

# ***“The Inner Road to Freedom and Nature By Self-Realization”***

**In Spinoza, Naess and Schelling**

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## Introduction

Some of the most threatening perspectives of our time are related to climate changes with Global Warming, caused by the emission of greenhouse gasses<sup>1</sup>, and the severe pollution of the environment causing destruction of ecosystems and the extension of species. Recent scientific research<sup>2</sup> points to an unusual increase in temperatures on earth seen in Al Gore's film "*An Inconvenient Truth*<sup>3</sup>". The climate changes are both natural and man-made; the topics here are the man-made problems among which consumer mentality and overpopulation can be mentioned. *Why are so many individuals ignoring the consequences of such selfish behavior?* In spite of the warnings from scientists and ecological movements, the problems seem to be increasing. The domestication of nature in an artificial reality of modern times reduces humans to numbers and robots. Even though many of these conditions can be described as the consequences of the technological development, they also point to a sick society in which *the connection between man and Nature has been lost*. To a certain extent we are all responsible for what happens to the earth and ourselves because we are part of Nature. In order to find some answers man should look deeper into himself and his own passions. Such analysis is the task of this paper based on *self-realization* in subject-object relations with the appearance of self-consciousness and a third factor defined as God or Nature. The questions are: *How can the link between man and Nature be re-established? How can each individual participate in changing the negative pattern?*

The problems of the broken link will be approached both psychologically and philosophically suggesting a link between consciousness and Nature, defined as microcosmos/macrocosmos. Many great thinkers of philosophy of Nature from the ancient world<sup>4</sup> have supplied us with important sources, illustrating the connection between man and Nature; and some of their followers are presented here: The Dutch pantheistic<sup>5</sup> philosopher Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677), the German philosopher Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (1775 – 1854) and the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess (1912-2009). Both Schelling and Naess are deeply influenced by Spinoza and even

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1 CO2 - the major cause of global warming Global warming is [caused by the emission of greenhouse gases](#) .

2<http://environment.nationalgeographic.com/environment/global-warming/>

3<http://www.takepart.com/an-inconvenient-truth/film>

4<http://www.ias.ac.in/resonance/Aug2004/pdf/Aug2004Classics.pdf>

5<http://www.pantheism.net/paul/>

though he lived in the seventeenth century, and mankind has reached far within scientific development<sup>6</sup>, the way we handle our lives are still highly related to our ability of handling personal emotions. The themes described by Spinoza in his Ethics on man and Nature are based on his concept of pantheism (man and God as one union). Spinoza's works provide a system of self-subsistence and activity related to the power of intellectual intuition. Such intuition is a manifestation of man as a smaller part of the universe operating according to the law of Nature in which reason plays a major role. Self-subsistence is related to limitations in the combination of freedom and necessity. The Ethics can be interpreted from diverse angles and Schelling's version entails a concept of World-soul – Nature as subject. Naess presents a concept of the *ecological self* considered in relation to the part five of the Ethics "On the Power of the Intellect" related to Mahāyāna Buddhism, in the Norwegian philosopher Jon Wetlesen's interpretation.

**Main Sources:** Spinoza: The Ethics. - Naess: Freedom Emotions and Self-subsistence, Deep Ecology of Wisdom. - Schelling: Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature and System of Transcendental Idealism.<sup>7</sup>

**Arne Naess** replaces Spinoza's concept of self-subsistence with self-realization. (*Naess 2005VI: lxi-xii*) In his view the self is to be realized and his concept of self-realization goes beyond Spinoza's form of self-preservation (*Naess 2005 VI 95:102*) and involves changes from within considered with renewed importance. He advocates a psychological approach to environmental ethics in relation to self-realization with obligations toward nature rooted in *identification* and self-love rather than morality. (*Drengson 1995: xxiii*) Naess suggests an ecological consciousness in the union of all species in the ecosystem. The movement encourages introspection and harmony at the level of intellectual and historical analysis, based on a spiritual development. (*Devall 1985: ix*) He approaches the self through several channels, among these: Erich Fromm, William James, and Gandhi and Mahāyāna Buddhism. Spinoza's concept of God or Nature is by Naess interpreted in relation to *Natura naturata* and *Natura naturans* as a union of consciousness and Nature. (*Part I*)

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<sup>6</sup>[http://www.ted.com/talks/stephen\\_hawking\\_asks\\_big\\_questions\\_about\\_the\\_universe.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/stephen_hawking_asks_big_questions_about_the_universe.html) Stephen Hawking's scientific investigations have shed light on the origins of the cosmos, the nature of time and the ultimate fate of the universe. His bestselling books for a general audience have given an appreciation of physics to millions.

<sup>7</sup>Many concepts are inevitably deeply influenced by Spinoza's views but tend to take another direction, especially in regard to Naess's (Wetlesen's) idea of combining Mahāyāna Buddhism with Spinoza's fifth part of the Ethics. And we shall see that Schelling's angel on the concept of freedom becomes closely linked to willing.

**Spinoza's** concepts of *Natura Naturans* and *Natura Naturata* are defined as: the first represent the eternal force of the universe – God. The second consists of both the universal and the particular. The split between man and Nature should be re-established by higher insight explained in relation to three forms of knowledge. The first kind of knowledge is defined as inadequate and confused ideas of the mind. The second kind of knowledge relates to reason and adequate ideas and the understanding of Nature. The third kind of knowledge involves the highest form of insight of God or Nature as Intellectual Intuition. The second and third kind relate to an immanent part of the mind which can be gradually acquired through determined (free) self-knowledge. The first step of selfknowledge involves a systematic insight to these layers, for passions are related to pleasure and pain explained as ideas. To proceed from one stage to the other requires settlement of false ideas and active participation in the environment, and accepting of the necessary conditions according to which all living species operates. Reason is by Spinoza considered part of the universal law of nature in relation to which man's freedom is limited and determined. No one freely chooses his own environment and the only kind of freedom for man is internal and achieved by the third form of knowledge in the intuition of God or Nature. *(Part II)*

**F.W.J. Schelling** entails Spinoza's ideas of (Pantheism) God or Nature as identical in his concept of unity. Here the self is not a thing, as for Spinoza, but a smaller part of a *Worldsoul* in which consciousness and Nature are united. Such forms of consciousness are based on the free will – *Intellectual Intuition* *(Schelling 1978: xxvii)* Unfolding of the self is considered a principle of activity in which the self is in conflict with itself and its own contradictions. *(Schelling 1994: 4)* Re-establishing the lost connection between man and Nature is by Schelling defined as a constant struggle of energies caused by the separation between organic and inorganic matter in our systems. His concept of subject has little to do with consciousness; it is rather a misconstrued self - a kind of auto self-relating - to the unconditioned....

*...in the medium of the universal and the impersonal. It is not a demonstrative but a generative process through which productive nature itself acts on, or produces, itself: "to philosophize about nature means to create nature" (Grant 2006: 2) (Part III)*

For Schelling nature necessarily grounds everything but what calls for attention is the impersonal and universal self-generating nature. *(Grant 2006: 2)*

**Naess, Spinoza, Schelling** both Naess and Schelling points to the necessity of history. The ecological approach to the spiritual self is considered in relation to part five of the ethics combined with Mahāyāna Buddhism in Wetlesen's interpretation. (*Part III*)

## Part I

### Naess's ecological Approach

Arne Naess is founder of the Deep Ecology Movement<sup>8</sup> the foundation for the ecological approach to the world is closely linked to the fundamental existential questions of mankind. Questions like: *Who am I - Where do I belong and what the purpose of my life is*. In the search for answers Arne Naess suggests we approach the area from a different angle in relation to which the ecological self emerges. First of all he points to our narrow concept of our own self mainly seen as the ego. The maturity of the self is constructed according to the surrounding world, in which a person identifies himself and external relationships are considered levels along the way to the real self. (*Naess 2005 X: 515*) Spinoza's concepts of diverse stages of self-development has plays a major role for Naess in his the terms of: self-realization, self-love, selfishness/unselfishness, joy, alienation.....etc. (*Naess 2005: VI: 95*) Naess points to Spinoza's concept of man considered as one particular among other particulars with a limited power in relation to nature as a whole. But man's ability of the intellect makes him able to seek freedom and change his emotions. By the act of self-realization he is able to reach higher forms of reality and release himself from immaturity and slavery of passive emotions - coursing suffering and pain.

*Man is not part of something in the same way as quartz crystals are part of sand, but rather as oxygen is part of water (Spinoza 1993: 2P47)*

In Spinoza's view man's only existence is relations to other entities according to which personal identity is constructed. But man is limited in time and does not conceive everything, so he must train himself because.....

*...humans have an adequate conception of God's essence (Spinoza 1993:2P47)*

Every human being has an inherent conception of the essence of God. Insight of these layers acquires higher insight of active emotions by freedom. But the road to inner freedom is blocked by

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<sup>8</sup><http://www.deepecology.org/deepecology.htm>

passive and blurred emotions; these emotions can, according to Spinoza be transformed into active emotions because they are all related to individual ideas. In spite of these limitations man has

*....a necessary endowment to crawl upwards (Naess: 1975:46- 47)*

Naess's considerations of the changes of the mind occurring in the course of a lifetime, is close to Spinoza's concept of mind, in which the individual moves from higher or lower states of perfection, depending on basic effects like joy and sorrow.

*That which tends to increase the body's power to act tends to increase our power to cogitate. (Naess: 1975:91)*

The emotion of joy determines the power of the body as well as our brain functions, in which it plays a major role in our ability to be perfect. *(Naess 2005: 95)*

*To be in joy is to get freer, in some or all aspects (Naess 1975: 92)*

Joy can be describes as a universal strive and deeply related to self-consciousness, because the realization of the one without the other is not possible. Changes in power or perfection of man's conditions are according to Naess defined in psychological terms, in which the vision of a life with joy and integrity without stress and anxiety is central. Unfortunately a human being can live a life in powerlessness, frustration and bitter hate *(Naess 2005 VI: 97)* but the mind is not evil in itself, he argues. *(Moustakas 1956: XXI / 271)*

## Self-preservation as Self-realization

Naess replaces Spinoza's concept of self-preservation with the concept of self-realization. The dynamic view of the self strive for self-perfection, can easily be interpreted as strive for power and self-consciousness. But for Naess it is rather strive for perfection, wholeness and completeness. *(Naess 2005 VI 9-:101)/ Naess: 1975:98)* The traditional definition of the principle of self-preservation covers structures for survival in the struggle against threats from the environment. According to this concept the organisms have inherent mechanism against disturbances. But in relation to the levels of increase and decrease in self-realization within Naess's ecological movement the principle is given renewed importance. For Naess the self is to be realized and his concept of self-realization goes beyond Spinoza's form of self-preservation and conservation. *(Naess 2005 VI 95:102)* and involves changes from within. These changes should be established by interaction with the

environment, according to which the self or ego expands and gains in power by a gradual level of increased self-realization.

Naess suggests:

*An increase in self-realization is extensionally equivalent to an increase in being in oneself. - To increase in self-realization mutually implies to increase in self-preservation. To completely realize oneself, to completely preserve oneself and to be completely in oneself, mutually imply each other. (Naess 1975:99)*

Alienation in this context is seen as the opposite, where an increase in alienation means an increase in being in something else. (Naess 2005 VI: 103) Our self-potential and ability of self-development is too narrow, if we are closed up in the social ego defined as a container of memories, fantasies and often false images of who we are. If the ego is used to build up a wire fence around feelings it is unable to hear the voice of the self and the interconnections with all other living beings. Such an ego is frozen and alienated from itself it is unable to communicate with the natural self - the trans-personal self<sup>9</sup> (higher self). Exploring the *ecological self* is to heal ourselves in the grounding of being in the world. The deepened self is not impersonal but trans-personal and the process of healing begins with self-awareness and involves self-acceptance. Self-knowledge and self-respect is of first priority instead of attempting to manipulate things for the purpose of desirable changes.

In order to avoid environmental catastrophes ethics of Nature must be intensified. Instead of imposing them on other people, a natural form of respect and love for the environment is desirable. An unselfish or even sacrificing attitude toward nature is in the long run a treacherous basis for conservation. Naess operates with an *ecological self* that must be established by identification and empathy with all living beings and nature. (Drengson & Inoue 1995: 103-105) The process of respect and love for the environment and other beings is related to gradual maturity in the levels of the self-realization. According to Arne Naess the self develops according to three stages: from ego to social self and from social self to the metaphysical self – *ecological self*.

In modern times identification with the deeper self and nature seems to be left out. Have we really forgotten our natural environment, in which we belong to all other species and nature, or can we find the way back? From the beginning of our lives, we are naturally connected to everything else, but on the way we have been separated and alienated from ourselves. Interaction with other human beings is necessary but we should avoid losing ourselves in the process, because our deeper real self

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9 <http://www.transpersonal.com.au/transpersonal-self/index.htm>

is much richer. The relationship to all other species, especially animals, and the whole ecosystem is part of the deeper - ecological self.

We are equipped with individual potentials gradually unfolded in the process of self-realization. Especially during identification the self is deepened and increased on the way to maturity. If the identification process is blocked self-realization is hindered and the individual will try to compensate by assisting in self-realization of others. Even though much can be accomplished through moral unselfish consideration of others, much more can be achieved by the process of widening and opening our own selves. Here Naess refers to Kant's concept of morality, according to which concern for all other living beings should be founded on the good will to perform beautiful acts. (Naess 2005 X: 516) By performing beautiful acts our life is enriched and more joyful and the mechanism of unfolding inherent potentials will be developed. In the analysis of the self we are, according to Naess, dealing with a highly complex and marvelous phenomena and he introduces the concept of the ecological self as:

*The ecological self of a person is that with which this person identifies (Naess 2005 X: 35-42)*

To reach the stage of the natural self the different concepts of identification is to be defined.

## Three forms of Identification

Within transpersonal ecology the clarification of the term self, shifts to that of process of identification. According to the Australian philosopher Warwick Fox<sup>10</sup> Identification can be explained according to three concepts: personal, ontological and cosmological.

*Personal identification* is brought about through personal engagement in other entities with which we tend to identify, mostly those in which we are often in contact. These relations involve not only family but also our pets, homes and all kind of entities with which a personal involvement is established. These entities represent a part of us and our identity and their integrity influences our integrity.

*Ontological based identification* is defined as transpersonal and relates to experiences of a shared feature of attributes with all other living beings. This special kind of relationship cannot even be expressed in words and relates to the training of consciousness – perception – associated with Zen

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.warwickfox.com/>

Buddhism. The engagement in such training continually warns us about the limits of language. (Drengson 1995: 136-137) As Wittgenstein says:

*It is not how things are in the world that is mystical, but that it exists (Wittgenstein, 1961 -6.44)*

The question of the ontologically based identification is associated with certain kind of experientially based spiritual disciplines relating to the concept of consciousness and cannot be analysed practically.

*Cosmologically based identification* refers to experiences of shared features among all living beings in relation to which every single unity is part of one deep shared reality. The cosmological approach to being can be realized through emphatic incorporation of mythological, religious, philosophical or scientific cosmologies, here Fox exaggerates Spinoza's philosophy. In spite of the difference between these accounts they are all capable of provoking our shared reality. We have every reason to believe that all entities in the universe are aspects of one single unfolding reality that has become increasingly differentiated over time. All scientific research points in one general direction. But what is at issue in science of the universe and the evolution of the universe is the question of the underlying force or mechanisms of the evolution in the universe. (Drengson 1995: 138-140) (Robert Sheldrake) "*Hypothesis of formative causation*")

According to Sheldrake the form of each entity is shaped by what he calls a specific *morphic*<sup>11</sup> *field*. The physical forms and even the behavior of organisms are formed by earlier examples of their own kind. Which can be explained as skills inherited by earlier generations? Still what is at issue is the question of the underlying mechanism. (Drengson 1995: 142)

*"Creativity is a profound mystery precisely because it involves the appearance of patterns that have never existed before. Our usual way of explaining things is in terms of pre-existing causes: the cause somehow contains the effect follows from the cause."* (Sheldrake 1988:308)

Creativity in the concept of inherited patterns as latent possibility consists in the manifestation of this pre-existing reality in which new patterns in the physical world is just a manifestation of earlier manifestations. With reference to Plato all possible forms have always existed as timeless mathematical potentialities according to eternal laws of nature. If we adopt Plato's concept, the latent possibilities are to be rediscovered. (Sheldrake 1988: 30)

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<sup>11</sup><http://www.sheldrake.org/Research/morphic/>

*The cosmological based identification*, offered by Spinoza, Schelling, Gandhi and Naess and many others, suggests a living sense of all other living beings. In contrast to personal based identification which can be defined as an inside outside psychological and physical relationships, the cosmological based identification proceeds from a sense of the cosmos and all living beings as an outside-in relation. The personal based psychological based approach to ontological and cosmological identification, emphasized by Naess, is deeply related to *freedom* of all entities. (Drengson 1995: 145-146) The formidable capacity of our brains makes it easy for us to see ourselves in others and in all living beings. Sometimes identification with other living beings is even closer than to other people. (Naess 2005X: 142) For Naess the spontaneous experience of relatedness with other beings is expressed by the term sameness – identity. (Naess 2005 X: 303)

The identification is illustrated by an example in which Naess looks into a microscope examining two kind of different chemicals. A flea – an insect – falls into the liquid. For the insect there is no way out so a dead struggle sets in. For several minutes the flea fights to get free and its movements and struggle moves him because he can see himself in the situation. Naess's compassion with the flea establishes his form of identification. (Naess2005 X: 518) If someone is alienated from his deeper self he is unable to feel this compassion and identification as a part of himself. In order to reestablish the lost connection Naess points to self-love as essential and the key concept to our natural selves. In his interpretation of the psychological term he turns to the German-American psychologist and sociologist Erich Fromm (1900-1980)

Self-love has often been compared to selfishness and considered sinful and by Freud considered as narcissism. Self-love in psychiatric terms is considered the same as selfishness. Love for Freud is the manifestation of libido either turned inwards or toward others. A normal child undergoes development shifting from its own person (primary narcissism) toward other objects (secondary narcissism). If object relationship is blocked the libido is turned inwards. According to this context the love a person has to himself is dependent on how much love is turned to the outside world and vice versa.

