Schnell reconstructs the role of time in self-consciousness in the *System* and its foundational and generative role in the individual, empirical I. He underscores the indispensable role of time in bringing all productions and developmental moments to consciousness. Furthermore, the epochs of the development of consciousness and history itself are temporalized in the *System.*

[184] See Marx, *The Philosophy of F. W. J. Schelling: History, System and Freedom*, 164.

substrate to which, for that very reason, they constantly revert, so soon as they find themselves in disharmony about that which is not directly determined by intuition" (SW III, 544/STI, 164).

Developing from his analyses of time and intersubjectivity, Schelling's practical philosophy in the *System* ends in the philosophy of history. Although the young Schelling does not yet share the eschatological view of the end of history espoused by late Schelling, he *does* reference time with regards to the *incompletion* of the system and the fact that the development of consciousness has not yet reached its final stage, which he calls "providence." There is "no point in time at which the absolute synthesis—or to put it in empirical terms, the design of providence—should have brought its development to completion" (SW III, 602/STI, 210). This open-endedness of the *System,* especially with regards to history, invites numerous possibilities for a reinterpretation of the significance of finitude, time, and phenomena in its genesis in this work, especially in reference to politics and history.

Teleology and Necessity in History: The Involuntary Community

Despite the ongoing striving of finite consciousness for a unity with the absolute beyond itself—accordingly freedom from constraint—in the *System,* Schelling's vision of *political* unity in this work follows an objective telos. For Schelling, the "primary characteristic of history" overall is that it "should exhibit a union of freedom and necessity" (SW III, 594/STI, 203). This becomes clear at the end of history, in a stage of, to use Schelling's term, providence, at which point humanity retrospectively sees that its contingent activity was subordinated to necessity. The activity of history, on Schelling's account, is not the uncoordinated, anarchic, chaotic activity that it appears to be from our individual, localized points of view as we go about our daily lives. Rather, our arbitrary actions are all synchronized through necessity. Schelling explains that "through freedom itself, and in that I believe myself to act freely, something I do not intend is to come about unconsciously, *i.e.*, without my consent" (SW III, 594/STI, 204).[185] Indeed, what comes about as an ultimate result of my own, individual action may even be contrary to my own will.[186] Freedom therefore does not lead the finite I *beyond* necessity, as in the case of a

[185] Similarly, for Schelling, the art product involves a radically contingent or random element, but in the end, everything that seemed arbitrary is coordinated in a teleology of ends.
[186] In Schelling's words, individual free activity "is to be confronted with an unconscious, whereby out of the most uninhibited expression of freedom there arises unawares something wholly involuntary, and perhaps even contrary

voluntary community. Instead, there is a necessity "hidden" from individual, acting humans that brings about a guaranteed "union," which is the "highest goal of the entire species" (SW III, 598/STI, 207). Every individual plays his or her part freely in history, but a "single spirit … speaks in everyone" (SW III, 602/STI, 201).

Such a unity is progressively effected through the will of objective spirit, necessarily ensuring the collective coordination of individual wills, and thereby history, over time. Schelling uses an analogy of a coordinated theatre piece to describe the reconciliation of our individual freedom with objective necessity in history. The playwright (i.e., the will of objective spirit) coordinating this play does not exist independently of it. Finite individuals are all actors in this play, whose "objective outcome" has already been "harmonized beforehand." Nevertheless, the actors act freely and are "collaborators" in the play. In our acting, we disclose the character and essence of the playwright through the roles we freely play (SW III, 602/STI, 201). In other words, our individual freedom progressively realizes an objective, coordinated goal: "History as a whole is a progressive, gradually self-disclosing revelation of the absolute" (SW III, 603/STI, 211). Humans contribute to the progress of history by working together to improve our socio-political relationships and bring about justice, but we do not achieve of a peaceful, global, objective federation of states on our own—rather, the objective will of history, the necessary drive of the Absolute or immanent God, ensures such a coordination. However, Schelling is clear that such a drive does not violate the legitimacy of our individual freedom.

In this theory of history, a universal, global, system of ends—an eventual utopic reign of peace on earth—is unconsciously produced. "All my actions, in fact, proceed, as to their final goal, toward something that can be realized, not by the individual alone, but only *by the entire species*" (SW III, 205/STI, 205). This unity is made possible through the unconscious unification of freedom and necessity in the continuous revelation of an immanent God understood as the absolute: "Man, through his history, provides a continuous demonstration of God's presence, a demonstration, however, which only the whole of history can render complete" (SW III, 603/STI, 211). Schelling explains that freedom *and* the "the total evolution of the absolute synthesis" are infinite processes (SW III, 603/STI, 211). Because this infinite nature of the

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to the agent's will, which he himself could have never realized through willing" (SW III, 594/STI, 204). This means there is something higher than individual human freedom coordinating our collective action: "There must be something here that is higher than human freedom, and on which alone we can reckon with assurance in doing and acting" (SW III, 595/STI, 204).

absolute, "history," on Schelling's account, is "itself a never wholly completed revelation of that absolute which, for the sake of consciousness, and thus merely for the sake of appearance, separates itself into conscious and unconscious, the free and the intuitant" (SW III, 603/STI, 211).

In concrete geopolitical terms, Schelling in 1800 imagines history moving towards a "federation of all states, who mutually guarantee their respective regimes," and which is also grounded in freedom. This can happen only when all the separate states "have but one interest, namely to preserve the constitutions of all," and also when "these states have again submitted to a single communal law, just as was formerly done by individuals in forming each particular state" (SW III, 586/STI, 198). On Schelling's account, the only thing therefore that makes such a "universal constitution" even imaginable is the governance of the "play of freedom…by a blind necessity, which objectively appends to freedom what would never have been possible through the latter alone" (SW III, 587/STI, 198).[187]

If there is an end of history—in which there would be peace and a total unification of all people—for the early Schelling, it is "*providence.*" Although this is a theological term, Schelling employs it here in a secular, immanentist sense as the culmination of his rational philosophy of history in the *System*. It does not, as in Schelling's later work, signify the final unification of God and the world through "providence," i.e., brought about by a God who can, in real terms, himself "*counter the facticity of the fall*" (SW XI, 556/PRP, 131). Providence is the evolutionary form of "the force which appeared in the earlier stages as destiny and nature" (i.e., stages one and two of history). Providence will only arrive *at the end* of the long "natural" stage of history, in which we currently find ourselves. In this "nature" period, "freedom and wholly unbridled choice" are compelled "to subserve a *natural plan,* and thus gradually importing into history at least a mechanical conformity to law" (SW III, 604/STI, 212). It is here that we see the pivotal role of necessity in Schelling's conception of history. Locating the beginning of this 'natural period 'in the time of Rome's expansion, Schelling suggests that from this point onwards, nations come together and follow a course of events that can be described as "natural consequences" that are

[187] The universal constitution allows states to stop behaving towards one another as if in a "state of nature." This is because freedom "plays its boldest and least inhibited game in this mutual relation between states." SW III, 587/STI, 198.

part of a "natural plan" (SW III, 604/STI, 212).[188] Its fate is, *through necessity*, to produce a "general comity of nations and the universal state"(SW III, 605/STI, 212).

In the final stage of history, it si revealed that "what seemed to be simply the work of destiny or nature was already the beginning of a providence imperfectly revealing itself" (SW III, 604-5/STI, 212). The stage of providence thus retrospectively reflects the teleology that was always present in the whole. Although Schelling claims we will not know when this period will begin, he implies that it will happen in the future on earth. As the unification of the necessity of nature with the subjectivity of human action, at this moment of providence, "God also will then *exist*" (SW III, 604-60/STI, 212).

The state and history are the function of processes which have an unconscious, objective, structural role in the production of our subjective experience, which, on the early Schelling's account, is destined in history to eventually unite with the objective in providence. The state, or second nature, is the objective order that stands between first nature and the unfolding of history.[189]

By claiming in the *System* that all of our practical activity, whether we know it or not, serves to build an objectively structured and coordinated kingdom of ends, it could be said that Schelling subordinates contingency to necessity. That which is contingent in fact brings about a higher, unified purpose, even if unbeknownst to us as we live our daily lives. Therefore, the type of unity that is brought about in a political sense is still one conditioned by the necessity Schelling sees running throughout history. This forecloses precisely the type of directly willed, free, voluntary unity that the late Schelling sees as characteristic of a genuinely moral community. Schelling's political philosophy in 1800 therefore affirms, contrary to Schelling in 1810 and after, that reason, through the state and history, can unify a political community. This faith in reason only strengthens in his Identity Philosophy period. But by 1810, "the existence of free beings" cannot be unified by rational or exclusively political means (SW VII, 462/SS, 227). Therefore, the age of providence is deferred and the rational teleology of history left behind, as "the true *politeia* exists only in heaven" (SW VII, 462/SS, 227).

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[188] Schelling's view of the role of necessity in the natural period of history is so strong that he claims that "even the fall of the Roman Empire has neither a tragic nor a moral aspect, being a necessary outcome of nature's laws, and indeed a mere tribute that was paid over to nature." SW III, 405/STI, 212.

[189] As the "broadest," objective theme of practical philosophy, history is "a topic that, in a system of idealism, requires to be deduced transcendentally no less than does the objective of first order, namely nature." SW III, 333/STI, 4.

In summary, although the *System* indicates the importance of the state as (a) founded on the importance of freedom and (b) as a necessary, naturalized, objective condition for the development of self-consciousness, and from that point, individuality, Schelling's justification of an involuntary community coordinated by necessity marks a turning point away from the trajectory taken by his middle and late philosophy. Ultimately, despite its concern for the significance of the finite and the unconscious, the *System* pursues a line of development which seeks to eradicate the root of all contingency in favour of an underlying necessity. The contingency of the finite in the *System* is thus a relative contingency, not the contingency of rational philosophy itself (or transcendental philosophy), as in Schelling's later work. As a *weak* notion of contingency, the contingency of being in *System* is a mere medium of the effectuation of necessity. Schelling therefore can be read as subordinating contingency to necessity, and arguing, as Hegel will even more persuasively in a few years, for the necessity of contingency. What appears contingent is in fact necessary for a pre-determined outcome in history.

Nevertheless, it should be conceded that there is some degree of deep contingency in the *System*. Free activity, as noted above, is at the root of *being itself.* The full development of self-consciousness is also contingent upon two free acts. Influenced by Spinoza, the free, blind activity of unconscious production undergirds nature's products, or conscious activity. However, in the end, the transcendental system itself is treated by Schelling as a foundational philosophy and its goal becomes to unify freedom and necessity, subjectivity and objectivity, at the end of history.

By contrast, in the Freedom Essay in 1809, everything that exists is said to be contingent upon a dark ground. At this point, the path to the providential end of history is reconfigured to *include* the free, directly willed activity of those working to bring it about. God is no longer the Absolute, or the immanent, collective, rational realization of the human community, but a living, personal God, who is free. With this new notion of God, and introduction of freedom as the capacity to choose good or evil, the roles of individuals and God in the undetermined course of history are redefined. Anything at all, including that which is irredeemably irrational, could happen. In creation, the free God wills free beings to exist. In their freedom, they do things God does not intend and *will* evil. Therefore, in contrast to the early Schelling, the middle Schelling in the *Stuttgart Seminars* in 1810 will echo the very early 1796 "Oldest System-Program of German Idealism" (in which Schelling almost certainly had a hand) by reaffirming its thesis that

the state produces only a precarious "material unity," in contrast to a higher unity willed by the individual persons that enter into it (SW VII, 461/SS, 227). At this later point, Schelling holds that any unity forced upon human beings through a natural structure external to their individual, conscious will is not a spiritual unity. This relativizes the state as a temporary but necessary structure, upholding our exercise of freedom so long as we have not yet achieved this higher unity. This later thesis opens new, potential considerations for how the state is contingent, e.g., upon power relations and the experience of history in a given time.

Schelling's pre- and post-1809 approaches to history, and thereby to the goal of any political philosophy, are differentiated on the question of contingency and necessity. Politically, the *System*'s goal is to integrate all finite contingency into an objective teleology of history. Since history in the *System* is described as the "unity of freedom and necessity" (SW III, 594/STI, 203) in which we progressively realize the "rule of law" (SW III, 592/STI, 202), the unification of the human community is postulated as advancing teleologically within the confines of the law, not beyond it. In this depiction of history, religion is simply the description of the "system of providence" in which reflection is "elevated to that absolute which is the common ground of the harmony between freedom and intelligence" (SW III, 601/STI, 209). Schelling officially leaves this teleological view of the progressive unification of freedom and necessity in history behind in 1809, at which time he officially pronounces an eschatological theory of politics and history in the 1810 *Stuttgart Seminars.* In the latter, God is also no longer within the bounds of "rational religion," but "outside of reason" (SW XI, 568-569/PRP, 133). Until Schelling accepts the idea that there is a fundamental contingency of reason, and thereby of history, the 'voluntary community 'of the future, even as a concept, is not present in his work. Instances of voluntary community are present only though relationships that are *willed* by individuals. Its prerequisite is that individuals have the freedom to rise above what is determining them and to choose to enter into a relation of supportive love with others. However, such relations are therefore precarious and cannot be secured by any means of reason, whether objective structures or coordinated coercion. The logical conclusion is that the unity of the *entire* human community will always be precariously unified until the true end of history, which for the late Schelling is signified by the return of the Son and the advent of the *eschaton,* in which the world is unified with the Father. Nevertheless, the genuinely just, freely willed community on earth is still, on Schelling's account, a worthy end for our striving.

Moreover, the question of contingency in this eschatological philosophy—which sees justice and resolution of the global human community as deferred to a different epoch in history (i.e., one that is *not* brought about as a linear, rational culmination of that which came before it)—is linked to Schelling's reconceptualizing of freedom and evil. Without a doctrine of evil, the *System* does not offer the existential avenues for moral philosophy and the anarchic basis of the contingency of systematic, rational philosophy that we find in the Freedom Essay. Rather, if there are any remnants of the unconscious ground of subjective activity throughout the progression of the *System*, in the end they should be absorbed into the unity of contingency and necessity. Schelling is clear about his intentions in the *System not* to produce "a moral philosophy of any kind, but rather a transcendental deduction of the thinkability and explicability of moral concepts as such" (SW III, 532/STI, 155).[190] Transcendental philosophy deals with morality only "at the highest level of generality," rather than in relation to individuals, and their contextualized choices for good or for evil. This can explain why the *System*'s concept of the state is so useful for the future political philosophy, yet it simultaneously offers little in the way of moral philosophy.

[190] Schelling, *System*, 155.

Chapter 3: The Romantic Roots of Schelling's Voluntary Community

Taking a chronological step back to the years before the *System*, this chapter continues the work of the previous chapter to localize the roots of Schelling's post-1809 political philosophy in his very early works. However, we will now shift our focus away from Schelling's early philosophy of the state and towards his romantic-inspired, voluntary community. The voluntary community is an ideal, united, moral community of free equals formed through their moral action. Descriptions of this type of reconciled community of the future, distinguished from a state-based 'involuntary' or 'unchosen' unity dependent on the coercion of state law and grounded in a strong concept of the individual will, are ubiquitous in German romantic thought. However, the romantics disagreed on whether or not the voluntary community would be established through reason, aesthetic sensibility, religion, or a combination thereof.

In this chapter, focusing on the concept of the voluntary community—or a freely consented political community that transcends the state—I interpret the romantic elements of the young Schelling's political writings by highlighting its resonances with Rousseau and Schiller in particular. After examining how Schelling shares with the latter two a reverence for the freedom of the human being to consent to her own participation in a moral community, I also expose that Schelling finds a home in the pessimistic turn of German romanticism, as he gradually moves away from having the type of faith, as Rousseau had, in state-based, political solutions to political problems. He shares both Schiller and Friedrich Schlegel's critical impulse towards the status quo of politics in the German states at the time. Furthermore, I expose that the young Schelling's student writings foreshadow later themes in his political philosophy, especially the political and moral significance of the fall of man, albeit without maintaining an unbroken continuity between Schelling's early and late writings.

Paying heed to his romantic heritage, the early Schelling's political philosophy explores multiple possible forms of the voluntary community, founded on a strong concept of the individual who strives for a 'higher' unity with other individuals. Schelling's earliest vague exploration of this concept appears in 1792 and is rooted in the anthropology of the fall of man in Genesis. At this point, he gestures to a future restoration of the lost unity between the initial natural state of the human being and human freedom. After turning his attention to the development of a strong concept of the individual who strives for a unity beyond what finitude

can provide in 1795, Schelling then explores two concrete forms of the voluntary community—Rousseau's concept of the general will and the aesthetic unity of rational beings beyond the state, present in Schiller—which could have indirectly informed his final presentation of the concept, which he calls the Church of St. John in his late Philosophy of Revelation. While neither is ultimately satisfactory for Schelling, whose final voluntary community only achieves full reconciliation with God through an external act of God, both are important for the development of his political philosophy beyond the state.

The question of whether or not a voluntary community is possible is linked to our perception of the *nature* of human beings, which determines how hopeful or pessimistic we can be in our capacity to cooperate to bring about justice. I therefore begin my analysis of the voluntary community in Schelling's Magister thesis, written in 1792, on the topic of the origin of human evil in Genesis, which includes comments on Rousseau. I then move to Schelling's 1795 Fichte-inspired text, "Of the I as Principle of Philosophy," which establishes the individual who strives for a unity beyond itself and beyond the state as the base unit of the voluntary community. From this point, I describe Schelling's brief exploration of the general will as a form of voluntary community in his 1796 Rousseau-inspired aphorisms, "New Deduction of Natural Right" (1796). This form of community is problematic due to its necessary association with the 'people' of a state. Finally, it is in the romantic-inspired, two-page political treatise the "Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism" (1796) that we first see Schelling develop his concept of a free, voluntary, moral community *beyond the state*, which combines reason with aesthetic sense. The authorship of the "Oldest System-Programme" is widely debated. Although it was "written in Hegel's hand, most likely in the early summer months of 1796,"[191] it is frequently attributed to Schelling.[192] I work with it in this chapter as, at minimum, a representation of Schelling's political philosophy at the time.

Merging anthropological analyses of human nature with moral philosophy, Rousseau and Schiller—both of whom influenced the young Schelling and are considered romantics in their own right—emphasize the need for sensibility and the passions to *accompany*, rather than to be

[191] Benjamin Pollock, "Franz Rosenzweig's 'Oldest System-Program,'" *New German Critique*, no. 111 (2010): 59.
[192] Scholars who have attributed the text to Schelling include Franz Rosenzweig, Ludwig Strauß, Georg Lukács and Xavier Tilliette. I discuss this debate in more detail below.

suppressed in, the individual's moral decision-making.[193] Their conviction that reason alone cannot bring about the moral community is shared by the early and late Schelling. However, the combination of reason and sensibility in these approaches to the voluntary community is ultimately not enough. Although Schelling remains committed to the idea of the perfect, reconciled, just voluntary community as a goal for humanity, forerunning the political pessimism of many of the late, German romantics, he ultimately doubts that such an idealistic community can actually be fulfilled by human beings without divine providence. No matter how well we do with the project of establishing a voluntary community on our own, ultimately, "neither moral action nor the contemplative life can reconcile the gap" between flawed human beings and God (SW XI, 567/PRP, 131-2). This insight, including the pessimism and critique of the contemporary social conditions that accompanies it, was shared by many late German romantics, especially the Catholic Tübingen school. Schelling was not only a thinker influenced by romanticism, but also an important mediating figure in German romantic political philosophy.

Between Rousseau and Kant: The Young Schelling's Philosophical Anthropology

Schelling's early iterations of the voluntary community are attempts to answer the following, traditional, Judeo-Christian, anthropological question, which was deeply influential for interpretations of the state of nature and evil in the history of political philosophy[194]: how can humanity achieve a peaceful unity after the fall of man? This begs the additional question of whether such a restoration of unity possible at all. Schelling contends with these questions from the time he writes his Magister thesis on the third book of Genesis in 1792 up to his final work in 1852. It is in the latter that he reiterates his early position on the relation of the fall to morality: "the fall from God, which led to a being-outside-of-God, lies at the base of *all* moral action" (SW XI, 566/PRP, 131). Before proceeding, it should be noted that while Schelling displays an interest in the notion of a voluntary community and the ability of the state to guarantee the freedom of its citizens in his very early texts, that does not mean the late Schelling is a

[193] For the positive role played by passion in Rousseau's politics, see Cheryl Hall, "Reason, Passion, and Politics in Rousseau," *Polity* 34, no. 1 (2001): 69–88.
[194] On the influence of the fall in *Genesis* on political theory, especially Hobbes and his subsequent reception, especially in theological circles, see Helen Thornton, *State of Nature Or Eden?: Thomas Hobbes and His Contemporaries on the Natural Condition of Human Beings* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2005).

Rousseau-enthusiast who is deeply concerned with state politics. While Rousseau appears in Schelling's late works, after 1809, Schelling is more interested in morality and the idea of a church community *beyond* the state than he is with the people *of* a state or the democratic process internal to state politics.

During his youthful years at the *Tübinger Stift* (1790-1795), Schelling was surrounded by the excitement of the French Revolution and the notion of the victory of reason over external authority in the realms of morality and politics. This set the intellectual climate in which he wrote the early texts to which I refer in this chapter. As described by Manfred Frank, the anti-authoritarian attitudes in the spirit of the French Revolution "bubbled [*brodelte*]" not only for the young Schelling, but also for his fellow *Stiftler* Hölderlin and Hegel while studying at the seminary.[195] Schelling even translated the *Marseillaise* into German, which almost got him expelled from school.[196] However, as this time period progressed, Schelling and his companions were not completely convinced that the rational capacities of the individual alone—and any corresponding violent revolution seeking the recognition of the political, liberatory power of these individual capacities—could peacefully unify a people.[197] He, along with many other *Stiftler,* accordingly became increasingly critical of the politics of the French state and killing in the name of revolution.[198] Subsequently, Schelling remains anti-revolution and critical of the status quo throughout his entire political philosophy.

After two years at the *Stift,* Schelling wrote his Magister thesis, *A critical and philosophical explication of the oldest philosopheme of the third book of Genesis concerning the first origin of human evil*.[199] In this work, Schelling explores questions of human nature and

[195] Frank, *Eine Einführung,* 18.
[196] Frank, *Eine Einführung,* 18.
[197] Schelling's eventual disappointment in the Revolution is shared with Schiller and Hölderlin. Their initial youthful excitement about the French Revolution was crushed by their subsequent horror at the terror and violence it inflicted on citizens to achieve its aims. This turned their appraisal of the revolution critical, despite their support for the revolution's championing of the individual's right to realize her freedom through the exercise of her free will in accordance with reason in a secular state.
[198] See Lambier, "The Organismic State against Itself," 132.
[199] Latin title: *Antiquissimi de prima malorum humanorum origine philosophematis Genes. III explicandi tentamen criticum et philosophicum,* henceforth the *Origin of Human Evil.* Schelling independently wrote this thesis at age 17 in preparation to pass his exam (required after two years of study) at the *Stift*. This was unusual at the time, for the exam typically included, in addition to the discussion of the student's two, self-authored S*pecimena,* a discussion of a thesis written by a professor (Robert J. Richards, *The Romantic Conception of Life: Science and Philosophy in the Age of Goethe* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010], 119). Instead, Schelling wrote his own. Schelling in fact wrote two theses and two short essays (*Magisterspecimena*) during his time at the *Tübinger Stift.* As per seminary standards, both works have a theological orientation. The first thesis, the *Origin of Human Evil,* is the most philosophically significant of these for Schelling's political philosophy. Hollerbach recognizes that this thesis

moral evil, locating the origin of the latter in the first act of human freedom, which is the first act of sin (SW I, 24-25).[200] He also exercises skepticism in the text towards the claim that reason could, on its own, completely dominate or subdue sensibility and experience. Following Rousseau, Schelling maintains that the clarity of our concepts and the effectiveness of our application of reason is something that changes and improves with experience over time (SW I, 4-5).[201] Through his interrogation of the limits and historical usage of reason, Schelling already, at this stage, finds himself at the precipice between idealism and romanticism. While idealism grounds the structures of reality in, to use Manfred Frank's words, "the workings of the mind," early romanticism grounds the subject and consciousness in "an inaccessible presupposition."[202] The inability of reason alone to capture the 'inaccessible' origins of human nature helps Schelling to build a case for the importance of mythological explanations.[203] Moreover, Schelling's lifelong quest to articulate such an "inaccessible presupposition" of reason, which he presents in a number of different concepts, is one way that the romantic influence can be seen as uniting his early and late thought.

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already contains "socio-philosophical ideas," which are intertwined with the philosophy of history. Hollerbach, *Der Rechtsgedanken bei Schelling*, 80–85.

[200] After pointing out the significance of the serpent in Genesis regarding temptation and the promise of wisdom, Schelling claims we "should also look at the woman who, as soon as she turns her attention to the snake, sways back and forth, doubts, and is curious about evil itself so to speak, and who finally eats the fruit after weighing the good. This is indeed an excellent picture of the person who is conscious of his freedom and strives to use this freedom in some way, but who nevertheless does not deviate from what the law of the good dictates" that is, unless he "gradually tricked himself in giving up the law of the good" (HKA 85-86/131). For each reference to the *Origin of Human Evil*, I include the standard *Sämmtliche Werke* (SW) reference for the original Latin in-text, along with two corresponding references from the *Historical-Critical Edition* in the footnote (the *Historisch-kritische Ausgabe* [HKA], edited on behalf of the Bavarian Academy of Science, H. M. Baumgartner, W. G. Jacobs, H. Krings, H. Zeltner, eds. [Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1976 ff.]; HKA I, 59-100). The first page number is to the same Latin text that appears in the *Sämmtliche Werke;* the second page number is to the German translation by Reinhold Mokrosch, which follows the Latin *Historisch-kritische Ausgabe*; HKA I, 101-148. English translations mine.

[201] Schelling explains that uneducated and early people are motivated to philosophize by "natural inclination," but that their use of reason "takes place in the dark, because only application and experience bring our powers and also reason more and more to unfold" (HKA I, 64-65/107).

[202] Manfred Frank, "Schelling's Late Return to Kant: On the Difference between Absolute Idealism and Philosophical Romanticism," in *6/2008 Romantik / Romanticism*, in: *Internationales Jahrbuch Des Deutschen Idealismus / International Yearbook of German Idealism*, ed. Jürgen Stolzenberg, Karl Ameriks, and Fred Rush (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 26.

[203] The *Origin of Human Evil* together with Schelling's 1793 essay "On Myths, Historical Legends, and Philosophemes of the Oldest World" (written one year after the former) prefigure not only the theological origins of freedom defined as the capacity to choose between good and evil, but also the explanatory power of myth. Through myth, we can present and understand the origins of radical evil. This significance of myths is further explained in "On Myths," where Schelling notes the explanatory and heuristic value of myth. This text and the aforementioned thesis were influenced by Johann Gottfried Herder, specifically his views of mythology and genesis in the works *Aelteste Urkunde des Menschengeschlechts* and *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*.

Myths concerning the origin of moral freedom, especially the choice between good and evil, did not go unnoticed by Schelling as significant in the history of political thought, particularly in state of nature theory. In his later work, he returns to an analysis of the status of freedom and the person in the state of nature, as grounded in Genesis and interpreted through political theory—specifically with a critical appraisal of Hobbes.[204] Myths need not be antithetical or opposed to reason. That being said, we must exercise vigilance towards the misuse of myths to subvert reason.[205] At no point does Schelling give up on reason as the best possible resource we have to improve our moral condition. But he also almost always maintains that such improvement cannot be accomplished by reason alone. For example, in the "Oldest System-Programme," he claims the "new mythology of *reason*" towards which we should strive would make "ideas aesthetic" and "philosophers sensuous."[206]

The anthropology of the fall of man in the *Origin of Human Evil* forms the basis for Schelling's early political philosophy. The post-fall corruption of the human condition engenders the need for governance and laws, as humans have lost their unity with the divine and strive—and constantly fail—to restore it. Once Eve, out of curiosity (an innate trait of human beings), eats from the tree of knowledge, the peaceful, pre-moral condition of happiness is lost as human beings acquire moral freedom (SW I, 20-21).[207] This moral freedom means the human being constantly faces moral dilemmas between good and evil, as she is now distanced from God (SW I, 13).[208] Revealing his important political heritage, Schelling also cites Rousseau's *Second*

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[204] Schelling was familiar with Hobbes' and Rousseau's respective uses of state of nature to describe a theoretical condition that could have prefigured the existence of the state. He critically examines the nature of the human being in a fictional state of nature with specific reference to Hobbes in the last lectures of *the Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy* (SW XI, 536-537/PRP, 110-11.

[205] The narratives that myths offer to explain the nature of the human condition can be deployed to appeal to emotion and drives. Schelling's later, critical treatment of myths in his Philosophy of Revelation thus has analytical potential for understanding and critiquing nationalism and populism in our current time, as ideological myths about how and who we are "come to be naturalized and accepted as 'timeless truths'" Sean O'Neill, "Myth," in *Oxford Bibliographies: Anthropology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018). See also McGrath, "Populism and the Late Schelling." McGrath explains that from a Schelling-informed perspective, "in a situation determined by revelation, such as the modern global situation, myth can only be ideology in the strongest sense of the word." Populist ideologies or myths are to be criticized for "obstructing the needed transformation our secular society must undergo if it is to pass through the current crisis" (McGrath, "Populism in and the Late Schelling," 3). For an alternative interpretation of Schelling as a thinker who could in fact be seen as endorsing a form of populism promoting philosophy through the concept of sympathy, particularly in reference to *Clara*, see Daniel Whistler, "Schelling's Politics of Sympathy: Reflections on Clara and Related Texts," *International Yearbook of German Idealism,* 15, ed. Dina Emundts and Sally Sedgwick (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 245-268.

[206] "The 'Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism,'" *European Journal of Philosophy* 3, no. 2 (1995): 200.

[207] HKA I, 85-86/131.

[208] HKA I, 78/122.

Discourse (1755) to explain this exit of humanity from the unified, blissful state of affairs, which sets the ground for the unity we seek to morally restore after the fall, along with the role of reason therein. Schelling explains that the prophies of the gods describe the golden age as one without the sadness or "evil" associated with death, which only comes once we have reason (SW I, 29-30).[209] Although humans acquire, through the fall, a new scope of individual freedom and eventually the capability for rational, independent decision making, we also suffer as we constantly battle between reason and inclination while attempting to execute individual freedom and find happiness with others in our imperfect condition.

Reason both helps with and exacerbates the problem. Drawing directly on Rousseau, Schelling maintains that knowledge—and more specifically, reason—actually *contributes* to the challenges faced by the corrupt human being in his emergence from the natural state. He goes so far as to call reason the "leader" of the "banishment of people from the golden age" (SW I, 25).[210] It is only with the "use of reason that the expectation of the future and with it death arose in man" (SW I, 30).[211] Rousseau explains this point in the following manner, to which Schelling refers: "no animal can know what it is to die; the knowledge of death and its terrors being one of the first acquisitions made by man in departing from an animal state."[212] As we become aware, through our understanding, of the threats we face and the need for self-preservation, we grow distrustful of others and selfish. Furthermore, as we move, to use Kant's expression, "from the guardianship of nature into the state of freedom,"[213] our acquisition of free will and reason bring

[209] HKA I, 90-91/136. Schelling's reference here is to Hesiod's *Works and Days* as presented by Christian Gottlob Heyne in an essay entitled "De Theogonia ab Hesiodo condita," in *Commentationes Societatis Regiae Scientiarvm Gottingensis* 114, 1779. Cf. Schelling's reference to the golden age as a "time of blessed indecision" in the Freedom Essay (SW VII, 378/PI 45).
[210] HKA I, 86/131.
[211] HKA I, 91/137.
[212] In the *Second Discourse* (1755), Rousseau gives an account of the role of language and reason in the descent of the natural human being into the state of morality. As his "circumstances" change, he progressively acquires understanding. Understanding, for Rousseau, does not stand in opposition to the passions, but is informed, and even *improved*, by them (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Discourse on Inequality," in *The Major Political Writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau: The Two Discourses & The Social Contract*, ed. and trans. John T. Scott (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), 84). Furthermore, it is only once the human being has reason that he also acquires a notion of pride or self-respect (*amour propre*). "It is reason that engenders pride, and reflection that fortifies it" (Rousseau, "Discourse on Inequality," 84). While this may seem to be a good thing, it in fact requires the separation from nature, isolation and selfishness. Rousseau therefore says that reason "turns man back upon himself" by "separat[ing] him from everything that bothers and afflicts him" (Rousseau, "Discourse on Inequality," 84).
[213] Immanuel Kant, "Conjectural Beginnings of Human History," in *Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History*, trans. David L. Colclasure (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), 29. Schelling refers to this text in the *Origin of Human Evil* in the same citation in which he references Rousseau.

with them the possibilities of transgression or "vice."[214] However, at the same time, reason has, of course, advantages. Reason is that which "drives out sensory perceptions and keeps in mind greater things and a higher dignity that could be achieved with its help" (SW I, 25).[215] But how can flawed, sensible beings mutually exercise their freedom and pursue happiness in such a corrupt state of affairs?