## The Selfishness of Modern Man

For From the question is, whether the selfishness of modern man can be considered a true care for himself as an emotional/intelligent human being, or is

“.....his selfishness identical with self-love or is it caused by the lack of it?” (Fromm, 1957:58)

In the question of selfishness and self-love it is worth considering, whether it is virtues to love my neighbor and not to love myself. Expressed in the bible as: “Love they neighbor as they self”! This sentence implies that the love for my own self is inseparably related to the love for any being, as conjunctive between objects and one’s own self and basically rooted in deeper capacity to love. Fromm refers to William James, to whom we shall return, in relation the concept of love involving only one’s own family and not the stranger. Such love is considered worthless and a sign of basic inability to love.

*“A person’s ability of happiness, growth, freedom is all rooted in one’s capacity to love- in care, respect, respect, responsibility and knowledge.” (Fromm 1957:60)*

Love for oneself and love of others are obviously deeply connected but selfishness and self-love are actually opposed. Fromm explains selfishness according to following principles. The selfish person is egocentric and only interested in his own affairs without respect for others and the outside world. Such a person does not love himself too much but too little and is unable to love. In his lack of caring for himself he becomes his own enemy in fact he hates himself. So selfishness compared to greedy concern for others in unselfish behavior is one and the same thing. Like the effects of an unselfish mother who had loved and taught her children what love means. Completely opposed to her expectations the children shows no sign of being loved instead they are anxious, tense, and afraid of the mother’s disapproval. They are affected by their mother’s hidden internal rejection against life. Only a mother with healthy self-love can give her children the true experience of what it means to be loved. (Fromm 1957:61) Selfishness is related to a symptom of neurotic unselfishness and connected to depression, failure in relation to other people. Even though the unselfish person only lives for others his relationships to those closest to him are unsatisfactory because he is paralyzed in his capacity to love or to enjoy anything. Behind the facade of unselfishness an intense self-centered person is hidden. Fromm quotes Meister Eckhart<sup>12</sup>

*“If you love yourself, you love everybody else as you do yourself As long as you love another person less than you love yourself, you will not really succeed in loving yourself, but if you love all alike, including yourself, you will love them as one person and that person is both God and man.”(Fromm 1957:63)*

For Fromm self-love and selfishness are completely opposite each others. Self-love implies care, respect, responsibility and knowledge both to one self and to others they are inseparable and important in our development of self-realization and a good life. Selfish persons on the other hand

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12 Meister Eckhart, Trans. By R.B. Blakeny, London, Watkins 1955

seem to care too much for themselves, which is just a compensation for their failing ability to care for their real selves. A small scratch on the surface is often enough to exhibit the self-hate. In order to love other people a person must be capable of self-love. (Fromm 1957:50)

## The Complex Self

In order to establish a higher form of self-realization self-love is essential but the question can be approached from different angles. One of them is the objective approach where self-love is identical with virtue. In this perspective every human being is obliged to preserve its existence in realization of its potential – not as a subjective feeling – but in relation to inherent nature as a human being. But we are all equipped with individual inherent potentials and the question is what this inherent nature is? According to Naess it is not easy to access these potentials especially not in relation to deep ecology and other species like animals and plants. For him Erich Fromm's terminology of the self is not sufficient, because the concept of individual potentials in relation to self-realization can easily be ignored or misunderstood in an ego-trip process of self-deception blocking access to the richness of the natural self. Instead the self must be explained as being deeply related to all other species and ecosystems on earth. But how can we access the practical concept of the deep *ecological self*?

Naess turns to William James's book *Principles of Psychology* in his investigation of the self where the complex concept of the self-consciousness is enlightened. According to James self-consciousness is deeply related to the environment in which our *ecological self* plays an important role as a natural part of us. (Naess 2005 X: 520-524) But as we shall see, James's approach to the self can be enlightened from different angles but they are all related. Here a short description of his interpretation of the complex self:

a. *The material Self*

b. *The social Self*

c. *The spiritual Self*

a. *The material Self* relates to the body and the organs through which we are connected to our nearest relatives. We have an immanent impulse to watch over our body. (James 1981:280)

b. *The Social Self* is that part that operates within society. According to James we have several social selves depending on our individual connections and relationships.

c. *The Spiritual Self* is for James a man's inner or subjective being - his psychic dispositions. The intimate part of the self relates to our moral sensibility and conscience. If this vital part of self being is blocked, a person can be alienated from himself. The spiritual self is the reflective part of the mind presiding over perception of sensation. As the foundation of our will it influences our interests even towards pleasure and pain. (James 1981:283-285)

The spiritual self cannot be accessed intellectually or through memories it can only be felt. Even though it is a part of us, to which we have direct sensible acquaintance, it is a being or principle that is difficult to explain, James claims. (James 1981:286) The different selves can be seen in a hierarchical scale with the bodily self at the bottom, the *spiritual self* at the top and the social selves between. In our self-seeking we naturally strive towards the intrinsically best, subordinating our lower selves to our higher self. He points to the spiritual self as highly precious in relation to whom we should be willing to give up friends and all property even life itself. Of all the selves James sees the potential social self as most interesting because of its connections with our moral and religious life. It contains the higher and the lower parts of us. (James 1981:299-301) In following we turn to James's interpretation of Self-love in relation to the higher Self.

*"A man in whom self-seeking of any sort is largely developed is said to be selfish. He is on the other hand called unselfish if he shows consideration for the interests of other selves than his own."* (James 1981:302)

Every human being is by nature primarily interested in his own person/survival. Should this number one principle of identity relate to an inner nucleus of the spiritual self – or even the indivisible soul-substance (orthodox tradition), James asks. For him we cannot make a comparison - to have a self that is worth caring for, the I must be presented for an object which appeals to one of the selves – the material – the social - the spiritual. For James a man's body is obviously his most selfish part considered in relation to survival – every species is primarily interested in its own access to food – mates. Self-seeking in this concept is the outcome of simple instinctive propensity of thoughts and acts primarily concerned with outward things without any concern of inner principles.

The more focus there is on these primitive objects the less need there is for inward principles and self-love is considered the relation to a set of things. Such a selfish bodily Ego certainly needs a principle of subjectivity – a soul or pure Ego – in order to establish a stream of thoughts and consciousness. Even though all interests are focused on other bodies and seem unselfish they are suicidal, according to James. The social self-love is according to James related to external objects and quite fragile and changeable, because they come and go just as my success or failure in the

pursuit of material things. Even though I see myself in the mind of others, the pride or shame I feel might also be related to something else namely to my own egoistic empirical selfhood – my historical self. (James 1981: 303-306)

For James the spiritual Self is: a soul-substance – a transcendental Ego – personal love and hate – willingness and sensibilities. He prefers the last one and says:

*“We see no reason to suppose that self-love is primarily, or secondarily, or even, love for one’s mere principle of conscious identity.” (James 1981: 307-308)*

For James consciousness as something more than just cognitive data, otherwise it would not be able to maintain its own existence. Here he points to the spiritual disposition as an important part of the human/body integrity in interaction with all other bodies/species on earth. A certain amount of selfishness/self-love is required in order to survive but man should also strive towards unselfish (altruistic<sup>13</sup>) behavior because we are all part of the same being.

*“And so in a thousand ways the primitive sphere of the egoistic emotions may enlarge and change its boundaries.” (James 1981: 307-308)*

Personal identity is the sense of sameness perceived by thought and predicated by objects according to which the self identifies itself. (James 1981: 314) Self-identification is for Naess, relates to the universal and deeper part of nature in which man represents a smaller part of a whole (microcosmos/macrococosmos). Such behavior enables the capacity for empathy with all other living creatures and here Naess points to Gandhi, who believed in a unity between man and all other living beings and he saw a spiritual development in the connection. (Naess: 2005 X: 522-523). Liberation of the individual is a supreme aim for Gandhi in his nonviolent policy in which his ultimate goal was:

*“What I want to achieve – what I have been striving and pining to achieve these thirty years – is self-realization, to see God face to face, to attain Moksha (liberation) I live and move and have my being in pursuit of that goal.” (Naess 1974:34)*

## Selfless Actions

Self-realization relates to the universal and higher Self which can be reached through selfless actions.

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/altruism>

*“I believe in advaita (non-duality). I believe in the essential unity of man and, for that matter, all that lives. Therefore I believe that if one man gains spirituality, the whole world gains with him and, if one man fails, the whole world fails to that extent.”(Naess: 2005 X: 524)*

The quotation from Gandhi reminds us of the individual as the supreme concern.<sup>14</sup> (Naess 2005 X: 60. As individuals we are all responsibly of developing self-knowledge and contact to the deeper natural *ecological Self*. Such insight opens up for common rights and self-realization for all other beings. Gandhi made manifest the internal relationship between self-realization and what he called *biospherical egalitarianism*<sup>15</sup>

Self-realization is often associated with life-long ego-trips. To compare these two is in according to Naess a serious mistake and underestimation of the self. Ego-trip development is placed at point zero and relates to altruism<sup>16</sup> implying the ego sacrifices itself in favor of others and relating to the demand: *love the others as much as you love yourself*. It stimulates however, a great deal of thoughts how limited mankind is capable of loving each others according to moral laws. To eliminate the negative ego-trip development increased emphasis must be given to the natural and deeper self in order to open up for identification with all other species in the ecosystem. (Naess 2005 X: 524-525) If we should act solely according to morality without inclinations and pleasure, what then? Naess asks. Instead he suggests an increased focus on ethics and here he turns to Emmanuel Kant’s third Critique (of Judgment)

## Self-realization an Ethical Commitment to Nature

Quoting Kant:

*“What is essential in the moral worth of actions is that the moral law should directly determine the will. If the determination of the will takes place in conformity indeed to the moral law, but only by means of a feeling , no*

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14 Self-realization in Western philosophy and psychology (Maslow) is mostly linked to Eastern concepts like Gandhi’s concept of self-realization.

15 The ecological field worker has a deep-seated respect for all forms of life and reaches an understanding from within. The equal right to live and blossom is intuitively clear for such a person. Unfortunately the anthropocentric separation of man and nature has affected the value of human life and led to alienation. (Drengson 1995:5)

16 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Altruism>

*matter of what kind, which has to be presupposed in order that the law may be sufficient to determine the will, and therefore not for the sake of the law.....”*<sup>17</sup>

Kant tells us, that we should motivate ourselves to act according to the good will in conformity with the moral law in what he calls beautiful acts. For Naess these acts are fundamental in relation to environmental affairs with special focus on increased sensibility toward the richness and diversity of life in landscapes of free nature. Each individual should contribute to the development of self-realization in a widened and deepened intimate relation to the environment ethics, in which a deeper concept of reality and the self is empathized.

## Self-realization based on Self-knowledge

Nature is for Naess related to the reality we live in defined as a movement from being in the world to being in Nature. Philosophically he contributes to a renewed form of self-realization exceeding the conscious ego. Such development is based on the union of subject and object unfolding joyful aspects of being in Nature. Even though we primarily focus on our own individual lives we should be aware of the fact that our real existence may lay outside or even beyond the world. The key term expression in this relation is higher self-realization. Such realization is often compared to pleasure and happiness, but philosophically it implies insight into the nature and properties of the self. Following Spinoza the potentials of man are internally related to happiness, but to search hard for happiness as the ultimate goal in life is wrong; one should rather look for self-realization.

*“It is very human to ask about our ultimate goal or purpose for being in the world. This may be a misleading way of putting the question. It may seem to suggest that the goal or purpose must somehow be outside of, or beyond the world. Perhaps this can be avoided by using the phrase “living in the world”” (Naess 2005 X: 529)*

The key term of answering the question of the ultimate goal in life is for Naess self-realization which is connected with the ecological self involving three abstracts: subject, object and medium. (Naess 2005 X: 529) Our special human ability of self-knowledge enables us to develop our individual potentials. And the importance of realization involves human ethical commitment within society which has been elaborated in philosophical metaphysics since the early Greeks. For Naess the

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<sup>17</sup>Great books of the Western World: 42 Kant, William Benton, The University of Chicago, 1952) page 321: Elements of Pure Practical Reason, book 1. The Analytic of Pure Practical Reason, chapter 111: Of the Motives of Pure Practical Reason:

connection between man and nature can be highly increased by individual development of potentials in relation to continued evolution on all levels. Elaboration of diversity (difference) and symbiosis requires clarification about the kind of universe we live in, which in this case is the earth as “living being” (Naess 1995 X: 526-532) Naess quotes Gandhi in his view of finding the truth, according to whom the condition of becoming perfect is highly related to action as ...

*“...a burning passion coupled with absolute detachment is the key to all success.” (Naess 1974:36)*

The highest form of development of the universal Self is according to Gandhi related to Mahāyāna Buddhism in which the supreme inter subjective goal for each individual is self-realization based on self-knowledge. The search for truth becomes unintelligible without a self that seeks for something which for Gandhi is God. (Naess 1974:37) He says:

*“I think it is the truth that God has as many names as there are creatures and therefore, we say that God is nameless and since God has many forms, we also consider him as formless.....but I worship God as Truth only and I am seeking for him.” (Naess 1974:27)*

Gandhi is, according to Naess, philosophically illustrating Spinoza’s concept of the immanent God, (Naess 1974:27) defined as: *Deus sive Natura* (God or Nature) (Naess 2005 X: 383)

*“The power through which particular things, and as a consequence, man, preserve their essence, is God’s or Nature’s power....in the role of being explicable through the actual human essence.” (Naess 2005 X: 383)*

If the immanence of God or Nature is to be taken seriously Nature does not exist apart from particular things. (Naess 2005 X: 383) If we wish to understand (intuit) the universe (macrocosmos), we must start by self-knowledge (microcosmos). For Naess Spinoza’s Ethics offers some of the most inspiring aspects of human thinking in relation to our existence. His applications suggest several important levels of decisions to act in certain ways in concrete situations. The account of the spiritual genesis is especially elaborated in part five of the Ethics; *Concerning the Power of the Intellect or, on human freedom*, in this part love of God becomes the highest goal for the religious man. (Naess 2005 X: 400-401)

*“Part five of the Ethics represents, as far as I can understand, Middle East wisdom par excellence. Spinoza fits in with Eastern traditions in a way that makes it highly unlikely that he can be completely absorbed in any of the major Western trends.” (Wetlesen, Naess 1978:137)*

The study of Spinoza in relation to Eastern meditation and Mahāyāna Buddhism by the Norwegian philosopher Jon Wetlesen is by Naess considered as groundbreaking. But the importance of reason

in relation to meditation is underestimated according to Naess. (*Wetlesen, Naess 1978:137*) His comments on the subject will be elaborated in the last section of this paper. Now proceeding to part II Spinoza's concepts of man and Nature will be presented.

## Part II

### Spinoza and Ecology

All considerations about ethics and happiness are, according to Spinoza irrelevant until man finds his own place in Nature or God - *the infinite substance*. Spinoza's metaphysics are considered fundamental in spiritual development by the conceptualization of the idea of unity between the mental and the physical. Individual objects like dogs, ants, flowers, trees are only temporary expressions of the continual flow of this substance. If we wish to develop and understand Nature, we must break free from the bonds of desires in our egocentric search for happiness and develop our spiritual Self (ecological self) - all our goals should be directed in relation to this principle. Spinoza's system is not a moral or ethical demand in the usual sense but rather ethics of reason and self-realization, in relation to which both humans and nonhumans have the right to live in their own environment. (*Devall – Sessions 1985: 237-240*)

For Spinoza most things occurring in life are empty or futile. But nothing is good or bad in itself, fear or pain caused by external things are considered as projections caused by confused passions. His concern and investigations are mainly related of the connection between an eternal and external force of nature operation behind everything - a kind of eternal energy of goodness affecting the mind reachable by intelligence. (*Ibid:3*) Higher *freedom* and understanding are essential to man as part of nature determined according to certain laws of the universe. Achieving intellectual insight is highly relevant in relation to correcting human errors and avoiding environment damage in a sick society. Such insight should, according to Spinoza, be guided by increased scientific knowledge and anything that goes against it should be rejected. (*Ibid: 6*) Man does not know his own mind, he says. It contains objectivity and communicates with the laws of nature; insight of such laws can be acquired by increased self-knowledge.

*“The mind has the power to form certain notions which explain the nature of things and teach us how to conduct our lives. We can, therefore, rightly maintain that the nature of the mind, insofar as it is conceived in this way, is the first cause of divine revelation.” (Ibid: 11)*

Nature speaks to us through our mind and the message can be reached by tuning into the right channels; these informations are however not in words but intuitively related to, what he calls *the natural light*. (*Ibid: 11*) Even though everything is determined by universal laws, the way man lives his life and produces is still dependent on his own decisions. As part of nature he constitutes and unfolds his energies in relation to these decisions as the power of his mind. Still universal considerations of fate and the chain of causes....