The first answer is to keep improving our use of reason while learning from experience. Although knowledge, and more specifically, reason, contributes to the veering of human beings from their peaceful, simple, natural condition, reason is still the best resource humans have, from the point of view of a fallen condition, to achieve a better state of affairs. Therefore, despite the evils committed in the progressive use of reason by humanity, according to Schelling in the *Origin of Human Evil*, society should still improve itself on the basis of reason as it aims towards a higher unification (SW I, 36).[216] This early position of Schelling on reason prefigures his later

[214] Kant, "Conjectural Beginnings of Human History," 29. Kant describes this inauguration of vices that come with reason as follows: "Before reason had awoken, there was neither command nor prohibition and hence no transgression. But as reason began to stir, however weakly, and came into coexistence with animal nature in all its strength, ills arose, and what is worse, with the cultivation of reason vices arose which were completely foreign to the state of ignorance and hence to the state of innocence" (Kant, "Conjectural Beginnings of Human History," 29).
[215] HKA I, 86/131. Leonardo V. Distasto offers a helpful summary of Schelling's depiction of the journey towards the "conciliation of reason and sensibility" in the form of a "higher unity" after the fall. "According to Schelling man works in order to substitute in himself the corrupted *spontaneitas* of the senses with the dominion of reason, a faculty that repeats the detachment consciously, attempting to overcome it and bring back man, at least ideally, to the horizon of the virtues of the primeval golden age." Leonardo V. Distaso, *The Paradox of Existence: Philosophy and Aesthetics in the Young Schelling* [Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2004], 13-14.
[216] HKA I, 97-98/145-146. Schelling shows how the genesis of the use of rational judgment has involved evil and wickedness in the progression towards a rational society. He writes that the "ability to make judgments is initially only perceived between individuals (from this grow the individual morals, the arduous compulsion to social interaction, and then waste, resentment and fraud); then between the individual and the whole society (this resulted for the first time in a stable society based on the authority of one or more individuals, the wisdom of drafting laws, and the art of ruling, which ultimately led to despotism and angry tyranny of people over people); and finally between individual societies (from which come peacekeeping and the art of war, jealousy among one another, and the union in common life)." Despite such wickedness, Schelling says, we have become "certain and confident that we can do what we want" and thus compelled to "search for a weakening of the wickedness in ourselves and to…search for the way to an even higher and more blissful perfection." The "malice" described in the rational path above "has freed us from natural brutality, it has suppressed the untamed instinct of the senses, and it directs the spirit, which has not gotten better, but is nevertheless more and more oriented towards humanity, towards the supreme autocracy of reason. So after these times more pleasant and happier days will shine for us; we see the highest goals of the human race before our eyes, to which everything human and everything that the individual has done and endured for the human race is directed" (SW I, 36-37; HKA 96-98/144-146). Schelling proceeds to describe how humanity will come to build a whole society and education on reason, "in which the most holy laws of mankind, based on laws of reason, are recognized" (SW I, 38; HKA 98/146).

thesis that the understanding alone can never completely eradicate evil, and nevertheless we must continue to rely on reason to perform "good and virtuous actions" (SW VII, 371).[217]

The striving to restore the lost unity of the golden age, lost as the human being acquired freedom and reason, is the first indication of Schelling's notion of the voluntary community. It is a community grounded in a specific account of the human condition and envisages the historical use of reason to unify all of humanity in the future. However, the failure of reason itself to preclude the real possibility to make a moral choice for evil, as described in the Freedom Essay, means that we never have any security in our own commitment to exercising our individual freedom in favour of the good, so long as we have not yet achieved the voluntary community. The second answer to the question above is thus that we must establish the temporary existence of an external structure to guarantee our individual freedom, namely, the state. While Schelling does not explore the need for a state as such in the *Origin of Human Evil,* this very early presentation of the moral condition after the fall and humanity's striving to restore a lost unity bolsters his eventual case in support of the state as a necessary, provisional structure to guarantee the freedom of all. When left to their own devices, human beings behave selfishly—not because of how we were born, but because of the radical capacity for free choice acquired after the fall and with the advent of reason. Despite this, at the same time, human beings desire "a higher unity of ideal and reality" after the fall.[218] It is Rousseau and Schelling's hope that human beings will overcome their selfishness and achieve this type of unified community in the future.

Rousseau's anthropology is crucial for Schelling's early distinction between the involuntary and voluntary community. In the same footnote in on the *Origin of Evil* in which Schelling references Rousseau and the role of knowledge in the transition out of an "animal" state, he also references Kant's interpretation of Rousseau's distinction between the "natural" (physical) and "moral" (cultural) species.[219] In his analysis of Rousseau's initial interpretation of the state of nature and the transition to society and the state of reason, Kant presents a case for the compatibility of Rousseau's ideas of community in "On the Influence of the Sciences" and the *A Discourse on Inequality,* on the one hand, and *Emile* and the *Social Contract,* on the other. In the former, Kant sees Rousseau as showing the "inevitable conflict of culture with the nature

[217] "The weakness or ineffectualness of the principle of understanding can indeed be a ground for the lack of good and virtuous actions, yet it cannot be a ground of positively evil ones and those adverse to virtue" (SW VI, 371/PI, 39). "The ground of evil must lie … in that which is most positive in what nature contains." SW VI, 368/PI, 37.
[218] Distaso, *The Paradox of Existence*, 12.
[219] Kant here also references Rousseau's *Second Discourse.*

of the human race as a *physical* species in which every individual is meant to achieve entirely his vocation."[220] This acknowledgement of the existence of natural hierarchy and natural differences between humans after the fall is also present in Schelling's late political philosophy, and by no means precludes the possibility for humanity to rise above these differences in the creation of a moral community (SW XI, 529-530).[221] The focus in these early Rousseau texts on "vocation" and the corresponding "progress toward perfection"[222] could only produce a type of involuntary community. We may recognize the form of such a vocation-oriented state of 'necessary unity' from Schelling's thesis of the organic state as presented in Chapter 1. However, in the latter two texts, the "voluntary" notion of the establishment of social relations in Rousseau and the emphasis on equality emerges. Rousseau comes to see the education and methods of his early work as *informative* for human beings to create their own voluntary communities. These communities, Rousseau shares with Schelling, are the "work of the human being," as they execute moral activity in an attempt to rise above the corrupt state of natural inequality and hierarchical relations which characterize their state of affairs after the fall.[223]

Rousseau is consequently an important historical source for reconstructing Schelling's early philosophical anthropology which underlines his future distinction between an involuntary (natural, state-based) community and voluntary (freely consented) community. Voluntary communities are only possible for human beings who have departed from their 'natural' state, whether conceived of as blissful or violent, and now live in a political state. From a theological perspective, this means that the fall of man is the condition for the formation of a voluntary community. From a political perspective, Schelling takes over Rousseau's view that we have fallen from a pure state into a corrupt one, and need to work our way out of it first through juridical means, i.e., the creation of a state.[224] However, the moral bond that humans create must transcend that which the state alone can provide. Accordingly, Thomas E. Carbonneau, for example, notes that Rousseau identified a "gap between a transcendent morality and the positive

[220] Kant, "Conjectural Beginnings of Human History," 30.
[221] Compare the following: "It is futile to try to eradicate an equality that, instead of being made by humans, comes from an order that reaches beyond this world … Community requires beings that are different from each other according to the idea, and thus in accord to their inner worth. There can be no type of order of possible or real things, in which one does not stand apart from the other." SW XI, 530/PRP, 105-106.
[222] Kant, "Conjectural Beginnings of Human History," 29.
[223] Kant, "Conjectural Beginnings of Human History," 29.
[224] See John T. Scott, "The Theodicy of the Second Discourse: The 'Pure State of Nature' and Rousseau's Political Thought," *The American Political Science Review* 86, no. 3 (1992): 696–711.

legal order," and thus "aimed at conceiving a State in which man could achieve his sublimation and deploy his full moral being."[225] While, as we will see, Rousseau remains more committed to the preservation of the state in relation to the voluntary community than Schelling, he shares with the latter a hope in the ultimate fulfilment of a collective morality by disparate individuals that is not enforced by the state. Nevertheless, notion of the voluntary community, solidified by the social pact and the general will, remains for Rousseau as something to be exercised by *a people of a state.* It is thus neither global nor cosmopolitan.[226]

The influence of Rousseau on Schelling's early analysis of the fall of man helps us to see the full scope of the relevance of the fall for Schelling's *political* philosophy on three fronts. Firstly, according to Rousseau and the young Schelling, in their natural condition before the fall, human beings were in a happy, animal-like, state. Although Rousseau maintained a critical relationship to the idea of original sin in Genesis, his positive view of the nature of human beings in their natural state is not at odds with the doctrine of the fall of man.[227] Secondly, for Rousseau and Schelling, freedom is foundational for politics. Notably, Rousseau situates freedom at the heart of politics. Rousseau maintains that all human beings were born free. He specifies in the "Social Contract" (1762) that the natural state of human beings is one of natural freedom. Natural freedom is an unlimited freedom to everything. "Man," Rousseau famously writes, "was born free and everywhere he is in chains."[228] The radical freedom of the natural condition means "no man has a natural authority over his fellow."[229] Thirdly, for Rousseau and Schelling, reason alone is not enough to redeem us. Pre-reflective life is morally superior in a way, but once reason

[225] Thomas E Carbonneau, "The Implicit Teaching Of Utopian Speculations: Rousseau's Contribution To The Natural Law Tradition," *University of Puget Sound Law Review* 123 (1979): 156. Carbonneau reminds us that "political coercion" can only be legitimated for Rousseau if it entails "restrictions which established equality among men and promoted their freedom to conform to their moral birthright and destiny" (Carbonneau, 156). For more on Rousseau's view of the perfectability of the human being in relationship to the necessity of the state, see William T. Bluhm, "Freedom in 'The Social Contract': Rousseau's 'Legitimate Chains,'" *Polity* 16, no. 3 (1984): 359–83.
[226]By analysing Rousseau's *Confessions*, 'Second Discourse', and the *Social Contract,* Carbonneau identifies a utopianism in Rousseau's view of the social contract, in a moment when "a fully balanced and perfectly transparent harmony instills itself between the personal individuality of each man and the collective personality of the political order. But this "moment of utopian felicity cannot be integrated into History." Carbonneau, 157.
[227] See Jeremiah L. Alberg, "Rousseau and the Original Sin," *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia* 57, no. 4 (2001): 773–90. Alberg notes that while Rousseau doubted the effectiveness of the story of *Genesis* to fully explain the negative, antagonistic state in which human beings find themselves, he still sees a "fatal accident" as having been responsible for the fall of man (788-790; See also Rousseau, "Discourse on Inequality," 97. Rousseau is at odds with the portrayal of the nature of the human being in the state of nature in *Genesis* insofar as language is said to precede the fall of man. Language rather emerges in the downfall of the human species, not before it (Alberg, "Rousseau and the Original Sin," 789-790).
[228] Rousseau, "The Social Contract," 45.
[229] Rousseau, "The Social Contract," 49.

enters the equation, there is no going back. We can only move forwards, and we need to use reason prudently and responsibly in a collective context in order to do so.

The equality of the original condition of human being informs Rousseau's claim, repeated by Schelling, that human beings should, in their political configurations, respect the individual will of each person equally. This premise (together with Rousseau's claim that no one has a claim to right over another on the basis of strength) leads Rousseau to assert that authority can only be legitimized through "agreed convention,"[230] not through any "obedience" which would demand the renunciation of freedom.[231] In the context of such an "agreed convention," the *individua*l's free will must be preserved and respected. Accordingly, the protection of individual freedom is at the basis for the consensual development of state law and political decisions. Each will must be free to enter into a social pact with another, which entrance is the foundation of their consenting to the future decisions of the general will. The general will is the single will of the people of a state, which always decides in their collective interest.[232] This is, as I show below, one possible candidate for a proto-voluntary community.

The Concept of the Voluntary Community

Schelling distinguishes the voluntary community, in which individuals exercise their personal virtues and decisively relate to one another, from the involuntary community, which he associates with the state (SW XI, 541/PRP, 114). After the fall, human beings must find a way to mutually exercise their individual wills in the community. Insofar as the state secures the minimum condition for the realization of positive freedom in this conflictual and uncertain state of affairs, it bonds individuals together out of necessity, and not by choice. It is in this sense that the state forms an involuntary community. In this forced community, the freedom of each is necessarily limited by the state, which supports the possible realization of the freedom of all. One could therefore say that the voluntary community is based on a positive notion of freedom, whereas the involuntary community, or the state, based on a negative notion. The model of necessity according to which Schelling describes the structure of the state—e.g., mechanical,

[230] Rousseau, "The Social Contract," 50.
[231] Rousseau, "The Social Contract," 50.
[232] Rousseau, "The Social Contract," 54–56.

organic, or formal necessity—changes throughout Schelling's work. I discuss Schelling's evolving models according to different concepts of necessity in the conclusion to this dissertation.

As an involuntary community, the state cannot, to use the late Schelling's terms, "prescribe" personal, social "virtues" (SW XI, 541/PRP, 114). Furthermore, the state itself does not forge personal connections—in Schelling's words, "inner unity"—between individuals or determine what is morally good for them (SW VII, 464/SS, 228). In a word, the voluntary community is a community decided for be individuals, and it therefore transcends that which unites human beings by necessity. It need not be.[233] The freely willed unity, characteristic of a voluntary community, seeks to restore equality and establish justice for all. Such a community, generally speaking, is united through the genuine consent and/or the moral action willed by each individual person rather than the force of an external authority (whether considered in terms of a person, monarchy, or the law of the state). However, it finds its bases in the involuntary community. More specifically, following Rousseau, the condition of the voluntary community in the natural right of each *individual* to freedom, which is secured by the state.[234]

Informing the young Schelling's experimental prototypes of the voluntary community are Kant, Rousseau and Schiller, all of whom highlight the particular significance of *each individual will* in the formation of the voluntary community. The individual's capacity to exercise her will

[233] The free decision at the basis of the bonds of the voluntary community leads Schelling to ultimately determine that a community forged through the moral law would be inadequate for personal, virtuous beings (SW XI, 554/PRP, 122). I discuss this in detail in Chapter 4. Schiller is, in fact, a key figure mediating Schelling's opposition to a free community based on the exercise of reason. Kant's rationalist approach to morality prompted Schiller to critically examine the empirical and unregulated elements involved in the exercise of free will. Schiller, returning to Rousseau after Kant, emphasizes that the individual's capacity to exercise her own reason had to be considered alongside sentiment and the reality of experience.

[234] My use of the term natural *right* here is not to suggest that Rousseau is a thinker of natural law. While it is possible to think of him as a thinker of natural law, this is not an unproblematic assertion, for Rousseau was critical of the natural law theory of his time (especially as espoused by Grotius and Pufendorf). Furthermore, as Michaela Rehm indicates, those who focus on the "rationalist view of natural law" often "claim that Rousseau's thinking is so strongly characterized by an emphasis on the limits of rationality that such a sceptic could hardly be counted among the party of natural law philosophers" (Michaela Rehm, "Obligation in Rousseau: Making Natural Law History?," *Jahrbuch für Recht und Ethik / Annual Review of Law and Ethics* 20 (2012): 139–54, 139). However, Rehm shows that depending on how broad our interpretation is of natural laws, values and norms (beyond, for example, laws offered by reason characterized by necessity), one can read Rousseau as a thinker of natural law (or of "pre-political moral principles" despite the aforementioned challenges (Rehm, 140). The possibility to consent to the social contract—which is the necessary condition of the general will—is grounded in a natural right of every human being to freedom, but requires also that we rise above the freedom we have in nature. For more on the natural right to freedom in Schelling's "New Deduction," see Sandkühler, *Freiheit und Wirklichkeit*, 49-73 and Klaus von Beyme, *Geschichte der politischen Theorien in Deutschland 1300-2000* (Berlin: Springer, 2009), 270.

in accordance with reason is precisely what makes the voluntary community possible.[235] This involves the exercise of reason in line with the development of one's moral character. Through reason, we can control our impulses in accordance with laws which treat all people together as ends in themselves. However, for Schelling, following Schiller, reason cannot simply ignore or suppress the role of drives, sensibility, emotion, and evil in our moral decision making.[236] The voluntary community is therefore always simultaneously rational and material, including both form and sensibility. In response to the challenges posed by Kant's moral philosophy, Schiller adds to his emphasis on sensibility the concept of play (i.e., free action that is neither completely uncoordinated, nor irreducible to self-discipline and constraint), which he proposes we consider together with Kant's account of the individual's execution of the categorical imperative. In so doing, the roles of desire, drives and the material aspects of the human experience are taken into account in the individual's motivation to carry out the moral law.[237] This empirical side of the moral community is acknowledged in the "Oldest System-Programme," and recurs in the late Schelling's analysis of the voluntary community as the material substrate for God's revelation.

While Schelling never directly engaged Schiller on the political as such, his familiarity with Schiller's ideas likely had an indirect influence on his negative appraisal of the political status quo and proposal of a romantic solution. When compared with Schiller on the political, the young Schelling's romanticism in his political philosophy shines through.

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[235] Cf. Rousseau's claim that in the civil state, in which one consents to the general will, the human being "who had previously thought of nothing but himself, is compelled to act on other principles, and to consult his *reason* before he attends to his inclinations" (emphasis mine, Rousseau, "The Social Contract," 59). Kant similarly states, "The concept of every rational being as one who must regard himself as giving universal law through all the maxims of his will…leads to a very fruitful concept dependent upon it, namely that *of a kingdom of ends.*" Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 41.

[236] Schiller opens the *Aesthetic Letters* with a quote from Rousseau to underline that sentiment always accompanies reason in our actions: "Si c'est la raison qui fait l'homme, c'est le sentiment qui le conduit." Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, trans. Reginald Snell (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2004), 21.

[237] Christoph Binkelmann compares the indifference of Schiller's "play drive" (*Spieltrieb*) towards materiality and ideality (and correspondingly towards the form drive and the sensual drive) to Schelling's concept of total indifference. At once receptive and productive, play produces the "negation [*Aufhebung*] of the two necessities that arise from the sensual drive (*Formtrieb*) and the form drive (*Spieltrieb*)." Christoph Binkelmann, "Wechselwirkung im Spieltrieb. Schillers Konfliktuöser Bezug auf Fichte," in *Friedrich Schiller: Über die Ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in eine Reihe von Briefen* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 148. "The sensual drive is just as 'indifferent' to whether the human being will become morally perfect through his striving for happiness as the form drive is to whether or not the perfect human being is happy (*glückselig*)" (Binkelmann, "Welchselwirkung Im Spieltrieb," 148). Play is indifferent to both drives, while at the same time, giving them equal validity. This indifference is, notes Binkelmann, precisely what allows play to actually fulfill both drives at the same time. On Binkelmann's account, the freedom to play could even be even be likened to the "bliss" (*Seligkeit*) of the ancient Greek gods in Olympus, who, "free of the seriousness, work of life, and the struggle for existence," are indifferent towards—and therefore assign equal worth to—"grace and dignity [*Anmut und Würde*], inclination and respect." Binkelmann, "Welchselwirkung Im Spieltrieb," 148.

Starting from the basis of the importance of the individual will to self-determine through reason in reference to others, all three thinkers in Schelling's early political lineage develop their own respective notions of the voluntary community: Rousseau's form of the voluntary community is the general will created through the social pact, Kant's comparable concept is the kingdom of ends, and Schiller's is a moral society united through aesthetics. These concepts all designate a non-coerced unity of individuals brought about by their own moral activity.[238] They are possible because each human being has an equal chance to exercise her own individual *will* without violating or suppressing the individual freedom of anyone else. As a result, all three agree that individuals should simultaneously will the good of the community when also willing on behalf of themselves. Otherwise, they would be irrationally willing against the broadest possible scope of individual freedom for everyone, which, if universalized, would mean they are also willing against the scope of their own freedom.[239] It is therefore personally advantageous and responsible to will the freedom of all. This was an important thesis of Rousseau's the *Social Contract* that was likely picked up on by Schelling.[240]

Despite being influenced by these three candidates for the voluntary community, none of these forms of the moral community are ultimately satisfactory for Schelling. He explores the possibility of the general will as a form of voluntary community in the 1796 "New Deduction of Natural Right" and the idea of a community beyond the state unified by both rationality and aesthetics in the "Oldest System-Programme." Both are undergirded by the striving of the *individual* I to transcend itself to attain unity with a higher principle in the 1795 "Of the I as Principle of Philosophy." The general will is too closely aligned to the people of a nation state, which, Schelling already claims in the "Oldest System-Programme," must be overcome. As he further explores the complex nature of individuality (including unconscious drives and the possibility to choose evil) and further commits to the idea of a transcendent God, the moral community unified by reason and aesthetics also falls short. Only God, in the end for Schelling,

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[238] For an important differentiation between Schelling and Kant's theories of the state in relation to the ethical, see Zöller, "Church and State," 214-215. Unlike Schelling, who maintains a critical relation the existence of the state, the latter of which he associates primarily with theoretical, rather than practical, philosophy, Kant sees the state as "a moral institution based on unconditionally valid practical (moral) principles" (Zöller, 214).

[239] "Why is the happiness of each the constant wish of all, unless it is because there is no one who does not apply the word *each* to himself, and is not thinking of himself when he votes for all?" (Rousseau, "The Social Contract," 68).

[240] Compare Rousseau's statement "To say that a man gives himself for nothing is an absurd and incomprehensible statement; such an action is illegitimate and void, simply because anyone who does it is not in his right mind" (Rousseau, "The Social Contract," 50) and Schelling's statement that "free beings…only allow themselves to be compelled so long as they find advantage therein." SW III, 585/STI, 197.

can bring about the highest unification of humanity at the end of history. He thus concludes in 1810 that "the true unity" "cannot lie [in nature] but only in God, nature is exposed to a continual struggle precisely on account of this separation from God" (SW VII, 460/SS, 226). At this point, the "true unity of free Beings" (SW VII, 461/SS,227) serves as an alternative to his earlier view of the involuntary unification of humanity presented in the *System* and the Identity Philosophy. Both of these versions of involuntary unity are driven by necessity and mediated by the state in the objective development of history.

The previous chapter revealed the first key tenet of Schelling's political philosophy to be the state as the prerequisite of the realization of freedom. The second tenet is that individuals should strive to establish a voluntary community beyond all objective necessity, including that of the state. Although such a community remains incomplete so long as humanity is distanced from God, we must continue to work towards achieving the best form of it that we can. For the late Schelling, through our constructive, communal activity, we become the means through which God redeems humanity, completing the unification between himself and humanity through Christ. Despite the teleological, deterministic view of history in the 1800 *System*, its presentation of the state is still compatible with the notion of a voluntary, moral community—a concept which, although present in other works of Schelling, the *System* itself does not provide. The goal of bringing about a voluntary community beyond the state, consented to by each individual, is an alternative pursuit to the political determinism of history Schelling presents in the *System* and the Identity Philosophy.

Schelling's final form of the voluntary community is characterized by the "inner unity" of the "human species." This unity originates in the decisive power of the individual will and is cultivated through religion (SW VII, 464-465/SS, 228-29). The individual will has a decisive power important for the establishment of the voluntary relationships (which Schelling calls relations of love). Each individual can choose either to overcome her own limitations in entering into loving relations with others (thus building the basis of the voluntary community) or to will against such developments, opting instead for self-interest. She can willfully rise above necessity, i.e., that which determines her, and carve out her own path that is not automatically sublated into the linear, objective, progress of history.

This description of Schelling's ultimate form of the voluntary community is supported by a shift in his perspectives on history and religion. History after 1809 is no longer the teleological

realization of an immanent, objective will, but rather the history of divine revelation, in which all relationships of love and unity (whether human relations or divine relations) are radically contingent, chosen relationships. The dependence of this view of history on a transcendent, rather than immanent, God means it is incomplete so long as the final acts of God, which would produce the *eschaton,* have not yet occurred. Furthermore, recall that religion in the *System* describes the systematic path to "providence," through which "reflection [is] elevated to that absolute which is the common ground of the harmony between freedom and intelligence" (SW III, 601/STI, 209). Religion, in that text, served only to unify freedom and thought in the teleological progress towards the end of history. However, in 1809 and after, religion does not simply seek to unite finite human knowledge with objectivity, but must also touch the individual's personal matters of the heart. The Freedom Essay thus proposes a new significance of the "demands … of the heart" and "the most holy feelings, character and moral consciousness" in relation to reason (SW VII, 13/PI, 74-75). This marks the shift towards the positive philosophy (its counterpart, negative philosophy, is idealism, or rational philosophy alone).[241] The personalities of God *and* individuals exceed the boundaries of a rational, teleological philosophy of history. For this reason, the late Schelling argues against "rational religion" in favour of religion with "an active God," i.e., "God [who] acts in history as providence" (SW XI, 568/PRP, 132). This is significant for understanding the eschatological, religious character of Schelling's final descriptions of the voluntary community.

Freedom and the Striving of the Individual in Reference to the General Will

Let us backtrack to the foundational unit of the voluntary community—the individual and her striving for a unity beyond the state. Schelling's conviction that the individual human being strives for something which is above the limits of reason was already present in "Of the I" in 1795. This striving is predicated on a practical dissatisfaction with the limitations of the finite. In this sense, this text has political implications, as it describes how the I seeks to go beyond the coercion it experiences as a finite being and conceptualize the possibility of progressing beyond it—or even, becoming emancipated from it (otherwise, striving would have no sense). The

[241] See McGrath, *The Philosophical Foundations of the Late Schelling,* 39.

concept of striving thus begs consideration of the object or goal towards which one is striving—for the young Schelling, it is typically a unification of the finite ego with the infinite. However, just a few years earlier, the *Origin of Human Evil* demonstrated that this goal could also be interpreted as a reconciliation of human freedom with the divine to restore a new version of the unity that was lost in the fall of man.

This common theme of the striving of the I is present in many of Schelling's early writings. For example, Schelling had, in the "Philosophical Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism," already articulated the vocation of criticism to be "to strive for immutable selfhood, unconditional freedom, unlimited activity," which he summed up in the simple command: "Be!" (SW I, 336/PL, 192). This imperative to strive to be-beyond-being is repeated in the 1796 "New Deduction of Natural Right," where Schelling proclaims, "Be! in the highest sense of the word; cease to be yourself as a phenomenon; endeavor to be a noumenon as such! This is the highest call of all practical philosophy" (SW I, 247/ND, 221).

This command to achieve a noumenal state of being reconciled with the unconditioned Absolute—or later, God—can be seen as underlying Schelling's critique of the scope of what is politically possible within finitude, which is a crucial element of his late eschatological politics. The recognition of these limitations for the late Schelling, once again, originate within the individual. It is only an individual will, according to Schelling, that can strive for that which is beyond the limitations of human experience. The late Schelling, for example, claims that the individual I strives for the recognition of himself, *qua* person, by the divine person of God. It is only the *individual* I, who, of his own free will, articulates, "I want that, which is beyond being" (SW XI, 564/PRP, 130). Such a longing, claims Schelling, cannot be forced or coerced. It is grounded in the desire and drives of individual, human experience.

As previously noted, the endless striving of the I is also heavily thematized in the 1800 *System.* In this text, the empirical I wishes to be eternally at one with the universe, but ends up settling for 'second best,' i.e., striving to "bring forth in succession the universe which it cannot depict by means of an absolute synthesis" (SW III, 491/STI, 123). Finitude and time prevent the unity with the unconditioned. But this failure does not cease the striving itself. In the *System*, the botched attempts of the finite to achieve a unity that it simply cannot, due to its nature, are saved by the objective coordination of history. History moves towards the goal of "the absolute synthesis of all actions" in the form of a unity of freedom with necessity—which, as we have

seen, is Schelling's interpretation of providence in 1800 (SW III, 598/STI, 207). Although Schelling's view of history, and specifically, God's role in history, changes, the impotence of the striving, finite individual vis-à-vis the infinite is a recurring theme.

The pre-1800 Schelling also conceives of the goal of finite, empirical striving differently than later on. Closer to his late philosophy, in the 1795-1796 works, it seems that the endless striving of the I simply cannot attain a state of rest or satisfaction in this world *or* in the development of history. Indeed, one can detect an anarchistic, almost self-destructive tone in Schelling's description of the striving of the I in "Of the I." While, on the one side, the familiar teleological drive of the I to make necessity (the laws of nature) and freedom compatible is present in this text (SW I, 200/OTI, 98), on the other side, Schelling also here proposes that the "goal of all striving" is personality (unified consciousness) expanding itself to the point of "its own destruction" (SW I, 201/OTI, 99).

To break down the argument, the goal of the finite I in "Of the I" is to achieve eternal unity with the absolute I. It "strives" for "pure eternity," or "to become identical with the [absolute I]" (SW III, 201/OTI, 99). But this endless striving of the finite I for the infinite can only logically end in paradoxical self-obliteration.[242] "The last goal of the world is its destruction as a world, that is, as an embodiment of finiteness" (SW III, 200-201).[243] However, so long as the world exists as we know it, and the finite I continues to strive for this unification with the infinite, the best we can do is to conceive of the "infinite continuance of the I" in the form of "immortality" (SW III, 201).[244] This point has religious and apocalyptic undertones that are subsequently lost in the 1800 *System.* Although Schelling does not propose any sort of philosophy of history in this individual text, let alone an eschatological one, we could conclude that unlike in *System,* any end of history and resolution of the striving as described in "Of the I"

[242] Tilliette, *Schelling,* 38. Tilliette notes that already at the end of "Of the I," Schelling is "dangerously close to paradox," for he "infinitized the finite spheres, in the name of the absolute ego, he widened the walls of his prison indefinitely" (38). Thankfully, says Tilliette, Schelling affirmed his commitment to the finite through his commitment to criticism. The critic freely decides "without precondition, in favour of humanity, in favour of the finite. It is the praise of mortal and finite freedom that leads to the beautiful Schillerian considerations on the tragic in the tenth letter." Tilliette, *Schelling,* 38.

[243] Schelling, *System,* 99.

[244] Schelling, *System,* 99. Kirill Chepurin has explored the significance of this thesis in detail in Kirill Chepurin, "To Break All Finite Spheres: Bliss, the Absolute I, and the End of the World in Schelling's 1795 Metaphysics," *Kabiri* 2 (2020). Chepurin sees Schelling's concepts of synthesis and morality as informing the concept of striving and its temporal challenges in "Of the I." Chepurin identifies bliss as a desirable alternative to the annihilation of the world presented by Schelling during these early years. "In bliss, we are taken out of time and space, and are the one immanence, without temporal succession or otherness" (Chepurin, 57). This could offer a point of comparison with the late Schelling's treatment of blessedness.

is not immanently achievable in the given world order. Due at least in part to such aporetic, self-annihilating consequences of "Of the I," he eventually abandons the concept of the "Absolute I" altogether, but retains the infinite concept of absolute freedom as the unattainable yet worthwhile goal of striving in the "Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism," written immediately after "Of the I" (SW I, 322/PL, 183).

In the "Letters," Schelling's conception of the finite I becomes even stronger, insofar as it remains committed to the realization of freedom through striving, but no longer aims at its own self-annihilation by 'expanding its personality' to the infinite. The practical here acquires heightened importance, as the choice between the systems of dogmatism (which he aligns with Spinozism) and criticism (which he aligns with Fichte) is an "ethical choice, it depends on the person one is."[245] Deciding to commit to a philosophical system now depends on the *individual will*—a point which finds resonance with the later decision presented by Schelling to choose or reject the positive philosophy of revelation. As evidenced in the Eighth Letter, and repeated in the "New Deduction of Natural Right," the individual will acquires an active role in overcoming dogmatism, i.e., resisting the dissolution of the I into the Absolute.

In the Schiller-influenced, tenth letter of the "Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism," Schelling claims that freedom and necessity can be united in art, particularly in the form of tragedy. This signifies that the striving of the individual I, described in "Of the I," will not find resolve in history or its own finite experience, and may therefore need to turn to art. This was a common thesis among German romantics,[246] and will remind us of Schelling's comparison of the state to a work of art in his Identity Philosophy. However, at this point, under the influence of Schiller's analyses of tragedy and suffering, upon which Schelling drew in his "Letters," Schelling still upholds a strong concept of the individual. This focus on the individual is largely lost in the Identity Philosophy.[247]

The unity of the subjective and objective in art is a recurring theme for the young Schelling. The aesthetic plays an important role in his early conceptions of community and the state. While the model of the state as a work of art combines with Schelling's organicism in his

[245] Tilliette, *Schelling*, 36.
[246] Notably, the conservative romantic Adam Müller (1779-1829), who was influenced by Schelling's aesthetics, champions the view of the state as a work of art. See Benedikt Koehler, *Ästhetik der Politik: Adam Müller und die politische Romantik* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1980).
[247] Particularly in reference to the Greeks, Schiller maintains that a stable, flourishing society is not possible without the multifaceted cultivation of the moral character and the aesthetic sense of *individuals.*

Identity Philosophy to produce a largely oppressive model of governance, this is not the case in the "Oldest System-Programme." In this text, the notions of "beauty" and an "aesthetic act" of reason are seen as uniting the richness of sensuous experience and imagination with the structure of reason in a community of equals.[248] For all of their challenges, models of political community based on the work of art offer solutions to the problems of the self-obliteration of the insatiable striving of the I, on the one side, and our dissatisfaction with the hard necessity of the impersonal laws of reason (or, for that matter, of the state or the objective forces of history), on the other. This reconciliatory role of art in reference to the infinite dissatisfaction of the individual will was famously pursued by Schopenhauer.[249]

Now that we have established the importance of the individual, and specifically individual striving, for Schelling's early political philosophy, we will turn our attention to Schelling's first exploration of the voluntary community in the 1796 "New Deduction of Natural Right." This set of aphorisms is, by all accounts, a unique text in Schelling's corpus of work. Starting out from the position of respect for the individual will, Schelling uses Rousseau's concepts and language to relate the individual will to the general will, the latter being an early candidate for the concept of a voluntary community. The general will is defined by Rousseau as the "undertakings that unite us to the body of society," which are "binding only because they are mutual, and their nature is such that in fulfilling them our efforts for others are efforts on our own behalf also."[250] In other words, it is the collective will of a community or society, which aims to maximize the scope of freedom possible for all.[251] By voluntarily consenting to the 'general will,' the individual will legitimizes its own limitation by the latter. This is a protoform of the voluntary community (i.e., free, moral community) because each individual *voluntarily* recognizes the right to freedom and the equal worth of each, and consents to bind herself in solidarity to all other members of society. Moreover, the general will wills justice for the whole

[248] "The 'Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism,'" 200.
[249] According to Schopenhauer, the apparent insignificance of any individual thing in art becomes "a representative of the whole, an equivalent of the infinitely many in space and time. It therefore pauses at this particular thing; it stops the wheel of time" (Schopenhauer, *The World As Will and Representation,* 185). In this way, through art, the infinite, insatiable drive of the individual attains some resolve.
[250] Rousseau, "The Social Contract," 68.
[251] Recall that for Rousseau, the general will is the foundation of the original social contract, cf., Rousseau, "The Social Contract."

community (SW I, 277-278/ND, 245).[252] As Rousseau states, the "tendency" of "the general will is towards equality."[253] The goal of a voluntary community for Schelling is a just unity of equal, free individuals.

As noted above, Schelling had been influenced by Rousseau during his earlier years at the *Tübinger Stift.* Together with other *Stiftler*, he had read Rousseau and Kant while hiding under his bedcovers with no electric light during the early years of the French Revolution.[254] This text was written a few years later, while Schelling was tutoring the two barons of Riedesel who were "going to study law at Leipzig."[255] While the aphorisms are no doubt important for the development of Schelling's political philosophy, we should keep in mind that Schelling may have also had a pedagogical use of the text in mind while writing it. The language, and focus on the general will, is thus rather unique within Schelling's corpus of work and thus should not be given too much weight. Perhaps recalling the enthusiasm with which he read Rousseau during his time at the *Tübinger Stift*, in the "New Deduction," Schelling—an arguable "democrat" at the time[256]—displays a focused concern for the role of the individual will in the achievement of an equal society.