*“...cannot help us to form and order our thoughts concerning particular things. Moreover we are completely ignorant of the very order and connection of things that is, of how things are really ordered and connected.”*  
(*Ibid: 30*)

Therefore it is relevant to consider everything as real and since the intellect is the best part of us, our main goal should be to improve our knowledge. All things in Nature involve and express such concepts, the more we acquire insight into natural things the higher our knowledge. The universal laws are prescribed in our mind and called commands.

*“If now we attend to the nature of natural divine law.....we shall see that it is universal, or common to all men; for we have deduced it from universal human nature.”* (*Ibid: 30*)

Since the law is universal, it does not require any specific kind of faith or historical narratives. Although we cannot achieve the highest knowledge by historical sources, Spinoza suggests we study the sources in regard to social life, according to which they can be useful tools. But ceremonies are not required; instead we should focus on actions that encourage the power of understanding *the natural light*.

*“Finally, we see that the highest reward of the divine law is the law itself, namely to know God and to love him from true freedom and with a whole and constant heart.”* (*Ibid: 30*)

For Spinoza violation of the divine law is mainly related to human bondage of confused passions and inadequate ideas. (*Ibid: 27-30*)

## Natura Naturans and Natura Naturata

Spinoza operates with a concept of Nature as *Natura Naturans* and *Natura Naturata*. The first is the eternal force of the universe – God. The second is divided in two: a universal and a particular. The universal is directly related to the divine. The particular consists of all singular things produced by universal modes. This form requires substances to be completely conceived. In the universal form

of *Natura Naturata*, which is directly dependent on God, we know two: motion in matter and the intellect of mind existing in all eternity.

*“Motion belongs to natural science it is infinite and can neither exist nor be understood by itself but only by extension. The intellect belongs to the eternal and its sole property is to understand everything clearly. Reflection is the main activity of the mind and it cannot stop thinking.” (Ibid: 59-61)*

The soul is for Spinoza an attribute of thinking, so if the mode of the body is disturbed, the mind will suffer and be destroyed. The mode called the soul is originally connected to the body and its changes are deeply depending on the body, they are combined in one union. As mentioned earlier the mind has objectivity in itself. Since Nature or God is one being it contains all essences of created things. *(Ibid: 59-61)*

*“...it is necessary that of all this there is produced in thought an infinite idea, which contains in itself objectively the whole of Nature, as it is in itself.” (Ibid: 59)*

Such an idea has objectivity in itself because it is one necessarily infinite being, that contains the essence of everything. Love, desire and joy are originated in the first immediate mode of *Natura naturata*. Therefore the idea of natural love and self-preservation of the body is fundamental for a thinking being. For Spinoza everything is defined as things including man, so this thinking thing, should maintain the idea of the soul for it contains the attributes of love, desire and joy. Now it seems obvious that the idea proceeds from the object and is changed or destroyed in relation to this. The essence of the soul remains in the thinking attribute arising as an object of Nature – meaning the object is real and exists as an attribute of one infinite being.<sup>18</sup>

*“The soul is an idea arising from an object which exists in Nature.” (Ibid: 59)*

Since our knowledge is mainly related to extension, the modes of the body are motion and rest. Any change in one of the modes involves changes the idea of the soul.

*“When the external causes which bring changes about differ in themselves, and do not have the same effects, there arises a difference of feeling in one and the same part.” (Ibid: 59)*

Feelings and ideas are deeply connected in relation to self-knowledge, experience and reasoning. Our soul is part of an infinite idea arising immediately from God as the origin of all knowledge and the immortality of the soul. *(Ibid: 59-61)* If we turn our attention to the two modes of *Natura*

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<sup>18</sup>This part will be elaborated below in Schelling's Transcendental Idealism

*Naturata*, there are two keys the first is identified by God/Nature, in relation to which all things in the world is determined according to one rational plan. The second concerns the channel through which God determines things and their causal state in the universe. These channels operate in diverse levels of which the highest is named: *the third kind of knowledge (virtue)*; identical to God as the one and only substance. As mentioned above two of them determine the world: *thought and extension*. Everything in the natural world is modes of these channels as closely connected. Both the physical and the psychological sciences belong to the same array of facts. In part 11 of the Ethics: *Of the nature and origin of the Mind*, he says:

*“The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things.” (Morgan 2006: Spinoza: 11P7)*

This proposition is highly relevant in relation to the rest of the Ethics. (*Ibid: x*) In following the focus will mainly relate to Part V: *Human Freedom*

## The Power of the Intellect

Man is conceived as part of nature and so his behavior can be explained in relation to the same laws as in physics.

Such laws can be organized into a system explaining the pattern of emotions like hate and love.

*“Hate is increased by being returned, but can be destroyed by love.” (Ibid: xxxiii: 111P43)*

The good man helps to preserve being and increases his power of action. Spinoza points to the task of psychology, as a system in which emotions are systematized as everyone strives to preserve his own being – defined as conatus.<sup>19</sup> Conatus not only functions psychologically but also in relation to ethics and a rational plan of life. (*Ibid: xxxiii*) In order to preserve being, man should control of his passions, because he is often subject to passions capable of overpowering rational desires. Therefore such desires should be controlled by reason and

*“...knowledge of God is the mind’s greatest good; its greatest virtue is to know God.” (Ibid: xxxiii 1VP28)*

This kind of knowledge relates to nature and involves freedom and reason. In part IV of the Ethics Spinoza tries to dictate reason and substitute the Law of Moses with the free man’s choice.

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<sup>19</sup> <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/conatus?s=t>

*“He who lives according to the guidance of reason strives, as far as he can to repay the other’s hate, anger, and disdain toward him, with love, or nobility.” (Ibid: xxxiii: 1VP46)*

But man is not free and he rarely acts according to reason, instead passions play a major role in life, Spinoza says. So his goal should be to bring these passions under control and guide them in the direction of reason. Many effects of the mind involve a cognitive element, like sadness defined as hate accompanied by the idea of an external cause; like a person. But the way man perceives someone else might be false, because what he sees is colored by his own ideas. As soon as these emotions are changed and realizes, they become enlightened and will be easier to handle. So the person sees what was wrong, and the hate turns into understanding.

*“If we separate emotions, or effects, from the thought of an external cause, and join them to other thoughts, then the love, or hate, toward the external cause is destroyed, as are the vacillations of mind arising from these effects.” (Ibid:xxxiii: VP2)*

If we learn to realize, that many of other people’s acts are necessary effects of the circumstances in which they are placed, the negative emotions may be redirected and less harmful. *(Ibid: xxxiii)*

## Freedom as Self-determined Actions

The link between man’s knowledge of Nature/God and his activity as a moral agent is essential to Spinoza. The concept of freedom plays a major role in his philosophy – not freedom of the will – he is a determinist<sup>20</sup> – but freedom as self-determined actions based on autonomy with the ability to control passions in relation to reason. According to this concept man should understand himself as a smaller part of one infinite substance. *(Spinoza 1993: xx-xxi)*

*“That thing is said to be FREE (liberal) which exists by the mere necessity of its own nature and is determined to act by itself alone. That thing is said to be NECESSARY (necessaria), or rather COMPELLED (coacta), which is determined by something else to exist and act in a certain fixed and determinate way.” (Ibid:4)*

The more active and self-determined a man is, the more he is considered an individual thinking being. The reality of a thing is dependent on its personal activity, so for Spinoza freedom plays a higher role than goodness. Evaluation of things is part of their own natural development and the highest form of virtue and perfection, in the realization of immanent potentials according to the common order of Nature. *(Hampshire 2005: 183)*

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<sup>20</sup>[http://www.philosophos.com/philosophy\\_article\\_63](http://www.philosophos.com/philosophy_article_63).

*“The endeavour (conatus) wherewith a thing endeavours to persist in its being is nothing else than the actual essence of that thing.” (Ibid: 90)*

The natural tendency or conatus of a man is to preserve himself according to activities in relation to his own essence, but he must gain access to this part of his mind, because he is already determined by Nature as a thinking physical thing. The choice is between reflection/intellectual powers and undirected passive conditions influenced by imaginary emotions.

*“Among the emotions which are related to the mind, in so far as it acts, there are none which are not related to pleasure or desire.” (Ibid: 124)*

Desires emerging into consciousness will be determined by the causes of pleasure and pain. Confused and imaginary reflections lead to *sub specie boni*, temporary ends, resulting in frustration and instability. Frustration is originally caused by the lack of free choice in relation to self-made confusions seated in the individual. Self-determination by intellectual activity is, according to Spinoza, considered the main criterion for development toward the right condition for a human being. Under such circumstances the individual will understand the natural order of every particular thing as types of structures and patterns involving better understanding of the laws of Nature. (Hampshire 2005: 184-185)

## The Complex pattern of Emotions

*“Nothing comes to pass in nature, which can be set down to a flaw therein.....thus the passions of hatred, anger, envy, and so on, considered in themselves, follow from this same necessity and efficacy of nature; they answer to certain definite causes, through which they are understood.” (Spinoza 1883:129)*

The properties of such causes (ideas) should be elaborated. Spinoza distinguishes between adequate and inadequate ideas. If we have adequate ideas our mind is active. But if we are exposed to inadequate ideas our mind is passive which, as we shall see below, is related to what he calls the first kind of knowledge. (Ibid: 130) Adequate ideas relate to real and objective understanding of Nature, second and third kind of knowledge, as an immanent activity of the mind can be gradually accessed through determined (free) self-knowledge. The various forms of selves are illustrated in his system of psychopathology showing hidden patterns of systematic connections – unconscious memory – of the passions. The first step to self-knowledge involves a systematic insight to these layers of consciousness, according to which the characteristics of the individual can be explained. Every passion is related to pleasure and pain combined to an idea. The reason for such passion can be interpreted by following such an idea. (Hampshire 2005:186) Pleasure and pain are directed to an

object and involves desire and aversion associated with unexamined links to unconscious content. An emotion necessarily involves a thought of the cause or occasion directed to an object. In the process of self-conscious awareness the original causes of pleasure or suffering involves active inquiries into the thoughts of imaginary and false ideas.

*“To change the accompanying thought is therefore to change the emotion, and therefore to change the desire or aversion that determines conduct.” (Ibid: 187-188)*

The complex emotional pattern can however be released and broken in the process of self-knowledge. When the causes of pain, related to unconscious memories/dispositions, is cleared and understood as a personal internal problem, man begins to understand that the pain is rooted in himself and not in the environment. On this stage intellectual inquiry of existence can be opened up for. (Ibid: 187-188)

## False Imaginations

Spinoza's account of true and adequate ideas of God/Nature is similar to the Platonic concept of wisdom in Plato's cave<sup>21</sup>. The picture of the slaves in the cave expresses the conditions under which most people live.

*“...for when a man is a prey of his emotions. He is not his own master, but lies at the mercy of fortune.” (Spinoza 1976:77)*

Bound up on a web of feelings man is unable to see reality and to act rationally. The message here is that when man is bound up by false imaginations, he lives in his self-made prison. Under such artificial conditions access to the real self and Nature is blocked and colored by blurred feelings. Living under such conditions man becomes a slave in his own weak environment and exposed to external causes – easy to manipulate into alienated desires. Therefore intellectual activity is highly relevant and relates to freedom of the mind.

*“The conatus<sup>22</sup> of the individual, conceived as a thinking being, is the vis animi<sup>23</sup>, which is the essential and natural tendency of the mind to assert active thinking and knowledge against the passive association of ideas in imagination.” (Devall – Sessions 1985: 239)*

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21 <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/plato-myths/>

22 Tendency <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conatus>

23 Strength of the Soul [http://www.proz.com/kudoz/english\\_to\\_latin/linguistics/2050477-strength\\_of\\_the\\_soul.html](http://www.proz.com/kudoz/english_to_latin/linguistics/2050477-strength_of_the_soul.html)

The process of psychic re-arrangement involves clearance of ego desires and passive perceptions transcending the narrow ego toward levels of higher knowledge of being. Spinoza's system can be seen as too rationalistic but illustrates how an individual has direct access to the whole of being by his own intuitive awareness of Nature/God. (*Ibid*: 239) In spite of man's ability of freedom of mind, every individual is constituted through certain modes of existence, organically integrated in nature, united with all other entities on earth and ruled according to unchangeable laws.

## Man's Limitation in Time

Man's position in the system is guaranteed according to his ontological mode determined by structures of reality and limitation in time. Human existence is once cut off in the tension between the two poles of power and individual being. Reason is considered a free choice in opposition to a network of confused images of reality.

*"Emotions, which is called a passivity of the soul, is confused ideas, whereby the mind affirms concerning its body, or any part thereof, a force for existence greater or less than before, and by the presence of which the mind is determined to think of one thing rather than another."* (Spinoza 1976: 73)

According to Spinoza the deep gap between power and weakness can however be bridged and the passage occurs when necessary changes arise in the individual. Man is united with all other entities on earth and exposed to universal laws, among which the tendency of all things to persist in their own being (conatus<sup>24</sup>) is essential. This immanent essence of Nature leads him to act/struggle in order to preserve his own being identical with the infinite power of Nature. For Spinoza it is entirely significant on which level the energy is expressed - from the lowest explained as jus naturale (instinct and passion) to the highest position - in which reason and freedom is manifested. Development of the individual stages is dependent on the physical and intellectual capacities of man. As part of Nature man possess inherent obstacles (knowledge) of this power in relation to which access is limited, because he is bound up in various kinds of knowledge and not responsible for all that happens in his life. (Jon Wetlesen, E. Giancotti Boshnerini: 1978: 86-88)

## Three kinds of Knowledge

Spinoza operates with three kinds of knowledge.

*"Knowledge of the first kind is the sole cause of falsity; knowledge of the second and third kind is necessarily true."* (Spinoza 1993:68)

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24 <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/conatus>

*The first kind* of knowledge is confused and uncertain knowledge based on inadequate ideas. A great deal of this knowledge comes to us through our sense perceptions in relation to images organized into memories, anticipations, and inferences. The imaginings depends on what we encounter through our senses. (Beth Lord 2010: 79) Truth can never be given through words alone.

*“Knowledge of the second and third kinds and not of the first teaches us to distinguish the true from the false.”*  
(Spinoza 1993:68)

*The second kind* of knowledge is reason, which is explained as common notion and adequate ideas of the properties of things. This kind of knowledge is necessary true because it involves knowledge and access to the adequate ideas of God or Nature. True knowledge teaches us to distinguish truth from falsity and understanding through reason means the ability to see that nothing is contingent and everything is necessarily determined.

*“It is the nature of reason not to regard things as contingent but as necessary.”* (Ibid: 71)

To gain reason means to clarify ideas and rational knowledge in relation to the part of our mind that already contains such information. This essential part has to be recollected and reestablished by relevant activity, according to which higher understanding can be achieved. The valuable insight into these layers of the mind involves self-knowledge in relation to all other species in the universe. Reason is built up and developed through experience with other entities in the world. Even though it seems that some of the empirical knowledge is false, it is not worthless but steps along the way to the higher self. Without such encounters it would not be possible to build up experience and develop rationality. Imagination and reason are not opposed to each others, because every human being has both parts of knowledge on different levels. It is impossible to be completely imaginative or rational, since the mind necessarily interacts with other minds – the activity of thinking is a continuum of imagination and reason.

*The third kind* of knowledge is intuition. This knowledge proceeds from adequate knowledge of God to knowledge of the essence of things and can only be performed by a non-durational mind.  
(Beth Lord 2010: 80-81)

*“The knowledge of the eternal and infinite essence of God which each idea involves is adequate and perfect.”*  
(Spinoza 1993:73)

This kind of knowledge is an immanent part of the mind, as a small part of one universal substance – the infinite essence of God/Nature. (*Ibid*: 73)

*“The human mind in so far as it knows itself and its body under a species of eternity, thus far necessarily has knowledge of God, and knows that it exists in God and is conceived through God.” (Ibid: 211)*

For Spinoza the third stage involves the highest possible content of mind and pleasure, by the idea and intellectual knowledge of God as the final cause of everything. (*Ibid*:212)

## Man’s confusion violates the balance of Nature

The road to the third kind of knowledge leads through a tunnel of frustrations followed by several changes. Man’s ability of reflection on his own situation reveals an unfulfilled search for a continuous unending happiness together with other individuals with the same character as his own – in a union of mind and the whole of nature. Since every mental striving relates to an equivalent physical strive it states the union with the body. Man exists in nature as a thing and he is necessary caused and harmonized together with other things in the universe; but as a thinking subject. As we have learned by Spinoza (Plato), man is often deceived by his own passions and desires and ignorant of the causality of the world. Even though man is in union with all other living things in the universe, his position is confused and ignorant because of negative forces within. These defects can however, be harmonized by positive science and philosophical knowledge as well as the causal order of man-in nature. Unfortunately man is self-centered and ignorant; therefore he violates the balance of nature, in which he himself is a participant. Re-establishing the balance requires man to overcome his self-centered deception and acquire higher forms of self-consciousness in relation to all other living beings. (*Wetlesen, Parson 1978:159-160*)

## The Forces behind Consciousness

*“There is in no mind an absolute or free will, but the mind is determined for willing this or that by a cause which is determined in its turn by another cause, and this one again by another, and so on to infinity.” (Spinoza 1993:74)*

In Spinoza’s terminology mind and body are united in one union. Fulfillment of the potentials of each individual is developed through interaction with other living beings in a natural environment. So the main purpose of our presence in the universe is to move from ignorance of being to higher dimensions within. Our mind has no distinct idea of the mechanism of natural interaction at work, but science can possibly provide us with some understanding of the forces underlying our

perception. Spinoza has informed us that by the second and third kind of knowledge, we can achieve intuitive insight of ourselves as part of God or Nature beginning with the body.

*“But since the mind is necessarily conscious of itself through ideas of the modification of the body, so the mind is conscious of its endeavour.” (Spinoza 1955:91)*

Knowledge relating to the mind it is called will; whereas knowledge relating to both mind and body is called appetite. Powers of action of the unity (mind/body) is determined by its own inherent strives toward fulfillment, in which the psychosomatic self is attracted to those things that tends to reinforce its powers and to avoid those which hinders psychosomatic fulfillment. (Wetlesen, Parson, 1978: 161)

*“Every man, by the laws of his nature, necessarily desires or shrinks from that which he deems to be good or bad.” (Spinoza 1955:202)*

Good in this sense is not something external but involves our own striving – a dynamic relatedness to persons and objects in the environment - a system of nature. Man must constantly be engaged in struggle with its world to secure what is profitable for itself and others. If our responses to the environment are thoughtfully active they lead to fulfillment and joy, but if they are inadequate and passive they cause suffering. Acting in relation to reason and helping other people in joining friendships preserves man’s own being. (Wetlesen, Parson 1978:163)

## The Immanent Power of the Universe

To become liberated by the power of the intellect means for Spinoza to show how much reason can control. Reason as part of nature is an immanent power of the universe reflecting the laws of things. Every single individual organism acts according to these laws in coordination with the whole of the universe. (Wetlesen 1978: 163) Man basically acts according to his fundamental drive appetite.

*“Whatever increases or diminishes, helps or hinders the power of action of our body, the idea thereof increases or diminishes, helps or hinders the power of thinking of the mind.” (Spinoza 1993:91)*

The emotions of pleasure and pain (melancholy) are deeply connected to the changes in our mind and body. (Ibid 1993:91) If the mind is engaged in false ideas it hinders the power of the body to act. Increasing the power of mind is based on personal determination in relation to higher forms of perfection and pleasure.

*“Desire is the very essence of man in so far as it is conceived as determined to do something by some modification of itself.” (Spinoza 1955:125)*

There is no difference between appetite and desire but still he draws a distinction between self-preservative (appetite) and the self-destructive desires. The latter derives from confused ideas, incomplete and confused therefore negative in relation to our own fulfillment. Self-preservative appetites facilitate the passage of the psychosomatic self to a greater fulfillment of reality and of the whole harmonious system of the universe. Evil however is destruction of such activity as well as the environment, instead potentialities for the good ought to be developed. Individual desires such as lust and ambition is tyrannous and dominates other desires. They are by Spinoza described as limiting and selfish (*Wetlesen, Parson 1978: 163-64*) and he reminds us that:

*“As for the terms good and bad, they indicate no positive quality in things regarded in themselves, but are merely modes of thinking, or notions which we form from the comparison of things one with the other.”*  
(*Spinoza 1955:189*)

## Ethical Knowledge

Our ability of the intellect enables us to evaluate our desires, for even fulfillment of the desire for love can be destructive and evil if it becomes dominating and overthrows other required needs.

*“The force of any passion or emotion can overcome the rest of man’s activities or power, so that the emotion becomes obstinately fixed to him.”* (*Ibid 1955:194*)

If man fails to fulfill his own bodily-mental desires in order to harmonize potentialities, among these bodily-environmental interactive patterns of survival and development – the strength of his organism will be weakened, because he fails to obey the wisdom of the body. As part of the universal laws of nature man’s conatus for self-preservation is the identifying form of his existence, essence and needs. His striving is considered good if it corresponds to appetitive needs - *ethical knowledge* – involving avoidance of deceptions of the senses and securing adequate ideas, as well as reflecting basic needs in relation to the environment. (*Wetlesen, Parson 1978: 164-65*)

*“Thus we see that the mind can undergoes many changes, and can pass sometimes to a state of greater perfection, sometimes to a state of lesser perfection.”* (*Ibid 1955:139*)

For Spinoza greater perfection is related to *ethical knowledge* in contrast to lower perfection considered as social wants, described below. The distinction between self-preservation and self-destructive appetites are by Parsons considered the distinction between needs and wants.

*“Wants relates to individual acquirements in the social environment. They are often destructive in relation to human fulfillment. Needs are defined as appetitive structures in, an unrealized form of the self, which can be*

*actualized in relation to the environment in which they are developed hierarchically in connection with biological needs providing impersonal ecological cosmic needs.” (Wetlesen, Parson 1978: 166-67)*

The need-fulfillment cannot be sharply separated but operates individually in relation to the rest of the planetary environment. The need is classified as physiological tension, restless notation. If the individual need is not adequately satisfied health problems can occur. Man has an inherent need to preserve and fulfill his potentials in relation to all other entities on the planet, in Spinoza's term with God/Nature. (*Ibid 1978:166-67*)

*“The force whereby a man persists in existing is limited, and is infinitely surpassed by the power of external causes.” (Spinoza 1955:193)*

God/Nature is the fundamental power of man and preserves his being, not as an eternal existence but as part of one unit, according to which his essence can be explained. If man by his own power should be able to avoid external changes, he would also be able to control life and death, which for Spinoza is absurd, because man like all other things in the universe undergoes changes (*Ibid:193*) ruled by the laws of nature. These changes occur in relation to desires unknown to our conscious self.

## Emotions, Reason and Virtue

*“The essence of a passion cannot be explained through our essence alone.....but must necessarily be defined by the power of an external cause compared with our own.” (Ibid 1955:194)*

Emotions defined as ideas of the mind, affects the power of the body either as increased or diminished activity. These emotions of the mind are powerful and can only be repressed by a stronger emotion. (*Ibid: 195*) In the study of human emotions the drive of self - preservation leads to the sustaining and creative interactions of the body in relation to the whole of nature, in which needs and appetite are forces of this activity. Such preservation requires a specific form of bodily appetite in order to keep the body in optimal health, for the basic reality of man is grounded in nature. (*Wetlesen, Parson 1978: 167*) For man to preserve being the development of both mind and body in relation the environment and other people is required. The search for others is both bodily (emotional) and rational, but confused and false emotions should be clarified and corrected by reason.

*“For the more a man seeks what is useful to him and endeavors to preserve himself, the more is he endowed with virtue.....and the power to act according to his own nature, that is to live in obedience to reason.” (Spinoza 1955:210)*

Even though it is best for man to live in accordance with reason, most men are troublesome to one another. Only by uniting their forces they can escape the dangers surrounding them.

*“To act virtuously is to act in obedience with reason.” (Ibid :211)*

For Spinoza obedience to reason is to understand the highest good – to know God/Nature - the very nature of reason is the essence of the human mind, so what each one seeks for himself, he will desire for others as well. The kind of desire Spinoza is referring to is the appetite/desire that relates to the mind – involving knowledge of God/Nature. Without this knowledge the essence of the mind remains inaccessible to man. (Ibid: 211) The dictates of reason postulates nothing which is against nature...

*“.....therefore, that each man should love himself, and seek what is useful to him – I mean what is truly useful to him – and desire whatever leads man to a greater state of perfection, and in absolute terms, that each one should endeavor to preserve his being as far as it in him lies.” (Ibid: 155)*

Virtue is nothing else than to act according to the laws of one’s own nature and relates to preserving one’s own being – as an immanent drive – desired by us on its own account. In preservation man is dependent on things outside himself especially other individuals, among them especially those which agree with his own nature. A man who is guided by reason seeks what is useful to him, and his desires correspond to the rest of mankind. (Ibid:155) Spinoza explains that it might attract attention, and be seen as lack of proper respect, that each man should seek his own best, but actually is quite the contrary because...

*“Every one necessary seeks what he thinks to be good, and turns from what he thinks to be bad. But this appetite is nothing else than the very essence or nature of man.” (Ibid:156)*

The more man preserves his being the more he endows with virtue – likewise the more man neglects to preserve what is useful to him and his being, the more he lacks in power. (Ibid: 156) Virtue is the main power of man and of highest priority in relation to preserve his being. Man is filled with inadequate ideas, so he is not necessary acting virtuous. To act virtuous means to be determined to search for a higher truth and understanding and to preserve one’s own being in accordance with reason. It means to act in relation to the laws of one’s inner nature and to seek what is useful and defined as individual.

*“Whatever we do under the guidance of reason is nothing else than to understand.....the endeavor to preserve oneself is nothing else than the essence of the thing itself.” (Ibid:157)*

The ability of the human mind to understand involves the essence of reason in relation to self-preservation. (*Spinoza 1993:159*) Virtue, Reason and Self-preservation are one and the same thing. To be determined for self-preservation means to gain higher levels of active insight into confused emotions, which will be easier to handle. Since the power of the mind is defined by understanding only, knowledge of the mind is considered the tool in which emotions are interpreted. (*Ibid:247*)

## Examination of Internal Passions

*“Even as thoughts and ideas of things are arranged and associated in the mind, so are the modifications of body or the image of things precisely in the same way arranged and associated in the body.” (Ibid:247)*

We have seen that the ideas of the mind (thoughts) and the modifications of the body are deeply connected and operate in association to each others. (*Ibid: 247*) Pleasure and pain (love and hate) are related to ideas of external causes, so when the concept of the external cause is changed the emotion will be changed or even disappear.

*“An emotion which is passion ceases to be a passion, as soon as we form a clear and distinct idea thereof.” (Ibid:248)*

Earlier we have learned that an emotion is a confused idea, formed by the human mind. An emotion is a passion and when the mind operates according to reason, the emotion will be easier to comprehend and control. Reason is a powerful force of the mind enabling man to handle his emotions in a positive way.

*“There is no modification of the body, whereof we cannot form some clear and distinct conception.” (Ibid: 248)*

Everything in nature is followed by an effect. So every emotion (idea) is related to an effect of the body according to which a clear concept can be formed. (*Ibid:248*) For Spinoza every man has the power of clear and distinct understanding of himself and his own emotions. Such knowledge involves the mind to be determined for examining internal emotions passions positive and negative. In order to gain such results these emotions must be related to external causes and separated here from and be associated with true thoughts. Hereby the emotions of both love and hatred - the same as appetite and desire – will be eliminated. We have learned that if someone is a slave of his own passions, he is not guided by reason, but someone who is determined to reason, is much more in control of his desires, formed by adequate and inadequate ideas. Spinoza reminds us of the importance of true and clear knowledge in relation to confused emotions and ideas.

*“An emotion toward a thing, which we conceive simply, and not as necessary, or as contingent, or as possible, is, other conditions being equal, greater than any other emotion.” (Ibid:249-50)*

An emotion conceived as free, is stronger than an emotion conceived as necessary, possible or contingent – so it is the greatest of all. Through understanding the mind becomes aware of certain things as necessary even the infinite chain of causes by which the pattern of the emotions will be less dominant.

## The Necessarily Chain of Courses

*“The mind understands all things to be necessary and to be determined to existence and operation by an infinite chain of causes.” (Ibid:250)*

The pain arising from the loss of any good becomes milder, if we learn to understand that the lost is part of a necessity chain of causes occurring in a lifetime. Spinoza points to the force of the emotions relating to reason in opposition to those related to external things. (Ibid:250)

*“So long as we are not assailed by emotions contrary to our nature, we have the power of arranging and associating the modifications of our body according to the intellectual order.” (Ibid:252)*

When bad emotions dominate the mind, it blocks access to natural reflection according to which higher understanding can be acquired.

*“Consequently we have in such cases the power of arranging and associating the modifications of the body according to the intellectual order.” (Ibid:253)*

These intellectual modifications influences and strengthen the physical force and guard the mind from bad emotions. Uncertain and unsettled emotions are more difficult to handle and Spinoza provides no system for a perfect knowledge of such emotions. But he suggests the framing of a system of the right conduct - practical concepts – relating to memory. These conducts should be in our imagination – ready at hand anytime – as guidance under diverse circumstances and challenges facing us in life, like situations under which hatred occurs. As one of our cultural life rules we have learned, that hatred should be overcome with love or high-mindedness. With the system of reason at hand we are advised to reflect upon the situation and by high-mindedness find the best solution. The idea of wrong should be associated with the concept of high-mindedness and the notion of the good which follows from mutual friendship. Man as every other living being acts by necessity of his nature. Hatred might not easily be overcome without a conflict and it might be necessary, because it

relates to the concepts of courage and fear as two sides of the same pattern. So according to Spinoza we should reflect on courage in relation is to overcome fear.

*“The ordinary dangers of life should frequently be brought to mind and imagined; together with the means whereby thought readiness of resource and strength of mind we can avoid and overcome them.” (Ibid:253)*

An action of emotion should always be guided by pleasure and considerations arranged in coordination with the best for each individual. Even through someone acts against what might be seen as wrong, the action must be interpreted by the individual itself in order to secure the understanding of the choice. Such understanding enables the mind to comprehend bad emotions, whereby it becomes able to form clear and distinct ideas. (Ibid:253)

## Freedom and God/Nature

*“The more the mind understands things by the second and third kind of knowledge, the less it is acted on by emotions which are bad, and the less it fears death.” (Spinoza 1993:215)*

When the human mind considers itself and its own body in relation to its own species it knows that it exists in God/Nature. So the more advanced the mind operates, the more it becomes conscious of itself as eternal, as intellectual love of God/Nature. When the mind acquires clear and distinct knowledge even the thought of death becomes less harmful. The intellectual love of God/Nature will occupy the greatest part of the mind in relation to which modifications of the body will be arranged and connected. (Ibid:215) Love that arises from the third kind of knowledge is by Spinoza referred to as virtue itself and the more the mind enjoys divine love, the more it understands and the less it suffers from bad emotions. The wise man is scarcely moved in spirit – he is aware of himself

*“The greatest endeavour of the mind and its greatest virtue is to understand things by the third kind of knowledge.....the more we understand things the more we understand Nature /God.” (Ibid:223)*

Whether we inquire into motions, or into nature and the movements of physical objects it is possible to search for eternally valid laws explaining the variety of human emotions or a physical movement. Such a pattern has its own explanation in the permanent structure of things explained as *sub specia aeternitatis*<sup>25</sup> (Hampshire 2005:179), defines as the eternal truth of God or Nature. Spinoza’s intense focus on God in part five of the Ethics is by Naess considered in relation to the old tradition, he says:

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<sup>25</sup> <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/sub-specie-aeternitatis>

*“We might ask, though, if the so called rationalist system invented by Spinoza allow him to put so much “theology” into it?” (Naess 2005 X: 400-401)*

For Naess Spinoza’s supreme focus on reason in relation to religion is unlikely to succeed, instead his immanent interpretation of *amor intellectualis* <sup>26</sup> should be defined as directed towards individual finite beings. The Ethics is full of the term God: so why was he accused of being an atheist, Naess asks. (Naess 2005:400-401) The expression of God or Nature in the Ethics has supported his concept of the immanent God. But it is evident that the God of the Ethics may be identified as *Natura Naturans* and the creative aspect of *Natura Naturata*. The latter exemplifies existing beings and their capacity of being temporal. Immanence of God was unacceptable to the theologians at Spinoza’s time but according to Naess’s, Spinoza never really abandoned his Jewish faith, and as we have seen, the transcendental God of religion seems to appear most clearly in part five of the Ethics.(Naess 2005 X: 400-403) His concept of immanence is explained as a theory in relation to which the infinite power of God is distributed unequally among natural beings among which humans seems to be equipped with most power. God as *Natura Naturans* is by Naess explained as a term expressing the intimately interrelated creativity of particular beings in his panpsychism<sup>27</sup>. The infinite creative aspect of the whole embraces both *Natura Naturans* and *Natura Naturata* as a union. So the term God has two functions in the Ethics:

*“One is to point toward an infinite whole with infinite dimensions of creativity, not in time, but making time possible. The second function is to point to the manifold of finite creative beings manifesting and expressing the parts of the whole.” (Naess 2005 X: 404)*

Man as a finite being must achieve self-knowledge in order to act creative. Those supporting the deep ecology movement are like Spinoza motivated by philosophical or religious levels of wisdom. In relation to this concept all living beings have intrinsic value.

*“It makes sense to care for these beings for their own sake, as creative beings.” (Ibid:405)*

For the human mind to have adequate knowledge of the immanent God, means to act in relation to the power of the eternal and infinite essence since the mind can only know existing things

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<sup>26</sup>“The Third kind of Knowledge” [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy\\_of\\_Spinoza](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy_of_Spinoza)

<sup>27</sup>Panpsychism is the doctrine that mind is a fundamental feature of the world which exists throughout the universe. In this entry, we focus on panpsychism as it has been discussed and developed in Western philosophy. Unsurprisingly, each of the key terms, “mind”, “fundamental” and “throughout the universe” is subject to a variety of interpretations by panpsychists, leading to a range of possible philosophical positions. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/panpsychism/>

*“The more we understand individual things, the more we understand God. “(Ibid:405)*

Such understanding involves a duality of principles effecting the self-construction of matter which according to Schelling is the task of philosophy of Nature. His system has provided us with important tools in the relation between mind and nature. According to Schelling, Spinoza failed to achieve a scientific system and overestimated the concept of subjectivity. He tries to avoid such misunderstandings and suggests instead a concept of a World soul and the Absolute, discovered by intellectual intuition. (Solomon 1983: 102-104) Following section provides elaboration of Schelling’s philosophy of nature based on his works: *Ideas of Philosophy of Nature and System of Transcendental Idealism*.