Schelling here begins to experiment with the logic of how *individual* freedom relates to the collective in a real, moral context. In the "New Deduction," Schelling is more interested in the existential and empirical dimensions of the individual than is typical of his very early works. This indicates his early appreciation for the emphasis the romantics placed not only on the importance of the will, but also on the drives, imagination and sensuous wants of the individual when envisioning the community. The role of the individual in bringing about the good of the moral community through the individual's genuine consent seems to have become (at least

[252] Schelling notes that the general will is predicated upon freedom, and it "no longer exists as soon as there is need to save freedom," and "all moral beings" must will the freedom of the will (the "form" of the will) of every other moral being. SW I, 277-178/ND, 244–45.
[253] Rousseau, "The Social Contract," 63.
[254] Manfred Frank, "Das Verklärte und das gekränkte Ich," *Die Zeit* 35, no. 19 (August 19, 2005), 35.
[255] Fritz Marti, "Translator's Introduction to New Deduction of Natural Right," in *The Unconditional in Human Knowledge: Four Early Essays (1794-1796)*, by F.W.J. Schelling, trans. Fritz Marti (London: Associated University Presses, 1980), 219.
[256] Sandkühler, *Freiheit und Wirklichkeit*, 62. Sandkühler appreciates this text as it displays very little of the religious conservatism that comes to characterize much of Schelling's political philosophy. With its emphasis on the individual will, it is the closest Schelling comes to being a liberal. Sandkühler interprets Schelling during this period as having a socially conscious, even bordering on revolutionary, side.

temporarily) absent by 1800, although the importance of the natural right to freedom and the respect for the rule of law is retained.[257]

Reminding us of the Rousseauian evolution of the use of reason that comes with experience in the *Origin of Human Evil*, in the "New Deduction," Schelling details how the individual moves from a conflictual relationship with others (due to clumsy, uninhibited assertions of its own will in pursuit of its own wants) to simultaneously willing its own good and the good of the whole. Returning to the concept of individual striving in a natural context, Schelling claims in the "New Deduction" that the individual's "empirical striving" in time first leads it to "*oppose [its] freedom to the freedom of others"* (SW I, 250/ND, 224). The individual, as in "Of the I," "strives for unconditionality" and to assert itself to the greatest extent *qua* individual in the collective (SW I, 251-252/ND, 224). But in the natural world, our "*empirical freedom*" antagonistically confronts and conflicts with the freedom of others if it is not rationally limited. The relation of my will to the wills of others, according to Schelling (following Rousseau), therefore demands that I rationally limit the scope of my own permissible action. The fact that we are *all* in this same situation demands that we work towards the coexistence of our individual "striving" for unconditionality (SW I, 252/ND, 225).

But the individual must not be coerced into recognizing this fact. Instead, she *consents* to have her will *limited* by the general will, which is the unified will of the whole community. Schelling here acknowledges that to behave as if there were no others in the world is not to behave as a moral being. In Schelling's words, "*the individual will is absolute only inasmuch as it is restricted by the condition of the general will"* (SW I, 254/ND, 227). Familiar to us from both Rousseau and Kant, to be morally free, or positively free to determine one's own action, means (in this text, for Schelling, too) to rationally self-determine in relation to others.[258] I thus do not try to imitate natural freedom (the unlimited freedom to all things) and do whatever satisfies my immediate pleasures. Instead, I consent to the general will, or to a legitimate,

[257] Schelling's early exploration of the possibility of an individual to simultaneously assert itself as an individual essence ("Be … a noumenon as such!" [SW I, 247]) and at the same time restrict its own activity in order to consent to a general will is in line not only with Rousseau, but with the concerns of the Enlightenment in general. Sandkühler, for example, thinks the Schelling of the "New Deduction" would accept the Enlightenment claim that the "demands of human rights" are the "necessary and sufficient conditions *of Being" (*Sandkühler, *Freiheit und Wirklichkeit*, 61).

[258] Rousseau defines moral freedom as the freedom we execute to be "the master of [ourselves] and to thereby "obey a law that we have imposed on ourselves." Rousseau, "The Social Contract," 59. It is the ability to positively self-legislate in view of one's place in a collective and to then discipline oneself accordingly.

universalizable level of constraint on my own activity. Every time I "feel" this limitation, I am constantly reminded that "I am not alone in the moral world" (SW I, 250/ND, 223). Furthermore, I know this limitation is justified and I understand it.[259] Although, in the end, the general will is not a sufficient form of the voluntary community for Schelling, it provides a first sketch of the possibility for individuals to consensually form a free community with one another.

One major advantage of the general will is that, as a voluntarily united community, it is a form of resistance, or at least response, to authoritarian rule. My consensual submission to the general will should preclude any coercion by necessity to submit to the will of another, such as a ruler, even to protect the freedom of all (including myself).[260] In France, the concept of the general will was always linked to a critique of authoritarianism.[261] I follow the general will as a law "*in order that my will may be a law for every other will*" (SW I, 256/ND, 228), and accordingly, so that no members of the community need submit to the will of a despot or other singular being.

The Rousseauian notion of the general will, however, does not meet Schelling's criterion that the moral community transcend the state. It cannot—and does not seek to—bring about a global moral community because it remains too tightly linked to the state.[262] The prerequisite to the general will is that its adherents live within a single state, which for Rousseau, as well as Schelling, is the condition for the exercise of freedom in real terms. However, when Rousseau refers to moral society, he designates, unlike Schelling, a society-within-a-state. As a result,

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[259] "When I feel that my freedom is limited, I recognize that I am not alone in the moral world, and the manifold experiences of limited freedom teach me that I am in a realm of moral beings, all of whom have the same unlimited freedom" (SW I, 250/ND, 223).

[260] Schelling explains that to assert the individuality of my will "against the *will* as such," means to submit to the general will "*in order that no other endeavor be opposed to my endeavor, no other will to my will as will, that is, in order that my will may become absolute unlimited power*" (SW I, 257/ND, 229). This preserves the greatest amount of autonomy of the will possible.

[261] In the seventeenth century, this critique of authoritarian rule through the notion of a general will was tightly connected to the critique of divine right. See Nicolas de Malebranche (1638) on how God acts by general wills and not through the wills of particular individuals and Montesquieu (1689-1755) on "general will of the state." Nicolas Malebranche, *Treatise on Nature and Grace*, trans. Patrick Riley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 195ff. Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, trans. Anne M. Cohler, Basia C. Miller, and Harold S. Stone (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 158.

[262] See Rousseau, "The Social Contract," 137–38. "The constant will of all the citizens of the state is the general will" (Rousseau, "The Social Contract," 137-138). However, we must note that Rousseau does not separate the state as the realm of theoretical necessity from the general will as a voluntary community in the way Schelling does. Instead, we all "consent" to life *within* the state for Rousseau, and thereby participate through our consent in the construction of its laws—which are *all of our* laws.

through the general will, state-oriented political decisions are made and laws are passed.[263] The bond which underlies the general will and makes it effective is the "social pact." The social pact is the consent of individuals to form *a people* or state-community that is not simply a group of separate wills, willing what they want independently. This is the only law of the state that "by its nature demands unanimous consent."[264] For Rousseau, consent to the social pact is a necessary civic duty for all members of any state: "If therefore when the social pact is agreed there are those who oppose it, their opposition does not invalidate the contract, but merely prevents it from being applied to them: they are foreigners among citizens."[265] Therefore, "Once the state has been constituted, consent lies in residing in it; to live within its boundaries is to submit to its sovereignty."[266] The sovereignty of the state and the definition of the community as a 'people' thus imposes certain limits on the possibility of the general will to be a form of voluntary community as envisioned by Schelling.

Rousseau's voluntary community, founded on the unanimous consent of the social pact which grounds the legitimacy of the general will, can be critiqued on many other fronts. Rousseau himself identifies the issue of the condition of majority rule,[267] making the community fall prey to the criticism of the rule (or tyranny) of the majority, and accordingly, the accusation that the majority wins out on deciding what is best for a whole society without any requirement to take power relations and the suffering of minority groups into account. Finally, as indicated above, Rousseau is vehemently committed to his position that the general will is the general will of *citizens.* As a result, refugees and arguably even dissidents who critique the operation of the general will, are not considered as part of the community it forms. By entering into the social pact and accepting citizenship, one is also forced to accept the verdict of the general will in all scenarios, as long as it proceeds legitimately and adheres to the democratic process.

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[263] Rousseau, "The Social Contract,"137–38. "The citizen consents to every law, even those that are passed against his opposition … The constant will of the citizens of the state is the general will … When a law is proposed in the assembly of people, what they are asked is not precisely whether they accept or reject the proposal, but whether it is or is not in conformity with the general will, which is their will; everyone, by voting, gives his opinion on the question; and counting the votes makes the general will manifest. When an opinion contrary to mine prevails, therefore, it proves only that I had been mistaken."
[264] Rousseau, "The Social Contract," 137.
[265] Rousseau, "The Social Contract," 137.
[266] Rousseau, "The Social Contract," 137.
[267] "This argument, it is true, presupposes that all the characteristics of the general will are present also in majority decisions; when they cease to be, whatever view may be adopted, liberty exists no longer." Rousseau, *The Social Contract,* 138.

Despite these problems, especially the tight link between the general will and the state, Schelling appreciates Rousseau's idea that a society founded on freedom demands that we will on behalf of the community when we will on behalf of ourselves. He also agrees with Rousseau's view of the necessity of a state to establish the conditions of 'negative' or 'civil' freedom, i.e., freedom from constraints. However, the late Schelling's notion of the voluntary community is one which transcends state borders and will one day succeed the existence of finite states, rendering them irrelevant. Rousseau's general will ultimately cannot fulfill this role. However, the concept nevertheless offers a fruitful model for the unification of finite, individual wills in a single, freely united, moral community.

The Moral Community in the "Oldest System-Programme" in Relation to Schiller

In the 1796 "Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism," we find a notion of the ideal, moral community that does not structurally depend upon the state. This community, referred to as the "moral world," has a transcendent quality and aims for the unity of reason and the aesthetic. Characterized by ideas of "divinity" and "immortality,"[268] it seeks the "*equal* cultivation of *all* powers of the individual as well as of all people"[269]—in other words, individual and collective freedom. It thus comes the closest of all of the early Schelling's writings to the post-1809 concept of the "voluntary and therefore higher community," which individuals enter through "virtues that are purely personal and … social" and which "reason alone cannot prescribe or realize" (SW XI, 541/PRP, 114). Despite this proximity, the final form of Schelling's voluntary, moral community differs from that of the "Oldest System-Programme," for it finds completion only through an act of "God above reason," not in the unity of reason and the aesthetic.

The voluntary community in the "Oldest System-Programme" has its roots in Schiller's post-Kantian, aesthetic approach to moral and political philosophy. Following Schiller, the young Schelling seeks to continue the development of Kant's Enlightenment-based, rational approach to individual morality in relation to a state-transcendent community, but by positively incorporating, rather than disciplining, the aspects of the human condition which exceed reason

[268] "Schelling, The 'Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism,'" 199.
[269] "Schelling, The 'Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism,'" 200.

(which include sensibility and the value of the imagination in aesthetic expression and poetry). In what follows, I first explain the concept of the voluntary, moral community beyond the state in the "Oldest System-Programme." Subsequently, I excavate its roots in Schiller's philosophy and explain the relevance of Schiller's view of aesthetic education to the moral community. I then conclude the chapter by gesturing to Schelling's subsequent influence on future German romantics, many of whom, like Schelling, saw the culmination of the voluntary community in a divine act of redemption, rather than in the aesthetic or through other immanent means.

Before discussing the presentation of the voluntary community in the "Oldest System-Programme" further, it must be noted that the work's authorship is highly disputed. Despite disagreement regarding the level of involvement that Schelling, Hölderlin and Hegel each might have had in the penning the fragment, it is widely accepted that at minimum, Schelling played a central role in its constitution.[270] Influenced by Schiller and, more generally, the romantic view of aesthetics, mythology, poetry, and politics, this text links the individual's striving for a higher unity to the desire for an eventual *abolition* of the state. This is the earliest indication of Schelling's view, as pronounced in 1810, that the state is "precarious and provisional" and should therefore be succeeded by a higher form of unification (SW VII, 461/SS, 226). The desired unification of humanity, as expressed in the "Oldest System-Programme," is specifically one which transcends the "*mechanical*" unity of the state, and, if fulfilled, will eventually see the latter as unnecessary and irrelevant.[271]

According to the "Oldest System-Programme," a new mythology and a new philosophy of history will eventually take the place of the restrictive development and workings of the state.

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[270] Franz Rosenzweig notably attributes this fragment to Schelling, followed by Ludwig Strauß and later Georg Lukács and Xavier Tilliette. Wilhelm Böhme attributes the ideas in the text to Hölderlin and Otto Pöggler to Hegel. For a critical summary of the debate, see Eckart Förster, "'To Lend Wings to Physics Once Again': Hölderlin and the 'Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism'*," *European Journal of Philosophy* 3, no. 2 (1995): 174–98. See also Georg Lukács, *The Young Hegel*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Merlin Press, 1975), 25; Tilliette, *Biographie,* 43. Tilliette summarizes the authorship debate as follows: "Rosenzweig, having carefully analyzed the content, did not hesitate to attribute his discovery to Schelling. Hegel would have only been the writer. This thesis was followed by the whole of the philosophical community, with some cases, at least partially, in favor of Holderlin, until Otto Pöggler intervened to claim Hegelian authenticity. Pöggeler's arguments for internal criticism are quite poor compared to Schelling's many parallels, but he has the spelling, and above all an image, on his side" (Tilliette, *Biographie,* 43). Regardless of whether we continue to have doubts as to its authorship, as Tilliette notes, the "Oldest System" best represented Schelling's views at the time: "[T]he new ethics, physics 'on a grand scale,' the revolutionary accent, the Schillerian references, the education of humanity, the new mythology, the people's gospel ... Schelling is the only one who has achieved almost point by point all aspects of the program. In addition, the tone corresponds quite well to his conquering temperament and the new energies released in him by leaving the seminar." Tilliette, *Schelling: Biographie,* 43.

[271] "The 'Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism,'" 199.

The philosophy of history would be oriented towards the advent of a new community of the future. Accordingly, the "moral world" would see the genuine "overthrow of all bogus faith."[272] This new morally-driven philosophy of history cannot be imposed on us from a higher authority, but must represent the "absolute freedom of all the spirits who bear the intellectual world within themselves."[273] It is accordingly rooted in the same reverence for individual freedom to which Schelling was vehemently committed in "Of the I," and which he will continue to defend from 1807 to the end of his life.

The critique of the state in the "Oldest System-Programme" is shared by Schiller. For Schelling, as well as for Schiller, this critique begs the question of the possible form and methods of the ideal, voluntary, moral unity, which would rise above it. In the "Oldest System-Programme," the author(s) put forth the imperative to "strip bare to the skin the whole wretched human contrivance of state, constitution, government, legislation."[274] Similar to the critique of the state found in the "Oldest System-Programme," and in direct relation to the contemporary situation, Schiller claimed, just one year earlier in *On the Aesthetic Education of Man,* that the "rotting foundations of the state" were weakening. He criticizes the "lawless impulses" and "indolence" of the citizens of his time.[275] This type of political pessimism is shared by Schelling at the time and also in the years to come. Schiller's response to this assessment of his contemporary socio-political situation is that we ought to strive for a higher "moral society" based on freedom through the cultivation of aesthetic sensibility.[276] Although scholars such as Zvi Tauber have noted some indecisiveness in Schiller's position regarding whether the cultivation of aesthetic sensibility can *itself* liberate humanity, there is no doubt that aesthetic education and aesthetic experience solidifies the bond of the moral society he describes.[277]

This emphasis on the aesthetic is repeated in "Oldest-System Programme," which similarly seeks the establishment of a voluntary political unity by moral improvement through

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[272] "The 'Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism,'" 199.
[273] "The 'Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism,'" 199.
[274] "The 'Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism,'" 199.
[275] Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, 35.
[276] Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, 29, 129.
[277] See Zvi Tauber, "Aesthetic Education for Morality: Schiller and Kant," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 40, no. 3 (2006): 22-47. Tauber points out a tension in Schiller's moral philosophy in *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* regarding whether the aesthetic serves as a means or an end in the establishment of "moral society." If aesthetic education is a means to "realising the principles of morality and Man's liberty," Schiller remains closer to Kant (Tauber, 22). But if aesthetic experience is itself constitutive of the morally free, liberatory society, then he has presented a romantic-aesthetic alternative to Kant's Kingdom of Ends (Tauber, 23). Arguments for both can be found in *On the Aesthetic Education of Man.*

the cultivation of aesthetic sensibility. At this point in time, Schelling shares with Schiller the position that creativity, as cultivated through the study and practice of aesthetics, has an important role in history and politics—"one cannot be inspired (*gesitreich*) in anything, one cannot even reason intelligently (*geistreich*) about history—without aesthetic sense."[278] According to the "Oldest System-Programme," we need to think beyond "tables and indices," and rather in the direction of arts and poetry.[279] Reason is insufficient on its own to bring about the perfect community, and we therefore must leverage the "polytheism of the imagination and of art" together with our use of reason.[280] There is accordingly a creative and imaginative element of future utopic thinking in the "Oldest System-Programme," in which "present-day physics is unable to satisfy a creative spirit, such as ours is, or ought to be."[281] Imagination and creativity could lead us instead towards a "new mythology" of reason, which "render[s] ideas aesthetic, i.e. mythological," therefore making them "of interest to the *people.*"[282] Finally, the "highest" act which would unite *all* ideas, according to the text, is an aesthetic one.[283]

But the focus on mythology and creativity should not be mistaken for an irrationalist programme. Mythology must also, maintain both early and late Schelling, be understood rationally. However, the early Schelling agrees with Schiller that the rationality of the Enlightenment must also find its counterpart in the 'sensuous' (and its relation to aesthetic sense). Once mythology is philosophical, and philosophy mythological, and everyone exercises their reason in line with their sensuous, empirical being, then and only then can "eternal unity reig[n] among us."[284] As stated above, the late Schelling lowers his expectations of the political potential of the unity of reason and mythology in view of the moral impotence of finite humanity in comparison with God.

Schelling's presentation of the voluntary community in the "Oldest System-Programme" is politically important not only for its anti-state sentiment and focus on the aesthetic, but also insofar as it is a critique of unification under the thumb of authority. We must bring this unity about on our own, not out of shame, oppression, fear, or force. There is to be "No more the

[278] "The 'Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism,'" 199.
[279] "The 'Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism,'" 200.
[280] "The 'Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism,'" 200.
[281] "The 'Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism,'" 199.
[282] "The 'Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism,'" 200.
[283] "The 'Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism," 199.
[284] "The 'Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism,'" 200.

contemptuous glance, no more the blind trembling of the people before its sages and priests."[285] Instead, the powers of the *individual* are supported and cultivated so that each can, through freedom, rise above necessity and the state. In so doing, together the "universal freedom and equality of spirits will reign!" [286] Despite its lack of a transcendent, acting God, we can still detect an eschatological impulse in the text, for the new community of equal spirits will be the result of the founding of a "new religion among us" by a "higher spirit, sent from heaven."[287] This suggests that this community will be humanity's final moral project. However, this religious community is also an aesthetic one, in which all ideas are united in the aforementioned "aesthetic act." [288] We could thus say that Schelling is already here moving towards the privileging of the aesthetic over the existential. This priority of the art product as the locus of unification between subjectivity and objectivity is fully realized at the end of the *System* and in his subsequent Identity Philosophy. When Schelling attempts to use the work of art as a metaphor for political unification, suppression of individuality follows and Schelling eventually abandons the aesthetic as a political dead end.[289]

Given that the "Oldest System-Programme" is only two pages long, it is worth examining Schiller's influence on Schelling at the time to gain a broader understanding of the implication of the text's theses. Schelling's classmate and friend Hölderlin was deeply influenced by Schiller before, during and after his time at the *Stift*.[290] Schelling was aware of Schiller's works during these student years—which were likely among the texts distributed in secret at the *Stift*.[291]

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[285] "The 'Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism,'" 200.
[286] "The 'Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism,'" 200.
[287] "The 'Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism,'" 200.
[288] "The 'Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism,'" 199.
[289] See the end of the *System of Transcendental Idealism*, part six ("Deduction of a Universal Organ of Philosophy, or: Essentials of the Philosophy of Art according to the Principles of Transcendental Idealism") in which art occupies a higher position than politics in its capacity to unify the subjective and objective (SW III, 611-34/STI, 219-36). In the transition from the mechanistic, legalistic view of the state in the *System* to an organic, all-encompassing state in the Identity Philosophy, Schelling begins to compare the state to a work of art. However, his interest in the state wanes during this period, as it does not have the same potential as art to unify subjective thought with objective reality. When he returns to the theme of the state in the *Stuttgart Seminars* in 1810, he requires the assistance of religion to describe how individuals can begin to cultivate an inner bond with one another within the state. For a good discussion of Schelling's progressive disillusionment with the state during this time, see Devin Zane Shaw, *Freedom and Nature in Schelling's Philosophy of Art* (London and New York: Continuum, 2010), pp. 136-141.
[290] See Günter Mieth, "Friedrich Hölderlin und Friedrich Schiller — Die Tragik einer literaturgeschichtlichen Konstellation," in *Hölderlin-Jahrbuch*, ed. Bernhard Böschenstein and Ulrich Gaier (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1993).
[291] Schelling even retrospectively suggests Hölderlin's poetry in Tübingen was related to the "bad influence" Schiller had had on him. Tilliette, "Schelling," 27. Tilliette here quotes from Melchior Meyer, *Schelling im Spiegel*

Furthermore, the young Schelling visited Schiller while traveling around Germany with the two young barons of Riedesel, whom he was tutoring at the time.[292] Schiller, together with Fichte, also invited Schelling to meet Goethe in Jena, "all in the hopes of securing a position for him" there.[293] Finally, Schiller's *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* influenced Schelling's view of aesthetics as the possible location of the instantiation of the unity of the theoretical and the practical, of conscious and unconscious activity, in the *System of Transcendental Idealism.*[294]

The overcoming of the state in favour of a free community in the "Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism" of 1796 specifically alludes to Schiller's 13th *Aesthetic Letter*.[295] Furthermore, Schelling's 1795 *Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism,* particularly the tenth letter, and his 1802/1803 lectures on the *Philosophy of Art*, were influenced by his critical reception of Schiller. Schiller, like the young Schelling, turns to aesthetics in search of an alternative to the "perverseness" and "brutality" of the "spirit of the time."[296] In his critique of the Enlightenment 'spirit' and its relation to the French Revolution, Schiller neither does away with reason's emancipatory power, nor advocates for the suppression of the sensible and 'natural' side of what it means to be human. Instead, he critiques the cold, undesirable results of the constant discipline of the sensuous side of who we are. Specifically, he criticizes the "bonds of physical necessity" in the development of "culture," which are constantly "tightened" as the "maxim of passive obedience passes for the supreme wisdom of life."[297] An early critic of consumer capitalism, he connects this cultural development with the constant creation of "new

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seiner Zeitgenossen II: Ergänzungsband: Melchior Meyr über Schelling, ed. Xavier Tilliette (Turin: Bottega d'Erasmo, 1981), 439-440.

[292] Schelling, *Briefe und Dokumente*, vol. I: 18.

[293] Bruce Matthews, "Schelling: A Brief Biographical Sketch of the Odysseus of German Idealism, in *The Palgrave Handbook of German Idealism* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 443.

[294] Michael Vater, "Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling," in *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, vol. 4, ed. Michael Kelly (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 221. On Schiller's critical relation to Schelling's transcendental philosophy and demand for a unity of art and philosophy to bridge the gap between the ideal and the real, see Benno Von Weise, *Friedrich Schiller*, 4th edition (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1978), 526.

[295] See "The 'Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism,'" *European Journal of Philosophy* 3, no. 2 (1995): 199, specifically the reference to "sluggish physics." For the comparable claim in the Thirteenth Letter, see Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man,* 70. Eckhart Förster also argues that the passage from the "Oldest System-Programme" that deals with physics in Schillerian language is in fact used to criticize Schiller through a Goethian lens. This, he argues, points to Hölderlin also potentially contributing to the text. See Eckart Förster, "'To Lend Wings to Physics Once Again," 176ff.

[296] Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, 37.

[297] Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man,* 37.

want[s].”[298] Schiller can thus be seen as a nineteenth-century critic of the mediating role of the state and consumerism in the realization of human freedom.

Schiller’s view of the positive role of aesthetic education in bringing about the moral community is a forerunner to the importance of the cultivation of aesthetic sense for morality in the “Oldest System-Programme.”[299] In the latter, the author(s) make a plea for philosophers to “possess just as much aesthetic power as the poet.”[300] Through Schiller, we can infer that we might acquire this “aesthetic power,” which can help strengthen the moral community, by cultivating an aesthetic condition. This is a “sentient condition … , where reason and sensuousness, duty and inclination, accord with each other” and “under which beauty of play ensues.”[301] Aesthetic education in particular allows the individual to bring the material in line with the rational, and therefore, the sensuous in line with the moral law. For Schiller, this makes “play” possible, which combines the sensuous and formal drives of the human being. Only a combination of the sensuous and rational drives together can “exhaust the conception of humanity.”[302] The cultivation of such a harmonious balance in each individual offered by aesthetic education can improve the moral community, for individuals with such a disposition would behave morally because, free of repression and resentment, they *want to.* According to Schiller, they would not resist their unification with one another through their dutiful exercise of the moral law, but freely embrace it.

It is noteworthy that in view of the romantic debates in which Schelling was embroiled during his first two years in Jena, Schelling’s political philosophy after the “Oldest System-Programme” could have taken either the path of Goethe and Schiller, or the path of the Jena romantics.[303] He could have followed Goethe and Schiller and committed to the principles of neo-classical art as forming the basis of a new political unity; but he also could have followed

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[298] Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man,* 36.
[299] Joan Steigerwald notes that Schiller and Goethe’s collaborations on German literature and art were political in nature. In particular, Goethe’s practical aim, through journals and art competitions, “to direct the development of German art towards a neo-classical style,” was “informed by Schiller’s claim of the centrality of aesthetic education to the formation of a free and moral society.” Steigerwald adds that Goethe and Schiller saw themselves as working to ascertain the conditions of the “freedom of the German peoples.” Joan Steigerwald, “The Cultural Enframing of Nature: Environmental Histories during the Early German Romantic Period,” *Environment and History* 6, no. 4 (2000): 470.
[300] “The ‘Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism,’” 199.
[301] Friedrich Schiller, “On Grace and Dignity,” trans. George Gregory, in *Friedrich Schiller: Poet of Freedom,* vol. 2, ed. The Schiller Institute (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1976).
[302] Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man,* 67.
[303] I rely on Steigerwald’s excellent article “The Cultural Enframing of Nature” for this argument.

the Schlegels and Novalis in their focus on the "process of *Bildung*" in working towards a new, universally accessible, anti-individualist, anti-elitist politics.[304] Instead of espousing one of these two positions, in the *System,* Schelling turns away from both of these possible routes towards the voluntary community. He takes a third path in the *System*, proposing the objective will of history as unifying humanity and designating the unity achievable in the art product a higher status than any intentionally coordinated political or moral unity. The result is that Schelling has a short brush with the idea of a voluntary community grounded in morality and the aesthetic, only to quickly step away from it and move towards a defence of the involuntary community of objective history in the 1800 *System.*

However, as noted above, Schelling returns to the concept of a transcendent, moral community and produces a second vehement critique of the state in the 1810 *Stuttgart Seminars.* At this point, the aesthetic dimension of the moral community fades into the background as Schelling turns his attention towards the potential of religion and God to cultivate the sought-after inner unity of human beings. Although Schiller's view of the importance of drives and the positive role of aesthetic education in cultivating aesthetic sensibility in relation to the moral law, together with his critique of the power of reason without sensibility, were influential for the young Schelling, ultimately, his aesthetic, moral society is not enough. Schelling's final thesis is that we are unable to achieve an ideal moral community on our own, whether through a general will, the application of the moral law to bring about a kingdom of ends, or through aesthetic experience. Instead we require a transformation from within — an alteration of human nature – the condition for which is an acting God, whose greatness exceeds all human limitations, in order to fully restore the unity lost in the fall from grace.

The legacy of romanticism in Schelling's political philosophy is not limited to the romantic figures which preceded him and influenced his early work. The historical and conceptual links between Schelling and later German romantics demonstrate that the first indications of his pessimistic view of state-based politics, which originated in his early thought and which, after a short period of dormancy during the Identity Philosophy, fully germinate in his post-1809 work. Schelling shares with the early German Romantics a critical, pessimistic

[304] Steigerwald, "The Cultural Enframing of Nature," 486.

stance towards the socio-political conditions of his time.[305] As he settles into his later position of doubt regarding the capability of humanity to bring about a perfectly just moral community by its own means (including through aesthetic activity), Schelling's political philosophy increasingly demands a sustained critique of present socio-political conditions.

Although the romantics differed on the degree of pessimism they exercised towards political activity, many of the late, theological, mostly Catholic romantics shared Schelling's lack of confidence in the possibility for the moral community to achieve its final form without divine intervention or an external event. Those who, alongside Schelling, view redemption and thus a perfect, moral community, as requiring the work of a transcendent God include Franz von Baader,[306] the late Friedrich Schlegel,[307] and Immanuel Hermann Fichte.[308] Late nineteenth-

[305] Among the early German Romantics, for example, Schiller presents a sustained critique of the "apathetic generation" and the "barbarity" and "enervation united in a single period of time" (Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man,* 35). Novalis also criticizes the "sluggishness of our spirit," claiming "We are negative, because we choose to be so" (Novalis, "Aphorisms," trans. Friedrich H. Hedge, vol. IV, 1914, https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/12060). Adam Müller also advocated for an end to the self-interested individualism and heavily criticized the French Revolution. Müller echoes Schelling's thesis that society depends on the state, and that a "human being cannot be thought outside of the state." Adam Müller, *Von der Idee des Staates und ihren Verhältnissen zu den populären Staatstheorien.* (Dresden: Waltherschen Hofbuchhandlung, 1809), 7). Robert Lougee also notes the "eschatological" tone of Müller's critique of the present. Müller writes, "We must completely destroy this lascivious and sensuous private life, together with the cold, dried-out formality of our public life; let them die together, in common death will their atoms again be reconciled," Adam Müller, *Friederich der Grosse und Preussen,* in R. Kohler, ed., *Adam Mülller*: *Schriften zur Staatsphilosphie* (Munich: Theatinerverlag, 1924.), translated and quoted in Robert Lougee, "German Romanticism and Political Thought," *The Review of Politics* 21, no. 4 (1959): 644.

[306] Cf. Franz von Baader on the final event at the end of cosmic time and humanity's destiny for community with God in Franz von Baader, "Elementarbegriffe Über Die Zeit," in *Schriften Zur Gesellschafts-Philosophie* (Jena: Fischer, 1925), 39.

[307] Cf. Friedrich Schlegel on the Kingdom of God in Lecture XVII of Friedrich von Schlegel, *The Philosophy of History: In a Course of Lectures, Delivered at Vienna*, trans. James Burton Robertson, 2nd ed d(London: Henry G. Bohn, 1846). For an analysis of the relation of the Kingdom of God to millenarianism in Schlegel see Chapter 8 in Asko Nivala, *The Romantic Idea of the Golden Age in Friedrich Schlegel's Philosophy of History* (New York and London: Routledge, 2017). Schlegel's philosophy of religion is directly linked to his anti-revolutionary political stance. He explains, "if we seek the first origin and ultimate foundation of all right and all justice, we must seek it in God alone, who is the eternal arbiter of the world, of states and nations as well as of individuals, who well knows how to requite every great political injustice on his appointed day of retribution." But if any human being tries to do this, "to propose to itself absolute justice, to judge and regulate all things by that standard, and to model the world in conformity to it—the consequence is a total revolution in all the relations of society—an entire subversion of all existing order; and it is this false idea which is the principle or the pretext of all those fanatic attempts at universal consequence, and of every revolution … aiming at sweeping, unqualified, and universal change." Schlegel, *The Philosophy of History,* 440.

[308] Cf. Immanuel Hermann Fichte, *Spekulative Theologie oder Allgemeine Religionslehre* (Heidelberg: J.C.B. Mohr, 1846). Immanuel Hermann Fichte, Fichte's son, devoted much of his work to developing philosophical accounts of God's personality and love. While I.H. Fichte's view of salvation was more immanently focused on the development of the human being—and thus more "pantheistic"—than the late Schelling's, it is still guided by the transcendent, Christian, personal, God. Despite his view of the gap between God and humanity, it is noteworthy that Schelling also sees revelation as ongoing and immanently present throughout all of history. I.H. Fichte's view of salvation also involves the Kingdom of God as the eventual goal for morality and politics, as his "Christianization" that "does not try to establish firm trust in an incomprehensible authority and which does not adhere to traditions," but rather "finds

century Catholic romantics, such as Joseph von Görres,[309] and more specifically, the founder of the Catholic Tübingen school, Johann Sebastian Drey[310] and Franz Anton Staudenmaier (also of the Tübingen school) also broadly share Schelling's view of the necessity of a transcendent God for divine revelation and redemption.[311] Finally, Schelling's anti-revolutionary politics was shared by the 'romanticist of the throne,' the Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm IV, who appointed Schelling to the chair in Berlin in 1841. Friedrich Wilhelm IV and Schelling both perceived the revolutions of 1848 as inappropriate means to try bring about the total freedom of humanity that would only be possible through the intervention of a transcendent God.[312] Finally, Schelling's commitment to the ongoing critique of the status quo finds an additional ally in Schopenhauer's pessimism and the latter's critique of the utopian ambitions of modernity.[313]

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its fulfillment in a reformed and energetic thinking and desire which finally aims at the Kingdom of the Holy Spirit." Hartmut Rosenau, "I.H. Fichte: Philosophy as the Most Cheerful Form of Service to God," in *Kierkegaard and His German Contemporaries*, vol. 1 (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2007), 56.

[309] Görres was a prominent figure in the Catholic romanticist movement and, like Schelling, defended the role of pre-Christian mythologies in Christian revelation. For a comparison of Schelling and Görres on mythology and revelation, including an assessment their differences with regards to Schelling's philosophical treatment of mythology, see Robert Gascoigne, *Religion, Rationality and Community: Sacred and Secular in the Thought of Hegel and His Critics* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1985), 183–84.

[310] See Johann Sebastian Drey's theory of revelation and view of worship in Johann Sebastian Drey, *Brief Introduction to the Study of Theology: With Reference to the Scientific Standpoint and the Catholic System* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994) and Johann Sebastian Drey, *Die Apologetik als wissenschaftliche Nachweisung der Göttlichkeit des Christenthums in seiner Ersheinung*, vol. 1 (Mainz: Florian Kupferberg, 1838). Drey differs from Schelling in positioning the Catholic Church as the site of the fulfillment of revelation, however, as Hélène Poisson suggests, Drey seems to have found in Schelling "an appropriate philosophical substratum for the reconstruction of Catholic theology" (Hélène Poisson, "The Programmatic Writings of Johann Sebastian Drey (1777-1853), Founder of the Catholic Tübingen School, with an Approach to Their Relevance for Our Time" [MA, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, Concordia University, 2012], 8). She claims that Drey critically drew on Schelling's notion of a personal God to "give substance, so to speak, to the continued incarnation of Christ. Christ's presence is … the presence of a living 'to be.'" (Poisson, "The Programmatic Writings of Johann Sebastian Drey," 168). The incarnation of Christ is central to Drey's conception of participation in the church community. For more on Schelling's reception by Drey, see Grant Kaplan, "Did Schelling Live on in Catholic Theology? An Examination of His Influence on Catholic Tübingen," *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology* 80, no. 1–2 (March 15, 2019): 57–70, https://doi.org/10.1080/21692327.2018.1453370.

[311] Staudenmaier refers to Schelling, who "reminds us of the greatest, deepest, noblest and most powerful spirits ever entitled to claim the name of Philosopher," extensively in Franz Anton Staudenmaier, *Darstellung und Kritik des Hegelschen Systems. Aus dem Standpunkte der Christlichen Philosophie (*Mainz: Florian Kupferberg, 1844). Schelling's view of freedom and the "personality of God" are important for Staudenmaier (Staudenmaier, *Darstellung*, 138). For more on Schelling's influence on Staudenmaier, see Thomas F. O'Meara, *Romantic Idealism and Roman Catholicism: Schelling and the Theologians* (London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982), 139ff, here 129.

[312] Gascoigne, *Religion, Rationality and Community*, 261.

[313] Schopenhauer's pessimism has its root in the view of the deficiency of the will that is always wanting, and therefore always causing humanity to suffer. He therefore critiques the "drudgery" of life that human beings must endure, coming under "constant pressure, endless strife, forced activity, with extreme exertion of all bodily and mental powers." Human beings go to war with each other over "senseless delusion" and "intriguing politics" (Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, trans. E.F.J. Payne, vol. 1 [New York: Dover, 1969], 357). This translates into a pessimism towards revolutions and politics in general: "the sweat of blood of the great

However Schopenhauer, of course, would oppose Schelling's view of divine intervention, insofar as he denies the existence of God and does not express hope in a positive conclusion to human history.[314] For Schelling, in the end, only God can redeem humanity from sin. In line with the millenarianist tradition, Schelling ultimately thinks that the voluntary community of the future will first appear in the form of a reign of peace on earth before the general resurrection. I describe this community in detail in the conclusion to this work.

To conclude, although in his very early writings, Schelling experiments with the general will and the aesthetic-rational moral society as two possible candidates for unifying human beings in the form of a voluntary community, neither option incorporates a sufficiently modest or realistic attitude regarding the limited capability of finite beings to achieve a unified state of redemption and justice on their own. While the post-1809 Schelling retains the strong notion of the individual and the opposition to coercion found in "Of the I" and the "New Deduction," and combines this with the drive to establish a unity beyond the state present in the "Oldest System-Programme," he drops the state-based general will and the aesthetic as viable options for his concept of the voluntary community. What he does retain, however, is his earliest thesis in the *Origin of Human Evil* that humanity lost its original unity in the fall of man and seeks to restore a new version of it in the future. Schelling ultimately concludes that a community built by human beings would not be powerful or stable enough to restore such a higher unity on its own. It instead requires a divine force that is "outside and above reason" (SW XI, 567/PRP, 132). He therefore concludes that, even if we fulfill the best possible human community on earth, we still need a force beyond the limitations of human capacities to achieve "a bliss that would be removed from of all particular being and also individual morality" (SW XI, 567/PRP, 132).

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multitude must flow, to carry through the ideas of individuals, or to atone for their shortcomings" (Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, 356). Eduard von Hartmann compares Schelling and Schopenhauer, both of whom influenced his own metaphysics and pessimism, in Eduard von Hartmann, *Schellings positive Philosophie als Einheit von Hegel und Schopenhauer* (Berlin: Löwenstein, 1869). See also Beiser, *Weltschmerz*, 137ff. Beiser claims that Hartmann's "pessimistic" view of the traumatic character of the first act of the will that brings forth existence to have been influenced by Schelling. Beiser, *Weltschmerz*, 137ff.

[314] As seen above, for Schopenhauer, if there is any hope to transcend suffering and find peace or even enjoyment, it is not in God, religion, or politics, but in art.

Chapter 4: The Journey of the Individual Beyond the State to Personhood

We have now established that Schelling's political philosophy aims to describe the project of disparate individuals to form, by their own free will, a "voluntary and therefore higher community" of "inner unity" (SW XI, 541/PRP, 114; SW VII, 463/SS, 228). This is a unity superior to the "involuntary community" (external unity), formed by the state. The voluntary community of free, equal human beings depends on the state for its instantiation, but it also transcends it. Recall that the individual, as the basis of the voluntary community, longs for that which is beyond the state, and more generally, for that which is beyond all laws and all necessity. The striving and longing of the individual, so strongly present in the 1795 "Of the I," found no satisfaction or resolve in the impersonal Absolute. This Absolute—unconditioned, infinite and eternal—is one into which an individual would dissolve if unifying with it. In the subsequent Identity Philosophy (1801-1806), the individual is lost again, but this time in an organic model of society, equally impersonal.

In 1809, Schelling suggests that this longing of the I will only find satisfaction in God. The individual thus has reason to hope in the possibility of redemption in the form of a final unity in the future between all of humanity and a *personal* God, the first step towards which is the establishment of a personal voluntary community, which in turn is made up of individual persons. Before any possible salvation or blessedness from God, the individual finds respite in the voluntary community, which has a personal character. Becoming a person, for Schelling, is a dynamic process which places certain demands on the individual. It is the state, not the community, which "raises the individual to a person" (SW XI, 546/PRP, 118). The state thus *facilitates* the individual's journey to personhood and thereby to the final form of the voluntary community made up of free persons. As a historically-changing structure which creates the conditions for the exercise of freedom, and thus personhood, it precedes the voluntary community. The state therefore should not be abolished, for the development of the individual into the person who can effectively exercise her freedom in a voluntary, moral community depends on it.

In the following, I first examine how the state facilitates the transition of the individual into a person. More specifically, after describing Schelling's basic views of individuality and personhood, I reconstruct Schelling's final version of the state as an "order of reason." I then turn

my attention to the question of how individuals could self-determine in such a way as to become positively contributing members to Schelling's final version of the voluntary community. This, I argue, would require of each to progressively overcome inclination and the pull of self-oriented behaviour to develop into a person who responsibly represents one's own, personal virtues universally. This leads one to the possibility of engaging in genuine relations of love, on which the final voluntary community of humanity is built. Schelling, having at this point officially taken a turn towards religion,[315] uses the terminology of the "truly universal Church (if Church is still the correct world here (PR, 322)" and the "Church of St. John" (PR, 323) to describe his final form of the voluntary community, which is comprised of persons united in love and religion. Schelling's attitude towards the state, despite its active role in fostering human development, is ultimately critical, especially when it overextends its reach.

Schelling's state-oriented *political* philosophy is closely intertwined with his moral philosophy. This moral philosophy, as presented in 1809 and after, can be described as a virtue ethics in which each individual person aims to find her own individual path towards the good. Moral activity, particularly the self-determination of the individual person, simultaneously *exceeds*, but also *depends on*, the state.[316] Morality and religion, for Schelling, thus bring us to levels of self-actualization beyond state politics. Therefore, the state, on the one hand, and morality and religion on the other, should be separate, as the realization of any religious community—in Schelling's case, the voluntary community or "universal church" community—should be the pursuit of free beings independent of their government or laws. Schelling accordingly critiques previous attempts of "spiritual power," through "proxies or priests" to "show itself as state power," which he describes as a "misunderstanding and error" (SW XI, 546/PRP, 117). Spiritual power, for Schelling, transcends state power. In view of the role of spiritual power in the unification of the voluntary community, we can also call it a spiritual community.

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[315] On this turn as a "turn outwards, towards sociopolitical problems which [Schelling] believed could only be solved through religion," see Sean J. McGrath, *The Philosophical Foundations of the Late Schelling:*, 15–18, here 15.

[316] Karin Nisenbaum compares the middle Schelling's moral philosophy to Stanley Cavell's Moral Perfectionism. See Karin Nisenbaum, *For the Love of Metaphysics: Nihilism and the Conflict of Reason from Kant to Rosenzweig* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 198–206. Moral Perfectionism is "what used to be called the state of one's soul, a dimension that places tremendous burdens on personal relationships and on the possibility or necessity of the transforming of oneself and one's society" (Stanley Cavell, "Moral Perfectionism," in *The Cavell Reader*, ed. Stephen Mulhall [Oxford: Blackwell, 1996], 355, quoted in Nisenbaum, *For the Love of Metaphysics*, 199). I discuss this in detail below.

Schelling's moral philosophy, especially as presented in the Freedom Essay and the *Ages of the World*, is deeply rooted in his metaphysics. In these texts, Schelling presents the patterns or archetypes of the personality and intellect of the human being in God. The human being is a being similar to God, who, through the voluntary, moral community, will eventually be led back to him. Although Schelling's moral philosophy depends more heavily on his theological ideas than on the concept of the state, the state is nevertheless that which "makes the individual free and leaves him a place for voluntary (and thus also for the first time for personal) virtues" (SW XI, 113/PRP, 113). Schelling already expressed similar commitments regarding the state as the guarantor of "civil freedom" (freedom from the constraint of others) in his engagement with Rousseau in the "New Deduction of Natural Right" in 1796, but he had not yet sharply separated the voluntary community from the state. He begins this process in the "Oldest System-Programme," first firmly dividing the "inner" voluntary community from the "external" community of the state in the 1810 *Stuttgart Seminars*. He repeats the distinction in his final lectures, Lectures 22-24 of the *Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy*. I will rely on the texts mentioned in this paragraph to build my argument in this chapter that the state has a decisive role in securing the conditions for morality. Nevertheless, moral activity, the development of persons, and the voluntary community, must all transcend the limits of the state. The state functions as a ground of the voluntary community, but it does not directly mediate this community, for it is brought about through the moral development of individuals in it. The state instead solidifies the conditions for the development of personality, love, and community by free beings.

The Individual's Path to Personhood

The development of the individual into a person has political significance for Schelling for two major reasons. First of all, the state guarantees the natural right to freedom of each individual, a requirement of personhood. Different people with varying dispositions and inclinations in a 'corrupt' world all mutually pursue personhood, hence the need for a basic structure. Secondly, for Schelling, the destiny of all human beings, both individually and collectively, is itself *personal*: the person is constantly seeking what is personal, i.e., what speaks to her dynamic

identity and capacity to love outwardly (SW XI, 566/PRP, 131). She ultimately finds this in the freely-formed bonds of love that characterize the inner unity of the voluntary community, as well as in the grace of the acting, personal God who can "free us from the law," which punishes and constrains us (SW XI, 566/PRP, 131). This perfectly unified, voluntary community and subsequent "participation" in God's complete salvation (i.e., the "beatific state that is incalculable and over-abundant" [SW XI, 567/PRP, 567]) are what humanity can hope for beyond the state. But in the meantime, we require the state to secure "external justice," while we figure out in real terms what it means to be virtuous (SW XI, 541/PRP, 113).

The state has a grounding role in establishing the basic conditions of mutual, sometimes conflicting, pursuits of freedom. It secures the *negative* freedom required for personal development, or freedom from the interference of others. Throughout this chapter, I rely on Isaiah Berlin's definitions of 'negative' and 'positive' freedom as presented in "Two Concepts of Liberty" to describe Schelling's state-based freedom, on the one hand, and the freedom for self-determination into a person, on the other. The state brings about negative freedom, which Berlin defines as "the area within which a man can act unobstructed by others. If I am prevented by others from doing what I could otherwise do, I am to that degree unfree."[317] We have already examined the notion of negative freedom in connection with Rousseau in Schelling's 1796 "New Deduction." The consent to the limitation of the scope of free activity by the general will produces negative freedom, or in Rousseau's terms, civil freedom.[318]

Positive freedom, and its legacy in the history of philosophy, is a trickier concept. Berlin himself treads cautiously, critiquing various forms that positive freedom has taken. I will use positive freedom to describe either the individual's singular journey to living a virtuous life and to love, which, for Schelling, means realizing oneself as a person, or choosing evil which means egoistically stunting one's own personal development. Positive freedom has two possibilities, for

[317] Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," in *Liberty*, ed. Henry Hardy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 169.

[318] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "The Social Contract," in *Discourse on Political Economy and The Social Contract*, trans. Christopher Betts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 59. Rousseau claims that in giving up natural freedom, i.e., the "unlimited right to anything by which [man] is tempted and can obtain," the human being gains "civil freedom and the right of property over everything that he possesses" (Rousseau, "The Social Contract," 59). Schelling does not embrace the terminology of "natural freedom," but indirectly refers to Rousseau in Lecture 23 of the *Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy*, when describing how the state makes us free: "'The human who enters into the state sacrifices his natural freedom,' so one says; but it seems rather to be the opposite, only in the state does he find and acquire real freedom" (SW XI, 537/PRP, 111).

Schelling, insofar as it not only begins with the capacity for the good, but also a capacity for evil. We can decide either way.

More generally, positive freedom, as delineated by Berlin, entails (a) the mastery of my own activity and (b) the ability to decide about and pursue my own ends.[319] While this might sound like a description of Rousseau's notion of moral freedom, which requires we become "the master of [ourselves]" and thereby "obey a law that we have imposed on ourselves," [320] Berlin is vehemently critical of Rousseau. He sees Rousseau's general will as taking over individual self-determination with the concept of what is best for the citizens as a whole. The result is that one consents to the decisions of the general will, even when one personally disagrees. "Rousseau does not mean by liberty the 'negative freedom' of the individual," writes Berlin, "but the possession by all, and not merely by some, of the fully qualified members of a society of a share in the public power which is entitled to interfere with every aspect of every citizen's life."[321] On matters that are of concern to the general will, one must value the decision of the whole over one's own, self-determined path. Berlin's critique of the general will reminds us of why it was not a satisfactory form of the voluntary community for Schelling—any moral philosophy which connects one's self-determination to the notion of citizenship cannot be truly free. In the previous chapter, this grounded the rejection of Rousseau's general will as a candidate for Schelling's ultimate form of the voluntary community.

Berlin's scrutiny of the different iterations of positive freedom and their relation to what he sees as a myth of the "total harmony of true values,"[322] leads him to espouse a form of value pluralism. On his account, individual realizations of positive freedom can and will involve irreducibly conflicting values, or, if we extend this to Schelling's critique of Kant's moral philosophy, virtues. While Schelling's idea of a perfect, voluntary community could imply that he is yet another, in Berlin's terms, "rationalist metaphysician"[323] who envisages our moral activity giving rise to a harmonious, end of history in which value conflicts are all resolved, I will argue that the relationship of individual virtuous activity to the voluntary community in

[319] Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 178. Berlin writes of positive freedom, "I wish my life and decisions to depend on myself, not on external forces of whatever kind. I wish to be the instrument of my own, not of other men's, acts of will. I wish to be a subject, not an object; to be moved by reasons, by conscious purposes, which are my own, not by causes which affect me, as it were, from outside." Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 178.
[320] Rousseau, "The Social Contract," 59.
[321] Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 208.
[322] Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 213.
[323] Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 213.

Schelling's late work takes him beyond such a reduction. Whether or not we ever achieve the voluntary community is not something we can ascertain on our own. For Schelling, we must always exercise skepticism towards our capacity to bring about the resolution of all human conflict in a state of righteousness by our own means. The final event that brings about such a resolution, on Schelling's account, would have come from the divine, that is, it would be the consummation of the redemption of humanity and creation begun in Christ. Furthermore, there is not one, single path for Schelling to becoming a fully, actualized person who contributes to the voluntary community. "Having no external authority, this church will exist because everyone will come to it by his own volition and belong to it through his own conviction, for in it each spirit will have a found a home" (SW XIV, 328/PMR, 334). The development of oneself as a person (the raising of oneself to spirit), and therefore of one's moral character, is at the core of Schelling's moral philosophy. This allows us to consider him a virtue ethicist. The exercise of virtue for Schelling is always contextualized and thus, as we will see below, requires more than the exercise of the moral law alone. Schelling's understanding of virtue, along with his commitment to the real possibility that one can choose evil and is responsible for such a choice, means his moral philosophy not only involves both obeying the moral law, but also cultivating a genuinely moral disposition which the law itself cannot provide.

I will now begin with Schelling's concept of the individual to delineate the path to personhood *through* the state. The individual was characterized earlier (chapter three) by the striving of the will. It was also suggested that the individual is both a sensuous and rational being, who should strive to bring these two dimensions into alignment through her moral action. In connection to Schiller, art and play were presented as possible ways of experimenting with and uniting these two sides of the human being. However, personal responsibility for one's own actions and the authorship of one's own character did not enter into our discussion of individuality.

In the Freedom Essay, Schelling addresses these themes, proposing that personal responsibility and the cultivation of one's character are important parts of the individual's journey to becoming a person capable of love. The concept of personality is the prerequisite for participation in the voluntary community of inner unity and love beyond the state. This community requires us to overcome what tempts us to remain selfishly enclosed within ourselves in order to be able to love outwardly. The voluntary community therefore depends on the

existence of morally responsible and virtuous persons. For Schelling, only persons who have overcome that by which they are determined (their internal 'ground,' i.e., the source of inclination, habit and evil) can enter into the free, loving relations characteristic of the voluntary community. In short, individuals must overcome the pulls of self-interest and inclination, in order to become persons capable of loving others.

In Lecture 23 of the *Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy,* Schelling declares that the "state is that which raises the individual to a person" (SW XI, 546/PRP, 118). Readers of Schelling's Freedom Essay will be familiar with the journey to personhood which begins in self-oriented individualism and progresses to rational, spirit directed, self-determination. In this development, the moral agent attains higher versions of herself by subordinating egoistic selfhood to the "light or universal will" (SW VII, 399/PI, 63). But is this not an *individual* journey rather than a political one? What role could the state occupy in this process of becoming a person? This chapter will answer these questions to expose how Schelling's final form of the state—the "order of reason"—serves as a ground for the moral disposition necessary for the creation of a voluntary, moral community of *persons* beyond the state. While we require the state to develop into persons, it is not obedience to the law or the categorical imperative alone, which brings about our personal development. Rather, each of us must follow a path that is ours alone.

In the Freedom Essay, Schelling clearly defines the person, but not the individual. A person is always in becoming, as personality is "selfhood raised to spirit," (SW VII, 370/PI, 38). It is a dynamic concept founded "on the connection between a self-determining being and a basis independent of him" (SW VII, 394/PI, 58). Developing into a person is therefore predicated upon a *separation* within oneself. This separation is between a dark (unconscious) and a light (conscious, spirit-directed) principle (SW VII, 372, PI, 40). The journey to personhood—for both God and the human being—involves raising the positive potential of the self, which is buried and hidden in the dark unconscious, to consciousness or spirit. Schelling describes personality as a "transfiguration of the initial principle of darkness into the light" (PI, 31). He writes, "Only in personality is there life, and all personality rests on a dark ground" (SW XI, 413/PI, 75). Personality and life depend on this *dynamic* relationship between shared, conscious existence and the unconscious dark ground within oneself. To raise "selfhood" to "spirit" or "light" is never something done in isolation. It involves overcoming self-oriented inclination, raising the

self to higher stages of development to become a virtuous person in a wide variety of situations and contexts.

As we are always persons-in-becoming for Schelling, the journey from individuality to personhood requires some experimental reconstruction. You and I were never not persons. The idea of a pre-state individual for Schelling, devoid of personality, is largely a limit concept. Schelling is critical of social contract theory for precisely this reason. Without states, there is no freedom, and without freedom, deliberation and agreement in the community, i.e., the condition for entering into a social contract, would be impossible (SW XI, 537/PRP, 111). Proto-states, orders of ruler and ruled, always existed for Schelling. Nevertheless, as a thought experiment, Schelling agrees with Hobbes that individuals without a state would exist in a "*war of all against all*" (SW XI, 536/PRP, 110). Therefore, the individual without a state is a *useful* fiction.

To reconstruct this fiction, we could say that an individual who does not fully develop into a person would be one who passively and uncritically accepts her determination by nature. To use the terminology above, such an individual would live a selfish life driven by instinct and inclination and devoid of reason, allowing the "dark principle" to consume her existence. Unconscious drives take over her life to the point of a total lack of rationality—i.e., she would have completely negated the "intelligent or light principle" in relation to "selfhood" (SW VII, 372/PI, 39). This should not be confused with a failure to humanize and a total descent into animality. Schelling notes that the "dark principle is active in animals as well as in all other natural beings, yet it is still not born into the light in them as it is in man: it is not spirit and understanding but blind craving and desire" (SW VII, 371/PI, 40).

An individual who is not a person would accordingly be less than an animal. Such an individual does not exist in reality, for if it did, it would lack any moral responsibility. Schelling will not accept the suspension of personal responsibility for anyone.[324] *Every* human being, by virtue of having the capacity to reason, is capable of making a decision for good or for evil. Evil occurs, for Schelling, when one decides to let the "selfish or dark principle," which should be

[324] See Schelling's explicit discussion of the personal responsibility for one's own individual moral character—even if this character is, at its root, determined—in the Freedom Essay (SW 385-387/PI, 51-52). Schelling illustrates this point with the example of Judas. Judas is responsible for his decision to betray Christ, even if it is something that "neither he nor any other creature could change" (SW, 385/PI, 51). The point is that we are always responsible for our actions, for Schelling, even if elements of these actions appear out of our control. There is no escaping responsibility.

subordinated to the "intelligent or light" principle, overtake oneself.[325] Evil is inflating one's self-interest to the interests of the whole. Because the dark and light, or the unconscious and conscious, principles do not separate in animals, they do not have the capacity to do evil (SW VII, 372/PI, 40). Animals are therefore not morally responsible or capable of a higher "personal unity" (and therefore moral community). As seen in the previous chapter, this higher unity is made possible through the initial 'lost' unity of the fall of man. Accordingly, "[a]nimals are never able to emerge from [their own relative] unity, whereas man can voluntarily tear apart the eternal bond of forces" (SW VII, 372/PI, 40).

Given Schelling's extensive comparison of South Americans in the *Historical-Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology* to animals in their lack of community, one might rightfully ask whether Schelling truly considers *all* human beings as having the capacity for personhood.[326] Schelling sees South Americans as having no representations of the Gods and therefore stunted in their capacity to freely transcend nature's necessity. As one of the text's translators, Mason Richey, points out regarding this portrayal of South Americans, Schelling is "wrong on his own terms, and being a product of his era in Europe cannot excuse his outrageous racism."[327] Although this is not the place to compare and contrast Schelling's appreciation for certain non-Western cultures, traditions, and mythologies to others, it should be noted that if a group of beings does not have any "trace of religious representation—and thus no trace of

[325] Schelling inherits the language of dark and light principles as the basis of the decision between good and evil from the German mystic Jacob Böhme (1575-1624). The dark principle represents the anarchic unconscious and the light principle conscious, rational, affirmative principle. Rationality, or light, can never completely eradicate and encapsulate the dark. More specifically, Böhme's first principle is a "dark fire," which produces the conflictual movement at the basis of all decision-making—and more generally, all emergence of life. As the unconscious principle, upon which consciousness itself depends, the dark principle is always active. It is the necessary condition for there to be a light principle at all. See Jacob Boehme, *Concerning the Three Principles of Divine Essence*, translated by John Sparrow (London: John M. Watkins, 1910). On the relation of Böhme to Scheling, see Robert Brown, *The Later Philosophy of Schelling: The Influence of Boehme on the Works of 1809–1815* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1977); Sean J. McGrath, "Boehme, Schelling, Hegel, and the Hermetic Theology of Evil," *Philosophy and Theology* 18, no. 2 (2006): 257-85; Sean J. McGrath, "Schelling on the Unconscious," *Research in Phenomenology* 40 (2010): 79-91.

[326] Schelling's comparison of South Americans to animals without community is flagrant and extensive. He argues that the "merely externally humanlike races of South America" live "*without any type of community among themselves,* fully like the animals of the field, in that they acknowledge just as little a visible authority above themselves as an invisible one, and feel as foreign to each other as animals of the same species feel to each other. And they form a people just as little as the wolves or foxes form a people amongst themselves: indeed, they live more unsociably than some of the animals living and working in a community, such as the beavers, ants, or honey bees." HCI 48/SW XI, 63-64.

[327] Mason Richley, "Translator's Introduction," in F.W.J. Schelling, *Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*, translated by Mason Richey and Markus Zisselsberger (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2007), xxiii.

mythological representations," Schelling considers them incapable of personality or community. While this might seem to contrast with Schelling's universal attribution of personal responsibility to each and every human being, it is possible to read the consequences of Schelling's metaphysics and political philosophy against his own racism and prejudices (hence Richley's suggestion that Schelling is "wrong on his own terms"). I will now expand this defence of reading "Schelling-against-Schelling" in view of (a) the significance of the dark ground, and (b) what exactly it means to have "humanity" or the capacity for religion.

Metaphysically, Schelling allots a great deal of transformative power to "the other of reason"[328] and the pure facticity of being—the *thatness* of being—over its existing *whatness* or essence. The transformative power of that which is never fully transparent to thought or reason in Schelling's philosophy (whether considered in the terminology of ground, the indivisible remainder, or the facticity of existence) has been at the root of many of the creative comparisons of his thought with Marx, especially in contradistinction to Hegel's view of Being.[329] This is important because whichever beings or characteristics are associated with the non-rational, anarchic ground are actually capable of disrupting and transforming the existing order. The implication is that those cultures whose forms of community and ways of life did not fit into what was historically perceived to be rational at Schelling's time could have transformative potential in the future. Alison Stone, for example, makes note of this transformative, "generative" power of the dark ground in relation to a strengthening of the female principle the *Freedom Essay*.[330] Politically, as explained in detail in Chapter 5, Schelling sees all natural hierarchies as capable of being superseded and replaced by a higher form of society with qualitatively different relations between beings. This replacement of natural relations with a voluntary community is an important part of Schelling's eschatological view of history. Due to the role of contingency in history, Schelling himself cannot determine the form of unified,

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[328] Richley, "Translator's Introduction," xxiii.

[329] See, for example, Frank on the "real" and "unprethinkable" ground of being in Frank, "Schelling's Critique of Hegel and the Beginnings of Marxian Dialectics," 260, and Frank, *Der unendliche Mangel an Sein,* 216-240; and Dussel on the "creative source of Being," Enrique D. Dussel, "Marx, Schelling, and Surplus-Value," *International Studies in Philosophy* 38, vol. 4 (2006): 59-69, here 63-66.

[330] Alison Stone, "Nature, Freedom, and Gender in Schelling," *in Schelling's Philosophy: Freedom, Nature and Systematicity*, ed. G. Anthony Bruno. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020, 178-180. Stone is nevertheless critical of Schelling's commitment to the male/female binary and his unproblematized association of the rational and the understanding with the male principle and the irrational and material with the female principle. She furthermore criticizes that the transformative possibility contained within the 'maternal' ground (especially as developed by Žižek) is always defined over and against an existing 'male-defined,' order (Stone, "Nature, Freedom and Gender," 180-183). It is noteworthy that Schelling does not deny women rationality or the possibility of personhood.

communal relations, and therefore also the capacity for personality, for future generations in different historico-political circumstances—even if he doubts the "original unity and community of consciousness" of South Americans. Moreover, as James F. Depew argues, Schelling overlooks the form of "humanity" specific to Amerindian mythology. He also does not discuss the potential for "spiritual becoming," the contingency of relationships, and the possibility for "revelation" within Amerindian thinking—all points which could bring the latter into dialogue with Schelling's philosophy of history.[331]

We have examined the difference between the concepts of the individual and the person, and identified the split in principles that creates the condition for personality and freedom. The state's specific role in this process is to create, in real terms, the first condition of morality through securing the natural right to freedom within a legal framework in which all individuals can be held responsible. In a natural state, Schelling maintains, if such a thing were possible, there would be no responsibility. In "a state of nature there can be neither moral freedom, nor blame or responsibility" (SW XI, 536/PRP, 110). The highest expression of personhood is love, but the basic condition for its development is the security of a "moral disposition." The moral disposition is the freedom to positively self-determine; every individual has the right to this, and if I violate the basic right to freedom of anyone else, there must exist a legal order in which I can be held responsible for having done so. This is the first and most basic notion of responsibility in Schelling's philosophy.

The state can thus be said to grant us freedom *from* the threat and rule of others over our actions (which is different than the freedom *to* self-determine). *Legal* responsibility is different from interpersonal, or moral, responsibility. The arena in which moral freedom—or the individual, self-determination characteristic of the journey to personhood—can be exercised by individuals on their way to personhood is established by the state. However, the pull of evil still persists in each of us. Schelling sees our temptation to strive to exist without another to be an inherent part of who we are. But the solution is not simply willing the categorical imperative, for the universal, however necessary or rational, can never satisfy the person. This explains why, despite his commitment to Kant's moral law and the value of universalizing one's moral action, Schelling's critiques the sufficiency of the moral law as a sufficient formula for the individual to

[331] James F. Depew, "Schelling's Philosophical Ethnology: History, Mythology and the Question of South America,'" *Analecta Hermeneutica* 5 (2013), 23.

follow in order to live a virtuous life (SW XI, 535/PRP, 109). In a word, the moral law is inadequate because the person's total fulfilment of themselves, the personal good, could never be universal. After explaining Schelling's final concept of the state in detail below, I will examine Schelling's proposal for how we ought to develop as persons by willing the universal through the contextualized exercise of virtue.

The Rational Order and the Gospel

In Chapters 1 and 2, we examined the concepts of the state as an organic whole and as a mechanically-functioning 'second nature.' Nearly five decades later, in the final lectures of the *Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy*, Schelling settles on a final model of the state as a realization of a rational order. This state retains the function, presented in the 1800 *System of Transcendental Idealism*, of the ground of positive freedom. Schelling explains that the state is the "foundation, assumption, entry-point" to the "higher development" of personhood and the voluntary community (SW XI, 553/PRP, 122). In this section, I will reconstruct this final, rational structure of the state and explain its relationship to the Gospel, more specifically to the promise of redemption and recapitulation of lost unity through Christ. The state, the late Schelling argues, cannot bring about the complete and perfect unification of human beings with each other and the divine, for it only unifies us provisionally and externally in precarious, earthly conditions.

In the last three lectures of the *Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy,* Schelling suggests the state is rooted in a rational, intelligible order that precedes consciousness and human existence (SW XI, 528/PRP, 105). The state itself, Schelling claims, is the initial act of reason as it becomes practical in real terms (SW XI, 538/PRP, 112). Schelling defines it as "the intelligible order itself become factual in the face of the factual world" (SW XI, 550/PRP, 120). Here Schelling maintains his very early thesis of the *System* that the act of the state's inauguration precedes human experience and therefore "cannot be investigated," that is, "does not allow itself to be drawn into the circle of experience as an object of research" (SW XI, 538/PRP, 112). Moreover, the organization of content in the state is determined by reason—not the reason as exercised by any particular individual, but "reason that is nature itself, the abiding totality of what truly is which stands above merely phenomenal being" (SW XI, 538/112). Despite the primacy of reason in Schelling's concept of the state, we should not miss his emphasis on

contingency and his repetition of his view, put forth in 1810, that the realization of the perfect state is impossible, due to the human nature and the role of contingency in the state's development (SW XI, 538-539/112).

Schelling states that the intelligible order "persists in [actuality] and imposes itself on the will that has become autonomous and self-acting as a law" (SW 528/PRP 105). But what is the nature of this rational, intelligible order, which the state instantiates the law in reality? The intelligible order, insofar as it concerns the state, can be characterized by (a) the Idea of the human that includes the innumerable possibilities for human individuation (possibilities that are mutually exclusive once actualized),[332] and (b) the law that "does not allow anyone to override the measure of his due right," thereby making it "possible for each and every one to exert their will" (SW XI, 529/PRP, 105). The fact that we all have the same right to self-actualize as human beings, or to become singular expressions of the Idea, means that the natural right to negative freedom is already embedded in this intelligible order, which predates the existence of human beings. The possibility of difference is inherent in the Idea of the human in the intelligible world, but each of us can only actualize one possibility. Each individual thus, on Schelling's account, has a place both in the sensible and in the intelligible worlds (SW XI, 528/PRP, 105). In the purely intelligible, the human being is only Idea or potentiality. There are many theoretical ways that the individual could become concrete. But once the individual actually exists, he leaves many possibilities unfulfilled—possibilities that are in turn fulfilled by others. This creates a first community of existing human beings who complement each other, albeit hierarchically, through

[332] It is hard to miss the Platonic roots of the late Schelling's view of the rational state, grounded in an intelligible order of Ideas. In Chapter 1, I explained the oppressive consequences of Schelling's earlier view of the Platonic state in the Identity Philosophy. Schelling himself realizes the impossibility of realizing such a state in the *Stuttgart Seminars* (SW VII, 462/SS, 227). In the latter he suggests we should not attempt to really implement Plato's concept of the state, for it presupposes conditions that are only possible through the divine (SW VII, 562/SS, 227). The later return to a view of the state grounded in the intelligible thus might raise alarms. However, the late Schelling views the community as a realm in which we can overcome our original determinations (or "rank") in the natural order through our voluntary activity. Schelling's engagement with Plato started during his youngest days at the *Tübinger Stift*, at which he wrote his famous essay on Plato's *Timaeus* (see "Schelling, Timaeus." Translated by Adam Arola, Jena Jolissaint, and Peter Warnek. Epoché 12, no. 2 (2008): 205-248, as well as the recently translated "Schelling's Plato Notebooks, 1792-1794," translated by Naomi Fisher, *Epoché* [2021], https://www.pdcnet.org/epoche/content/epoche_2021_0999_8_30_203). For more on the influence of Plato on the early Schelling, see Frederick C. Beiser, *The Romantic Imperative: The Concept of Early Romanticism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006). Throughout his middle and late periods, Schelling continues to draw on Plato to establish the positivity of non-being or *me-on* (See SW 326/AW3, 94) and to explain the productive, creative power of 'holy necessity,' which I discuss in terms of Plato's *Ananke* in my conclusion (PR, 129). On the relation of Schelling's metaphysics to neo-Platonic interpretations of matter and transcendence. See Tyler Tritten, "On Matter: Schelling's Anti-Platonic Reading of the Timeaus," *Kabiri* 1 (2018), 93-114 and McGrath, *The Turn to the Positive*, 54-58.

the realization of mutually exclusive possibilities. But, we ought to remember, on Schelling's account, this first, naturally-realized human community—the one which needs the state—will ultimately be transformed through the achievement of a non-hierarchical, voluntary community.

The intelligible order is transformed through human activity into the "factual power" of the state. The requirements for its presence in the real world, on Schelling's account, are natural differences between human beings, or "inequality" (SW XI, 529/PRP, 105). In this now factual order, the categories of ruler and ruled, subjugated and dominated, server and served exist inevitably and everywhere. In short, so long as we live within this age of the world, we live within the boundaries of a factual, legal order, which relies on relations of domination and subjugation. This order exists through the concrete fulfillment of singular possibilities of the intelligible Idea of the human being, and yet involves the guarding of the natural right of the freedom of each individuated human being. This leads to many questions. Is the rational state really all that different from the organic state, in which each of us were destined to fulfill predetermined roles? Does Schelling provide a defense of natural hierarchy that justifies oppression based on one's rank on the pyramid? Schelling does say, after all, that we "stand apart from the other, from birth onwards, by virtue of the fact that the one rules while the other is ruled" (SW VII, 530/106). Moreover, he claims that despite our desire to all equally occupy the same "rank," it is nevertheless "a futile effort to set aside differences that, instead of first deriving from the world of freedom, were already designated in the intelligible world and hypothetically predetermined by the idea" (SW XI, 530/PRP, 106).