## Part III

### Schelling’s World soul

Following Spinoza’s view things are explicable because they embody the intelligibility of God:

*“All things, I repeat, are in God and all things which come to pass, come to pass solely through the law of the infinite nature of God, and follows.....from the necessity of his existence.” (Spinoza 1955:59)*

According to this principle the causal relations of all finite things are explicable and dependent on one first principle (the infinite). (Schelling 1994: 4) Schelling’s Nature philosophy opens up for an intensified understanding of the human mind in relation to God/Nature as the highest principle. Man’s self-knowledge and the world are finite and incomplete - even trivial - because of limitations by the senses as forms of intuition and morality. Friedrich Hölderlin<sup>28</sup> insisted upon oneness of everything a re-establishment of man’s identity with nature. Kant tries to establish this identity showing that a single *absolute or infinite Self is at work in both nature and individual consciousness*. The question is how can we understand nature as objective and achieve an identification of nature and Spirit?

Schelling operates with a concept of a “World soul” elaborated by philosophy as “intellectual intuition”. Kant’s Third Critique<sup>29</sup> (Critique of Judgment) becomes important to Schelling, not as the phenomenal world of the understanding or the causal laws of Newton’s physics, but as the

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<sup>28</sup> <http://www.hoelderlin-gesellschaft.de/index.php?id=658>

<sup>29</sup><http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-aesthetics/>

*super sensible universe* as a whole, beyond the bounds of our concepts of infinity. Schelling takes Kant's idea of the world to be rationally ordered – harmonious. Such conditions in nature might never be comprehended by the human mind, for we can never know the world in itself outside our experience, but following Schelling we can acquire *intuition of the Absolute*. An intuition of the absolute Self is more than self-reflection – it involves insight into the unity of the self in relation to Nature as the slumbering Spirit – the unconscious self-production of the Absolute observable by reason. He believed in a purposive order implanted within nature ultimately the Aristotelian telos of cosmic self-revelation. The ultimate image of Schelling's philosophy is the self-creation of the Absolute (God) in the progression of the whole of Nature (*Solomon 1983: 100-107*). In *The System of Transcendental Idealism* he develops an imposition of the self in relation to nature –

*“The imposition of free consciousness on physical nature is the mark of freedom and self-realization.”*  
(*Ibid:453*)

The clash between freedom and nature plays a major role in Schelling's System of Transcendental Idealism.



30

## Separation of Organic and Inorganic matter

In Schelling's view the problem within nature philosophy is the separation between organic and inorganic matter. His intention is to build up a system in which the lost connection can be reestablished by the concept of Nature as Subject. This subject has little to do with selfhood and consciousness it is rather a misconstrued self - a kind of auto self-relating - to the unconditioned....

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30A magical connection between Mind and Matter

*“...in the medium of the universal and the impersonal. It is not a demonstrative but a generative process through which productive nature itself acts on, or produces, itself: “to philosophize about nature means to create nature”” (Grant 2006: 2)*

For Schelling nature necessarily grounds everything and what calls for explanation is the impersonal and universal self-generating nature. (*Ibid*: 2)

*“What then is that secret bond which couples our mind to ‘Nature, or that hidden organ through which Nature speaks to our mind or our mind to Nature?”(Schelling 1988: 41-42)*

The existence of Nature outside me cannot explain the nature inside me. The issue here is how the idea of Nature has come into us and the question of a predetermined harmony in Nature.

*“Nature itself should .....not arbitrarily, but necessarily .....not only express, but even realize, the laws of our mind.”(Ibid: 42-42)*

By achieving an absolute identity of mind we should be able to consider ourselves as part of Nature. For Schelling the idea of nature should be investigated in relation to earlier systems.

*“Nature should be Mind made visible, Mind the invisible Nature.” Ibid: 41-42)*

If the mind’s ability to think was the limits of Schelling’s nature philosophy it would simply be a prototype of naturalized epistemology conducted under neurophysiology conditions. Instead such a system should, for him, extend physiology. He suggests a concept of nature as subject, affirming the autonomy of nature – not as it appears to the mind but as nature itself. (*Grant 2006:2*) In Schelling’s system the concept of freedom plays a major role. For him the problem is not the transcendental account of freedom but the way freedom transforms transcendentalism. So the basic question is:

*“Is the philosophy of freedom capable of nature?” (Grant 2006:64)*

Schelling points to the divided ontology of nature and thought coured by transcendental deductions of logical possibility. (*Grant 2006:64*)

*“Anything, whose conditions simply cannot be given in nature, must be absolutely impossible.” (Schelling 1978: 186)*

Of the two-world solution transcendentalism invents, one world contains the formal, the material and the causal, insofar as these have been withdrawn from the other. The first, finds form only in the laws of the understanding, matter exclusively insofar as it is intuitable, and causation only within freedom; while the second, lacking all three, is nonetheless the real nature before which

transcendental philosophy reaches its highest point and becomes self-reverting. For Schelling the self-reverting process is relevant for transcendental philosophy, in which nature is eliminated to the side of the ideas, but nature remains the Hypokeimenon<sup>31</sup> of all, so it is relevant to look into the nature of Nature. (Grant 2006:66-67)

## Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature

*“The system of Nature is at the same time the system of our mind, and only now, once the great synthesis has been accomplished, does our knowledge return to analysis.” (Schelling 1988: 30)*

Schelling's first period is Fichtean, according to which he develops a theory of the subject itself – the absolute subject – (auto to auto). The inquiry into the self-organizing nature of the individual – the becoming of being – examined in Timaeus's<sup>32</sup> dialogue by Plato – is the main concern throughout his philosophical development. In contrast to Fichte he extends the concept of the subject beyond human consciousness. Schelling's identity philosophy is not a separate system but rather an intra-nature philosophical development demonstrated in his edition of the *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* (1797/1803). (Grant: 2006: 6) In his *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800) he tries to build up a system for tasks of themes such as reality of nature – the self-identity of the Absolute – general metaphysics upon the model of human freedom (Schelling: 1988: xii). The importance of Schelling's works are by Ian Grant described as:

*“Urgent every time philosophy reaches beyond the Kant inspired critique of metaphysics, its subjectivist-epistemological transcendentalism, and its isolation of physics from metaphysics.” (Grant: 5)*

The isolation of physics and metaphysics constitutes a *two-world view* in relation to which Schelling suggests an inspection of nature philosophy. His post Kantian confrontation with nature involves a renewed concept of ground and subject in relation to nature. (Ibid: 6) A new concept of ground (object) and subject involves the real life with nature in relation to the entire range of phenomena of organic life, with special focus on the continuous self-construction of matter.

*“Organic nature begins where the blind principle first sees itself as free, no longer being a blind and unconscious entity, but rather one that is conscious of itself, and becomes its own goal, aim, and purpose.” (Ibid: 14)*

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31 <http://www.class.uidaho.edu/ngier/309/greekterms.htm>

32 <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/plato-timaeus/>

An external cause cannot produce an affect upon the inwardness of a mind because all changes of perception and presentation in a mind are deeply dependent upon an inner principle. (*Ibid: 14*)

*“Suppose, then, that there appears to me in my perception an organic being, freely self-moving, then I certainly know that this being exists, that it is for me, but not that it exists for itself and in itself.”*  
(*Jacobi 1787:140*) Schelling 1988:39)

For Schelling the I is immediately aware of its own being – even of an inner soul – but what is difficult to explain is the connection between the I and the outside world. Since the I can never acquire direct awareness of anything outside its own consciousness the question is how it achieves the idea of an external reality. Our connection to this reality is obviously practical and only immediate knowledge of being, so the I must be transferred onto nature....

*“...as a peculiarity of our power of conception.”* (Schelling 1988:39)

Schelling transforms Fichte’s empirical I to a theory of the subject as nature, which correspond to nature itself acting in relation to an unconditioned principle. This subject cannot be described as a thing and acts beyond our common concept of a first person reflective consciousness. (*Grant 2006:16*)

## The Self-operating Subject of Nature

Schelling’s concept of nature, as a self-operating subject constitutes a naturalistic historical resolution of the antinomy of nature and freedom. The isolation of organic from inorganic matter must according to this concept be challenged by the ‘test of life’. The Kantian constraints between nature and intellect, established in the third Critique, have held nature in its grasp for hundreds of years in a phenomenal determination of nature rejecting the primacy of the practical. Schelling says:

*“The system of Nature is at the same time the system of our mind, and only now, once the great synthesis has been accomplished, does our knowledge return to analysis (to research and experiment).”* (Schelling 1988: 30)

Instead of assuming that everything is present outside us and not within us – events in the outside world can be explained by external causes, in relation to cause and effect. As soon man raises himself above individual phenomenon, such a model falls apart because of its own limits. By entering the area of organic nature it becomes clear that all mechanical relations ends because every organic product exists for itself and carries cause and effect in itself. (*Ibid: 30*)

*“No single part could arise except in this hole, and this whole itself consists only in the interaction of the parts.”*  
(*Ibid: 31-32*)

The interactions between the parts are by Schelling considered their real and only existence – but an objective relation between the parts and the whole is also at work. Each part contains a concept in relation to which it organizes itself, both as form and existence. Concept and object – form and matter are necessarily united and cannot simply be separated. But the union of the two is only accessible by an intuiting and reflecting being. (*Ibid: 31-32*)

## Man as Victim of his own Images

*“How a world outside us, how a Nature and with it experience, is possible – these are questions for which we have philosophy to thank;” (Ibid: 10)*

Man originally lived in harmony with nature but the spirit of man is freedom and it strives to make itself free from Nature. But nature releases nobody and as Schelling puts it....

*“...there are no native sons of freedom.” (Ibid: 10)*

During the process of reflection man separates what has always been united namely object from idea - concept from image - in the process he becomes an object to himself outside of nature's domination and influence. He loses his own essence namely the ability of action and becomes an object - a stranger to himself.

*“The less he reflects upon himself, the more active he is.” (Ibid: 10)*

Originally forces and consciousness are combined and there should be no split between man and the world. For Schelling the harmony between the two can both be upset and reestablished through *freedom*. Such *freedom* cannot be established by mere reflection considered a dominant sickness in man, killing all his natural relation to life and cutting off the spirit from its original source. In the process man becomes a victim of his own images in relation to which there is no escape, so the separation between man and the world becomes permanent (*Ibid: 11*) Objects appear in relation to ideas of the free choice, but how these choices influence us is finally quite individual and personal. In this process the self becomes re-united with its own natural being - completely independent of false ideas and things. The first endeavor of philosophy is to combine object and idea in relation to cause and effect. If the connection between the two worlds should be established relevant theory must be transformed to practice by real knowledge of the external world. (*Ibid: 12*) question is how the separation of mind and matter can be reestablished and to what extent we should allow external things affect us.

## The Interconnection of Objects

For Schelling the union of object and idea (subject) is impossible to explain and the reality of knowledge lies in the combination of the two as he says.

*“How things affect me (a free being) is not at all conceivable.” (Schelling 1988: 30)*

His investigations concern the issue of how a free being like man, capable of raising itself above external objects (cause and effects), is part of the interconnection with objects.

*“In that step out of the series of my ideas, even cause and effect are concepts which I survey from above. For they both arise only in the necessary succession of my ideas, from which I have released myself.” (Ibid: 30)*

How an external cause can affect a self-depending being like man is for Schelling inconceivable. (Schelling: 1988: 14) To break the mechanism of external influence means to control internal ideas. Without such control a person will be dragged into the stream of cause and effects and dominated by things and external causes and driven away in the stream. No self-knowledge can be achieved under such conditions, where man is turned into an object existing only for the purpose of others – without any imagination. The question is why the connection of mind and matter has been broken and he points to Spinoza as the first philosopher considering mind and matter as one. (Ibid: 15)

*“Spinoza was worried at a very early stage about the connection of our ideas with things outside us, and could not tolerate the separation which had been set up between them.” (Ibid: 27)*

Thought (subject) and object are intimately united in Nature according to Spinoza. The correspondence between ideas and things is explained as the affections and determinations of the ideal in the self. In contrast to Schelling, Spinoza is not operating with any transmission from the infinite to finite nor any beginning or becoming. Schelling’s concept of necessity follows from the fact, that things and ideas are originally one, and self part of the Infinite’s thoughts – as representation. According to Schelling, Spinoza failed to explain how the self becomes aware of such representation. (Ibid: 27) For him nature accomplices intelligence and becomes an object to itself. A phenomenal product is in itself an object and only a subject can become an object to itself. The object-becoming of the subjective and the subject-becoming of the objective form the two sciences of transcendental and nature philosophy. Absolute identity of subject and object are called nature in which self-consciousness is the highest power. (Iain Grant 2006: 173)

## Schelling's Transcendental Model

The highest goal of Nature is for Schelling to become wholly an object to itself. Such a condition can be achieved by a universal form of mental self-conscious reflection, in which it becomes object to itself by identification with Nature. Schelling tries methodologically to approach and transform Kant's concept of freedom toward the only consistent metaphysics of Spinozism. He adopts not only the deductive form of Spinoza's Ethics but a good deal of its naturalistic and deterministic spirit as well. The concept of freedom plays a major role in the system in which the idea of sensible particles are described as fall from the Absolute (God) as an exercise of the free will in the activity of life. (*Schelling 1978: xx*)

In his inquiries into the nature of human freedom, Schelling turns to the pragmatic...

*"... or spirit centered standpoint of his system in which all objective and subjective forms of being are interpreted through categories of willing." (Ibid: xix)*

Schelling transforms nature philosophy into a history of philosophy based on the interplay of dependence and independence of human freedom. His concept of freedom is built upon the moral, social and historical decisiveness of action. Being is here described as the will of an anthropomorphic move in its stabilization of nature and fulfillment in history and the consequences of the emergence of finite spirit. The complex human consciousness is originally predetermined as free but limited by social and individual forces. *The limitations can only be eliminated (to a certain degree) by a moral individual self-determination of absolute freedom, based upon a general metaphysic system of freedom.* The foundation of such a model fundamentally relies on the relation between reality and nature considered in idealistic perspectives. (*Ibid: xx*)

Schelling seeks an ordering of comprehensive knowledge of the principles from which all individual knowledge can be determined. (*Ibid: xx*) He suggests completing the task of an absolute consciousness by bridging the opposition between nature philosophy and transcendental idealism – realism to idealism as a common principle of spirit and nature. (*Ibid: xxii*) His concern is to bring knowledge of the real into consciousness. This special kind of knowledge, according to which every individual is determined, is rooted in self-knowledge (*Ibid: xxiii*)

*"Since I seek to ground my knowledge only in itself, I inquire no further as to the ultimate ground of this primary knowledge (self-consciousness), which if it exists, must necessarily lie outside knowledge." (Ibid: 18)*

The limitation of our knowledge endlessly forces us back into new research. (*Ibid: 18*) Absolute knowledge can never be reached empirically or by synthetic mode of thinking. It must be accessed by a holistic flash of totality. Intellectual intuition is defined as an unconscious principle of consciousness as a mode of being directed back upon production, as an objectified activity relating to our experience. Absolute Identity involves for Schelling freedom and necessity lying outside of transcendental philosophy. (*Ibid: xxiii*)

Schelling insists upon the unconscious and he says:

*“In order to arise for itself (to be not merely producing, but also at the same time the produced, as in self-consciousness), the self must set limits to its producing.” (Ibid: 36)*

For Schelling contrary to Spinoza the self is non-objective and not a thing (conditioned), but originally unconditioned as pure inwardness in a state of being unfolded in self-awareness. Self-consciousness in relation to cognitive knowledge is considered a limited form of self-activity. Whereas self-sufficiency (independence) is originally rooted in the spirit of the world in which freedom plays a major role. But the central part of the spirit relates to self-consciousness, according to which consciousness and nature coincide. Higher forms of self-consciousness can only be achieved by self-directed acts of the free will in the self-constituting process of recapitulation of the intellectual intuition. (*Ibid: xxvii*)

## Self-consciousness – a transcendental Principle

*“The highest consummation of natural science would be the complete spiritualizing of all natural laws into laws of intuition and through.” (Ibid: 6)*

Schelling's philosophy of transcendence is close to Spinoza's concept of the unconscious - a kind of material transcendence of will or being. His concept of the unconscious activity is not an individual dynamism of conflict and repression as for Freud or a conflict-free kind of being as for Spinoza but rather a principle of activity in conflict with itself striving to unfold its own contradictions.

*“.....as an act which is an infinity of actions, an absolute self-consciousness never realized definitively and exhaustively in any conscious awareness, but rather the life and source of the whole system of finitude.” (Ibid: xxxiii)*

The transcendental principle of self-consciousness involves for Schelling the self-realization based on the will in dialectic of both the conscious and the unconscious. (*Ibid: xxxiii*) Between the finite

forms of consciousness, we recognize there must be something else like an absolute consciousness. (Ibid: xxxiv)

*“Hence there must be some universal mediating factor in our knowledge, which is the sole ground thereof.”*  
(Ibid: 15)

For Schelling there must be reality in our knowledge as a kind of self-supporting and consistent source relating to one absolute principle. (Ibid: 15)

*“There is no question at all of an absolute principle of being, for against any such these objections are all valid; what we seek is an absolute principle of knowledge.”* (Ibid: 16)

There must be a limit to our knowledge – something that binds us - and appears as an object because it is the principle of all knowledge. But what is the ultimate of such knowledge? For Schelling we should seek for an answer inside and not outside of knowledge. (Ibid: 16) Primary knowledge is self-knowledge and starts with self-consciousness. This consciousness is all we know but it might be a modification of a higher being or consciousness. But, as he says, we must realize that going beyond self-consciousness is not possible, because we are endlessly driven back to the ground in our struggle for finding answers. But we can choose to break the sequence by positing an absolute of both cause and effect – both subject and object of itself. Breaking such sequence is only possible through self-consciousness - in the absolute identity of subject and object. Self-consciousness as our entire horizon of knowing involves, for Schelling, re-establishing the lost connection to one eternal substance – the highest principle - according to which each individual is determined. (Ibid: 17) Such investigations occur only within the Absolute itself and involve the movements of the world.