I hold that the moral quest to become a person who is best capable of serving the totality of humanity may offer us possibilities to transcend our determined positions in the natural hierarchy of being that seems to be embedded in the first human community which enters into involuntary relations in the state. If we consider the capacity of each individual to develop into a moral person in the manner described in the Freedom Essay together with Schelling's emphasis on the value of mutual servitude in the *Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy*, we can infer that our exact places in an earthly hierarchy of being are not fixed. The state, our personalities, and our historical conditions change over time. As we improve our ability to use reason to serve the whole in pursuit of virtuous living, we can ascend in our position in the hierarchy. This is because, "he who rules the most, is he who serves the most" (SW XI, 529/PRP, 105). As we serve others, we elevate ourselves in the relationship to the whole or totality. The

"idea of the human" as the "purpose of nature" can be fulfilled "only by the totality" (SW XI, 529/PRP, 105). This whole, or totality, Schelling states, is our final goal. We could presume this goal to be the establishment of the final, voluntary community of free beings, in which all members serve one another. Schelling describes totality in the context of natural hierarchy as follows:

> As such, the end goal can only be the totality. In regard to it, all people cannot be of equal rank, but only of a higher or less worth, depending on whether the material they draw from is closer or further from the centre point. The more the common element lives in them, the higher they stand; the more they act only for themselves, for their individual aims and for their own preservation, the lower. A person is elevated and ennobled in relation to how much he or she serves the totality (SW XI, 529/PRP, 105).

The more dedicated one is to the service of the whole, that is, the more one can raise oneself to represent the universal for all and serve as many others as possible, the higher worth one has. The raising of oneself to a higher stage through virtuous action that, in overcoming the dark ground within oneself, serves the whole is exactly what Schelling describes as the journey of personhood towards love in the Freedom Essay. In the latter, Schelling is clear that this is a struggle to elevate oneself through "freedom as that which is above the creaturely." We are constantly pulled back down towards "what is creaturely" and natural (which he compares to the temptation of the "irresistible song of sirens," for example) (SW VII, 381/PI,47). This constant taming of one's own self-will is required in order for love to be possible. Schelling explains that the dark ground "continues to be incessantly active in individuals … [and] arouses individuality and the particular will precisely so that the will of love may appear in contrast" (SW, 381/PI,47).

The striving to be one with the universal will in the course of the development of personality is described by Schelling through analogy to centre and periphery—the language of which was repeated in the quote above. By remaining in the "*centrum*" of all wills (i.e., ensuring my will is "one with the primal will of understanding"), rather than isolating myself at the periphery, I develop as a person. Self-actualization thus requires the elevating of oneself to the universality of spirit. By constantly subordinating the self-oriented ground that is within myself to the universal, I improve morally (SW VII, 364/PI,33).

Schelling's view of the role of servitude and the subordination of one's particular will to the universal good also applies to our care for future generations. This point could have important consequences for contemporary ways of thinking about the climate crisis. Schelling writes, "No one complains that his actions are beneficial to those living later. In truth one would not feel demeaned, but rather elevated, if one were justified in regarding himself as born not for himself, but for the whole" (SW VII, 529/PRP, 105). We are therefore *not* predestined to occupy one static place within individuated being, but to improve ourselves, overcome our self-oriented habits and vices, to serve humanity as best we can as we develop into persons. Although we all display different personality traits, are tempted by different inclinations, and occupy different roles in society, as instantiations of the intelligible Idea, in our *potentiality* as persons, we are all equal.

In short, there is contingency in the development of the state. Moreover, in stark contrast to the organic state, eventually this factual, legal order will be replaced with the voluntary community—the "universal church"—which is above it. As Schelling writes in the *Stuttgart Seminars,* the state ought to be "progressively divest[ed] of the blind force that governs it." (SW VII, 465/SS, 229). Through the cultivation of moral character and the promotion of religious principles *within* the state (which are not combined with the law or governance of the state), the community can eventually rise above it (SW VII, 465/SS, 229).

Schelling's presentation of the state in the *Purely Rational Philosophy* is unique within his corpus. This is not only due to his description of the abstract nature of the intelligible order, but also because for the late Schelling, the state is divinely willed; it is the expression of a divine idea. Furthermore, the state is a source of punishment and is an order to which we, *qua* sinners, owe a debt that can never be repaid in full. These characteristics of Schelling's final form of the state are illuminated by his references to Luther (to which I return below).

The state and the divine order are so close, and yet so far from one another, that Martin Schraven describes Schelling's final presentation of the state as a disguised God (*der verstellte Gott*).[333] According to Schelling, through reason, humans instantiate a legal order

[333] Schraven, *Politik und Revolution,* 177, quoted in Gabriel, *Der Mensch im Mythos,* 324. Schraven draws, as noted by Gabriel, a link between Schelling's "philosophy that the state is the disguised God" and the thesis that rebellion against the state is a transformation of "the revolt against God" (Schraven, 177, Gabriel, 324). Gabriel's summary and supplementing of Schraven's general thesis on Schelling's view of the human being is helpful here. According to Schraven, Schelling, in the full *Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy*, is only interested in the human being as an *intelligible* being. According to Gabriel, this is correct from the point of view of the negative philosophy

(*Rechtsordnung*) for themselves as a replacement for the unity lost in the fall. Because it originates in the intelligible world and is brought about through reason, on Schelling's account, this legal system is immemorial, even though its material instantiation happens in time (SW XI, 550/PRP, 120).[334] This allows us to make sense of Schelling's otherwise obscure claim that the state is an "external order of reason equipped with coercive power," which "materially considered, is a sheer fact, and has only a factual existence. But it is *sanctified* by the law that lives in it (SW XI, 533/PRP, 108). The law itself, which is "sanctified (*geheiligt*)" by the state, "directly originates and emerges from the intelligible world" (SW XI, 533/PRP, 108). The universal, absolute nature of intelligibility, and its application to the unruliness of real-world activity, is the closest that the human being can come to God. But even the best possible order that human beings could bring about through reason does not substitute for the living, acting God. As I explain below, this is because the state itself cannot (a) provide us with a desire to be moral, or (b) redeem our sins, or more generally, close the distance that separates us from God.[335]

The state as a legal order functions to unify human beings *externally.* It thereby functions as a temporary replacement for the internal, perfect unity with God (and totality) that was lost in the fall. The state, as a second nature, can be seen as bringing us closer to God, if we understand it as that which was established through reason to stabilize our precarious conditions on earth and guarantee everyone's natural right to freedom through the best possible means. The sin of the first human being leads humanity to a turn inward, towards selfishness and self-love, away from God. Because of this turn inward, the human being "*step[s] to the side of the other* [of that which is, *des Seyenden*]" (away from the aforementioned *centrum*), and in so doing, "*has made*

(or rational philosophy), but Schelling puts an equal importance of the human being's determination in real terms in the positive philosophy (philosophy of revelation and history). Gabriel, *Der Mensch im Mythos,* 322.

[334] Schelling explains that the state's origin in the intelligible world means that it "has a root in eternity and is the *enduring*, never-to-be-abolished [*nie aufzuhebende*] and no-more-to-be-investigated *ground* [*Grundlage*]of all human life and all further development." SW XI, 550/PRP, 120.

[335] It is therefore not an easy question whether the late Schelling sees the state as positive or negative, as it depends on our expectations of the role of the state. For this reason, I disagree with Habermas' position that Schelling's last form of the state contradicts his early political philosophy, namely because, on Habermas' account, he has moved from a negative view of the state, which has anarchist undertones, to seeing the state has "healing power" against the "perversion" of the fall of man (Habermas, "Dialectical Idealism," 46). The state in the 1810 *Stuttgart Seminars* and the 1847-1852 *Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy* are compatible insofar as Schelling never advocates for a revolutionary abolition of the state. In 1810, he sees the state as a *necessary* "curse" (SW VII, 461/SS, 227). In 1847-1852, he simply iterates the possible rational basis of such a 'necessary curse,' why we need it, and how we might improve it. When Schelling claims in the latter that we must "preserve" the state (SW XI, 550/PRP, 120), one can assume this preservation is only insofar as it remains an undesirable necessity for us in the absence of the attainment of the true unity with God.

himself subject to the law" (SW XI, 530/PRP, 106). By straying from the universal, and subsequently reconstituting its own universally-applicable, rational order through the state, human beings wilfully subject themselves to it.

As a result, to some (specifically, "those who know nothing of God"), the state may seem to be "an independent, self-enthroned power" (SW XI, 530-531/PRP, 106). These individuals may "elevat[e]" the law to God's "equal," insofar as the state appears as a transcendent power and "source of natural law [*Recht*]" (SW XI, 531/PRP, 106). But, Schelling is clear, state law is not divine law. The state is in fact independent from God. Therefore, it does not bring about inner unity or divine justice. There is a higher, divine order above the intelligible order—an order which begins in the "pure thatness" of God, (a^0) and out of which humans are "created" (SW XI: 570/PRP, 134; SW XI, 528/PRP, 105). This "pure thatness" itself is before all 'potentiation'—and, therefore, the subsequent 'politicization'—of being. As Tyler Tritten explains, "without this prior moment—that in and of itself is actually nothing—actual differences and identity would be impossible."[336] The state, which can only exist within differentiated being, therefore only serves as a ground for the voluntary community insofar as the totality of the highest order does not show itself in finite being. Insofar as the whole of being, including a^0, does not appear for us in time, the state grounds the human community. But it does not ground our destiny to restore unity with God absolutely. It is rather a precarious ground that will dissolve once the whole of being is reconciled with God. Markus Gabriel thus explains that the non-appearing status of a^0 –the true origin of all being in God—presents a "case of ontological irony" in relation to the state: "The state is therefore the disguised ground of the whole [*der als solcher verstellte Grund des Ganzen*], a case of ontological irony insofar as Being

[336] Tyler Tritten, "Schelling's Doctrine of the Potencies: The Unity of Thinking and Being," *Philosophy and Theology* 24, vol. 2 (2012): 217-253, 218. In this article, Tritten reconstructs Schelling's famous metaphysical doctrine of the three potencies which logically proceed a^0, as the pure thatness of being. He summarizes the three as follows: "A^1 is simply *Seinkönnendes* (the allness of what can be), A^2 *das Seinmüssende* (that which must be) *or das nur Seinkönnende* (that which can do nothing other than be) and A^3 *das Seinsollende* (that which ought to be) *or das sich selbst nicht verlieren Könnende* (that which cannot lose itself)." Tritten, "Schelling's Doctrine of the Potencies," 223. Thomas Buchheim offers a sustained, in depth reconstruction and analysis of Schelling's potencies in Buchheim, *Eins von Allem: Die Selbstbescheidung des Idealismus in Schellings Spätphilosophie* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1992). For an interpretation of the theory of potencies as a theory of predication with important epistemological consequences, see Wolfram Hogrebe, *Prädikation und Genesis: Metaphysik als Fundamentalheuristik im Ausgang von Schellings* (Franfkurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1989).

does not manifest itself in it as such."[337] The state can only serve as a relevant ground for the construction of the voluntary community, not as an absolute ground for redemption.

We can consequently conclude that it is God, not a natural hierarchy or the state, who will ultimately allot the human being her rightful place in totality. On Schelling's account, it is through Christ that human beings are brought to their final destination.[338] Schelling is clear on his views of the general resurrection and the place of the human being with God in his 1841/1842 *Philosophy of Revelation*, in which he states that the "re-assumption of human form in Christ mediates the general resurrection. We have all died with him and thus will be resurrected with him. *However, for those who do not die with him, the moment of death will be enduring; it will become an eternity*."[339] On Schelling's account, only God, through the son, can bring the human being to his rightful place within the whole; there is no belief in universal salvation. Schelling also describes our collective challenge before the general resurrection to bring about the inner unity of the voluntary community on earth. Such a challenge is beyond the state. "After an extra-divine world is bettered in Christ, the goal can only be to represent and make externally visible the internal world, as it was originarily intended to be. Therein the Christian view distinguishes itself from all rational philosophical views, which do not know of any true goal or appeasement [*Beruhigung*] for the more distant Being" (PR, 304). As Schelling discusses in the *Stuttgart Seminars,* this task can be accomplished through religion and love. Religion is the "inner, supreme blessedness of [our] temperament and spirit" (SW VII, 473/SS, 235-6). After the achievement of the voluntary community, Schelling believes that history will come to an end with the unveiling of a "new heaven and earth," as "promised by Christ, and, according to Peter" (PR, 304-305).[340]

The individual who wishes to find his identity and satisfaction in reason, or more specifically, in the impersonal law, accordingly ends up dissatisfied.[341] The law cannot satisfy him as a person. Moreover, the state is not liberating for the individual, but a source of

[337] Gabriel, *Der Mensch im Mythos,* 323.
[338] See John 13:3, 1 Cor 15:28, Ephesians 1:10.
[339] Schelling, *Philosophy of Revelation,* 313.
[340] Schelling states that fallen humanity can expect a "new heaven and a new earth after the last κρίσις [crisis]," as "promised by Christ, and, according to Peter." In this heaven and earth, the human being will "partake, without forsaking himself, in the joys that were meant for him originally." PR, 304-5.
[341] Gabriel is helpful here: "To the person who wants to be like God, his original and thus unavailable relation to Being appears to him as the law, which is indeed irremovably inscribed in him, but in which he cannot find himself again as an individual." Gabrie, *Der Mensch im Mythos,* 323.

punishment. Although it grounds the voluntary community by securing negative freedom and, correspondingly, establishing legal responsibility, it does not recognize or cater to the individual. The state, on Schelling's account, does not and should not directly contribute to our individual flourishing, or positive freedom. Schelling explains, "the state is not established to cater to or reward the I, but rather for its punishment" (SW XI, 547/PRP, 118). It is noteworthy that the moral law also has an impersonal, disciplinary function (see below).

Schelling also associates the state with a debt owed. Continuing his explanation of the state's punishment role, Schelling writes, "What [the state] demands, we owe it, i.e., it is a debt which we must repay or clear. One can say: the intelligible order of things, from which a person has detached himself, is transformed into a debt owed to the state" (SW XI, 547/PRP, 118). This statement may be interpreted in the light of Luther's description of the debt sinners owe God, together with the comparison between God and the state outlined above. After the fall, sin against God is transformed into a debt owed to the legal order, which attempts to restore basic equality through the law. The law of the state, on one hand, and, on the other, God's ethical will, or the Law of the Old Testament, according to Luther, are linked. Sin in the eyes of God, shown by failure in measuring up to God's commandments, together with the inability to secure negative freedom without the presence of state law, are a result of the same problem, i.e., the fallen condition. The debt owed for sin, in more immediate and practical terms, becomes a debt owed to the state as a kind of "second order" of basic unity. It punishes the sinner for having sinned in the first place. Additionally, the same disdain is felt towards state law and the law of the Old Testament. As theologian and Karl Barth scholar Derek Woodard-Lehman explains:

> Luther holds that the role of the law in Christianity is entirely negative. The law is grace-less and gospel-free. In its "first use" (*usus politicus*), law is a "bridle" that restrains evil and secures civic order. In its second use (*usus theologicus*) law is a "mirror" that reveals sin and convicts sinners … Note that Luther uses "the Law" (meaning the commandments of the Hebrew Bible including the Decalogue and the Levitical codes) and "law" (meaning any legal code, particularly one enforced by coercion and punishment) interchangeably. For him, what is true of "law" in general is especially true

> of "*the* Law." He correlates the two through the conception of natural law he inherits from medieval scholasticism."[342]

Woodard-Lehman's explanation of the link between the *usus politicus* and *usus theologicus* of the law allows us to understand all of the comparisons made thus far between God and the state. On the one hand, their common use and negative coercive power as a result of sin shows why the state could be considered a "disguised God." On the other hand, the inability of the law to satisfy, especially in consideration of the relationship between the Law and Gospel, shows us the just how wide the gulf is that separates all law from God himself.[343]

Schelling quotes Luther three times in his most political lecture, namely, Lecture 24 of the *Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy.* All three instances confirm the following statement: "The law is unable to give man a heart that would be equal to the law. Instead, it increases the power of sin" (SW XI, 555/PRP, 123).[344] According to Luther, we feel hostility towards all forms of the law and our blind respect towards it will not fulfill us as moral beings. The law is constantly showing us how, as sinners, we struggle and fall short, and, therefore, it does not satisfy us.

Following Luther, Schelling claims that the law will not bring about peace (SW XI, 555/PRP, 123). This brings us back to the question of the debt to the state, a debt which can never be paid off in full. There is never complete satisfaction and resolution of the fallen condition through the law.[345] The debt owed for sin is a debt passed on to the state, through the intelligible order—the closest human order to God, to whom the debt is really owed. Our debts, on Luther's account, can only be forgiven by God through Christ as promised in the Gospel—not through our own activity within the state.

In his sermon on the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant, Luther explains the relationship of the Gospel to forgiveness within the human community. This would be the type of religious-

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[342] Derek Woodard-Lehman, "The Law as the Task of the Gospel: Karl Barth and the Possibility of an Apostolic Pragmatism," *Journal of Jewish Ethics* 2, no. 1 (2016): 65, 76–77.
[343] In reference to Scripture, Luther claims there are laws we ought to obey, but there is also the promise that Christ will redeem all sins (the Gospel).
[344] It should be noted that this is largely a restatement of Paul's main arguments in his letter to the Romans.
[345] Luther writes: "Why, the Law makes trouble even for those who have the Holy Spirit. What will not the Law do in the case of the wicked who do not even have the Holy Spirit? The Law requires perfect obedience. It condemns all who do not accomplish the will of God. But show me a person who is able to render perfect obedience." Martin Luther, "Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians (1535)," trans. Theodor Graebner, available online: http://www.projectwittenberg.org/pub/resources/text/wittenberg/luther/gal/web/gal2-17.html.

oriented bond characteristic of the voluntary community. Luther writes, "First the lord forgives the servant all his debt. Then he demands of him that he also in like manner forgive his fellow-servant and pardon his debt. This God demands, and thus his kingdom shall stand."[346] Accordingly, Jesus Christ, for our sake, becomes, Luther insists, a sinner, and pays the debt for others' sins which he takes upon himself. In so doing, Christ establishes "a kingdom in which there is nothing but grace, that is to endure forever, that every thing, as often as you sin, may be forgiven; because he has sent forth his Gospel, not to proclaim punishment, but grace alone." [347] In this kingdom, unlike in life under the state where punishment and debt are endless, we can repeatedly "rise" and be forgiven time and time again through grace, "however deep and often [we] fall." Peace is accordingly achieved in the forgiveness of sins through Christ, not through the law.

The state is not equal to God, for Schelling; furthermore, the law cannot forgive sin. The state and its law are a punishment for sin. Ideally, we would not need a state. Moreover, perfect obedience to law, even were it possible, is inadequate to pay the infinite debt we have incurred in sin. Only God can pay the debt. The state, like the law in Luther, and for that matter, Paul, is given to us, not as a means to redeem ourselves, but rather, to reveal to us the infinity of the debt incurred, the seriousness of the situation, and the need for a divine redeemer. Therefore, in and through the law of the state, we cannot achieve peace and justice. As Schelling writes, "Even if one could find for himself what is best in the law (due to the intelligible side of his being, always a possibility), peace would still not be achieved" (SW XI, 555/PRP, 123).

The law, explains Schelling (again drawing on Luther), creates the *possibility* for the moral disposition without thereby *giving* us the motivation to improve our moral character, to love and forgive one another (SW XI, 555/PRP, 123). It is the "spirit of God," not the law itself,

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[346] Martin Luther, "Twenty-Second Sunday after Trinity, Matt 18:21-35: The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant," *Lectionary Central,* available online: http://www.lectionarycentral.com/trinity22/LutherGospel.html.

[347] Luther, "The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant." On the status of Christ as a sinner, Luther states the following: "If you want to deny that He is a sinner and a curse, then deny also that He suffered, was crucified, and died. For it is no less absurd to say, as our Creed confesses and prays, that the Son of God was crucified and underwent the torments of sin and death than it is to say that He is a sinner or a curse. But if it is not absurd to confess and believe that Christ was crucified among thieves, then it is not absurd to say as well that He was a curse and a sinner of sinners. Surely these words of Paul are not without purpose: 'Christ became a curse for us' and 'For our sake God made Christ to be sin, who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God' (2 Cor. 5:21) … He is, of course, innocent, because He is the Lamb of God without spot or blemish. But because He bears the sins of the world. His innocence is pressed down with the sins and the guilt of the entire world. Whatever sins I, you, and all of us have committed or may commit in the future, they are as much Christ's own as if He Himself had committed them." Martin Luther, *Lectures on Galatians* (1535), ed and trans. Jaroslav Pelikan and Walter A. Hansen, vol. 27 (Saint Louis: Concordia and Fortress Press, 1963), 278.

that makes us *want* to behave according to the law (SW XI, 555/PRP, 123).[348] If God did not make humans "equal to the law," through the Holy Spirit and faith in the redemption of sin through Christ, on Schelling's account, we would have no reason to submit ourselves to such an external and foreign power (SW XI, 555/123n77). The law, writes Luther, "reveal[s] sin." It therefore "drives us away from God, but Christ reconciles God unto us."[349] Although virtues can "embellish and ennoble life," helping us to develop as persons, our own moral activity cannot solve constant shortcomings in reference to the law. We can never pay our debt to the state—or even to God—in full on our own. The inability to bring about the end of our punishment under the law points to Schelling's view of the moral impotence of the human being with regards to redemption. Schelling follows Luther in claiming that it is only God, and specifically through Christ, that sin can be forgiven.

The Moral Law and the Importance of Virtues

It was shown above that the state, for Schelling, secures negative freedom for all, so that positive freedom may be possible. In this way, the state grounds the realization of positive freedom for individuals. It is in this sense that it "raises the individual to a person," without thereby completing the individual's journey to personhood, which has only just begun. According to Schelling, the exercise of positive freedom, or the actualization of oneself as a person, leads us to love. Positively free and independent persons, who have learned to subordinate the darkness within themselves to light (which Schelling also designates as the universal and the will of the centrum), can further develop by loving others freely in a communal context. However, they

[348] Schelling's references on these points are, respectively, "the unequal struggle of the man of good will with the overburdening flesh, in chapter 7 of Paul's Letter to the Romans" (SWXI, 555/PRP, 123n75) and Luther's statement: "But nobody can give such a heart, except the spirit of God, that makes the human equal to the law, in such a way that with all of his heart he desires the law," Luther, *Preface to St. Paul's Letter to the Romans* (1522) (quoted in SW XI, 555/123n77).

[349] Luther, "Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians" (1535). In Luther's comment on Paul's Letter to the Romans, cited by Schelling above, he explains the role of faith in Christ in producing the desire to be moral and fulfill the law. "To fulfill the law however, is to do its works with pleasure and love, and to live a godly and good life of one's own accord without the compulsion of the law. This pleasure and love for the law is put into the heart by the Holy Ghost … But the Holy Ghost is not given except in, with and by faith in Jesus Christ … ; and faith does not come, save only through God's Word or Gospel, which preaches Christ, that He is God's Son and a man, has died and risen again for our sakes … Hence it comes that faith alone makes righteous and fulfils the law; for out of Christ's merit, it brings the Spirit, and the Spirit makes the heart glad and free, as the law requires that it shall be" (Martin Luther, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. J. Theodore Mueller [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954], xi).

always retain a radical independence, which they secured for themselves through their contextualized, psychological development. The remainder of this chapter will delineate the path of the individual from the negative freedom to this community of love, i.e., the voluntary community. In this section in particular, I will examine Schelling's view of the human being's cultivation of a moral disposition in relation to Kant's moral law.

The state serves as the ground of this voluntary community by providing the first, 'naturalized' condition of free existence. Recall that the state functions as a second nature in relation to the community. Like all 'grounds' in Schelling's thought, it must remain the correct position in relation to the *personal* entity which it grounds.[350] This highlights the possibility of Schelling's thought as a source of the critique of state-based nationalism. As explored in the previous section, any investing of one's personal identity in the state is doomed to fail. The state is a source of negative freedom, thereby regulating basic human behaviour, and its law punishes us. For this reason, Schelling describes the state as impersonal. It should function like invisible nature and not itself be a bearer of personal values. For this reason, the role of religion in society must be distinctly separate from the role of the state.

The dangers of the overlap of the normative, disciplinary function of state law, when combined with notions of positive, self-determination, are relevant themes which repeat throughout 20th and 21st century social and political philosophy. Isaiah Berlin in particular identifies such dangers in "Two Concepts of Liberty." His critique of Kant's notion of positive freedom in relation to politics in this essay can help bring out the relevance of Schelling's critical appropriation of Kant's moral philosophy.[351] Schelling attempts to go beyond the questions raised by the unequivocal prescription of the moral law through an ethics of virtue, which nevertheless does not give up on the moral law altogether. I will now briefly show the relevance of Schelling's post-Kantian considerations of positive and negative freedom with the help of Berlin before expounding Schelling's interpretation of Kant's moral philosophy in more detail.

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[350] The terms of Schelling's tripartite constitution of personality are: (1) its origin in a metaphysical non-ground (*Ungrund*) preceding and thereby grounding all opposition, (2) ground, and (3) existence. These three elements structure personhood—for God and, in turn, for the individual, who participates in God's creation. After love, the second most important concept for understanding the structure of Schelling's voluntary community is ground, which serves as the basis of all personality. Ground firstly describes the "inner necessity," or unconscious drives and influences, of the individual persons who constitute the community. Secondly, it is the self-will, or desire to be self-contained, within God that he overcame in order to create the world. It thirdly signifies the function of the state vis-à-vis the voluntary community. For Schelling, the individual, God and the community are all dynamic entities that are distinctly *personal*, and that involve a positive subordination of their internal ground.

[351] Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 183.

Berlin highlights the identification of positive freedom with the "resistance to" and "control over" desires in Kant.[352] More generally, he criticizes the supposed potential for individual liberation through self-regulation based on rational principles, especially when these principles become associated with citizenship, as in Rousseau, or nationalist ideologies that claim to free the people of a state. Berlin specifically suggests that "socialised forms" of the "positive doctrine of liberation by reason" are "at the heart of many nationalist, Communist, authoritarian, and totalitarian creeds of our day."[353] Berlin paraphrases his interpretation of Kant in stating: "To rid myself of fear, or love, or the desire to conform is to liberate myself from the despotism of something I cannot control."[354] In view of this, I am only myself when I overcome the temptation to yield to any "lower impulse," for "I identify myself with my rational moments. The consequences of my acts cannot matter, for they are not in my control; only my motives are."[355] From this develops an individualism of the "solitary thinker," who has "emancipated himself from the chains of men and things," which Berlin sees as part of the legacy of liberal individualism. [356]

Although Schelling maintains that we ought to follow Kant's moral law, Berlin's skepticism highlights the need to discuss the positive remnants of embodied individuality in Schelling's morality, along with his answer to the question of why we should work to improve our moral disposition. These two aspects, as I will show, are intertwined in Schelling's view of the possible condition of blessedness. Moreover, in reference to Berlin's identification of the possibility of Kantian morality to result in a recoiling into self-righteous solitude, it is noteworthy that Schelling rejects contemplative life. The contemplative life does not lead us to love, forgiveness, or the notion of an active God who can achieve that which we cannot on our own (which, for Schelling and Luther, is redemption). "God in actuality," that is, God as the active redeemer of a fallen humanity, cannot be grasped through an isolated, contemplative activity (SW XI, 559/PRP, 126). Without such a God, Schelling says, "there can be no religion—for this presupposes an effective, real relationship between God and man" (SW XI, 568/PRP, 132). The humanity that hopes for such a redemption and that works to cultivate a community of

[352] Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 183.
[353] Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 191.
[354] Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 185.
[355] Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 185.
[356] Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 185.

love is beyond no only only state law, but anything that can be brought about by the moral law as well.

I will now examine Schelling's view of Kant's moral law and concept of happiness, as presented in the final lectures of the *Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy.* Schelling's position, in a word, is that while we should follow the moral law, it does not itself provide us with the motivation or disposition to be moral; furthermore through it, we cannot bring about a deserved happiness. The moral law thus does not bring about the personal, voluntary community of love. However, like the state, the moral law nevertheless has a role to play in the individual's development into a person. Specifically, the moral law guides me towards a commitment to universalizing my moral activity and the treatments of others as ends rather than means, which helps me develop my moral character and to elevate the good of the whole above myself.

Schelling endorses Kant's moral law, but the moral law alone cannot answer the question of why I ought to be moral, nor does it coordinate an ultimate state of happiness or blessedness for the moral community.[357] Schelling shares this criticism of Kant with Berlin.[358] Individuals should be free to reject self-discipline in the name of the whole if it brings about a morally desirable end and to develop their own ends irrespective of the promise of any harmony of ends. From a Schellingian perspective, we must constantly be deciding *in context*, which requires more than any imperative can provide. Decisions regarding moral character and what one can hope for beyond the law (specifically, what can liberate us from the law), cannot all be determined by the universalization of maxims. Despite being "unconditionally bound to the moral law" (SW XI, 554/PRP, 122), the 'good' we determine for ourselves as individuals through our moral virtues differ. Schelling wants each individual to determine his own good. The decision for good or evil is not preceded by a pre-existing good or evil, which is precisely why, for Schelling, it is a real *decision*. The individual nature of every person's vocation means that no central authority could possible know what is good for me, or how specifically my personal good harmonizes with yours. Nevertheless, Schelling is not a relativist when it comes to personal good. We ought to

[357] The question of why be moral and cultivate a moral disposition have posed repeated challenges for Kant scholars. For an exploration of questions related to moral motivation and evil in Kant, see Joel Madore, *Difficult Freedom and Radical Evil in Kant: Deceiving Reason* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2011).

[358] Berlin is vehemently critical of promises of the coordination of ends through the application of any moral principle. This includes the Kantian promise of the coordination of our virtue and happiness as the highest good beyond this world. For Berlin, such promises should not lead us to justify the denial of the value of individuality and the plausibility of value pluralism. According to Berlin, there is no "a priori guarantee of the proposition that a total harmony of true values is somewhere to be found." Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 213.

rationally decide for that which benefits the whole and to serve others before ourselves. What that actually looks like as a collective, human good, however, is something that must be developed in context.

Once the individual has *decided* for the good, she enters into a dependency relationship with the community. In becoming vulnerable in this decision, she can serve others and fulfill her own moral vocation in reference to the whole. The virtues she stands by in pursuit of the good are the same ones she is responsible to stand by publicly in the community. Freedom to decide for the good is thus the condition of what Schelling considers to be voluntary, communal relations.[359] Despite this contextualized notion of the good and virtues, Schelling does not doubt the value of Kant's moral law for guiding moral action towards the universal. Specifically, the moral law directs us to behave responsibly towards the whole human community. Schelling explains that it makes each person "responsible for their part in the real achievement of the community (where *no one* can do anything for this unless they all want it, and specifically, not a single time, but always want it and thus cannot do anything else but want it)" (SW XI, 535/PRP, 110).

The moral law is a third type of law, in addition to the law of the Old Testament and the law of the state. A comparable resistance to the moral law is experienced in reference to the Law of the Old Testament and the law of the state. They, too, are sources of constraint for human beings in a fallen condition.[360] All three types of law are for the same reason, namely, moral correction after the removal from God (SW XI, 553/PRP, 122). God is "hidden by the [moral] law, and must remain so, so that the law can be disciplinarian" (SW XI, 554/PRP, 122n73). Both the moral law and state law thus serve a *disciplinary* function, which is not the same as a *liberatory* one. This distinction, on Schelling's account, justifies the separation of the rational moral law and religion. Religion concerns the relationship between the human being and the living God, the latter of whom transcends human morality and politics. In these domains, one experiences the law as unwanted, disciplinary, and coercive. We are "held captive under the law" (SW XI, 554/PRP, 122).

[359] See McGrath, *The Philosophical Foundations of the late Schelling*, vii: "The freedom of the Spirit frees humanity to decide (or not) to participate in the divine production of perfect community."
[360] Luther also saw no "positive" use in prescriptive ethical laws. Woodard-Lehman notes that "in contrast to Calvin and Reformed Protestants, for Luther there is no 'third use' (*usus ethicus*) in which law serves a positive purpose as a guide for conduct." Woodard-Lehman, "The Law as the Task of the Gospel," 65.

However, the moral law is closer to the inner life of the person than state law. It is an *internal* law, whereas the law of the state is an external law. State law leads only to "an external, i.e., factual justice," not the inner justice and love demanded of the moral community (SW XI, 554/PRP, 122). While the moral law cannot bring about this inner justice and love, it *can* create solidarity in the universal coordination of moral activity. It thus brings human beings closer to each other than the law, for it concerns internal deliberations about activity. It requires that one be *active* rather than *passive.* "The state is something with which one comes to terms, in relation to which one can behave in a completely passive manner. This is not the case with the ethical law" (SW VII, 554/PRP, 122). For Schelling, the individual's "internal" relationship to the law is more important than the individual's relation to the "external" law of the state (SW VII, 554/PRP, 122). Its mutual exercise has the capacity to bring about justice between human beings in a much more intimate and interpersonal way than the state. This is why the moral law, as the "internal law that is written in the heart," is "all the more urgent" than the law of the state. (SW VII, 553-4/PRP, 122).

Just as was the case with state law, the temptation to reject the *moral* law, to oppose the universalization one's moral actions, and to live solely for oneself, is strong. The moral law does not display any personal characteristics that would motivate one to identify with it. Like the state law derived from the intelligible order, the moral law, as "a power of reason, … knows so little of personality that it does not even leave an iota for the sake of a person." It is "universal and impersonal" (SW VII, 554/PRP, 122). Thus, while the moral law is another step in the development of individuals into persons, insofar as it raises the significance of moral activity to the level of the universal, it still remains an impersonal, disciplinary, foreign power.

The question of why one rejects the law, and in turn why one ought to be moral, points to the importance of the *individual* in the process of raising moral activity to the universal. As we have seen, even the idea of a pre-personal individual is closer to nature than it is to positive, self-determination. Furthermore, resisting the law is natural. The human being naturally desires to be free of constraints and progressively comes to terms with the fact that the law—especially laws one set for oneself—duty, and self-constraint play a constitutive role in realizing positive freedom and what Schelling calls conscientiousness or religiosity (SW VII 392-393/PI, 56-57). However, just as the law is not enough to bring about the realization of love through positive freedom, following it is also insufficient to safeguard one from evil.

Schelling retains the active possibility to decide for evil in his definition of freedom. The individual cannot purge himself of the dark ground as the potential source of an evil decision. An uncompromising commitment to the execution of the moral law will not eradicate this dark ground. What's more is that Schelling thinks we must periodically tend to the dark ground and revisit its role in our moral orientations to ensure it is not overtaking our conscious decisions. One feels the compulsion of the dark ground every time one is tempted to do something out of line with one's moral character. For Schelling, this darkness within the individual is at the base of personality—not the moral law. The individual is in an active relationship to this ground and should never fool herself into thinking she has definitively mastered and overcome it. Moral improvement requires a certain modesty regarding one's ability for total self-discipline and self-control, and an acceptance of the darkest parts of ourselves, as part of who we are, and as something we have to contend with as we better ourselves.

Disdain for the impersonal law is rooted in the very ground of our personality itself. The active "will of the ground" is within everyone. It is something a person eradicate, is a but is constitutive part of their personality. Not only is the law incapable of completing what is only possible through the Gospel and grace of God, but it also cannot instruct us on how to handle the pull of the dark, which is the "incessantly active" source of evil within us (SW VII, 380/PI, 47). However, the dark ground is not just the irrational drives that must be controlled in the moral life. Schelling radically claims that irrational drive of the ground is the foundation of personality itself. Thus, the dark is the ground of the light. Schelling repeatedly state that good must be raised out of darkness. "All birth is birth from darkness into light; the seed kernel must be sunk into the earth and die in darkness so the more beautiful shape of the light may lift and unfold itself in the radiance of the sun" (SW VII, 260/PI, 29). To bring out what is best in ourselves, we begin with what is *worst* in ourselves—the force which drags one back to individuality and "the particular will." This is required so that "love may appear in contrast." We ought, according to Schelling, to unite our will with God's will to "universalize everything, to raise everything up toward unity with the light or keep it there," instead of giving in to the will of the ground, which seeks to "particularize everything or to make it creaturely" (SW VII, 380/PI, 47).

The first prerequisite to developing a genuinely moral disposition, for Schelling, is to acknowledge, regulate and overcome this dark ground. Part of us strives for the good and an unconscious part pulls us back to darkness. Being moral, for Schelling, means ordering the

former above the latter so that there can be personality and love. While the dark ground is the origin of the will to evil, from the same root emerges the will to good. Schelling uses the terms striving (*streben*) and yearning (*sehnsuch*t) in the Freedom Essay to explain both the recoiling into darkness and the birth into light. This complexifies our understanding of why we struggle so intensively with our desire to obey the law. As suggested above, the closer the individual is to his or her dark ground, the more she feels the pressure and compulsion of the law as a burden (SW XI, 555/PRP, 123). As we develop as persons, not only do we struggle less with the law, but we begin to positively realize ourselves beyond it.

The individual who becomes a person consistently overcomes the pull of the ground that could lead one astray and now strives for unity with the will of God in her moral activity, knowing she is pursuing the good and that any possible source of grace (of a final state of peace or bliss) is *beyond* her control. This may remind us of the insatiable striving in Schelling's very early work, "Of the I." Schelling writes again that the I "striv[es] to escape th[e] compulsion" of the state (SW XI, 547-8/PRP 118). The difference now is that, in view of the differentiation between the Law and the Gospel, Schelling very explicitly does not think the subordination of the dark ground to the universal is enough to bring about the forgiveness, redemption and bliss that only an acting God can provide. Schelling thus expects less of morality, or finite striving, to use the 1796 language, in terms of what it can accomplish. Moreover, he retains the significance of sensibility in moral activity, the importance of which was indicated to him by Schiller. Schelling accordingly directly addresses the need to attend to our feelings without letting them take over our notions of self. He explains that if the self reduces everything "merely to feeling," it "cannot win in us any trust where one is dealing with truth and cognition. Feeling is glorious if it remains in the ground, but it is not so when it steps into daylight, wanting to make itself into a being and to rule" (SW VII, 413/PU, 75).

To summarize, the moral law eclipses the role of personality in the decision for good ro for evil, the root of which is in the dark ground. The closer the individual is to nature, the further away she is from developing into a *fully actualized* person, whose moral activity is oriented towards servitude to the whole. Like Schiller before him, Schelling sees the moral law alone as failing to address embodied individuality, including our natural drives. However, unlike Schiller, who focuses on the reconciliatory power of the aesthetic, he locates the source of the eventual resolution of the disconnect between our universality and particularity, freedom and nature, in a

voluntary community of the future, in which persons are unified in love and in religion. This community is gathered together in Christ as the Lord of Being and fulfillment of the deepest drive of every person towards love.

Aversion to the moral law first comes from the fact that inclinations, feelings and drives are ineradicable. One cannot not pay attention to them when trying to be moral. While we can contend with these and raise goodness out of darkness in our moral activity, when we exercise hubris in the ambition to rise above God as independent, self-subsisting beings, we are led to sin. But this is not to say that our embodied condition is evil or perverted. In fact, our embodied individuality is also important as the condition for blessedness. An 'undeserved blessedness' is Schelling's counter to Kant's claim that by dutifully following the moral law, and thereby subordinating our own individual happiness to duty, we ultimately contribute to bringing about the highest good *on our own*.[361] Schelling does not think our individual morality is capable of bringing about the "highest good," i.e., a state of absolute bliss and restored unity, on our own. Instead, this requires an *undeserved* blessedness, the first condition for which is individuality.

Critiquing the relationship of dutiful moral action to "*deserved* salvation (something proportioned, as Kant wanted)," Schelling explains that for "Kant, who also wants to surpass the law, it is not the I, but only philosophy and proportionality that aspire, beyond the law, to a happiness that would thus be deserved" (SW IX, 567/PRP, 132). Schelling is referring to Kant's claim in the *Critique of Practical Reason* that "virtue and happiness together constitute possession of the highest good in a person, and happiness distributed in exact proportion to morality … constitutes the *highest good* of a possible world."[362] On this account, the pursuit of the moral law by all human beings will bring about the highest good, in which the virtue and happiness of each is distributed in accordance with their moral goodness (virtue). For Schelling, the highest good is in a "true union with God," i.e., a "bliss that would be removed of all particular being and also individual morality. The anticipated state of bliss would be clouded for me if I had to consider it again as an (at least mediated) product of my action" (SW XI, 568/PRP, 132). Schelling's conclusion is that one can only hope for grace—a blessedness that is not

[361] Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 10: "[T]he true vocation of reason must be to produce a will that is good, not perhaps *as a means* to other purposes, but *good in itself* for which reason was absolutely necessary. This will need not, because of this, be the sole and complete good, but it must still be the highest good and the condition of every other, even of all demands for happiness."

[362] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, ed. and trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 90.

deserved. Foregrounding Schopenhauer's pessimism, for Schelling, the Kantian position would lead to "eternal dissatisfaction." The moral impotence of human beings means we can never bring about the state of bliss, the total unity between the human being and the divine, that Schelling envisages at the end of history. Thus, "the only option that remains (and no philosophical pride should hold us back here) is to accept with gratitude that which we otherwise can never achieve but must be bestowed upon us undeservedly and through grace" (SW XI, 568/PRP, 132).

In the Freedom Essay, the unconscious ground contains the seed of goodness that progressively through personal development towards love. "[T]he ground continues to be incessantly active in individuals … so that the will of love may appear in contrast" (SW VII, 380/PI, 47). Individuality is, in fact, the condition of receiving blessedness [*Seligkeit*]—which Schelling associates with redemption—from God (SW XI, 567/PRP, 132). Blessedness is therefore not something individually deserved. One can never fully master everything in the dark ground to the point of its total sublation or eradication. Instead, one ought to curb hubris and acknowledge that the final redemption of the world—the raising up of all spirit to light and the casting out of evil—is not something humanity can do on its own. In the end, the whole world is first made subordinate to spirit and then returned to that which is above it in love.[363]

However, as Schelling explains in the 1810 text *Clara,* one always wrestles with the corporeal, physical drives within oneself in the raising of selfhood to spirit. Undeserved blessedness is not an excuse for moral complacency. In *Clara,* Schelling argues that the spiritual and physical worlds both affect each other (CL, 50). If one receives blessedness or partakes in the general resurrection, it is not because one *deserves* it, but at the same time, something of embodied individuality on earth is retained. The natural basis of our individuality is thus the condition of receiving God's grace. In McGrath's discussion of this point, he explains that in the liberation of essence which occurs in death, "the person does not become less of what he was, but more." Without its "recalcitrant quasi-material core," McGrath writes, "the soul would have no individuality and no possibility of blessedness. But this same dark ground is responsible for all the evil in the world."[364]

[363] See SW VII, 404-410/PI, 67-71.
[364] McGrath, *The Dark Ground of Spirit*, 110.

In the aversion to the moral law and struggles with physicality in this world, human beings cannot raise all darkness into light—*all* evil into goodness. In the end, it is only God who can eradicate evil from the world. Humans need to tend to the pull to self-love. But preaching the blind exercise of the self-discipline of the moral law is also not the answer. In addition to carrying out our moral duty in the Kantian sense, Schelling notes the need to periodically cycle back to the dark ground and revisit one's virtues and moral conduct while recognizing that one can always deceive oneself and slip back into natural inclinations. Schelling claims that an "attempt to step out of this center into the periphery is almost necessary in order to seek there some calm for his selfhood" (SW VII, 381/PI, 47-8). The dark ground serves as a constant reminder that humans are natural, physical, self-contained beings, despite our vocational call to overcome the limitations posed by such an existence. In a word, human beings must return to the physical and non-rational aspects of who we are in relation to the unchecked self-discipline of reason-based morality. As McGrath explains, "[R]epressive moralism is as deadly to the soul as unbridled egoism. To counteract the former, one must occasionally descend, awaken the ground, the madness beneath consciousness, and ensure that our 'virtues' do not become a thin disguise for our vices."[365] The development of personality is two directional: not only must we work to attain higher versions of ourself in line with the universal will of God, but we must periodically return to the dark ground and assess how it is affecting us in this process.

We have tracked the individual's development into a person beyond the law of the state. The journey to personhood is the journey to the realization of positive freedom, which is the condition to enter into free relations of love in the voluntary community. The state established a framework for legal responsibility and the moral law indicated the relationship between responsibility to the community and 'internal,' personal decisions. But the moral law could not explain the role of the dark ground in the cultivation of moral disposition. Schelling's theory of personality showed that tending to the dark ground is necessary when assessing moral activity. Furthermore, physical, embodied existence was also exposed as a condition for blessedness. But Schelling's view of the cultivation of a moral character requires one additional element: the ability to stand by virtues and to represent them socially within the context of the whole. Virtues, on Schelling's account, are the gate of entry into the domain of personal morality from the

[365] McGrath, *The Dark Ground of Spirit,* 111.

impersonal. “With them, there arises above the involuntary community the voluntary and therefore higher community” (SW XI, 541/PRP, 114).

Morality needs not only a universalization of maxims, but a universalization of virtue. Schelling suggests this in claiming that no one can “be virtuous or a hero or generally a great human being on the basis of pure reason” (SW VII, 413/PU, 75). Virtue is demonstrated in specific circumstances, but it is not something subjective or relative. The cultivation of a moral disposition for Schelling is the cultivation of virtues. Morally virtuous persons can relate to the universal at the same time as relating to particular, individual human beings. Schelling claims that virtues are personal (SW XI, 541/PRP, 113), which means they are not developed through the exercise of the moral law, but in relation to who we are as persons in specific contexts. The cultivation of virtue therefore determines how, when, and with what considerations we exercise the moral law.

The state clears a place for the development of virtues. Virtues, not the moral law, are central to the cultivation of moral *disposition* and by extension personality. The moral law does not touch what is personal, but virtues do. Schelling’s virtue ethics addresses challenges which arise in moral decision-making when there are multiple (even conflicting) considerations regarding *how* to universalize maxims. Virtues allow us to go beyond that which we can accomplish through reason alone: “no matter how high we place reason, we do not believe, for example, that anyone may be virtuous or a hero or generally a great human being on the basis of pure reason” (SW VII, 413/PI, 75). Schelling’s explanation of virtue allows us to consider the specifics of the person and the situation when assessing moral decisions which are not universalizable but would be for the good of the whole. The following passage demonstrates just how central virtues are for Schelling’s notion of the voluntary community beyond the state:

> [T]he state makes the individual free and leaves him a place for voluntary (and thus also for the first time for personal) virtues, e.g., that one is fair. Instead of asserting his own right to the detriment of others … , he prefers to give up something himself, even if the law would be backing him. Or one is brave. … Or one is truthful, faithful to his promise, even when he cannot be forced to keep it, or communicative, benevolent, caring. These are virtues that reason alone cannot prescribe or realize. They are virtues that are purely personal and can also be called social. With them, there arises above the involuntary

> community the voluntary and therefore higher community. This is what we will call *society* (SW VII, 541/PRP, 113-114).

The development of virtues signifies what it means to self-actualize as a *person* in a collective, moral context. This can be connected with Schelling's view of the progression of the self through the understanding in the development of personhood.

Despite the necessary attention to the unruly dark ground, Schelling claims that the process of developing into a person requires reason and the understanding. "The understanding," writes Schelling, "develops what is hidden and contained in this ground merely *potentialiter* [potentiality] and raises it to actually [*zum Aktus*]" (SW VII, 413/PU, 75). Duality is the condition of personality: all light is raised out of darkness, and the dark ground is the condition for there to be love. The moral possibilities of Schelling's view of self-actualization have been notably explored by Karin Nisenbaum, specifically in terms of Schelling's view of nature and the "universal soul" in God in relation to the theory of moral perfectionism. Schelling's view in *Ages* is that nature (including nature within us) progressively self-actualizes in higher forms.[366] Quoting Schelling, Nisenbaum emphasizes that "what is highest in nature actualizes the *thoughts* of the universal soul" (SW VIII, 289/AW1 66). Although the stages of actualization of the human being in reference to the wisdom of God can be interpreted differently, nevertheless, it can be agreed upon that for Schelling, self-actualization is an ongoing process of the development of moral character in view of the exercise of virtue oriented towards the good.[367]

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[366] Nisenbaum, *For the Love of Metaphysics*, 197.

[367] Nisenbaum, *For the Love of Metaphysics*, 198. Nisenbaum's comparison between Schelling and Stanley Cavell's forms of moral perfectionism in particular can help us see the value of Schelling's virtue ethics for moral philosophy from a different angle—specifically in consideration of the relation of wisdom to moral improvement in the *Ages of the World*. In reference to the *Ages of the World,* Karin Nisenbaum links Schelling's view of the role of archetypes in wisdom to morality by drawing a comparison with Stanley Cavell's moral perfectionism. Nissenbaum argues that in reference to archetypes in God, wisdom, on Schelling's account following Plato, involves producing copies of the divine archetype. Nisenbaum emphasizes this relation between wisdom and the archetype in relation to personal development, seeing the role of the human being to bring the ideal archetypes into actualization. Cavell himself saw his moral perfectionism as closely linked to virtue ethics (see Aletta J. Norval, "Moral Perfectionism and Democratic Responsiveness: Reading Cavell with Foucault," *Ethics & Global Politics* 4, no. 4 (January 2011): 227, 226). One could challenge Nisenbaum's reading of Schelling's view of wisdom in view of the analogous and reflective relationship between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of the human being found in Proverbs 8, which is directly referenced by Schelling in *Ages.* On this more Christological reading of Schelling's view of wisdom, we would look back to wisdom as a part of how God created the world and initiated the relationship between the human being and God. Wisdom, in the form of a woman, calls out to the human being to listen and behave accordingly (and therefore in line with God—or, to use the language of the Freedom Essay, to strive towards "unity with the light" (SW VII, 362/PI, 32). In heeding the teachings of God and exercising wisdom, the human being has a role in reflecting God's creative mind back to him. Wisdom, Schelling restates from Proverbs 8, existed before the

Nisenbaum connects her reading of Schelling's Platonic, epistemologico-metaphysical theory of the actualization of archetypes to his moral philosophy, claiming that Schellingian "morality consists in each being's attempt to actualize its own natural potential."[368] Moral perfectionism in particular concerns the progressive ascent of the soul to higher stages of the self, emphasizing "personal relationships" and the "possibility or necessity of transforming oneself and one's society."[369] It has a "democratic or egalitarian nature" and asks that we all seek a higher state of self, which is determined "by seeking to know what you are made of and cultivating the thing you are meant to do."[370] This, Nisenbaum suggest, is a approach we can take to reading Schelling as a moral philosopher.

To demonstrate the compatibility of Schelling's moral philosophy with moral perfectionism, Nisenbaum discusses Cavell's twelve criteria of the latter.[371] On the moral perfectionist view's—as well as, it can be argued, Schelling's—the self is constantly realizing itself in relationships with others through love. In short, we need others to self-actualize.[372] Despite the incomplete nature of this journey to personhood or total self-actualization, on Nisenbaum's account, we have no reason to lament, for every form or stage of the self in development is "*always attained,* as well to be attained."[373] Nisenbaum links the ascent of the soul to overcoming our "sensuous nature" and recognizing the ground of existence as the "condition that enables us to ascend toward a higher, further state of our own self."[374]

While this may sound different from certain standard approaches to virtue ethics (especially insofar as moral perfectionism specifies that there is one person, for example, Socrates, who represents the "height of the journey" of the soul for us),[375] it concerns virtue

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existence of the earth. It "*played* .. on what is ground and soil to God. But God's exquisite desire was already in this early time that creature that, because it was the first link between nature and the spirit world, actually mediated the propagation of the attracting movement into the highest movement." Therefore, the *human being* is "the combinatory point of the entire cosmos, and, in as much, one can say that everything was actually beheld in the human" (AG3, 71-72/ SW VII, 297).

[368] Nisenbaum, *For the Love of Metaphysics,* 199.

[369] Stanley Cavell, "Moral Perfectionism," in: *The Cavell Reader,* ed. Stephen Mulhall, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 361, quoted in: Nisenbaum, *For the Love of Metaphysics,* 200.

[370] Cavell, "Moral Perfectionism," 359, quoted in: Nisenbaum, *For the Love of Metaphysics,* 199-200.

[371] Nisenbaum, *For the Love of Metaphysics,* 198–205.

[372] "The transition to the spiritual world that Schelling calls 'Going to God' is also a movement of ascent that is brought about by the reciprocal effect of two beings. … [T]he ectype, or copy, incarnates or actualizes the possibilities that it beholds in the prototype, possibilities that it could not have known without the other, but which it now regards as its own." Nisenbaum, *For the Love of Metaphysics,* 200.

[373] Nisenbaum, *For the Love of Metaphysics,* 201.

[374] Nisenbaum, *For the Love of Metaphysics,* 201.

[375] Cavell, "Moral Perfectionism, 361, quoted in: Nisenbaum, *For the Love of Metaphysics,* 202.

ethics insofar as it emphasizes (a) responsibility, (b) intersubjectivity (values only have meaning in a world with others), and (c) the necessity of virtues proper to the self to serve the good of the whole, but not in a single, uncompromising, representative way.[376] Through commitment to (c), one progressively actualizes higher versions of oneself as a *person.*

To conclude, whether examined from the point of view of a virtue ethics focusing on individual moral character or of a moral perfectionism which focuses on the ascent of the self, Schelling's moral philosophy is able to contribute to contemporary debates on the expectations of individual self-responsibility in the context of intersubjective relationships. The individual can only truly self-actualize by engaging in vulnerable, responsible, conduct with others, as a person who is always in a state of self-overcoming. This process of actualizing oneself, as a self which is always in a state of becoming, is unique to each person. It requires not only that one follow the law—whether divine, state, or moral laws—but also that one develops virtues in different, unrepeatable contexts as one aims to will in line with a good higher than oneself.

[376] "When we each take ourselves to be representative for each of us, we are situated at the center of our life among others. This is because if we are aware of the fact that by pursuing certain projects and forms of life we are making claims about the ends that are and are not worthy of commitment, this awareness should renew our sense of responsibility toward the values that we endorse in living … we are responsible for the claims that we make— for the values, projects, or forms of life that we affirm— together with the fact that others are always free to challenge our own judgments, can tempt us to move from the center of our life among others to the periphery, where the horizon is unobstructed by their judgment. As Cavell points out, the idea that we are each representative for each of us, is a threat as much as an opportunity." Nisenbaum, *For the Love of Metaphysics,* 204.

Chapter 5: Love and the Three Ages of the Church

In the previous chapter, I described the distinctly *personal* character of Schelling's voluntary community. I argued that in the transformation from individuality to personhood, as delineated by Schelling, one becomes increasingly capable of responsibly partaking in such a community. The individual who simply follows the law of the state and exercises the moral law does not express anything personal. However, through the development of personality and the cultivation of virtues, the human being can develop her moral character and practice serving the whole of the community, which itself is distinctly personal.

Persons do not self-actualize on their own. Rather, through free relations with others, we fully become who we are. Schelling calls these freely chosen, personal relations "love." Love is the highest expression of freedom. This applies not only to love between human beings, but also to love between God and humanity. Schelling's presentation of the final voluntary community, to which he commits from 1810 onwards, is built on relations of love between individual persons and also between the three persons of the Trinity—the one God who is three persons, who together generate the movement of history. These two types of love are not separate, for the Spirit in the voluntary community (the third person of the Trinity) *is* the love between human beings. Schelling calls the final form of the voluntary community, solidified in and through loving relations, the Church of St. John. As itself "Spirit," it plays a historical role in the final return of humanity back to God, which is mediated by Christ through love. According to Schelling, God's salvation is the highest act of love: "*In the Creation, God shows his spirit; in the Salvation; his heart.* The more powerful the spirit, the more impersonal it is. The most personal deed of God is the revelation" (PR, 244).

Schelling's final form of the voluntary community is a world church unified by religion and love. This "voluntary and therefore higher community" is presented as a "universal church" that will transcend the state and be unified through religion. Under it, the whole world will be unified in a non-denominational, "invisible," church, which is not limited by citizenship or creed. Through this new form of voluntary community, humanity will finally overcome the natural hierarchy described in the previous chapter, as well as the notion of the church as an institution. Moreover, the Church of St. John represents the first eschaton (the beginning of the end of the world) in the late Schelling's philosophy of history. The latter is a philosophical account of the

progressive, historical revelation of God. As Schelling considers the Church of St. John to be post-political, this church entails ascertaining the limits of possible social progress through state-oriented, political means and aiming for a unification of humanity beyond them. Schelling believes that the significance of this community and its fate (the return to God) is part of a divine history to which humanity contributes, but does not control. If his account of history is wrong, then the voluntary community will be an ideal for secular society that will never be completely realized. This is indeed a possibility. But if it is right, then the voluntary community is sacred and destined for an ultimate unification with God that is beyond anything we can even conceptualize in rational terms.

Schelling's last political philosophy can be characterized as an eschatology, in which the ultimate resolution of history is deferred to a qualitatively different time that is brought about by an event or force external to ourselves.[377] It is not in our power to complete the story of God's revelation. However, we *can* work towards achieving the inner unity of a voluntary community that would be prepared to receive and be transformed by the final events of the world, which Schelling interprets from the New Testament (especially the book of Revelation).[378] The skepticism Schelling exercises towards state politics is not only rooted in his hope for the eventual instantiation of the Church of St. John, but also in his long-held, pessimistic view of human nature. To transcend our condition, we require something more, whether it be a higher power or disruptive event originating from outside the finite, than we can do on our own. The debate concerning the limitations of the potential change we can bring about through the state, and which objects of hope must lie beyond the political, and even the rational, is the concluding theme of this dissertation.

In this chapter, I describe Schelling's final form of the voluntary community, the Church of St. John, as formulated around the unifying capacities of love, religion and Christ. Religion, for Schelling, it is to be noted, is completely separate from the state. I then reconstruct Schelling's delineation of the three ages of the modern history of Christianity, which he calls the three ages of the church. I explain the historical transitions from (1) the medieval, hierarchical period in which the church ruled in and through the structures of the state, to (2) the current

[377] On the distinction between eschatology and utopia, see McGrath, *The Philosophical Foundations of the Late Schelling*, 226.
[378] The Book of Revelation in the New Testament is the key text for understanding the Church of St. John. John was, Schelling writes, "the apostle of the future destined to write the book of Revelation, the only New Testament book of prophecies." UR, 707.

secular age of diversity in which we find ourselves, to (3) the final, fully unified community in the form of a non-denominational, non-coercive, Christian church of the world. I finish the chapter with an explanation of the moral impotence of this voluntary community in view of its inability to bring about the final unification with God the Father on its own, which, Schelling claims, requires Christ. This is the question to which Schelling sought an answer as early as his 1792 text on the *Origin of Human Evil.* Schelling develops this final form of the voluntary community and details its relation to Christ at the end of his 1831 *Urfassung* and in his *Philosophy of Revelation* (in the forms of both the *Paulus Nachschrift,* recently translated under the title *Philosophy of Revelation (1841-1842),* and the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Revelation* [SW XVI, 310-334]). I refer to all three texts to reconstruct Schelling's final version of the voluntary community in this chapter.

Love in the Voluntary Community

The path to becoming a person who enters into genuine relations of love in the voluntary community can be conceptualized in four interconnected stages. The first stage concerns the condition of the individual's free and unique determination of character, the space for which is guaranteed through negative freedom. This development is inaugurated by an intelligible act—an initial, determinative act of the individual's character outside of time (which Schelling appropriates from Kant) (SW VII, 389/PI, 54). From this point, the development of an individual's personality can play out in time. Secondly, the individual begins to develop as a rational, moral being, notably through the exercise the moral law. Although the moral law itself remains impersonal to us, it can be considered as the first step towards establishing a moral community beyond the state. However, a moral community established through the mutual pursuit of rational, moral, self-legislation of independent beings does not yet have the decisive, voluntary, chosen character that Schelling sees as descriptive of the highest form of community. Thirdly, the individual decides for good or for evil. If she decides for good, the possibility opens up to her to positively self-actualize into higher stages of self-development. This requires first, to use McGrath's terms, an 'internal self-mediation,' which in turn puts one in a position to freely relate to others.[379] One must overcome the dark ground within oneself and *decide* to love others

[379] McGrath, *The Turn to the Positive,* viii.

and to exercise one's virtues responsibly. This is possible only through the individual's decision that there is more to be gained through free, genuine relationships than there is in self-enclosed, self-oriented activity. Hence the existential radicality of Schelling's notion of individual freedom. We each need others to realize the good proper to each of us—others to whom we can be vulnerable and in turn who we can love—but in such a way that our freedom is not dialectically dependent on them. In turn, fourthly, one serves the other, holding the other above oneself in a state of vulnerability. In such a vulnerable relation, the individual can reach possibilities of development she could not reach on her own. This last stage is what Schelling calls love. Love is specifically a relation which "links such things of which each could exist for itself, yet does not and cannot exist without the other" (SW VII, 407/FI, 70).

I explain the importance of the relations of love between the three persons of the trinity in reference to voluntary community below. However, before arriving at this final exposition of the voluntary community (the church community which seeks unity with *God* in love), some preliminary remarks on love between persons are warranted. These points will help us see how and why love describes the highest point in the journey of personal development that I have been tracking throughout this chapter.

Love is only possible for beings who are completely free. It is predicated on a real existential freedom which allows individuals to bond with each other without coercion from any sort of law (whether the law of the state, morality or of dialectics). The freely established bonds of love are therefore stronger than the bonds of necessity forged by the law. Freedom is precisely what makes one free to bond with an other. Love is accordingly the unity that can be formed "if, where existential independence prevails, free beings are freely drawn to one another" (SW VII, 64/AG1, 124). Two entities bonded by love, on Schelling's account, must be *able* to exist independently of one another. However, they choose not to. When Schelling says in an association of love, individuals "cannot exist without the other," I take this to mean that love is chosen by individuals who, in fact, *could* decide to be on their own, but in so doing, would not be fully self-actualized persons (SW VII, 408/PI, 70). They would be lesser versions of themselves.

Love depends on the development of the person as someone who is capable of mastering the inner—i.e., inner necessity (determinism)—before she can consider herself to be in a healthy position to turn outward and engage in free relations with others. Love therefore requires the

capacity for personhood, in which the individual can overcome the aspects of herself that are determined (i.e., her inner necessity, or her dark ground). This overcoming, characteristic of the transition to personhood, is, for Schelling, the most desirable alternative to giving in to an egoistic, inward-oriented attitude. The individual who becomes a person attains the capacity to love, because she manages to overcome inner necessity, and subordinate evil and the egoistic within herself. In choosing love, she chooses to serve another, and therefore the good. To decide for the opposite would be to decide for evil, and on Schelling's account, the free human being has the capacity for both. Evil describes an attitude of self-orientation, in which one raises the egoistic, or 'self-love,' to the level of the whole.

Relations of love are the last step in the self-actualization of persons within finitude. Love fulfills our innermost drive toward relationality, but without such relations, we are not to be thought of as less free. Through love, one can reach, to use the terminology of the *Ages*, a higher stage of self-actualization. It is important to note that love is not mediated by universal concepts or structures, and is thus non-dialectical. McGrath accordingly coined the term "non-dialectical personalism" to describe relations of love, structured as follows:

> In love, the beloved still eludes and transcends the lover, and it is precisely because of this transcendence that love as such is possible. In clear opposition to Hegel's dialectic of recognition of 1807, Schelling developed in 1809 a non-dialectical theory of human relations. A person for Schelling is not one who stands in a necessary relation to another person, as in Hegel, but one who has overcome an impersonal and internal necessity.[380]

On Schelling's view, we love one another willingly when we are at a point in our development that we are ready to do so. In serving the other in love, the person stepping into the relationship makes no necessary demand of the other. Non-dialectical, personal relations of love lead to a political life beyond the state. Such bonds transcend all necessity. This means that the love by which we create the voluntary community is a "love that surpasses knowledge."[381]

Examples of love for Schelling are relations between God's three persons (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), and between Jesus and humanity. On Schelling's view of the trinity, the three

[380] McGrath, *The Philosophical Foundations of the Late Schelling*, 96.
[381] Ephesians 3:18.

persons, separate and distinct from one another, are free. They are not bonded by necessity.[382] This means each person is capable of freely loving the other person. The relations are not dialectically mediated.[383] More specifically, all three persons of the trinity resist the drive to self-enclosure in order to freely love the other—to let the other be in and for itself. According to Schelling, God the Father gives everything over to the Son in love;[384] Jesus Christ, the Son, gives the realization of revelation over to the human community through Spirit;[385] and the Spirit ignites the free unification of everything under the Son to return to the Father (PR, 256). These are successive acts of love, which ultimately allow for a free unification between humanity and God. They provide a model for how we ought to direct our actions outward in love, rather than inward in egoism.

However, such divine love also places human love into context. Christ's crucifixion and resurrection give our love meaning, for through loving one another, we are creating the body of the church (the voluntary community), which is also the body of Christ.[386] This means when members of a community love each other, they do so in the context of the history of God's ongoing incarnation in the body of the church. This gives love between human beings a higher meaning. Through relations of love, the voluntary community thereby becomes a church community. Only through religion, according to Schelling, not through political means, will human beings achieve the unity that is the promise of the Gospel. "[T]rue unity," Schelling explains in the *Stuttgart Seminars*, "can be attained only via the path of religion" (SW VII, 465/SS, 229). The goal of attaining such a unity in the future through relations of love and the cultivation of religious principles is shared by all of humanity, Schelling claims. "Man does not

[382] It is noteworthy that Schelling explains that the Son, due to the "action of man," has a position "*independent from the Father*." Therefore, in taking the form of man, Christ is no longer exclusively divine by nature, but becomes "*extra-divine*" (PR, 181).
[383] See McGrath, *The Philosophical Foundations of the Late Schelling*, 101-109.
[384] Schelling describes this 'handing over' as follows: "[T]he Father has loved the Son before the world was created because otherwise there could be no freedom, no world. He values freedom so highly that he makes the fate of his Creation dependent on his freedom. The Father hands the world over to his Son and has no more claim to it" (PR, 182). The independence of the Son is what allows him to restore the "broken" unity between God and creation (PR, 182).
[385] The return of the Son to the Father is what allows for the coming of spirit and therefore the connection between a free humanity and God: "[T]he spirit comes only after the glorification of Christ, having rid itself of the extra-divine Being, after he has been taken from judgment (from the *tension*). It is for your benefit, says Christ that I am going away, otherwise the the *παράκλητος* [helper, advocate] will not come to you" (PR, 261).
[386] Colossians 1:18: Jesus is the head of the body, his body is the church. In Colossians 2:1-2, Paul encourages human beings to be "encouraged in heart and *united in love*, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (italics mine).

exist alone in this word, but there is a multiplicity of men, a *human species*, humanity. The manifold human world strives for unity" (SW VII, 460/SS, 226).

To love is to make oneself vulnerable to one's fellow human being. In the voluntary community, we exalt the other. Love is the opposite of selfishness, and this is why it depends on the dark ground. Loving relationships are not based on reciprocal exchange, necessary familial or personal ties, or on the respect for another's socio-political status. Love, for Schelling, is characteristic of a relationship that transcends hierarchies. Thus, the *political* goal of love is a unification of all of humanity that transcends the law of the state. Accordingly, Schelling often distinguishes a free, higher, spiritual unity from the forced and precarious unity of the state.

Love describes the unity between persons in the voluntary community and it reconciles humanity with God at the end of time in a "general unity" that is "above spirit." This unity is described by Schelling simply as "love, which is all in all" (SW VII, 408/PI, 70). Through love, the voluntary community is the basis of a higher reinstating in the future of the unity that was lost between the divine and man. According to Schelling, the free, moral activity of human beings, who form a voluntary community, serves as a means for the final victory of good over evil in the Christian story of revelation. The voluntary community has a crucial role to play at the "end of revelation" in particular, when the "real," physical community is completely unified with the "ideal" spirit, which is the condition for evil to be expelled "from the good" once and for all (SW VII, 405/PI 67–68). For Schelling, the end of politics and thus of the voluntary community is love. Love is therefore even higher than spirit. "[S]pirit is not yet the highest thing; it is but the spirit or the breath of love. Yet love is the highest" (SW VII, 406/PI, 68).

The Perfect Community in the Context of the Three Ages of the Church

Schelling's final presentation of the voluntary community is a universal church of perfect internal and external unity, which he refers to as the "third age." It is the final of three ages of the church which succeed each other in history. In this age, all human beings are freely unified in love and peace. This unity transcends the state and results in its passing away, as it is no longer needed. In the wake of a strong unification of all of humanity, state law is no longer required to safeguard negative freedom.

Predicated upon a distinction between church and state, this final community, termed the Church of St. John, is synonymous with the final age of Spirit or love. In this age, according to Schelling, every human being will have made it to the non-denominational church completely freely, by virtue of their own will. It is the final form of the human community—the penultimate stage of the history of revelation before God becomes "all in all" (UR, 708; SW VII, 403/PI, 66; SW VII, 405/PI, 68). The "all in all" which characterizes the unity achieved at the end of the world is, in a single word, "love" (SW VII, 408/PI, 70).[387] This voluntary community is therefore firmly situated in a context of a philosophy of history that describes the one and only God's progressive self-revelation through humanity.

Given its theological underpinnings, one may ask whether there are limits to the scope of inclusion of such a community (which is also a church). Schelling's answer is that *everyone* will freely come to this global community of the church (SW XIV, 328/PMR, 334). It should be stressed that all who belong to this final form of the human community belong of their own free will. In the course of its realizations, those who do not join, also presumably do not join by their own free will. But the final, voluntary community is only truly realized once it includes everyone. A unity will then be achieved, with all that lives and with the God of life.

The church, including its final, universal form, and the state are "opposed" for Schelling (SW VII, 463/SS, 228). As they have completely different goals, they should not interfere with one another. The state aims only to secure an external, material, relative unity of broken beings by creating the conditions for negative freedom. The church, on the other hand, seeks to unite the hearts and minds of the people of the world. Schelling claims that it aims to produce "inner unity or unity of the mind," which is "based on revelation" (SW VII, 463/SS, 228). Schelling therefore objects to any political action on behalf of the church. He is opposed to the prosecution of heretics by the church and claims the church should have no enemies (SW VII, 464/SW, 229). He also takes issue in general with the imposition of religion through state means and to theocratic regimes in general. From Schelling's perspective, we are already past the age of the forced imposition of religion—the conflation of the roles of church and state—which he claims was characteristic of the first age of the church and medieval times.