Schelling’s concern is to bring determined individual knowledge into his system starting with self-knowledge. (Ibid: 18) In the act of self-consciousness, in the union of subject and object, the individual becomes an object to itself, based on an exercise of absolute freedom - a determinate act of thinking. According to this principle there is no other self, than that arising from the act of thinking, during which the self becomes conscious of itself.

*“That this identity between being-thought and coming-to-be, in the case of the self, remains hidden from so many, is due solely to the fact that they neither perform the act of self-consciousness in freedom, nor are able to reflect in so doing upon what arises therein.”* (Ibid: 25-26)

Empirical self-consciousness as presentation of objects and identity should be distinguished from pure consciousness as the original higher proposition of self-awareness. The self is nothing beyond its thinking – not an object among other objects but only an object for itself, so reaching insight onto the highest principle of knowledge, involves free self-determination. (*Ibid: 25-26*)

## Intellectual Intuition

As the principle of all knowledge the act of self-reflection must be absolutely free and nonobjective. The act should be independent of any proofs or concepts described as intuition and freely productive. Such knowledge involves *intellectual intuition* founded on self-knowledge. By the act of free choice the self raises and produces itself - in contrast to the sensory intuition. The main capacity of transcendental thinking is based on *intellectual intuition* according to which the objectified self is enabled to set itself free. The self cannot support its own thinking without *intellectual intuition* in the speculative transformation of the objective world. Intuition is for Schelling a natural part of each individual and has nothing to do with mystery, never the less, as he says; many people are out of contact with this side of themselves. It cannot be demonstrated because it is an absolutely free action.

*“What the self is for that reason is no more demonstrable than that the line is; one can only describe the action whereby it comes about.” (Schelling 1978:27-29)*

The self is already determined in a particular fashion. To approach this inner source means to be decided for *intellectual intuition*. (*Ibid: 27-29*) Reaching such a level of personal development the self that arises is a self-made construction as the cause and effect of itself - producer and the product (subject and object) at the same time. Simultaneously natural science proceeds from nature, as productive and produced in the process from the concept to the particular. It becomes an object of knowledge in self-consciousness, as the highest power of self-objectification according to which man arises himself through freedom.

*“...the fundamental duality in nature is itself ultimately explicable only inasmuch as nature is taken to be intelligence.” (Ibid: 30)*

The self should ground both the form and the content of knowledge by the act of thinking, in which it both identifies and becomes an object to itself. (*Ibid: 30*) How such an act takes place is described below.

## The process of becoming an object

For Schelling it is evident that the self contains higher dimensions than individually expressed. The individual enters the scene during self-consciousness, which in itself contains nothing, as both determined and delimited it generates the empirical consciousness. All individuality derives from the act of the self as self-consciousness. Pure self-consciousness relates to higher dimensions of the universal and lies outside of time. The self is distinguished from its own universal center by its own conscious limitations.

If the empirical self is eliminated the absolute self – the pure self-consciousness arises. This self can never be defined as a thing-in-itself and it can only be authenticated by an act of the free will. (*Ibid: 31-33*)

*“The proof that all knowledge must be derived from the self and that there is no other ground for reality of the knowledge, continuous to leave unanswered the question: how, then, is the entire system of knowledge.....posited through the self?” (Ibid: 35)*

The world consists in presentations and full conviction emerges in a mental activity of an inner principle. And the objective world, with all its determinations, is developed out of pure self-consciousness, which is originally activity but often bound up in blind compulsive (mechanical) behavior. Such behavior of inner limitations can only be reduced by free activity of the mind in which the self-made restrictions of consciousness can be eliminated. If such freedom exists, it can only be limited and necessarily determined according to the laws of nature. So the deduction of the principles involves both theoretical and practical philosophy. (*Ibid: 35*)

*“Through the act of self-consciousness, the self becomes an object to itself.” (Ibid 36-37)*

The self is intrinsically an object only for itself and nothing external can operate upon it as mere activity. Originally the self is infinite activity and the ground of an inner principle of all reality, but the act of self-consciousness, in which it becomes an object to itself, involves being aware of something limited or restricted and finite.

*“Hence in order to arise for itself (to be not merely the producing, but also at the same time the produced, as in self-consciousness), the self must set limits to its own producing.” (Ibid: 36-37)*

The self is a completely enclosed in its own world form which there is no escape. It cannot be entered from the outside either. In spite of this, it must realize itself by the act of self-consciousness.

(Ibid: 36-37) This stage is accessed theoretically by an absolute act involving all that is posited<sup>33</sup> by the self of both ideal and real considered separately.

## Limitations

In the process of self-consciousness the self elevates itself through absolute freedom.

*“Through this act there is now..... something posited in the self qua object, but hence not yet posited therein qua subject (for the self as such, what is posited as real is in one and the same act posited as ideal).” (Ibid: 42)*

So the inquiry continues until what is assumed to exist in the object, also exists in the subject and coincide with consciousness – such insight should be without any theoretical restrictions. The process proceeds until the starting point of the self-determined act – since both subject and object are originally united. (Ibid: 42) The union of ideal and real is only thinkable in an absolute act of self-consciousness. The act of intuition is purely ideal but in the process the self becomes real and aware of its own limitations.

*“To be intuited and to be are one and the same.” (Ibid: 43)*

But these limitations have no reality apart from self-consciousness – so limitations must be both dependent and independent of the self.

*“Only if the self is equivalent to an action in which there are two opposite activities, one which undergoes limitation and of which boundary is therefore independent, and one which limits, and is for that very reason illimitable.” (Ibid: 43)*

The act Schelling is referring to is self-consciousness; without which the self is purely objective activity.

*“Only through self-consciousness is subjectivity first added thereto.” (Ibid: 43)*

This limited objective activity, relating to the laws of nature, stands in opposition to the limiting activity, which is self-made (Ibid: 43) but actually they are one and the same. The cause of such limitations lays outside consciousness for the self only experiences its own limitations and never the real source. The self exists in neither of the two in isolation. Schelling’s distinguishing between the two forms of limitations - limiting and limited – as described as:

1. *The limiting activity does not enter consciousness or become an object – it is not the pure subject but both*

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<sup>33</sup><http://www.wordnik.com/words/posite>

*subject and object.*

2. *The limited activity is experienced as purely objective element in self-consciousness. But the self of self-consciousness is neither pure subject nor pure object, but both of these at once.*

Neither of these limitations can be reached by self-consciousness, so a third activity is involved. This activity is compounded by both the limiting and the limited activity - as both the producing and the being of the self. It is the self of self-consciousness.

*“The self is thus itself a compound activity, and self-consciousness itself a synthetic act.” (Ibid: 44)*

The definition of the synthetic activity points to opposed conflicts both in subject and object. The self's urge to produce the infinite is directed outwards, therefore it also points inwards to the self as center. The outgoing process is by nature a striving to intuit the infinite. Through the action the inner and the outer are divided within the self. This separation is subject to a conflict in the self which can only be explained by self-consciousness.

*“Why the self should have originally to become aware of itself, is not further explicable, for it is nothing else but self-consciousness.” (Ibid: 44-45)*

The self of self-consciousness paradoxically pursues opposite directions, without which it would be inactive. Such opposed directions are determined for the drive of the self-activity. As soon as the self becomes aware of itself the conflict arises in self-consciousness and the clashes of opposing directions are maintained. But two opposite directions seems to destroy each other's resulting in inactivity, because every contradiction is self-destructive in itself. It can only be sustained by identity – but the identity expressed in self-consciousness is not an original identity. Only the conflict in the opposed conflict is real. For inquiry into the conditions of self-consciousness have shown, that our identity is only synthetic, since we can neither be conscious of subject nor object

*“The mediating factor must be an activity that wavers between opposite directions.” (Ibid: 45)*

Whether the conflict in the opposed directions of subject and object are alike in their condition of being their status is considered as infinite and capable of unification. (Ibid: 45)

## Thesis – Antithesis – Synthesis

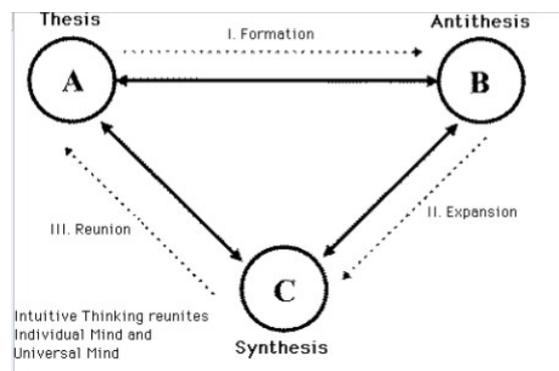
*“How the self is driven to this absolute action, or how it is possible for an infinity of actions to be condensed into a single absolute one, is intelligible ...” (Ibid: 46)*

We have learned, that in the struggle of the opposite directions within the self (subject and object), both tries to cancel each other's. But this is impossible, because neither of them can become real

without destroying the other. So the destruction can never be accomplished, because each one of them exists through each other's. The problem described as a conflict between two opposed factors, is more precisely described as inability to unite the infinite oppositions, which inevitably leads to endless actions directed towards one absolute final action.

*"If there were no oppositions in the self, it would contain no movement at all, no production, and hence no product either. If the opposition were not absolute, the unifying activity would likewise not be absolute, would not be necessary and involuntary one." (Ibid: 46)*

The deduction from an absolute antithesis to an absolute synthesis is, by Schelling, described as the object (the thesis) as absolute reality and its opposite as the absolute negation. And reality based on the absolute is not real, because both opposites are merely ideal. If the self is to become an object to itself it must be absolute real. And for the opposite is to become real – it must cease to absolute negation. So if both subject and object are to become real, they must share reality between them and such activity can only be accomplished by a third activity of the self. (Ibid: 46) Such activity is only possible if both opposites are activities of the self. This process from thesis to antithesis and synthesis is by Schelling described as an original part of the mind – see scientific model below.



*"Self-consciousness is the absolute act, through which everything is posited for the self." (Ibid: 47)*

Such activity is immanent in the mind and comes automatically to consciousness. Now the question arises: *which kind of act may this be, is it voluntary or involuntary?* Such a question already presupposes limitation or consciousness for Schelling.

*"The action that is cause of a limitation can no longer be explained by any other and must be absolutely free."*

Absolute freedom is identical with absolute necessity and explained in following way; to imagine an action in God must be based on absolute freedom, according to which all laws (of nature) necessarily spring – an eternal energy.

*“Such an act is the original act of self-consciousness; absolutely free, since it is determined by nothing outside the self; absolutely necessary, since it proceeds from the inner necessity of the nature of the self.” (Ibid: 47)*

Schelling makes it clear, that the act of self-consciousness must be self-determined and free but at the same time considered a necessarily link to the eternal nature of the self. *But how can we know about such an absolute free act?* The question must be analyzed philosophically and involves inference <sup>34</sup>(logical conclusion). We have been informed that all limitations are originated through the act self-consciousness, but as Schelling points out, such an act cannot only be based on a relation to a universal and infinite unit of God/Nature but also involves presentations.

Transposed into time the self consists in a steady stream of one presentation to the other. Interrupting the process means to analyze psychologically or philosophically. So the original act of self-consciousness consists in the evolution of one synthesis, in which the self is unfolded and original. *(Ibid: 48)* This act is earlier explained as a conflict of two opposed activities. The first reaches out into infinity and is called the real, limitable activity. The second points to intuition of the other called ideal, subjective, illimitable activity. The ideal reflects the real activity and the deduction starts with the first.

*“The act of self-consciousness.....tells us only how the objective activity is limited, not the subjective; and since the latter is posited as the ground of all limitation of the objective, it is for that reason posited, not as originally unlimited (so limitable like the other) but so absolutely illimitable.”(Ibid: 49)*

The limitations occurring in self-consciousness are original and eternal as basis for the activities of the ideal in theoretical philosophy. The infinite conflict in self-consciousness, expressed by infinity of actions forms the content of an infinite task. But if such a task should ever be accomplished, it would reveal all the structures of the objective world as well as the determination of nature. Reaching such insight goes beyond human existence and lies out of time. So the task of theoretical philosophy is to explain the activity of the ideal in relation to the two kinds of limitations. *(Ibid: 50)*

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34 <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/inference>

## Self-Intuition

*“What I am, I am only through my acting (for I am absolutely free); but through this specific act it is always just the self that arises for me, and thus I must conclude that it also comes about originally through the same act.” (Ibid: 51)*

As the limitations, involved in the act of self-consciousness, are original, the self can never escape or emerge from them. Difficulties are grounded in the failure to distinguish between original and derived limitations. The original limitations, which we have in common with all other living beings, relate to intrinsic finitude. Man is distinguished, not from other beings, but from the infinite and all limitations are necessary determined in nature.

*“The act of self-consciousness is an absolute synthesis; all conditions of consciousness arise at once through this one act, and so too does the determinate limitation, which is no less a condition of consciousness than limitation as such.” (Ibid: 59)*

The other kind of limitation is directly related to the self’s unending tendency to become object to itself, this kind of limitation can be explained and it leaves determinacy entirely free, even though both arises from one and the same act. That it arises in one act is inexplicable for philosophy only the manner of the limitations can be explained. Such determinacy reaches out into an eternal and universal intelligence. (Ibid: 59) Without limitations the mind would probably be able to compare the entire planetary systems in the universe all together. And to explain why things are composed of a certain kind of materials relates, for Schelling, to the primordial consistency of the enormous capacity of the mind in its eternal striving for self- knowledge.

*“The self has sensation, in that it intuits itself as originally limited. This intuition is an activity, but the self cannot at once both intuit, and intuit itself as intuiting.” (Ibid: 60)*

Within the phase of intuition the self is merely sensing itself as real restricted activity. Such an act of self-consciousness involves the self to become an object to itself; For Schelling the process can only be accomplished by philosophizing. (Ibid: 60) Now the problem is how the self intuits itself as sensing. By the act of self-intuition the original form of self-limitation is intuited, but the self is not aware of this, because it only senses the real and restricted activity, in which it becomes an object to itself. The reason is it is entirely rooted in the sensed and, so to speak, *lost in the sensed*. In the original act of self-consciousness only the fact of limitation can be deduced. So the act of sensing must be turned into an object involving the progress of the synthetic method described as:

*“...Two opposites a and b (subject and object) are united by the act of x and x contains a new opposition c and d sensing and sensed hereby x again becomes an object and explicable only through a new act and so on.”(Ibid: 61)*

For Schelling the self does not possess sensation without being active. Such activity is related to the illimitable (eternal) and reaches above and beyond the object.

## Sensation involves activity

*“The self does not sense, unless it contains an activity that goes beyond the limit.”(Ibid: 178: 62)*

For the self to have sensation, it must take up the alien element (the ideal) which is originally within itself - just as suspended activity. The two elements are explained as: The ideal (intuition) is originally part of the self – like all other activities including the real, reaching beyond the limits – as a smaller part of the universal. Ideal and real, like subject and object, are originally identical and can be interpreted in various ways depending on the method. The distinction between the two, as part of their own limitations, must be balanced in relation to the illimitable – eternal energy. (Ibid: 62) Such activity is based on self-determination.

*“So the ideal activity will have to determine the limit.”(Ibid: 62-63)*

In the act of self-determination the ideal self becomes the producing. During the process it encounters its own limitations. The act is the most absolute union of activity and passivity, and the condition of consciousness changes from something that is sensed to something that senses.

*“It becomes an object as such to itself, since it is limited. But it becomes such an object as active (as sensing) since it is limited only in its own limiting.”(Ibid: 64)*

Now in the producing process the ideal self becomes completely free and the reason why it becomes limited must be located outside of itself, as a smaller part of one eternal subject. (Ibid: 64-65)

The ideal self cannot recognize itself as such without overstepping the limits of the real in the act of sensing. Only by *this third act* it becomes real and an object to itself. This activity, which is both inside and outside the boundary is by Schelling described as:

*“The third activity, at once ideal and real, is undoubtedly the producing activity, within activity and passivity conditioned by each other.”(Ibid: 67)*

Now in this act, in which the self becomes an object to itself, the feeling of sensation is experienced. In this condition it manages to go beyond the limits of consciousness. (Ibid: 67)For

original sensation is here transformed into intuition, in which the self realizes the part of the limitations, experienced as the real, as originated in the self. Hereby it becomes both separated and gathered together by the third activity in the union of ideal and real. (*Ibid: 69*)

*“All productive intuition springs from a perpetual contradiction; the intelligence, which has no other urge than to revert into identity, is thereby placed under constant compulsion to activity, and is no less bound and fettered in the manner of its producing than nature in its engenderings appears to be.”* (*Ibid: 75*)

Intuition is not of the sensory kind but involves the intellect – productive intuition proceeds from the method described above – in the union of ideal and real. (*Ibid: 75*) Schelling’s transcendental philosophy is a model of how the self gradually arises from one form of self-intuition to another, leading to a conscious act of free self-consciousness in which all determinations are contained. In the first act of self-consciousness the self is not free, because it is still unconscious in a condition of both the unlimited and the limitant, but without being conscious of it. For the self to be able to strive out beyond the limits it must, be determined for the act of intuition. If these stages of self-consciousness should be transformed to philosophy of nature – as principle underlying the idealism of Leibniz<sup>35</sup> – the concepts of mind can be transferred to those of matter in general. (*Ibid: 90-93*)

What is posited in the self by the series of acts of consciousness, accomplished by transcendental deduction, is not only synthetic but only analytic in nature, according to Schelling. Reflection is identical with analysis founded on the synthetic acts of self-intuition. For the self to arrive at any intuition of itself as productive, it must separate itself from the products - described as an act of abstraction. Through abstraction it becomes something different from its own producing. Abstraction presupposes a higher power in the intelligence itself referring to the mode of action; (*Ibid: 134*)

*“Hence the action must be one which follows from no other in the intelligence itself (but rather, as it were, from an action outside it), and this action is thus an absolute one for the intelligence itself.”* (*Ibid: 149*)

After such an absolute act everything that emerges in the empirical consciousness will appear as contingent. Only by becoming conscious of transcendental abstraction the self can first elevate itself above the object by recognizing itself as intelligence. (*Ibid: 149*)

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<sup>35</sup><http://www.iep.utm.edu/leib-met/>

## Absolute Abstraction

*“By an absolute act the intelligence elevates itself above everything objective. Everything objective would disappear for it in this act if the original restrictedness did not persist; but the latter must persist, for if the abstraction is to occur, then that from which abstraction is made cannot cease to exist.” (Ibid: 149)*

The intelligence will by this act of the absolute be reunited with its original source of intuition in the union of both real activity in sensation and ideal activity in productive intuition, as an object. *(Ibid: 149)*

*“It appears to itself as limited through productive intuition. But the intuition has been submerged in consciousness, and only the product has remained.” (Ibid: 149)*

The limitation Schelling refers to relates to the objective world. As a result of this limitation a confrontation in consciousness between the objective world and the intelligence will occur. *(Ibid: 149)* During the whole process of *intelligent intuition* everything that was originally united will be separated in the process of transcendental abstraction. The object that might have caused the determination will following have no influence on the free intelligence. *(Ibid: 150)* The highest act of reflections is related to the object as real free activity in which the category of possibility arises. If this reflection involves limited activity (the original) the category of actuality is added.