[387] Cf. 1 John 4:8-9: "Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him."

Schelling's starting point for this distinction between church and state is a repeated motif that we have visited multiple times: the fallen human being in nature, *striving* for unity, who must overcome nature to activate that which is spiritual and higher within him to get closer to restoration (SW VII, 460/SS, 226).[388] Unlike in his Identity Philosophy, Schelling is now convinced that humanity cannot, on its own, regain this unity with God. If it did, it would be annihilated and not only man, but *all of nature*, would be completely "immersed in the spirit that has been awakened in man" (SW VII, 460/SS, 226). Nature and humanity are together severed from unity with God. The complete unity of free beings is "only *God*" (SW VII, 461/SS, 226). Fallen from this unity, in conditions of temporality and finitude, humans "search for their unity and cannot find it" (SW VII, 461/SS, 226). Thus, as described above, we try to unite under a state, but within the state we can only find a natural unity. This natural unity, because it can never measure up to the task of bridging the gap between humanity and the divine, is a "curse" (SW VII, 461/SS, 227). For this reason, Schelling thinks *redemption* (*Wiedererhebung*) is the only answer to how to restore the lost unity with God, which created a "gap" that cannot be "bridged" by "man in his present condition" (SW VII, 463/SS, 228).[389] The one who redeems us, explains Schelling, is a personal God beyond the impersonal unity of the state. In reference to the search for this personal God, Schelling succinctly writes, "Person seeks person" (SW XI, 466/PRP, 131).[390]

On Schelling's account, the state and those who govern know that "material" or "natural" unity—the basic unity effectuated by the state in contradistinction to divine unity—is not enough to internally unify anyone. If the state oversteps its bounds and attempts to bring about an inner unity of its citizens, Schelling thinks the outcomes could be harmful, oppressive and despotic. His thesis on the state can therefore serve as one foundation for a critique of nationalism. Nationalism is an example of one consequence of the attempt of human beings to try to combine

[388] In the *Stuttgart Seminars,* Schelling gives a clear and succinct account of how the original unity with God was lost and why all of humanity strives for it: "The true natural unity would have consisted in man and, through him, the divine and eternal. Yet nature has lost this sensitive unity through the fault of man and therefore must now seek a unity of its own. However, because the true unity cannot lie in her but only in God, nature is exposed to a continual struggle precisely on account of this separation from God." SW VII, 460/SS, 226.
[389] For Schelling, "only God himself can re-establish the bond between the spiritual and the corporeal world, namely, by means of a second *revelation.*" SW VII, 463/SS, 228.
[390] This search for the person, under whom persons can be unified and that which is "impossible by the law" can be made possible, is at the heart of Schelling's defence of monarchy as a desirable form of government. For Schelling, the monarch in power must, like God, be a person who can relate to their constituents as such and bear personal responsibility. PRP, 569n2/133.

their desire for spiritual and personal fulfillment with the state, failing to clearly differentiate the two. Schelling accordingly critiques attempts—for example, the French Revolution—to unify "free beings" in the highest form, which is "impossible" and can end in "despotism" (SW VII, 462/SS, 227). Indeed, Schelling believes that if we acknowledge the necessity of cultivating inner unity, it will take pressure off the church and thus calm "one-dimensional" pressures of political tyranny (SW VII, 464/SS, 229). Accordingly, the state cannot restore the lost, divine unity, or on its own forge any sort of inner unity, and thus it should not be inflated to the "whole" (SW VII, 462/SS, 227). It is in such claims that we find Schelling's tendency towards a minimalist concept of the state, that does not attempt to meddle into moral affairs. We require a state because we are beings who are always in between inclination and reason—beings structured by an ineradicable necessity which at times drags us back to our materiality; thus we must periodically revisit and consciously subordinate to materiality. It is an integral part of who we are, of our morality, and our earthly existence.

To say that the church and state are separate is not to imply there is no *relationship* between them. Schelling says the state should promote religious principles within its borders, but not through force. Religious principles, at minimum, are the type of convictions—or virtues, as presented in the previous chapter—which we should be able to represent universally, but exercise contextually with sensitivity (SW VII, 465/SW, 229). In any case, Schelling is clear that the "true unity" of the final age "can be attained only *via* the path of religion" (SW VII, 464/SS, 229).

Schelling claims that religion is the "inner, supreme blessedness of [our] temperament and spirit" which "officiat[es]" the soul (SW VII, 473/SS, 236). Religion includes the *loving* pursuit of "virtue, science and art" (SW VII, 473-74/SS, 236-37).[391] Through religion, which includes the free, responsible exercise of virtue, we can begin to forge inner unity higher than both the external unity of the state and the impersonal inner unity created through the moral law. As discussed previously, this happens as human beings grow as persons. We confront nature open and honestly, realizing we are between the "Ideal and the Real," we begin transforming ourselves through the understanding and virtuous activity to bring ourselves into an Ideal unity. When we engage in personal, loving relations and try, through religion, to "transfigure" nature,

[391] Wirth emphasizes the potential role of creativity in the development of philosophical religion in the Church of St. John. See Jason Wirth, "Schelling and the Future of God," *Analecta Hermeneutica* 5 (2013): 10.

in all different forms, into love, we have reached the highest point possible in this life (SW VII, 743/SS, 236). Religion will therefore outlast politics, and at the end of the voluntary community will emerge in a specific form, called "philosophical religion," which I discuss below.

As mentioned above, the transition from our current conditions to a post-state age is described by Schelling as the transition between the Church of St. Paul to the Church of St. John. These two are preceded by the first church, the Church of St. Peter, in which people are externally united under Christianity, but through the coercive force of law. It is therefore not an age of free religion. The Church of St. Paul (our current age of secularism) successively followed from the Church of St. Peter. Schelling summarizes: "*The Church of Peter represents strong lawfulness; but a church that is free and independent from the exclusionary Petrine Church was intended through the calling of Paul*" (PR, 321). In the future, the Church of St. Paul will in turn be succeeded by the Church of St. John, the universal church of the perfect, voluntary community beyond the law. The pursuit of such a community is a collective endeavour that we cannot force to happen here and now, even if we can aspire for it and work towards it. Indeed, since the non-coercive condition of its existence is the radical, existential freedom of each individual, as a collective humanity, we may veer further from it (and accordingly, further from each other) in the coming years before the time is rife for its achievement. But we are not to sit back and wait. We must stay on the course towards personality and love through virtue and religion as outlined above. I will now say a word about each of the three ages of the church in order to present the final voluntary community—the Church of St. John—in its fullness as Schelling understands it.

As a preliminary note, within Schelling's corpus of work, this development of the history of the Christian church is prefaced by his philosophy of mythology. Schelling characterizes his foray through mythology as "historical-critical." We will find a succession of mythologies, eventually overcome by the Judeo-Christian tradition, as far as Schelling is concerned, with no tolerance for absolute relativism in his philosophy of religion. Schelling claims that the origin of religious consciousness was a monolithic, undifferentiated, naïve stage of "relative monotheism." In this stage, humans were predisposed to having the idea of God without producing conceptual determinations of Him. This was followed by a polytheistic period, in which different peoples experienced different relative determinations of the divine. These determinations evolved in succession through mythology. The process concludes, according to

Schelling, in a Judeo-Christian "absolute monotheism," in which God is understood as one who is complete, but internally multiple.[392] At the end of this development—in which, admittedly, all become 'Christians' by their own volition—Schelling presents the three ages of the Christian church: the Petrine (the past age of the Father), the Pauline (the present age of the Son), and the Johannine (the future age of the Spirit). The Johannine period is the final age of the church and thus the age of the fulfillment of the voluntary community which marks the end of the state.

Schelling's philosophy of mythology has been the subject of numerous criticisms. We have already critically examined Schelling's problematic claims descriptions of the lack of humanity and religious sensibility among South Americans—an issue which has been discussed at length secondary literature.[393] Furthermore, Edward Allen Beach encourages us to exert skepticism regarding the anthropological validity of Schelling's claims, especially with regard to the original, undifferentiated culture that Schelling associates with relative monotheism.[394] Jason Wirth additionally highlights problems with Schelling's disregard of Islamic tradition and indigenous religions in the context of this evolution towards "philosophical religion" in Christian terms.[395] Wirth's conclusion is that the final philosophical religion of the last age of the church should be recast today in "a language that emerges within a broader consideration of the immense variety of living religious experience all over the world," making note, nevertheless, of Schelling's "rare and generous … gesture of non-coercive and radically inclusive religiosity."[396] The voluntary character of the final age of humanity as a community that surpasses the state, and which thus supports a critique of the state and the status quo, gives us reason to be interested in Schelling's philosophy of history, even despite the questionable nature of some of Schelling's anthropological claims.

The Church of St. Peter was the externally unified, hierarchical, imposition of Christianity observed in medieval times. Although it entailed a dangerous, inappropriate mix of church and state, it was nevertheless historically important. As we have seen, Schelling directly critiques the "earlier, hierarchical period" when the church took on the institutional structures of

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[392] See F.W.J. Schelling, *Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*, trans. Mason Richey and Markus Zisselsberger (Albany: SUNY Press, 2007);
[393] For example, Depew, "Schelling's Philosophical Ethnology"; Devin Zane Shaw, "'Animals, Those Incessant Somnambulists': A Critique of Schelling's Anthropocentrism," in *Rethinking German Idealism,* ed. Sean J. McGrath and Joseph Carew, 77-98. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, 82.
[394] Edward Allen Beach, *The Potencies of God(s)* (New York: SUNY Press, 1994), 186–91.
[395] Wirth, "Schelling and the Future God," 10.
[396] Wirth, "Schelling and the Future God," 10-11.

the state (SW VII, 464/SS, 229).[397] For Schelling, this initial exteriorization of Christianity as the one true religion that would unify the world was historically important to set the historical ground, from which the secular age of freedom of inner life would follow. Peter is therefore the "rock," the ground, of the future—an "insurmountable rock on which the church is built" (UR, 679). Schelling compares the "hold" of external unity that the Church of St. Peter exercised over people to the restriction of the "real principle" in nature. It was a coercive unity, which was then overcome by the free Church of St. Paul (UR, 692). Schelling states accordingly: "*The Pauline principle* liberated the Church from blind unity" (PR, 323).

The Church of St. Paul is the age of secularism, associated with the diversity of Protestant denominations and with freedom in the division of cultures, religions, and beliefs. While it is first associated with diversity within Protestantism, it must move beyond all denominations in its secularization. Not only is the Church of St. Paul of a secular character, it is not yet secular enough. We have not yet reached an adequate stage of secular freedom—of religious tolerance and acceptance—to produce the condition for the *free* entry into the voluntary community of St. John, as conceived by Schelling. Everyone will find their way to the latter through their own path, but the divinity first identified with Christ will no longer be exclusionary.

The Reformation is the foundational event for the Church of St. Paul, for it sends each self-identifying Christian down the path of an "internal process" that each "must go through … on their own" (while, it should be noted, in the broader development of history, remaining part of a "common …*historical path*") (PR, 327). This state of affairs could be described as secular multiculturalism. Faith is no longer something imposed upon Christians. Through Paul, the church becomes secular as the Church and state are severed from one another.[398]

Schelling claims this age is also associated with Christ, because it is the age of the individual interiorization of the Gospel and revelation. Faith and belief in the Gospel becomes the Christian's own interior, private affair. We are free to accept or reject Christ and the promise of forgiveness and redemption. Schelling therefore says that the "second church is therefore the

[397] In the *Stuttgart Seminars*, Schelling explains that the state should be the only force of external unity, as the age of the external unity of the church has now passed. "That which is true and divine may not be promoted by an external force" (SW VII, 464/SS, 229). Therefore, the church should not use the state to further its goals (SW VII, 464/SS, 229).

[398] Schelling expresses this effectively and succinctly as follows: "Die Kirche des heiligen Petrus ist in der Stadt, die des heiligen Paulus in der Vorstadt" ("The church of St. Peter is in the state, that of St. Paul in the periphery"). UR, 708.

church of the Apostle of freedom" (UR, 693). It cannot be understated how important the freedom of interiority in the Church of St. Paul is, for, as we have seen, the voluntary community (and, naturally, personality and love) is predicated upon it.

The Church of St. John succeeds the Church of St. Paul. This is the "universal church" united in love under the "apostle of the future" (SW XIV, 328/ PMR, 334). It is without "coercion or authority" (SW XIV, 328/ PMR, 334)). As the realization of Spirit in the world, this form of the voluntary community is characterized by a time of peace. It is united internally, as cultivated under the Church of St. Paul, but also externally in a free, higher form. Schelling states: "*The third period, the Church of John,* is the unity that is willed resolutely and is therefore eternally lasting" (PR, 323). Under this 'church,' there are no denominations, 'religions,' confessions, or even Christianity as we have hitherto known it.[399] There are no Christians and no non-Christians. As the first *eschaton* in which all of humanity is free and untied both in heart and their external action, there is no need for a state or external coercion. All conflicts between cultures, denominations, and nations have dissipated. Therefore, although it is Christian, this church is not of a particular denomination or conceived of as any sort of institutionalized Christianity. Everyone within it has freely decided for love and for unity, and so nothing is inhibited. All of our activity, from the aesthetic to the scientific to religious worship, is united. As Jason Wirth puts it, it is a Church "*of the whole time*," a "Church for everyone and everything—for all things human and the mysterious creativity of the earth."[400]

No one is brought to the Church of St. John through forceful conversion or tyrannical means. It is the absolutely free choice of each individual person to partake in it. Our paths towards this voluntary community are unique and the realization of the community itself is likely to be something totally different than anything we could ever imagine, even within our contemporary references for Christian faith. Therefore, Wirth goes so far as to suggest that we could experiment with thinking of it as "the coming of the Dharma and the great Buddha sea in which the singularity of each and every being is granted its space and time, or the awakening of

[399] Walter Kasper claims that under the Church of St. John, Christianity is transformed into "the religion of mankind." However, we ought to be careful with the use of the term Christianity here. Christianity is radically transfigured into a religion of the future that is in no way oppressive or exclusive, and therefore like nothing we have associated with Christianity thus far. Walter Kasper, *The Absolute in History: The Philosophy and Theology of History in Schelling's Late Philosophy*, translated by Sr. Katherine E. Wolff (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2018), 514.
[400] Wirth, "Schelling and the Future of God," 10.

consciousness to the full expanse of the spatial and temporal life of the earth."[401] However, this Church of St. John, is not a generation of political utopia. While it may have elements in common with post-state, utopic communities of peace on earth, the unity of finite life on earth is not its ultimate goal.[402] Instead, it serves as the penultimate stage of transition in the historical trajectory that leads towards the final return of all things to a single, loving, unity with God.

Creativity in the arts and sciences will have an important role to place in the Church of St. John. Schelling describes it as a community full of persons creating art and pursuing knowledge in innovative, loving, satisfying ways. Christianity is, at this point, perfectly fused with "*general science and cognition*" (PR, 322). This fusion is, for Schelling, characteristic of the type of religion that will emerge during this third age, which he calls "philosophical religion." (SW XI, 568/PRP, 131). Recall that in the third age, the age of Spirit, denominational religion—and, for that matter, scripture—are no longer needed. The Spirit unifies opposites, including the opposition of Father and Son and revelation and philosophy, and brings total freedom. There will thus no longer be any contradiction between human knowledge and revelation and revelation will cease to be something received externally. Every human being will be spontaneously religious and partake in philosophical religion. All will have found faith via their own individual paths to the knowledge of that which was revealed as Christ, permitting "thinking to come to rest" (UR, 411). This calmness of thinking is the "calmness of knowledge = Faith" (UR, 412).

Since philosophical religion does not yet exist, we do not know exactly what it is. However, Schelling offers some general descriptions. First of all, philosophical religion would be the "religion that is called upon to really comprehend the real religions that are either mythological or revealed" (SW XI, 568-569/PRP, 133). All "real religions" thus freely move towards their unification within it. It would use reason, and become one with reason, without thereby becoming *rational religion*, i.e., a religion that tries to understand God within reason or the idea. Instead, philosophical religion would be able to grasp the personal, self-revealing God *outside* of the idea. In Buchheim's words, it would "factually" unify the movements of "negative or purely rational philosophy on the one hand, and the positive philosophy of mythology and

[401] Wirth, "Schelling and the Future of God," 11–12.
[402] For an argument detailing the Christian eschatological roots of certain presentations of political utopia in the history of philosophy, see Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1949).

revelation on the other."[403] This religion will also include creative activity, and see the merging of God, revelation, reason, science, creative arts, and time.[404] In this age of spirit, the unification of ground and existence in all of humanity brings forth "creative and productive" activity in a distinctly *personal* condition. In this religion, the "active principle" of "inspiration" will be at work in "art and science" (SW VII, 412/PI, 73-64). Schelling describes it as a "truly public religion—not as a state church or as a high church, but as the religion of all mankind in which mankind will, at the same time, find the supreme knowledge" (SW XIV, 328/PMR, 334).

As we are now at the end of our discussion of the Church of St. John, a question arises regarding the ability to judge one's own moment within an eschatological philosophy of history. Following Schelling's line of thinking, how will we know when we have achieved the state of unity that liberates us from the now relic of the state, allowing us to transition into a qualitatively different stage of human history? Prematurely judging this to have happened would be devastating in Schelling's eyes: a shocking example of hubris, such a confidence in what we have done on our own could lead us to destroy structures that we need in our precarious condition—a condition in which the dark ground of evil is still active and capable of rearing its' head in each of us, even if it appears to have been subdued. This helps us understand Schelling's reliance on religion. It is not Eurocentric to conclude that we cannot judge our own time or the extent of our finite capabilities (even if Schelling's philosophy of history is undeniably Christian). It is an exercise of caution underlined with skepticism regarding the human condition. As explained above, we can certainly improve our moral condition on our own. But we cannot trust the stability of an improved collective state of affairs.

Human beings will only know we have transitioned away from the division and precarity of our time when historical events start happening that are only explicable by reference to divine activity. According to Schelling and the Christian tradition, these could include, for example, the events and blessings described in Rev. 20, specifically the reign of saints with Christ on earth for 1000 years (UR 706).[405] While the Biblical images of the final reign of peace in *Revelation* present a mytho-theological symbol for the future, it has real-world significance now for how

[403] Thomas Buchheim, "The Method and Structure of Schelling's Late Philosophy, " *Kabiri* 2 (2020).
[404] For a discussion about what Schelling's philosophical religion could be, see Jason M. Wirth, *Schelling's Practice of the Wild: Time, Art, Imagination* (Albany: SUNY, 2015), 49–52.
[405] Schelling seems to refer to the reign of saints with Christ when he writes, "[D]ie Funktion des heiligen Johannes erst anfängt mit der Zeit, in welcher der Herr kommen wird, und die übrigens noch eine große und lange Zeit kann, mit deren Anfang Johannes hervortritt, an deren Ende aber der Herr kommen wird" (Urfassung, 706)

one can think about politics. To have hope in such an end is to relegate the possibility of complete justice and reconciliation of humanity to a different time, possible only through the activity of a transcendent God.[406] This suggests that humanity should adopt humility, and even skepticism, towards the possibility of achieving a perfect state of affairs by its own means. The radical transition into a post-state, miraculous age is a recurring theme in the millenarianist tradition, which was influential for Schelling. Schelling directly associates his presentation of the three ages of the church with the millenarian Joachim of Fiore (1135-1202).[407] Drawing on Fiore, Schelling makes clear that his methodology in distinguishing the three ages is *historical*, not *a priori*. "*I will not move forward by way of an* a priori *rationalizing but by following the thread of historical development.*—I find the views I now present, as well as their applications, to be *strikingly consistent* with the thoughts of *Abbot Joachim of Fiore*" (PR, 317). Fiore presented three distinct ages which forerun those of Schelling: the Age of the Father (the age of obedience to laws), the Age of the Son (the age of the Gospel) and the Age of the Holy Spirit (the age of divine love).

The moment we recognize, according to Schelling, that the historical transition to the third age of the church has occurred, is likely to have already happened. For Schelling, such a historical transformation is the last stage of human life on earth before the total fulfillment of the promise of the Gospel, the idea that the Kingdom of God has come, on earth as it is in heaven. This promise was made through the Christ event, when God, out of love, became man, who in turn, once again out of love, died for the sins of humanity.[408] In so doing, Christ gave to the human community the possibility to realize revelation through Spirit.[409] This is the history of the

[406] The importance of transcendence (specifically, the absolute transcendence of the 'first potency' of God) in Schelling's late philosophy has been widely discussed in existing Schelling literature. For example, both Tyler Tritten and Saitya Brata Das highlight the significance of absolute transcendence, especially in relation to immanence, in Schelling's late work. Tritten describes the concept as a kind of absolute exteriority, comparable to Quinten Meillassoux's "absolute outside." Tyler Tritten, "Against Kant: Toward an Inverted Transcendentalism or a Philosophy of the Doctrinal," *Angelaki* 21, no. 4 (October 1, 2016): 149-50. Das notes that absolute transcendence is one way of describing Schelling's primacy of actuality, or "actuality without potentiality." Das, *The Political Theology of Schelling*, 47.

[407] On Schelling's indebtedness to Joachim of Fiore (1135-1202) in his description of this final stage of history, the "Third Age" of the Church, also known as the "Age of the Holy Spirit," or for Schelling, the "Church of St. John," see Jason M. Wirth, *Conspiracy of Life, The: Meditations on Schelling and His Time* (New York: SUNY Press, 2012), 38–40; Sean J. McGrath, *The Philosophical Foundations of the Late Schelling*, 15, 226; Lenart Škof, "The Third Age: Reflections on Our Hidden Material Core," *Sophia* 59, no. 1 (March 1, 2020): 92.

[408] On the relation of divinity and humanity in Christ, see Tyler Tritten, "Christ as Copula: On the Incarnation and the Possibility of Religious Exclusivism," *Analecta Hermeneutica* 6 (March 23, 2016).

[409] Schelling accordingly states that "*A philosophy of revelation is solely about explaining the person of Christ.* He is not the teacher or founder but the *content* of Christianity." PR, 248.

revelation and the processive identification of God with the world. The "highest stage" of this revelation, which will finally bring the human being back to God, is the end of human history. We are all caught up in this history, which was inaugurated as the divine "defie[d]" itself by becoming human in Christ (SW VII, 463/228). Christ then becomes the mediator of the "general resurrection" (PR, 303).

Precisely because humanity is destined to fail in re-establishing unity with God, human beings ought not, according to the late Schelling, to try to bring about the highest goal of human history through political means. Politics serves a far more modest and practical purpose for Schelling. The fundamental choice is not whether to resolve the conflicts of humanity through politics, but whether to accept the history of God as our own. This choice is a free one, grounded in the same freedom which afforded us the possibility to decide for the good and to unite with others through love in the community. In our current state, we are free to decide to accept the revelation of God through Christ or to reject it. On Schelling's account, it is only Christ that can bring true unity, not politics (or art). More specifically, Schelling maintains that the path towards the restoration of the unity of humanity with God is through Christ, who guides His people in the process of the return of all things to the Father at the end of the world. This is how the final unity between God and humanity will finally be achieved.

Conclusion: The State, Necessity, and Freedom

I have shown in this dissertation that throughout his career, Schelling experiments with different forms of community in relation to the state. His views of the community change over time, not only as he presents different concepts of the state, but also as his concepts of freedom and necessity shift. Notably, I have shown that Schelling presents three different concepts of the state (mechanical, organic, and rational). Furthermore, he advances at least five different concepts of community, in chronological order: (1) the community under the general will, (2) the moral, aesthetically united society, (3) the cosmopolitan community objectively unified in history, (4) the organic community of the state, and (5) the voluntary community of the church. Despite these transitions, Schelling never abandons the necessity of the state to guarantee human freedom.

I have argued in this dissertation that (1) the general will, (2) the moral society unified in aesthetics, and (5) the community unified through religion are candidates for the general concept of a voluntary community. The (3) historical community unified by the objective will in the *System* and (4) the organic community of Schelling's Identity Philosophy were deemed to be too heavily dependent on necessity in history and in the state. As a result, they were characterized as involuntary communities. Although the general will relies on a natural right to individual freedom separate from the state, it ultimately faces a challenge common to the organic community, insofar as it relies on the people of a *state.* Schelling's voluntary community is, in the end, a global community that cannot be limited by citizenship. The moral, aesthetic community, as discussed in reference to Schiller and the "Oldest System-Programme," shares with Schelling's final voluntary community a critical impulse towards that which the state can accomplish. However, in the end, an aesthetic community is insufficient, on Schelling's account, to unite humanity, which requires something more than human beings can bring about on their own. Schelling's final, voluntary community thus begins with religion and love, through which a universal church of the future is brought about. But this church, the Church of St. John, remains an *ideal* church rooted in an eschatological, Christian philosophy of history; the latter defers the realization of justice and reconciliation to a future age. This church is an ideal that we can work towards, but it is also one which requires intervention from something external to all finitude—transcendent—if it is to become fully actualized in all of its glory.

All of Schelling's political philosophy is driven by the question of possible reconciliation of freedom and necessity in history. This theme was present already in the early *Naturphilosophie,* in which Schelling argued that the free action of human beings plays an integral part of the unconscious, yet coordinated development of nature. The opposition between freedom and necessity is later proclaimed to be the most important opposition in the Freedom Essay (SW VII, 332/PI, 4). The interplay of necessity and freedom drives Schelling's metaphysics. We are part of something beyond ourselves, the entirety of which remains at least in part opaque to us. This structure calls us to speculate on what is possible for humanity.

For Schelling, necessity, however conceived, always precedes freedom and consciousness. Politically, he associates necessity with the state. Therefore, to unify unconscious necessity and the conscious exercise of freedom, Schelling must, in each of his attempts, pass through the state to arrive at moral philosophy. As we have seen, the state is most often presented by Schelling as an extension of nature. It further establishes necessary conditions for the exercise of freedom to be possible. Moral philosophy, on Schelling's account, is where free activity plays out through the cultivation of virtues and free exercise of love. But he has repeated trouble with how far moral philosophy on its own can bring us. This causes him to turn to transcendence.

But it is not enough for Schelling for freedom to be unbridled, uncoordinated activity. It always has a role to play in the metaphysical and historical system that Schelling is developing at a given time. In the early *Naturphilosophie,* our free activity in the domain of "natura naturata," partook in the becoming-manifest of the hidden potentiality of nature—"natura naturans." We participate in the teleology of nature progressively reaching higher, potentiated stages. Subsequently, free activity in the *System* unconsciously contributes to the realization of the objective will of history, which, in its immanent activity, brings about providence at the end of history. In the Identity Philosophy, freedom and necessity are identified with one another. As a result, the necessity of reason guides us to freely occupy predetermined roles in the state to bring about the good of the whole, understood as the organic functioning of society.

Once Schelling turns towards the notion of a transcendent God between 1806 and 1809, he makes a lasting decision about the relationship of necessity to freedom. Necessity persists inside each of us and is linked to our materiality and the possibility of evil. With this thesis,

Schelling has found resonances with materialists[410] and relevance for accounts of the relation of embodied finitude to transcendence in everyday life.[411] We are equally free, in Schelling's Philosophy of Freedom, to choose love or evil. On Schelling's account, the fact that God chose love by creating the world and in promising salvation to humanity through his Son offers a blueprint of the selfless love we ought to pursue amongst ourselves in society. This is now the metaphysical and historical framework in which our free activity has significance. Our freedom allows us to wilfully choose loving relations within society and to develop our moral character through virtuous activity, thus having a conscious role in bringing about the final form of the human community. But this realization of human freedom occurs in a philosophy of history that is driven by a necessary development beyond itself, insofar as through the ideal, final form of the voluntary community, we will enter a final age of history, which leads towards the final reconciliation with God. The events of this period of the Church of St. John, which bring us towards redemption and a final stage of history in which everything is unified in God through love, are out of our control. We can only hope for such a perfect resolution to the unequal and unjust conditions in which we live, which would lead us beyond the state. The state, on Schelling's account, is only here to safeguard the conditions of negative freedom so long as we need it as a result of our proven inability to be just and loving without it. So long as the third age has not yet begun, we can continue to work to approximate the ideal of the perfect, voluntary community of love, justice and peace—the Church of St. John—to the best of our ability.

In this conclusion, I provide an overview of Schelling's shifting state-community relationship through the "higher" opposition of "necessity and freedom" (SW VII, 332/PI, 4). In the Freedom Essay, Schelling suggests this dichotomy should replace the old separation between nature and spirit. By rereading the development of Schelling's political philosophy through this lens, we are able to see the specificity of Schelling's final notion of holy, inner necessity and

[410] See Žižek on the material nature of the subject as the source of its dynamic relationship with itself in *The Indivisible Remainder*, 70-71.

[411] See Paul Ricoeur, "Religion and Symbolic Violence," *Contagion*, no. 6 (1999): 1-11. Ricoeur, for example, positively evaluates the role of necessity in freedom in Schelling. He writes, "dwelling in my finite capacity is something infinite, which I would call foundational. Schelling speaks of a *Grund,* a ground or foundation, which is at the same time an *Abgrund,* an abyss, therefore a groundless ground. Here the idea of a disproportion arises which is suffered and not simply acted upon, a disproportion between what I would call the excess of the foundation, the *Grund/Abgrund*, the groundless ground, and my finite capacity of reception, appropriation, and adaptation. … Now rightly or wrongly, I take the problematic of capacity and excess, and therefore disproportion to be constitutive of the human being." Ricoeur, "Religion and Symbolic Violence," 3-6.

why this type of necessity was capable of grounding the relations of the final voluntary community.

Mechanical, Organic, and Rational Necessity in the State

Schelling's early texts in political philosophy present multiple, shifting definitions of human freedom in relation to four presentations of the state and the community. As the state is the ground of the realization of individual freedom in Schelling's political philosophy, it is repeatedly likened to nature. Just as in nature, the laws or principles of the state take on the character of necessity. There are four types of necessity in Schelling's political philosophy: mechanical, organic, formal, and inner necessity. The first three correspond to three different concepts of the state, and the final to the voluntary, moral community. Accordingly, as the type of necessity inherent to the state changes, so does his definition of freedom. Depending on the definition of freedom in relationship to necessity he is espousing, he has differing answers to the question of what type of voluntary community may (or may not) be possible and by what means.

In developing his philosophy, Schelling's repeated struggles to describe the unity of the free, moral community beyond necessity can accordingly be conceptualized as varying attempts to overcome the necessity of the state in both mechanical and organic models. For both the very young Schelling of 1792 and the romantic-inspired Schelling of 1796, the integration of reason, mythology, and aesthetics provides the first outlines of his attempt to describe a higher, immanently-divine, rational community, which transcends the state on earth. But the fall of the human being from grace, which Schelling described in his very earliest writings, proves to be too much for the voluntary, human community to rectify and restore to a condition of righteousness on its own. In this section, I will provide a final overview of the running theme of necessity throughout Schelling's various state models, detailing how Schelling's conception of necessity within the state—and, accordingly, freedom within and beyond the state—changes. With the shift first from mechanical necessity to organic necessity as the basis of the state, and then from this organic necessity to an intelligible order of reason, or rational necessity (the latter transition is mediated by an intense critique of the state in 1810)—Schelling's account of the relation of this necessity to freedom (and thereby the free or voluntary community) is transformed. In this section, I reconstruct Schelling's account of three different state models based on necessity—

mechanical necessity, organic necessity, and rational necessity, respectively—and explain why each could not adequately unify and reconcile free individuals. This leads Schelling to posit a final form of the voluntary community which transcends and outlasts the state. The creation of this community itself still requires that individual persons overcome within themselves a fourth type of necessity—inner necessity—different from the concepts of necessity associated with the state.

In the *System* (1800), Schelling demonstrated that the state is analogous to the mechanical necessity observed in nature. The state allows for the maximum exercise of freedom possible from within the limited conditions of consciousness and intersubjectivity. So long as the I is conscious and therefore limited, it never achieves full, unconditional freedom. But it does have the capacity to exercise its will on what is beyond the limitations of consciousness (which includes the limitations of being). That being said, the scope of the objective significance of its individual actions, particularly to effectuate change, is limited by Schelling's teleological philosophy of history. The telos of history overpowers any transformative possibilities of localized, individual, willed action. In the Identity Philosophy (1801-1806), on the other hand, Schelling put forth a concept of the state structured on the basis of *organic* necessity. In this model, freedom and necessity were identified and the scope of free action of the individual, regarding, for example, her vocation and status in the society, was limited.

In the romantic-inspired writings examined in this chapter, Schelling is fluid with his model of the state as he experiments with different notions of the voluntary community *beyond* the necessity of the state. This requires a stronger separation between the state (necessity) and the realm of morality (freedom), to which Schelling returns to 1809. From this point forward, Schelling examines two further concepts of necessity, rational (formal) necessity and 'holy' or inner necessity. In so doing, he sets out to ascertain whether a "universal freedom and equality of spirits"[412] could be achieved. The first type of necessity, formal necessity, is the necessity characteristic of rational laws. This serves as the foundation of Kant's moral community (kingdom of ends), which is an insufficient form of moral community for Schelling. However, he shifts his model of the *state* to one characterized by 'formal necessity' in his 1847-1852 *Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy.* The second is the inner necessity characteristic of the unconscious or matter (to use Schelling's term—the necessity of the dark ground of

[412] "The 'Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism,'" 200.

being). This is the necessity that Schelling finally commits to as the prerequisite to consciousness, form, and existence.

Freedom for Schelling in 1809 and after must be more than simply the ability to self-legislate and follow the laws one set for oneself. Neither Rousseau's concept of moral freedom (self-mastery through the obedience of laws one sets for oneself) nor Kant's categorical imperative, can adequately direct the individual person's choice between good and evil. By defining freedom as the capacity to decide for good and for evil, Schelling challenges us to contend with and repeatedly conquer the material, unconscious ground by which we are, at least in part, determined, to become who we are as *persons.* Recall that a person for Schelling is one who overcomes inner necessity.[413]

Schelling considers the necessity of the ground of existence in the Freedom Essay both metaphysically and politically. "All personality," whether the personality of the human being or God, "rests on a dark ground" (SW VII, 413/PI, 75). This structure of ground and existence also has political implications that are not explicitly drawn out in the Freedom Essay. The community, which is composed of personal relations and is therefore personal in character, rests on its own unconscious ground of necessity—the state. The personal, moral community is separate from, but founded upon, the impersonal state Its genuinely willed relations of love, which are not relations of necessity, require that persons overcome their inner necessity. This is an ongoing process that itself is grounded in the ground of the state as the necessary guarantor of negative freedom. This moral community, as the form of self-governance to follow the state, will subsequently serve as a ground in its own right for the free experience of revelation at the end of history. Through this community (in the form of the Church of St. John), human beings will eventually become spontaneously religious. Their ongoing pursuit of knowledge will be unified with their free reception of God's self-revelation in a community that no longer requires the state. The reception of revelation is completely free of all coercion and far from depending on an irrational leap of faith, on Schelling's account, can occur for each person on the basis of a rational decision. However, as long as we remain limited by our own finitude and distanced from God, necessity in the form of the state must continue to play a structuring role for the community. In what follows, I provide a brief explanation of Schelling's journey to overcoming

[413] See McGrath, *The Philosophical Foundations of the Late Schelling,* 98-100: "a person is not one who is untouched by necessity," but "one who stands confronted by necessity, and yet does not succumb to it" (98).

the aforementioned four types of necessity: mechanical, organic, formal, and inner necessity, in relation to freedom, in order to demonstrate the shifts in Schelling's conceptualization of the voluntary community.