*“The limitation of the ideal activity consists precisely in the fact that it recognizes the object as contemporaneous.” (Ibid: 150)*

An object can be described as real if it proposes a determined step – as thrown - into time. In the union of real and ideal activity the concept of necessity arises. *(Ibid: 150)* The three concepts arising in the highest act of reflection also represent the whole sphere of philosophy leading from theoretical to practical philosophy. *(Ibid: 151)*

*“Absolute abstraction, the beginning of consciousness, is explicable only through a self-determining, or an act of the intelligence upon itself.” (Ibid: 155)*

Absolute abstraction can be described, as the act whereby the intelligence raises itself absolutely above the objective.

## Theoretical and Practical Systems

*“The beginning of consciousness is explicable only through a self-determining, or an act of the intelligence upon itself.” (Ibid: 155)*

The self-determined act is particular and not conditioned or explained by any other act of the intelligence. As the main force and principle of the intelligence, the absolute must be explained by a determinate act of the intelligence itself - from an immediate self-determination. The beginning of all consciousness is the absolute abstraction explained by the act of the intelligence upon itself. (*Ibid: 155-156*)

*“1. This self-determination of the intelligence is called willing.” (Ibid: 156)*

Through inner intuition every man can demonstrate for himself that any kind of willing is related to self-determination. Schelling here speaks of a transcendental determination as the original act of freedom and inexplicable to someone who has never experienced intuition. (*Ibid: 156*)

*“2. If this self-determination is the original act of will, it follows that it is only through the medium of willing that the intelligence becomes an object to itself.” (Ibid: 156)*

The intelligence recognizes itself as intuiting by the act of the will. But as long as the self is actively producing the intuiting is always directed upon another object and can never be objectified to itself. Productive intuition must be raised to a higher power, which is organized through willing.

*“3. Since, through the act of self-determination the self becomes an object to itself qua self, the question remains as to how this act may be related to that original act of self-consciousness, which is likewise a self-determining, although it does not bring about the same result.” (Ibid: 157)*

In the first act the self is nothing and has no ideal activity - but in the second the self already exists and it must find back to itself. (*Ibid: 157*) The outcome of Schelling's postulates of how the intelligence intuit itself by an absolute act of self-determination is described as, quite different from what we might have expected. He points to the results within theoretical philosophy, in which the endeavor of the intelligence to be aware of its own actions is considered a miscarriage. The reason is that the intelligence intuit itself as producing and

*“...hereby the purely ideal self-separates itself from that which is at once ideal and real, and so is now wholly objective and completely independent of the purely ideal.” (Ibid: 158)*

Instead intelligent intuition becomes consciously productive and the act of being conscious of itself is impossible (*Ibid: 158*)

*“...and the intelligence will never be able to recognize directly that it produces this world out of itself.” (Ibid: 159)*

Even though the act of self-determining of the intelligence seems inexplicable for Schelling, but he still believes in some kind of explanation in virtue of the laws of thought, which has to do with some kind of both producing and not producing.

*“The original act of self-consciousness falls altogether outside time, whereas the present act, which marks.....the empirical starting point of consciousness, necessarily occurs at a particular phase of consciousness. “(Ibid : 159)*

The free self-determining ground cannot by itself be self-producing but must necessary be connected to something outside determined by the intelligence. But this something is also inexplicable to the intelligence, so the presentation of such an act as both inside and outside the intelligence must then coexist.

*“...as though the one were determined by the other. “(Ibid: 161)*

## Intelligence outside the Intelligence

For Schelling such a relationship can only be a pre-established harmony. *(Ibid: 161)*

*“.....pre-established harmony of the objective (or law-governed) and the determinant (or free) is conceivable only through some higher thing, set over them both, and which therefore neither intelligence nor free, but rather is the common source of the intelligent and likewise of the free.” (Ibid: xxxi)*

Only between subjects of equal reality such a harmony is conceivable, so the act of self-determination is related to an external intelligence. We cannot perceive how the intelligence should be influenced by any external intelligence.

*“The act of self-determination, or the free action of the intelligence upon itself, can be explained only by the determinate action of intelligence external to it. “(Ibid: 161)*

So the act of self-determination is explicable, as explained above, but also inexplicable as a producing intelligence. For Schelling an external intelligence must be the indirect ground of the internal act consciousness – even a predetermined harmony between intelligences. *(Ibid: 162)* The act of self-determination must be a free act – based on willing. As we have seen, this act of willing must be raised through the act of intelligence and cannot be performed without such activity. So the indirect ground of self-determination is raised through willing grounded on an external intelligence.

*“By what action, then, can the concept of willing arise for the intelligence?” (Ibid: 162)*

It must be the concept of an object only existing if the intelligence makes it real, then what seems to be divided in willing can be turned back into the self. Under such conditions the object arises for the self as ideal and becomes realized by the intelligence as objectified both as ideal (limitation) and as real (realization). The self is obliged to combine the two because the act constitutes a demand for realization of the object.

*“Only through the concept of obligation does the contrast arise between the ideal and the producing self.”  
(Ibid: 163)*

The condition of the action is the concept of willing which is always a free action. *(Ibid: 163)* But how can intelligences influence upon one another?

## Pre-established Harmony

According to Schelling, there must be a pre-established harmony among intelligences in nature, acting upon each other's through freedom. Both the whole objective world as well as individual things is events in the same period of time and explicable by a common nature, or identity.

*“For just as the original restrictiveness predetermines, for the individual intelligence, everything that may enter into the sphere of presentations, so also does the unity of that restrictedness ensure a thoroughgoing consistency among the presentations of different intelligences.” (Ibid: 164)*

The common intuition is the solid ground; in relation to which interaction between intelligences occur. Any disharmony in relation to what is predetermined is a return to earlier conditions/stages. *(Ibid: 164)*

*“It is a fact, that free actions have actually already been made impossible from the start by an unknown necessity, which compels men to bless or bewail, at times the grace or disfavor of nature, at times the decree of fate.” (Ibid: 169)*

It seems as if free activity of original self-intuition is related to certain restrictions in accordance with an external intelligence. The restrictedness of the individual freedom is deeply connected to the intelligence intuiting itself as an original individual, Schelling quotes. He points to a kind of universal instinct in the human organs communicating in and the body as the visible expression of its character. *(Ibid: 171)*

*“Only by the fact that there are intelligences outside me, does the world as such become objective to me.”  
(Ibid: 173)*

The existence of objects outside me can only be explained, if they exist without my intuition. And individual knowledge of the world can only be intuited by intelligences outside itself. For the individual such intelligences are the eternal independent forces of the universe. Intuition can only become objective through other objects – by intelligences outside – intuited individually. Therefore a rational being in isolation can never obtain consciousness of freedom or knowledge of the objective world or communication with external forces. Hereby Schelling has accounted for, how the self in the process of self-intuiting is depending on external objects/intelligences. The limitation and determination involved in the recognition of the self is deeply depending on willing.

*“Willing, at the outset, is necessarily directed upon an external object.” (Ibid: 175)*

Willing becomes fulfilled by the act of free self-determination, in which the self becomes free from the objective. Willing involves that the self becomes an object of intuition, in which it takes responsibility of its own actions as wholehearted and absolute. If an act is unfree or unreal the result is only a blind producing. *(Ibid: 175)* Schelling points to the opposition between ideal and object in which the self tends to idealize the object instead of seeing it as it really is. The drive of transforming the object to something else is in one way free but in another way deeply influences by an internal feeling. In this state of feeling the self is restricting itself, because a feeling always contains a contradiction in relation to which a condition of activity arises. This activity is free without any reflection and only a drive. The drive finds expression in an external object restoring the lost identity of the self. But since we cannot complete our self-consciousness without external objects the process must continue to the point at which, it begins to establish consciousness. Schelling reminds us that the condition for progress is the act of free self-determination. *(Ibid: 177)*

## Self-Interest and the Rule of Law

The act of self progress is, according to Schelling, not a natural law but rather dependent on the free activity of self-determination (the will)

*“...the objective world cannot contain the ground of such a contradiction within itself, for it behaves complete indifference toward the operations of free beings as such; the ground of this contradiction of the self-interested drive can therefore be lodged in it only by the rational being.” (Ibid: 195)*

Schelling suggests a higher order of nature based on a theoretical law of freedom - different from what is visible in nature but with iron necessity. A law in which effects follows cause in the sensible

nature directly related to the self-interested drive, not as a branch of morality or practical science but rather as a condition of

*“.....the continuance of consciousness.” (Ibid: 195)*

Schelling's legal system of nature is to be considered a supplement to the visible nature of purely natural order without any moral considerations. *(Ibid: 195-196)* But the question of the ground of identity between freedom of choice on the one hand and the objective law binding on the other must be answered in a universal form. *(Ibid: 198)*

History exhibits the union of freedom and necessity, for freedom that is not guaranteed by a universal order of nature is unstable and fragile.

*“Freedom is necessity and necessity is freedom.” (Ibid: 203)*

Necessity is also defined as the unconscious – the involuntary. The conscious part is based on willing. Freely determined activity is to be confronted with the unconscious part often containing something repressed and contrary to the agent's will but assuming a relationship between freedom and a hidden necessity (fate). Without such hidden drives the disposition to act, regardless of the consequences, never inspires the mind. Such forces point to something higher than freedom. As a kind of second nature the unconscious reveals itself intuitively in consciousness in objectified form leading back to an earlier principle (being). All actions proceed to a final goal of realization not only individually but of the entire species. If our goals are to succeed we are dependent on not only our own will but also of the will of others. But the majority of men have no goal in mind. This might point to the need for a universal form of self-realization, in which everyone takes responsibility for himself and the environment in relation to the universal law of Nature or God. For Schelling such a higher world order can only be accomplished in the union of conscious of unconscious elements of self-intuition of the entire species – a World-soul. *(Ibid: 203-207)*

Even though history is considered a progressive and gradual process, the total evolution of the absolute synthesis is still an infinite process and history never completes revelation of the absolute of consciousness, endlessly separating itself into conscious and unconscious of eternal identity. *(Ibid: 211)* The self-conscious subject can never completely recover its original ground since it extends down to the subject of nature, in which all dynamic movement has its ground prevailing endlessly in the universe, but... *(Grant 2006:176)*

*“.....self-consciousness is the lamp of the whole system of knowledge, but it casts its light ahead only, not behind.” (Ibid: 18)*

## The Highest Aim of Nature

Schelling's solution to the dynamic stages of nature consists in various determinations of subjectivity in nature as one and the same organization. We see that all subjectivity, even the self as absolute identity, is reinterpreted in his *System of Transcendental Idealism*, according to which the self is to become an object to itself as the highest aim of nature.

*“The complete theory of nature would be that whereby the whole of nature was resolved into intelligence.” (Ibid: 6)*

For Schelling self-consciousness is nothing else than nature in its highest power, in relation to which the ideas is considered the natural history of the mind. According to this concept philosophy must either make intelligence out of nature or nature out of intelligence. *(Ibid: 7)* Nature as a priori is the foundation of his transcendental experiment and we are reminded .....

*“.....that there exists only a world of things outside and independent of us, but also that our presentations are so far coincident with it that there is nothing else in things save what we attribute to them.” (Ibid: 10)*

The phenomenon is the identity of the thing-in-itself, which is evident because nature acts right in front of us and can be observed by our senses. Consciousness is filled with the real objects and nature coincides with our mind. *(Ibid: 5)* The concept of nature, considered as one unit, concerns subjectivity - not of the ethicizing sort. Nature cannot by itself become an object to itself – it remains a subject arising in nature as subject. *(Grant 2006:160-162)* In the *System of Transcendental Idealism*, where the problem of the subject is its limited nature of becoming an object to itself, a dynamic theory of subjectivity is generated. *(Ibid: 168)* Self-conscious subjectivity is simply the highest power of the identity of subjective and objective called nature.

*“In that it materializes the laws of mind into laws of nature.” (Schelling 1978: 14)*

The basal asymmetry between the subjective and the objective, or productivity and product, is the power of identity expressed in nature. But identity must be constructed, because it produces coincidence according to which it recapitulates the productivity of the identity at a higher power. All construction rests upon the conflict between the absolutely universal and the particular, as inadequate to the universal. Access to the original identity of productive and product is blocked by limit-points (the emergence of a new product) and no product can reveal productivity itself. The

pursuit of particularity in nature is not directed to nature as a whole or atoms – but to the unhinged in nature or nature as subject. (Grant 2006:169)

## Ontological relation between Mind and Nature

The subject of nature itself constitutes the dynamic process. Even though the product is phenomenal, it is difficult for a transcendental subject to intuit, because the process itself is non-phenomenal. In Schelling's transcendental systems the identity of subject and object in its highest power self-consciousness is described as the limited. By the act of self-consciousness the unconscious part of the mind becomes enlightened by conscious activity. The activity relates to the history of mind within branches of psychology/philosophy. For Schelling the problem is not solved and relates to our understanding of the continuity of production in the universe.

He suggests a solution within the branch of geological research.

*“Thus nature-philosophy and transcendental philosophy have divided into two directions....if all philosophy must go either to make intelligence out of nature, or nature out of intelligence then transcendental philosophy is the other basic science of philosophy.” (Schelling 1978: 7)*

The relation between intelligence and nature are neither symmetrical in the idea nor in nature, considered intellectually the relation must be ontological. (Grant 2006:171-172) Naturephilosophy and transcendental philosophy are, according to Schelling, not in opposition to each other's but rather antithetical movements across the absolute. The ground of the self is physically imposed on the intelligence. Therefore the system has to make nature out of intelligence, which is not to make nature an artifact of intelligence, but rather a naturalization of ideality. Nature's highest aim of becoming an object to itself, must from the outset be given the conditions in a determining mode under which nature attains to intelligence – becomes an object to itself. And only a subject can become an object to itself. The object becoming of the subject and the subject becoming of the object form the two transcendental and naturephilosophy as parallels. The two systems can never merge into one because intelligence introduces a symmetry break into nature. Instead the unilinear development of nature to intelligence should be the necessary tendency of all natural sciences. (Ibid: 173-174)

Schelling has tried to work out a naturalization of the abstract or the physics of ideas between his works *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* and *System of Transcendental Idealism*. The shift in his transcendental reflection is a demonstration of things not simply logical but rather physical in the

relation between productivity and product. In the pursuit for conditions the transcendental is productive but the conditions are established by thought.

*“Hence it becomes clear that the second stage we assume in the construction of matter, namely the stage where the two forces become forces of different subjects, is exactly the same for physics as this second act of intelligence is for transcendental philosophy.”(Ibid: 91)*

Schelling entails a conjunction of naturephilosophy and the diverse branches of natural science, for the sciences have misconceived the nature of nature in its critical delimitation of metaphysics. Naturephilosophy not only theoretically exceeds the transcendental but also practically by isolating the thinking mind – the I – of transcendental philosophy. So naturephilosophy must pursue naturalistic investigations of the transcendental or the physics of the idea along with philosophical investigations of natural phenomena. (Grant 2006:158-159)

## Part III

### Matter coexists with Nature

Schelling’s principle of the self placed in Nature and represented by the split in consciousness, in which the absolute comes to expression, can be considered parallel to Spinoza’s one world view of *Natura Naturans* of mind and nature. In his *Transcendental Idealism* it becomes clear that reason is part of Nature. The role of metamorphosis<sup>36</sup>, Goethe’s term for transforming inorganic nature to organic nature, is relevant in relation to his concept of prime existent – matter coexisting with the whole of Nature. His metaphysics of identity are not ethical but demonstrates an absolute identity realized as a totality – by a logical process from relative identity to duplicity and relative reality. The process of investigation only functions within a totality, in which the term identity (self-realization) is considered in relation to the union of nature revealing itself in progressive integration or reintegration in difference back into indifference. The activities of nature – gravity, cohesion, light, electricity, magnetism etc. manifest individual items into the one existence.

*“The subject which is at first a subject which is pure and not present to itself – in wishing to have itself, in becoming object to itself – is tainted with contingency (the opposite of essence) But it cannot in this way negate itself as essence, for it is not just essence in general, but in an infinite manner.” (Schelling 1994:116)*

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<sup>36</sup><http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/metamorphosis>

For both Naess, Spinoza and Schelling – the individual only senses itself completely in relation to the infinite – the highest power of Nature. (*Vater 2012: 135-139*) Originally the subject is essence – freedom from being, but remaining a subject it is nothing, so only by becoming another to itself (object) it mediates its finite being as infinite. (*Schelling 1994:116*) As we have been informed by Schelling, the act of self – identity is not only individual, but concern the entire species - arising and realized in history. But, as he points out, absolute freedom for all individuals would not necessarily harmonize, actually quite the opposite unless a common factor of absolute synthesis is at work, the result would be negative. Schelling points to the fact, that most men have no goal of life, so if the conditions of global warming and destruction of the environment are to change, man should be guided in the direction of self-realization, even against his own will, as a necessity of absolute synthesis of actions. Such actions are not free but directed toward the highest goal of the entire species, related to a natural mechanism as the lawfulness of nature, or intuition. Freedom can only be achieved by self-determination (willing) at the highest level of self-development in which it becomes independent of the intelligence. (*Schelling 1978: 206-207*)

The absolute identical principle is already divided in consciousness, generating the entire system of finitude. When the absolute becomes the harmonious foundation between object and subject the entire species, will find traces of eternal identity. At this stage intuitive reflection is willingly elevated to the absolute and becomes the spiritual foundation of freedom and intelligence. The manifestation of the eternal power of nature plays a significant role in relation to history. (*Ibid: 208-211*) The original unification of freedom and necessity, involving higher forms of understanding, should be guidance for individuals performing acts to the advantage of the entire species.

## Unconscious Predetermined Activity

In line with Spinoza, Schelling considers freedom as subjective and limited as the highest form of insight. In contrast to Spinoza Schelling's form of absolute knowledge cannot be reached empirically or intellectually only by a holistic flash of totality. The objective world is hard to understand and seems to relate to a blind mechanism of the intelligence. But sometimes it appears as if something acts through us, as a kind of predetermined activity operating in the unconscious, gradually revealing itself through conscious and free activity of self-realization. Now if all conscious activity is purposive of conscious and unconscious activity the process must be grounded in Nature, in which we should seek for a solution. (*Ibid: 214*)

*“Nature in its blind and mechanical purposiveness admittedly represents to me an original identity of the conscious and unconscious activities, but it does not present this identity to me as one whose ultimate ground resides in the self itself.” (Ibid: 217)*

Such intuition is exhibitable in the intelligence explaining the opposition between subject and object. (Ibid: 218) The act of self-consciousness in which the self divides itself, is nothing else but an act of self – intuition as the primary act of both subject and object considered in relation to philosophical reflection. In the second step of the process the self becomes object to itself and intuits determinacy (willing) in sensation. In the third step the self is intellectually raised to the highest power as a self-conscious productive object. (Ibid: 234) From here a new sequence of acts begins, such acts even precede nature and leave it behind.

*“The objective factor in willing is intuiting as such or the pure lawfulness as such. The act in which this occurs is in the absolute act of will.” (Ibid: 236)*

In this absolute act of will the self becomes an object directed to the external lawfulness of nature and objectified as a categorical imperative (the moral God) based on a free choice of activity. (Ibid : 236) For Schelling the highest aim of Nature is to become object to itself, for self-consciousness and Nature are one and the same. As we have seen the will plays a major role in his concept of freedom not only individually but of the entire species. Spinoza does not believe in any free will, Naess says:

*“The will of a free man is not free. We do not need a free will to be free. It is enough that the person as a whole is free – never mind isolated faculties or components of a person such as will.” (Naess 2005 VI: 84)*

Instead Spinoza points to a certain striving (conatus) inherent in every human being. (Ibid: 84) But as pointed out in part two of this essay, under Union of Mind and Body, the mind is determined for willing. Even though such ideas are impossible to comprehend Spinoza believed in scientific development within the area, but according to Schelling Spinoza never achieved to build up such a system. Instead Schelling suggests a holy flash as linked to Intellectual Intuition based on a World-soul and Nature as Subject. In line with William James, Naess considers higher insight as something that cannot be reached intellectually, it can only be felt. Self-subsistence and Self-realization can be approached from diverse angles and Naess especially points to one of them related to Mahāyāna Buddhism as highly relevant, especially in relation to Spinoza’s fifth part of the Ethics elaborated by the Norwegian philosopher Jon Wetlesen<sup>37</sup>. Being a Buddhist might be

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37<http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/1399072?uid=3737880&uid=2129&uid=2&uid=70&uid=4&sid=21104518554913>

considered living a life in passivity, without active participation in the surroundings, but according to Naess this is wrong.

## The spiritual Self and Mahāyāna Buddhism

Living in a condition of withdrawal from the world is considered unacceptable. Such a life form is without motivation for the protection of ecosystems and other living species and should be prevented. Like Spinoza and Schelling, Naess considers man's transition from lower to higher forms of development and perfection in relation to the human body representing a smaller part of nature. (*Naess 2005 X: 83*) His description of Spinoza's free man can be described as a powerful and active being a sort of karmayogi in the tradition of Buddha and Gandhi. And the spiritual self is considered in line with Wetlesen's meditative approach to Spinoza and Mahāyāna<sup>38</sup> Buddhism: (*Bill Devall – George Sessions: 1985: 240*) Naess approaches the spiritual self in line with Wetlesen's apart from the view on: Tranquility of meditation – two forms of freedom, defined below.

*“...serious practice of meditation in the West now can be combined with, and integrated in a mature philosophical outlook that makes use of both Eastern and Western sources.” (Wetlesen, Naess 1978:136)*

Wetlesen's work of combining Spinoza with Buddhism is by Naess seen as groundbreaking and part five of the ethics (*The Power of the Intellect*) is considered a direct way to Eastern traditions.

*“As long as we are not assailed by emotions which are contrary to our nature we have the power of arranging and connecting the modifications of the body according to the order of the intellect.” (Spinoza 1993:201)*

Wetlesen's interpretation of Spinoza's free man....

*“...underrates life under the guidance of reason and overrates the tranquility of meditation.” (Wetlesen, Naess 1978:137)*

The term tranquility should be replaced with equanimity<sup>39</sup> (a state of psychological stability) as both the internal and the external balance. For Naess Spinoza's mode of human nature is active both internally and externally and the two forms of internal freedom are distinguished between one absolute and the other relative. Internal absolute freedom presupposes intuition of oneself and other beings in nature as eternal. (*Ibid: 137*)

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<sup>38</sup><http://www.religionfacts.com/buddhism/sects/mahayana.htm>

<sup>39</sup><http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/equanimity>

## Higher form of Cognition and Internal Freedom

Naess refers to Wetlesen's definition of Spinoza's absolute intuition, as part of the mind that cannot be approached gradually. Becoming conscious of this immanent essence can be described as a sudden enlightenment, considered from the perspective of bringing forth the original self by the act of self-consciousness. Such an act is described as a necessary step towards God/Nature. Discovering insight of the true self also means to realize absolute freedom as closely linked to its original source of energy. (*Ibid: 139*) The difference between the absolute and relative forms of freedom is related to active and passive emotions (adequate and inadequate ideas) related to self-awareness and effects. The relative strategies of freedom considered as negative passions should be replaced with good passions. But such passions cannot result in absolute freedom; they must be based on actions. Wetlesen distinguishes between relative and instantaneous strategies. And absolute freedom can only be achieved by the latter. The higher form of adequate cognition is related to internal freedom and self-determination. Wetlesen categorizes the two forms of freedom as:

*"Freedom<sub>1</sub> (absolute) the highest form of freedom and immanent."*

*"Freedom<sub>2</sub> (relative) the gradual form of freedom, it takes time to reach such freedom." (Ibid: 138)*

These two forms of freedom are without continuity and Naess encounters a clear distinction between the two forms of freedom in Spinoza. In line with Mahāyāna Buddhism he calls them the relative and the instantaneous strategies of liberation. The instantaneous form of freedom cannot be approached relatively and presupposes intuition of oneself and others. Such intuition is an essential part of the mind and nature without any influence of time and becoming conscious of it is described as a sudden enlightenment.

*"For the enlightened person sees that freedom, in the absolute sense, consists not in becoming something that he is not, but in being what he is from eternity." (Wetlesen Naess 1978: 138)*

Experiencing such enlightenment means to achieve self-intuition and awareness of the necessarily relation to the eternal forces of God/Nature. (*Ibid: 138-139*) The relative strategies of liberation relates to man as a temporal being in the degree of autonomy in connection to the environment. Only by understanding existence from the perspective of absolute eternal freedom the bondage of confused emotions can be released.

## Absolute Freedom as both Intuitive and Active

Spinoza's concept of absolute freedom, defined as the third kind of knowledge, is by Naess considered a combination of both intuition and active interaction with the environment. His concept of freedom should be considered in combination with the Mahāyāna Buddhism's teaching of freedom, as a relatively developing process leading to higher forms of knowledge, identification and compassion. Such activity is highly relevant within social as well as political affairs and should serve as guidance for the human race along the way to higher understanding. In line with Gandhi, Naess considers meditation and metaphysics as a kind of spiritual egoism, in relation to which prayers and yoga are considered an inadequate form of insight, perfection and freedom. Proceeding to higher levels of knowledge requires active participation in social and environmental activities.

To understand Spinoza's acts of cognitions, joined with active affects between body and environment are, according to Naess, complex and comprehensive. So he suggests that Spinoza's second and third kinds of knowledge are combined with reason in nature. Such activity should be performed without retreat to meditation and isolation. The highest form of insight, defined as Freedom<sub>1</sub>, cannot be reached by instantaneous intuition, he says. Instead such insight can only be relatively (gradually) acquired by deeper insight improving over years. (*Wetlesen, Naess 1978: 139-143*)

*"It cannot happen that a man should not be a part of nature, and that he should be able to suffer no changes save those which can be understood through his nature alone, and of which he is the adequate cause."*  
(*Wetlesen Naess 1978: 145*)

The internal nature of man is according to eternal necessity, determined by God as the indirect adequate cause of an external effect. If a person recognizes his attachment to such higher forces, he will have the power to determine and maintain himself at a higher level of existence, with the effects of intellectual love of God. Such effects will be strong enough to control passions and liberate the person from bondage. Wetlesen's interpretation of Spinoza points to freedom as a relative (gradual) development turning passive effects into active, based on free self-determination. But as long as man strives to fulfill his own imaginary perfection, he will be bound to the process of time and freedom in the absolute sense will not be attained. (*Ibid 1978: 145-146*)

## Self-determination as Mindfulness

The highest freedom of man is his salvation and consists in adequate cognition of his own essence. To understand passions and turn them into active emotions and generosity towards those hating us

is a rather complicated affair and difficult to handle, Naess says. And how do we distinguish between active and passive emotions? One of the ways is psychologically; defined above, but such practice cannot be carried out by one man alone. Absolute freedom (freedom<sub>1</sub>) by Wetlesen described as instantaneous (enlightenment) should instead be considered as relative and a painful process, for God has not provided us with shortcuts. Spinoza's formulation of the first steps of development is defined as reflection on the cognitive and effective acts, formed by our own ideas. In the separation of the two the projection of consciousness becomes clear and their immanent character will be recognized. Naess moves from the phenomenological approach of Husserl<sup>40</sup> to the ontological approach of Spinoza, which has nothing to do with external objects. Instead they relate to the effects of the causality of God. (*Ibid* :148) For a person, to reach such self-knowledge means to be free in the sense of being self-determined and mindful, according to which his world of imaginations/affects and awareness of projections become internally free. What is unclear here, for Naess, is that man in this condition should be able to see all the effects of the immanent causality of God, by one single act, as says:

*"We certainly do not have the ability instantaneously to understand each of the passive affects so that we get a clear picture of their origins – and not only a general notion of their dependence upon natural laws and God as their immanent cause."* (Wetlesen, Naess: 1978:149)

For Spinoza general knowledge of passions is a liberating force. As we have seen above, passive emotions are defined as confused ideas and implies gradual and not by instantaneous freedom. His realism does not involve a sudden enlightenment as seen in religion and elsewhere. Following Naess, we should avoid considering transition from bondage to freedom as a move from passive emotions to active emotions emerging as an enlightenment in time. That active emotions should develop out of passive emotions is absurd for Naess and he quotes Wetlesen:

*"If adequate cognition and active affects can be actualized in a person at all, they must be potentially there from the beginning."* (Wetlesen, Naess: 1978:149)

Only by considering parts of the body and mind as fragments of nature a person's development can be understandable. When hindrances are removed there is for Wetlesen a possibility of some kind of clear eternal awareness breaking forth. Under such conditions man will know his absolute freedom as eternal and of absolute necessity. Achieving such insight involves reevaluation of self-

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<sup>40</sup><http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/phenomenology/>

knowledge in relation to confused ideas and freedom. In the perspective of eternity the social ego will be seen as an illusion and nothing but a mode of imaginary cognition.

## Gradual Enlightenment

The term absolute eternal freedom is unclear for Naess. Instead he suggests the theory of gradual enlightenment:

*“The stronger everyone is in this kind of cognition, the more he is conscious of himself and of God, that is to say, the more perfect and blessed he is, which will appear still more clearly.....”* (Wetlesen, Naess: 1978:150)

Naess concludes that Wetlesens freedom<sub>1</sub> (sudden enlightenment) is foreign to Spinoza’s system. (*Ibid: 150-151*) Furthermore he considers Spinoza’s remedy against passions as a close affinity to Buddhist insight meditation, starting with mindfulness/awareness – as a kind of ontological status of external things – culminating in adequate cognition, or wisdom. Such insight can liberate a person in the absolute sense.

*“An effect which is a passion ceases to be a passion as soon as we form a clear and distinct idea of it.”* (Wetlesen, Naess: 1978:153)

When someone experiences the world as projections of his own imagination, he develops the Buddhist insight into the impermanence of things and unsubstantiality of egos. (*Ibid: 153*) Hereby he becomes aware of the necessary conditions of Nature realizing the bondage of passions and attains freedom. We see that Wetlesen’s comparison of Spinoza with Buddhist theory and practice becomes central to Naess. The ideas of getting in contact with passions may be considered in line with a psychological analysis by Freud. Even though such contact might bring deeper insight into the complex pattern of emotions, it is time-consuming and Buddhist theory of non-substantiality destroys such framework. Still for Naess any instantaneous form of clearness occurring seems strange, instead it is more likely that passions should be gradually elucidated. On the other hand, he does not completely abandon the idea of some kind of clearness breaking through and invading consciousness. Even though such events have occurred within sudden religious forms, these types of enlightenment are rare, he says.

## Conclusion

In spite of the considerations about meditation – of sudden, fundamental changes in the world and the self – Spinoza may be interpreted in this direction, according to Naess. But the abstract conceptions of the world and the ego may not change the person permanently. He finds the

considerations inspiring but behavior and attitudes must be studied in society. Changing the structures of the interaction between man and the environment normally takes many years and is dependent on historical patterns. Spinoza's concepts of freedom are closely related to social life and genuine human conceptions are only changing gradually. Absolute freedom is for Naess only possible at the internal level, so our actions must have internal causes and internal effects. Spinoza's idea of disconnecting passions from external objects does not entail a kind of life within the self.

Both for Spinoza and Mahāyāna Buddhism the self is anyhow dependent on circumstances beyond its own control. Naess's interpretation of Spinoza's free man is not someone of tranquility, but a wise human being with an increasing momentum of the road to still higher levels of freedom. Such dimensions of freedom, involves a high level of activity corresponding to all parts of the body and includes social and political activity. The meditative approach may be one of the methods of achieving such freedom but it cannot be a stable situation for anyone. In Mahāyāna Buddhism the idea of freedom relates to the concept of higher levels of individual freedom and of all other species as well. So the individual freedom is deeply related to solidarity and identification of all beings in relation to the universal self. Various methods within Mahāyāna Buddhism might be considered in line with Spinozistic philosophy and for Naess such practices of meditation in the West are most welcome. (*Wetlesen, Naess: 1978: 155-156*)

## Resume

Lack of contact to the universal *ecological self* and lack of self-love is by Arne Naess considered one of the basic problems of modern man. Changing the conditions of the gap between man and Nature involves a form of self-realization exceeding Spinoza's concept of self-subsistence. Such development is also by Schelling defined as the unconscious principle (*intellectual intuition*) unfolding itself.<sup>41</sup> When necessary changes arise in the individual the level from weak to strong emotions can be bridged,<sup>42</sup> according to Spinoza. Both Naess and Schelling consider the passage as symbolizing the universal form of mental self-reflection, in which the subject becomes object to itself by *identification* with Nature and such insight can only be felt and not as defined by Spinoza interlectually understood. The road to self-realization involves confrontations and struggle and the ability of facing confused emotions. But as Naess points out, such analysis cannot be acquired by an individual alone and psychological analysis is complicated and time consuming. Instead he suggests

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<sup>41</sup>See page 48

<sup>42</sup>See page 28

we combine Spinoza's part five of the Ethics with Mahāyāna Buddhism in relation to an active life. Reaching spiritual insight might change the negative pattern of selfish egocentric behavior with diverse damage and ignorance of the environment and other species on earth. But all development is, according to both Naess and Schelling, dependent on history. For Schelling freedom and willing are closely related and defined as an anthropomorphic move in the stabilization of nature, as a kind of collective agreement between man and Nature (mind and matter) also defined as: *The inner road to freedom and Nature by Self-realization*.

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