In the *System,* Schelling models the state on the basis of mechanical necessity. The laws of the state are associated with the mechanism of nature (SW III, 583/STI, 197). State laws, or the legal order, are already sharply distinguished from morality. This is why the function of the state in philosophy in the *System* can be seen as a foundation for his mature political philosophy. The divide between the mechanical notion of the state and the realm of morality is required for the realization of moral activity beyond the state in the form of a voluntary community:

> [L]aw is no branch of morality, nor in any sense a practical science, but rather a purely theoretical one, which stands to freedom precisely as mechanics does to motion, in that it merely sets forth the natural mechanism under which free beings as such can be thought of as interacting; a mechanism, indeed, which can undoubtedly itself be set up only through freedom, and to which nature contributes nothing. For nature, as the poet says, is without feeling, and God, as the gospel tells us, permits His sun to shine on the just and the unjust alike. From the very fact, however, that the legal system has to be considered merely as a supplement to visible nature, it follows that the legal order is not a moral one, but a purely natural order, which freedom has no more power over than it has over sensible nature (SW III, 583/STI, 195-96).

Mechanical necessity, for Schelling, is always something to be overcome. It is a simplistic understanding of the functioning of nature (and thereby the state) in the world of appearances. A more complex way of understanding the whole of anything that *appears* to operate mechanically is in reference to its telos, i.e., organically.

Schelling's critique of mechanical necessity in his early period is grounded in the critique of mechanical necessity developed by Kant in the context of his defence of organic necessity in the *Critique of Judgment*.[414] It appears in numerous places in his *Naturphilosophie,* notably in

[414] See §§64-65, Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. Paul Guyer, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). According to Kant, the causality of anything with purpose "must be sought, not in the mechanism of nature, but in a cause whose ability to act is determined by concepts" (Kant, *Critique of Judgment,* 242). Instead of mechanical necessity, we ought to look to organic necessity,

the Introduction to the second edition of the 1797 *Ideas on the Philosophy of Nature*.[415] Whereas Kant sees mechanical necessity as an *epistemological* problem, Schelling views it as a problem for being and thereby for politics, as explicated in Chapter 1. Kant could thus be seen from a Schellingian perspective as misapplying or underapplying the organic model. Transferring Kant's organic model to being, Schelling now sees the need for all of *being* to be reconsidered organically. The young Schelling attempts to organicize all relations to the farthest extent possible—including political relations. At the height of the Identity Philosophy period (1802-1806), Schelling seems to have cast aside his romantic roots of the critique of reason in favour of allowing the organic model characteristic of the working of rationality in the Identity Philosophy to play itself out. Once he takes the organic model to its logical end in the political and in history, we see that it actually codifies hierarchy and oppression within the state. Schelling must therefore abandon this model in the subsequent development of his philosophy of freedom and corresponding critique of the state.

Schelling's reconsideration of the complex, necessary relationships of cause and effect in an organic model, helps us to see the problems of the mechanical state. The mechanical state is simplistic and insufficient vis-à-vis the realization of moral life. However, it has a paradoxical advantage, namely that it sharply brings into focus that the state is not an appropriate vestige for our moral activity, and more specifically, for the cultivation of virtues, "feeling," redemption beyond finitude (of the "just and unjust the alike"), and the "power" of what we can accomplish through freedom (SW III, 583/STI, 195-96). As Kant has shown, mechanical necessity thus only ever offers a limited explanation of causality, insofar as it is observed from the point of view of the phenomenal world. Mechanical necessity cannot reflective the complexity of nature, because, as Kant explains, when we observe and analyze a simple instance of cause and effect, we isolate it from its "natural end," which is a self-organizing, organic whole.[416]

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to the necessity inherent in an organism that is simultaneously the cause effect of itself. Cf. Schelling's critique of mechanical relations based on Kant's organicism. F.W.J. Schelling, "Ideas on a Philosophy of Nature as an Introduction to the Study of This Science, Second Edition, 1803," trans. Priscilla Hayden-Roy, in *Philosophy Of German Idealism: Fichte, Jacobi, and Schelling,* ed. Ernst Behler (New York: Continuum, 2003), 190.

[415] Schelling, "Ideas, Second Edition, 1803," 190. In his *Naturphilosophie,* Schelling highlights the importance of the primacy of intuition and claims we must see everything as organically related. Where we see mechanical relations in nature or in *being,* there is, in fact, an inadequacy of our perception of the (organic) whole and thus a failure of intuition.

[416] Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 245.

Once he leaves the mechanical model of the state behind, Schelling's next concept of the state is, correspondingly, one that is based on organic necessity. While an organic view of the voluntary community, as presented in the Identity Philosophy, is theoretically compatible with the mechanical view of the minimalist state presented in the *System,* Schelling's drive to unify freedom and necessity becomes so strong merges, under one single organic model the, necessity of the state and the freedom of the individuals in the community. Under such a model, when we realize the aims of the state, we realize the aims of the community, and there should not be a distinction between the goals of the two. The state's role as a *ground* for the moral community at this point vanishes. The notion of a voluntary community beyond the state is nonexistent as everyone fulfills their destiny by carrying out their vocation in the state.

Schelling outwardly rejects this organic view of morality and politics in 1810, after he has redefined freedom as the capacity to decide for good or for evil. The organic state takes away one's possibility to genuinely, individually self-determine into a person. The state and morality are then separated once and for all, as "the state as such can never find a true and absolute unity" and is "doomed" when it attempts "to become a whole" (SW VII, 462/SS, 227). He claims the organic state is destined to wither away, reminding the reader of the critique of the state that he had already put forth in the 1796 "Oldest System-Programme." More specifically, Schelling proclaims that an organic state would eventually be "subject to the fate of all organic life, namely to bloom, to ripen, eventually to age, and finally to die." (SW VII, 462/SS, 227). "Plato's state," he continues, would have to "categorically presuppos[e]" both "freedom and innocence." (SW VII, 462/SS, 227). It is therefore a state that is naïve regarding human nature after the fall of man and that presupposes that freedom can be mutually realized within its bounds. Schelling comes to think that such a perfect state is impossible (SW VII, 462/SS, 227).

At this point, Schelling declares the goal of achieving total justice, equality, and unity *through the state* as an impossibility. But if the necessity of the state—whether conceived of mechanically or organically—is eventually to be overcome, i.e., rendered irrelevant once the perfect moral community is achieved and human beings no longer need it to secure their freedom, then what principle of necessity structures or grounds the voluntary community?

Schelling's answer in the *Origin of Human Evil* and "Oldest System-Programme" is reason—but not reason alone. In the latter text, for example, Schelling suggests that the free, moral community also requires a "*sensuous religion* … Monotheism of reason and of the heart,

polytheism of the imagination and of art, this is what we need!"[417] The romantic influence on Schelling's depiction of the voluntary, moral community helps his early challenges to Kant's claim that through the universal realization of the moral law we could bring about a moral community in the form of the kingdom of ends. Schelling returns to these challenges from the point of view of inner necessity (the deep necessity that grounds contingent development of conscious life) in 1809. As we have seen, Schiller struggled with this issue to the point of ending in two conflicting positions regarding the role of the aesthetic in bringing about a moral society.[418]

Formal necessity is a general term for the necessity at play when we draw logical conclusions from premises. The necessity of the moral law—i.e., the universal method by which one determines the maxims that guide one's actions—can thus be called formal necessity. The good person, for Kant, is one who flawlessly wills each maximum that guides his action as universal. He thus behaves in the same way as every other morally good person would in the same situation at the same time. As we have seen, the Schelling of 1809 and after does not think such a neutral universalization of individual, moral action is possible. While the moral law could provide some coerced, inner unity, it was neither personal nor conducive to the development of an individual, contextualized moral disposition.

For Schelling, each individual's realization of the good or of evil involves their own authentic realization of their freedom in a given context. The good, therefore, is not simply universal, but must also be individual and personal. It involves a unique struggle of overcoming the conditions and drives by which one is determined. Such a personal realization of moral goodness for Schelling means that Kantian formal necessity cannot achieve the degree of personal, willed unity that Schelling envisages. The moral law is so impersonal, on Schelling's account, that, as described in Chapter 4, the individual experiences "aversion and antipathy" towards it (SW XI, 553/122). "For, as something universal and impersonal," the moral law "cannot be otherwise but hard." (SW XI, 553/PRP, 122). Such a concept of community, based on the formal necessity of reason, thus cannot serve to unify humanity for Schelling. Despite his commitment to defending Kant's categorical imperative in the *Presentation of the Purely*

[417] "The 'Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism,'" 200.
[418] See the discussion in Tauber, "Aesthetic Education for Morality."

Rational Philosophy (SW XI, 533/PRP, 108), for Schelling, the kingdom of ends could not support the dynamic nature of the free *person* he depicts in his Philosophy of Freedom.

Nevertheless, Kant's kingdom of ends offers one benefit over Rousseau that is important for Schelling, that is, its cosmopolitan orientation. Earlier in this chapter, Rousseau's general will was critiqued for being too closely tied to the state. Although Kant praised and respected Rousseau,[419] his kingdom of ends in fact renders the state, and thereby the general will, unnecessary.[420] On the one hand, the young Schelling shares this desire of Kant to move beyond the state towards a more cosmopolitan, moral community. On the other hand, Schelling still appreciates Rousseau's thesis that the human being is capable of "justice"[421] only within the state. This, in fact, prefigures Schelling's thesis that the state is necessary for the realization of freedom in a fallen state of affairs.

The impediments to the moral community presented by the condition of fallenness bring us back to Schelling's philosophical anthropology. Even if we looked away from the inability of the moral law to accommodate personality, due to this corrupt nature of human beings, formal necessity, or reason alone, could not achieve the unification of humanity. Our inability to rectify all past wrongs through a perfect and consistent application of reason means that the perfect moral community requires a redemption that is beyond our power, and indeed that is beyond reason and finitude. In executing the categorical imperative, the human being still remains fallible in her judgment, dependent on grace, and far from God (SW XI, 532/PRP, 108). The moral law is not divine law for Schelling, as it disciplines the individual, whereas only God liberates (SW XI, 554/PRP, 122).

Reason's role in structuring moral and political philosophy concerns not only morality, but the state itself. The state in the *Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy* is also conceptualized, on Schelling's account, on the basis of an intelligible order of reason. We try to reproduce this order of reason in the empirical world, but we always do so in a contingent and imperfect way. The intelligible order has one Idea of the human being, but innumerable

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[419] See Susan Meld Shell's commentary on Kant's reading of Rousseau, as documented in Kant's notes to his *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* (1764). Here, Kant says "Rousseau set [him] right," teaching him to "honour human beings" by according them equal worth and rights. He also suggests Rousseau is the "Newton of the moral world." Susan Meld Shell, "The Embodiment of Reason: Kant on Spirit, Generation, and Community" (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 81.
[420] Patrick Riley, "Kant on the General Will," in *The General Will: The Evolution of a Concept* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 333.
[421] Rousseau, "The Social Contract," 59.

possibilities for how the human being could be instantiated. Every possibility within it has the right to exist, and when these possibilities come into being, they do so in hierarchical ruler/ruled relationships. These relationships are then contingently codified in the state, through, for example, the occupation of different roles and jobs based on factors such as natural strength and intelligence. But such an order can be overcome through a free community of persons. As we become persons, we overcome brute determinism and natural hierarchies. We can work towards a higher, voluntary community through serving others in love. As this community develops, state-based relations decrease in importance. In love I serve and am vulnerable to the other, allowing the other to be free and accept, contend with, or reject this love. Love, as we saw in the previous chapter, is the first step to overcoming the necessity which orders the state. In the final form of the voluntary community, the state is no longer needed.

Holy Necessity

When we relate to one another through free, transcendent relationships of love (transcendent insofar as they are not characterized by necessity or reciprocity), we not only overcome the external necessity of the state, which was associated with nature, but also an internal necessity within ourselves, which Schelling articulates in a variety of terms, such as the "higher darkness of evil" (SW VII, 459/SS, 226) and "steadfast, holy *Ananke*" (PR, 129). This is the active, dark ground of existence, *considered insofar as we contend with it and decide to rise above it,* as described in the course of personality development in the previous chapter. It is necessity that is the condition for the possibility for goodness, for there is no goodness, no freedom, without an overcoming of necessity. Schelling's final voluntary community is dependent on *each individual* overcoming this inner necessity through freedom. It thus places a tremendous amount of personal responsibility on each individual. Otherwise, it would not be free, but at least in part coerced.

In forming a voluntary community, we thus have *two* types of necessity to overcome. The first is necessity according to which the state is structured. This necessity, associated with state laws and nature, secures the basic conditions of negative freedom in a precarious state of affairs in which we cannot be trusted to respect the right of everyone to a space of self-determination—a point most clearly explained in the *System of Transcendental Idealism*. Communal relations must

therefore qualitatively surpass state-based relations. The state only unifies human beings "externally," but not internally, or in their heart of hearts. Such "inner" relations can only be freely decided for. The second form of necessity to be overcome is "inner necessity"—the higher, ignited, dynamic ground within each individual that no one can force the individual to subordinate to the universal will of God. As seen in the previous chapter, this dark ground exists in both the human being and God. The difference between the two is, according to Schelling, is that in having created the world out of love, God has always already subordinated the ground to the universal and the good. In overcoming his dark ground, God became personal. And as a personal, acting God, "outside and above reason" (SW XI, 567/PRP, 132), he is the God who Schelling thinks can redeem humanity, i.e., restore the unity that humanity cannot fully restore on its own. This is the God that *acts* and thereby reveals himself in history. Revelation, Schelling is clear, does not result from necessity or "general laws; rather God, that is, the person of God, is the general law, and everything that happens, happens by virtue of the personality of God, not according to some abstract necessity that *we* in acting would not tolerate, to say nothing of God" (SW VII, 396/PI, 60). Schelling's description of the personal God who acts personally is not reducible to the will of the ground, or the "involuntary" will of nature's self-unfolding (SW VII, 396/PI, 59), but it is the God whose will is love and who runs through all of nature with a transformative capacity, revealing himself. This God is a person. Just as we, as virtuous, moral persons, discussed in Chapter 4, cannot be bound by the impersonal nature of the law, God's love is also more than that which can be contained by necessity, geometric or otherwise.

We have work to do regarding the concept of holy necessity to get to a point where, as human beings, we no longer need the state because we are all committed to the freedom of all—a point in which *everything is love* in human relations. So long as we are all contending with the dark ground and have not yet attained the "Church of St. John," human beings temporarily require the state to secure our freedom. But once we have achieved a voluntary, moral community of the "universal church," the state will become irrelevant.

But in what sense is the inner ground, for God and for us, specifically a *necessity*? Schelling refers to the dark ground of personality specifically as an "inner necessity" and the source of "individual action," which together produce the condition of freedom (SW VII, 383/PI,

50).[422] If the individual was not bound by natural necessity—something unfree within himself—he would never have to choose between, for example, a course of action determined by inclination or one determined by reason. We make such choices in everyday life. We set alarm clocks, eat at specified times, and perform acts of service, all to live a better life than the one we would live if we let habit and feeling, i.e., that by which we are necessarily constricted, run the show.

Inner necessity is necessity that is already in transformation, but will not be completely eradicated by human beings, even if we have mastered it in our loving relations in the Church of St. John. We saw in the previous chapter that individuation—materiality—is in fact necessary for redemption. To deny inner necessity would be, for Schelling, to deny nature-in-us, individuation, and in turn, ipseity. Schelling does not share Kant's negative view that our ipseity and materiality should be forgotten. For Schelling, inner necessity is a completely constitutive part of who we are. To say so is to maintain there is something positive in individuality, which amounts to the capacity for genuine choice. The individual who actively chooses egoistic self-love and hubris does not thereby lose her individuality. She does, however, remain stunted in her development as a person, for she fails to subordinate the ground to virtuous existence. It is in grasping her inner necessity in a positive and productive way that would lead her to develop dynamically as a person.

This inner necessity, on Schelling's account, in fact becomes positive and holy**.** Relating our discussion to the role of matter as an individuating principle for Plato should help. If there is no matter, and thus nothing necessary in being, if everything is free in the unconditioned sense presented in the *System,* then there is no individual and no person. Schelling already followed these lines of development in works such as "Of the I," which led him to reclaim the individual as he confronted questions of the goal of self-annihilation inherent in the desire to rid oneself of finite, material existence and achieve unity with the Absolute. The impersonal Absolute, on the late Schelling's account, does not fit to a dynamic person beset by inner necessity. Individuality in matter, contending with the necessity inside us, is a trademark of the life of the person. Inner necessity is thus the necessity required for my own individuality. It is itself necessary, for

[422] "Individual action results from the inner necessity of a free being," which "is itself freedom." If this dynamic unification of freedom and necessity did not exist, i.e., if this necessity described being that was "dead" and merely given … with respect to man," it would mean that "all action resulting from it" would come from "necessity" alone. Therefore, "all freedom would be abolished." This is the way in which we are simultaneously determined and free for Schelling. SW VII, 383/PI, 50.

without it, I do not exist as a human being, let alone a person. Inner necessity is the source of all contingency and determination of my being. I am not the unconditioned and the unlimited.

Despite the difficulties inner necessity brings us, it also presents the possibility of self-improvement, the chance to become closer to one another through love in the community, and thus closer to God. But the totality of who we are as both natural and spiritual beings, and the reason we exist in this manner, cannot be grasped, let alone saved, within the realm of finite possibilities. Without necessity, there is no structure or spirit. This is a point Schelling makes from his earliest *Naturphilosophie* until the end of his life: nature and spirit should be thought together, not as opposites. We require inner necessity—or more generally, materiality—for relationality, blessedness, salvation and resurrection. Therefore, necessity inherent in matter or nature is not strictly negative for Schelling. In this sense, we can describe the final notion of inner necessity as a *positive* necessity that conceptually initiates the development of Schelling's final form of the voluntary community.

This "higher darkness," the necessity which makes me who I am, is also expressed by Schelling, in relation to Plato, metaphysically, as "steadfast holy *Ananke* [necessity] of Being" (PR, 129).[423] Ananke was the "goddess of necessity" in Greek mythology (PR, 129).[424] Plato uses this term to describe non-personified matter that can be shaped by the demiurge through reason, but which is not negated; the counterpart to *nous* through which the cosmos is created.[425] *Ananke* in Plato's works is often translated as necessity. The Platonic example shows well that this notion of necessity is not the same as formal necessity or the necessity of reason described above (which can be brought to *Ananke*, but is never inherent within it). Without necessity understood in this way, there can be no specificity, no personality, no character. As Schelling remarks in his *Monument to the Writing on the Divine Things, etc., of Mr. Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi* (known as the *Denkmal*), without inner necessity—here denoted inner force in God—there would be no character. But inner necessity, of course, does not describe our personalities insofar as we *exist*. "Where there is no force, there is no character either, no individuality, no real personality, but rather a vain dispersion [*eitel Diffluenz*], as one can verify everyday in men

[423] I am grateful to Sean J. McGrath for drawing my attention to Schelling's use of the term *Ananke* to describe inner necessity.
[424] The translator Klaus Ottmann here refers to *Ananke* in Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound,* 217f.
[425] Plato, *Timaeus,* 47e-48a. See Plato's commentary on the *Timeaus* and his reference to the original, material, principle of motion that can be brought to form. TI, 210.

without character" (SW VIII, 64).[426] This points us to the remnants of naturalism in Schelling's philosophy of freedom. Nature, claims Schelling, is the "antechamber" or passageway to the "highest life" (SW VII, 459/SS, 226). Without nature and necessity, there is no voluntary community.

Inner necessity—necessity in the human being—is necessary in order for the spiritual part of the human being to ascend to higher degrees of goodness (SW VII, 459/SS, 226). We all have a "divine power" in us, that despite the precarity of nature and determinism, persists (SW VII, 226/SS, 226). The natural, individuated human being, on the path to personhood and thereby the path to love in the voluntary community, must "overcome the darkness within him—and, out of this higher darkness of evil, the aberrant, and the wrong, must call for the light of goodness, truth, and beauty" (SW VII, 459/SS, 226). In this way, inner necessity persists in the voluntary community. We cannot annihilate darkness on our own. Only God, for Schelling, can permanently cast out darkness and evil. With the coming of the first *eschaton*, evil will "be separated from the good in order to be cast out eternally into non-Being" (SW VII, 404/PI 67). Once this happens, humanity is completely transformed.

While inner necessity is the *condition* of the general resurrection, on Schelling's account, it is God who resurrects us. Without "corporeality," such a transfiguration could not happen (PR, 303): "*Our bodies must first become transfigured in order to be like Christ's body*" (PR, 304).[427] Therefore, inner necessity and corporeality—force and materiality within ourselves—are necessary, Schelling argues, for us to fulfill our role in the age of Spirit and to eventually be eternally one with the Father through the resurrection in the story of God's revelation. This role is to be "the mediator for nature" in revelation (SW VII, 463/SS, 228). In this sense, the inner necessity not only with God, but also within ourselves, can be considered as *holy necessity.*

Final Remark

Schelling's presentation of the voluntary community and its role in the philosophy of revelation reopens challenging questions for society today: to what extent can we hope to change our current state of affairs through political action? Can we turn our identification of injustice in the

[426] The English translation here was kindly provided by Hadi Fakhoury.
[427] Schelling refers here to Philippians, 3:21.

world and our critique of existing hierarchies and norms into a political program? If we were to do so, how could we responsibly shape our expectations of the possibilities of state-coordinated activity to bring about justice and equality? Are aims to achieve political utopia through the state doomed to result in the misuse of power and corruption, insidiously channelled through its institutions and means?

I have shown throughout this dissertation that Schelling was repeatedly critical of the attempts of the state to correct all of the perils of society. Schelling endorses a minimalist concept of the state because it is undesirable, possibly catastrophic, for the state to mediate all of the personal affairs of its citizens. For Schelling, the state has to protect our negative freedom so that we can positively decide for good and develop as persons. This means that it is not the business of the state to legislate virtue and to force closeness between citizens. It can and must prevent us from harming one another, but beyond that, we must remain free to decide our fate as moral agents. In drawing such distinctions, Schelling can contribute positively to the ongoing debate concerning the distinction between *potestas,* as the "unity of institutionalized political power," and *potentia,* as the infinite capacity of social power. Institutionalized power, or state-justified dominance, is always informed by, but never exhaustive of, *potentia.*[428] There is therefore always untapped creative potential in *potentia* for the future of communities beyond the state.

Schelling invests his hopes for the unification of collective life in a free community made up of distinct, creative individuals, who transcend the state. The final form of this community, the Church of St. John, is firmly situated in a philosophy of history, which Schelling understands as God's progressive realization in the world. The participation of individuals, through their free action, in a coherent philosophy of history, larger than themselves and which they do not control, is a longstanding theme in Schelling's work. It finds its first basis in Schelling's early metaphysics and his account of the participation of conscious human beings in the productivity of nature therein. In his early *Naturphilosophie,* Schelling maintains that through our free action, we unconsciously participate in the development of the whole of nature.[429] This insight is

[428] See Jiří Přibáň, "Constitutional Imaginaries and Legitimation: On Potentia, Potestas, and Auctoritas in Societal Constitutionalism," *Journal of Law and Society* 45, no. 1 (2018): 31. Gilles Deuelze, Antonio Negri and Etienne Balibar have also made use of this distinction.

[429] As Naomi Fisher explains, "when the conscious intentions of human freedom coincide with the laws of nature, human beings, as conscious organisms, are both consciously and unconsciously producing." Naomi Fisher,

translated in an politico-historical key in the *System,* for here Schelling claims that our free action contributes, unbeknownst to us, to producing the coordinated end of history (providence). In his late philosophy, Schelling similarly suggests that as we develop our independent personalities and establish loving communal relations, we are participating in the transformation of the world as it will be led back to God. Human beings, as persons who self-actualize in the voluntary community, contribute to the closure of the distance between its fallen state and God's perfection. But, as we have seen, unlike in the *System,* in Schelling's late works, he maintains that we cannot bridge the gap by the worldly resources available to us. This exposes the moral impotence—and even political pessimism—of Schelling's late eschatological, political philosophy. However, where there is political pessimism, there is religious hope. This hope is a hope in Christ, "who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine."[430]

For Schelling, Christ's death on the cross brings the promise of the forgiveness of sins and the final reunification of humanity with God. Christ is the mediator of this reunification in this second and final *eschaton*, in which God becomes "all in all " (SW VII, 408/PI, 70; UR 708-709).[431] This is an end in which everything, beginning with the voluntary community of human beings unified by Spirit, has been returned back to the Father *through* Christ in love. But for those who do not believe in Christ, the question of whether there is anything beyond political pessimism and nihilism in Schelling's political philosophy persists.

In responding to such a question, we should first note that if history ends in the secular age, this does not mean our efforts to transcend necessity and oppression in our relationships were all in vain. Even if his philosophy of history is wrong, Schelling's political philosophy will have still shown us something important about the capacity of human beings to serve one another, to achieve peace, and to contribute to an end to oppression, without forcing all of this to happen through authoritarian rule. At the heart of Schelling's political philosophy is a description of what is possible when human beings *freely* decide for the good, for understanding, for love, and adopt a responsible approach to the cultivation and consistency of personal values. This happens in tandem with the collective liberation from hierarchical structures, norms and governments, which maintain a top-down hold on the capacity for individuals to exercise their

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"Freedom as Productivity in Schelling's Philosophy of Nature," in *Schelling's Philosophy, Freedom, Nature and Systematicity*, ed. G. Anthony Bruno, 53-70 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 54.

[430] Ephesians 3:20.

[431] Schelling sums up this conclusion of all of history in the following concise formula: "the last All-in-All Being of God = Alone Being God." UR 708-709.

freedom (freedom understood as the capacity to decide for good or for evil). For now, we have not achieved this state of liberation, which, on Schelling's account, cannot be forced. We need the state until we have achieved a unity with one another that is so strong that the state is irrelevant. Until then, we ought to encourage the highest degree of existential freedom possible, to allow for transcendent moments in which we overcome necessity and choose love *freely*.

Schelling's political philosophy additionally offers, at minimum, a framework for the critique of the state and how it should function. Having presented three models of the state, all accompanied at various points by a critique of that which they were unable to achieve (notably, the inner unity of human beings), Schelling motivates us to look for examples of the state overstepping its bounds, particularly regarding questions of identity. This critique of the state also extends to reality as we understand it through the frameworks and concepts of our time. As Manfred Frank writes, "Schelling's religious option … proved always to be resistant to one thing: it did not necessitate, and here the contrast to Hegel is noteworthy, an acceptance of existing reality."[432] More specifically, from a Schellingian point of view, we ought to reject attempts of the state to dictate a person's innermost values and to unify its citizens on the basis of concepts such as "the people" or those rooted in nationalism.

Through his distinction between the role of the state to provide negative freedom and the realization of positive freedom through the development of personality, Schelling shows us why and how the state, on its own, will not motivate us to be good to one another. Transforming individuals into persons capable of love and virtue is not the role of the state. This is a responsibility that Schelling instead firmly places on our shoulders in our development as persons. Furthermore, it is not something that impersonal, rationalist morality (the moral law) can achieve. It is something we need to *want*, and that we each ought to work towards as we improve our moral disposition and self-actualize in such a way as to be capable of genuinely loving others. One can do all of this *within the secular*.

Despite its reliance on religion and exposition within the context of the history of the church, Schelling's late political philosophy can be read secularly and without religious assumptions. First of all, the nature of the transcendent God to whom all is returned at the end of history is unknown—it is not only that which we understand through Christ. Christ rather is the

[432] Frank, "Schelling's Critique of Hegel and the Beginnings of Marxian Dialectics," 226.

person through whom God is identified with the human community.[433] Moreover, the emphasis Schelling places on the role of transcendence in his critique of the present need not necessarily be tied to Christianity. The emphasis on the importance of transcendence for politics is shared by many thinkers of the critical theory and even post-structuralist traditions. *Absolute* transcendence, in the Schellingian sense, is not the only notion of transcendence that can offer us a glimpse of that for which we can hope. Ernst Bloch, in fact, proposes that all revolutionary politics invokes the transcendent.[434]

Some examples of creative uses of the transcendent in political philosophy that could be read in tandem with Schelling are found in Ricoeur, Adorno, Žižek and Derrida. Ricoeur speaks of the mimetic process between the "finite capacity of reception" and the "infinite appeal, the excess of the ground."[435] Adorno, for his part, proposes that there are moments of micro-transcendence in experience, for example, in "cognitive practice": "In cognitive practice, when we resolve the insoluble, a moment of such cognitive transcendence comes to light in the fact that for our micrological activity we have exclusively macrological means."[436] Even Žižek's use of Schelling could be seen as invoking a modest sense of transcendence, insofar as there is an order, a notion of the real, above (or below) the "symbolic order," in whose constitution we can identify cracks from within our experience of it.[437] Finally, Derrida speaks of the "experience of an inadequation" that corresponds with the "demand for an increase in or supplement to justice."[438] All of these thinkers were influenced in some way by Schelling.[439] Whether these

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[433] Through Christ, the redemptive act of humanity becomes internalized in the human community. There is nothing external to the human community at the end of history; the divide between humanity and the supernatural is closed.
[434] Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, trans. Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice and Paul Knight, vol. 1 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1986), 146. Camellone puts Bloch's position on the transcendent character of finite, political activity well: Bloch's "utopian not-yet is thus determined by the removal of the eschatological *goal*, a deficiency that is discernible in the immanence of the historical process, and which also labels every human accomplishment as temporary. Representationally, Bloch seeks to think of 'transcending without transcendence', so that history (the not-yet) and eschatology (the *ultimum*) are held together at the highest level, with the tension of a polarity … [T]he ultimum is the immanent limit to the very principle of hope – for the eschaton to be totally other is not conceivable in any place, and in any other time, other than the not-yet." Mauro Farnesi Camellone, "Fraternitas Militans. Time and Politics in Ernst Bloch," in *The Government of Time – Theories of Plural Temporality in the Marxist Tradition*, ed. Vittorio Morfino and Peter D. Thomas (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 154.
[435] Paul Ricoeur, "Religion and Symbolic Violence," Ricoeur conceptualizes this process not only in individualistic, but also communal terms.
[436] Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E.B. Ashton (New York and London: Continuum, 2007), 28. See also Adorno's claim that "in the critique of cognition as well as in the philosophy of history, metaphysics immigrates into micrology. Micrology is the place where metaphysics finds a haven from totality" (Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 407).
[437] Žižek, *The Indivisible Remainder*, 9.
[438] Derrida, "Force of Law: The 'Mystical Foundations of Authority," 20.

moments expose the possibility of a better world or the fracture at the bottom of existence, they nevertheless destabilize complacency. They motivate us to critically think about how things could be different—to see beyond our immediate social and political conditions.[440]

Whatever the ideal for the human community—equality, justice, peace—all of these concepts rest on a future that has never been present. Whether that present can be achieved within finite conditions at all is the question which links Schelling's political pessimism to the messianic politics of critical theory, in which no redemption or righteousness in this world is possible,[441] as well as to Derrida's thesis that justice is an ideal that is infinitely deferred.[442] Derrida calls 'the experience of inadequation' of existing laws with respect to justice.[443] Derrida and Schelling find an additional productive resonance on the relationship of the law to responsibility and justice. There are persons with specific moral dispositions who make decisions behind the supposed neutrality of the law and they are *responsible* for these decisions. When the latter are made within a legal context in particular, they do not bring about absolute justice even if they effectively produce a fair judgment or outcome. As Derrida explains, to say that a decision is "legal or legitimate" is not to say that something is just.[444] The law is always backed by force and authority within our socio-legal framework. Derrida accordingly claims, "there is never a moment that we can say *in the present* that a decision *is* just (that is, free and responsible), or that someone *is* a just man."[445] The entire foundation of the "state of law" only "defers the problem of justice."[446] The same could be said for Schelling's political philosophy. Moreover, Derrida suggests decoupling Pascal's analysis of the mystical source of the authority

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[439] Schelling has an explicit, formative influence of the two texts mentioned above from Žižek and Ricoeur. Adorno's references to Schelling in *Negative Dialectics* are a mix of positive and critical appraisal. Importantly, he positively refers to Schelling's analysis of urge or drive: "Urge, according to Schelling's insight, is the mind's preliminary form" (Adorno, *Negative Dialectics,* 202). On Derrida's reading of Schelling, see Philipp Schwab, "Nonground and the Metaphysics of Evil: From Heidegger's First Schelling Seminar to Derrida's Last Reading of Schelling (1927-2002)," *Analecta Hermeneutica,* no. 5 (2013).

[440] Iain Macdonald, *What Would Be Different: Figures of Possibility in Adorno* (Standford: Stanford University Press, 2019).

[441] See Adorno, *Minima Moralia*; Max Horkheimer, *Die Sehnsucht nach dem Ganz Anderen: Ein Interview mit Kommentar von Helmut Gumnior* (Aachen and Hamburg: Furche-Verlag, 1971); Shaw, "Reason, Nostalgia, and Eschatology in the Critical Theory of Max Horkheimer"; Christopher Craig Brittain, *Adorno and Theology* (London and New York: Continuum, 2010); John Hughes, "Unspeakable Utopia: Art and the Return to the Theological in the Marxism of Adorno and Horkheimer," *CrossCurrents* 53, no. 4 (2004): 475-92.

[442] See Derrida, "Force of Law." Derrida's distinction between the force of law and the realization of justice can be brought into productive dialogue with the dialectic of the law and the gospel as explored in Chapter 4.

[443] Derrida, "Force of Law," 20.

[444] Derrida, "Force of Law," 23.

[445] Derrida, "Force of Law," 23.

[446] Derrida, "Force of Law," 23.

of the law from his "Christian Pessimism" in order to extract a "basis for modern critical philosophy, indeed for a critique of juridical ideology."[447] Perhaps the similar interpretive, dissociative moves could be possible with regard to Schelling's critique of the law of the state and elements of his eschatological politics.

In a word, Schelling's voluntary community, in the form of the Church of St. John, is a perfect, moral community that we can work towards and which promotes self-critique and modesty, insofar as we can never declare that we have achieved it. It is possible that this form of voluntary community will in fact never begin at all, but if it does, on Schelling's account, those who believed in the redemptive power of Christ will have been right about the trajectory of history as the revelation of a personal God. But if they are wrong, Schelling's political philosophy nevertheless provides resources to critique the contemporary misuse of state power and to reassess its scope. It also offers us reason to hope for more than critique and to pay attention to the importance of transcendence in everyday experience, while presenting an ideal to work towards as we actualize ourselves as unique persons—whether or not we believe.

[447] Derrida, "Force of Law," 13.

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