Ohnmacht der Vernunft[87], „[...] denn alle Systeme sind von gestern, die Sprache des Volkes aber wie von Ewigkeit“[88].

Philosophie kommt damit gleichsam wieder als Weisheitsliebe zwischen Theosophie und Wissenschaft zu stehen, nach beiden Seiten hin offen, dennoch beides kritisch zurückweisend. Folgt aber aus dieser doppelten Negation eine gediegene Position? Das fragmentarische, immer wieder neu angefangene und doch wieder abgebrochene Projekt der positiven Philosophie läßt daran berechtigte Zweifel aufkommen. Die Unruhe des Wissenwollens kann nicht im System des religiösen Glaubens zur Ruhe kommen[89], weil der Glaube selbst ein Hort ständiger Unruhe, Anfechtung und Zweifel ist. Das hat Kierkegaard besser als Schelling gesehen, indem er immer wieder den Blick auf das Ärgernis und das Paradox der christlichen Existenz gelenkt hat, die objektive Ungewißheit des Heils in subjektiver Leidenschaft als Doppelreflexion des Glaubens auszuhalten. Daher philosophiert Kierkegaard zuletzt wie Fichte: „nicht [...] *erschaffend* die Wahrheit, sondern nur [...] abhaltend den *Schein*“[90], oder mit Kierkegaards eigenen Worten im Stil einer negativen Theologie (D. Law): „man reflektiert sich nicht in das Christ Sein hinein, sondern aus Anderem heraus um Christ zu werden.“[91] Es bleibt aber Schellings Verdienst, die dem Menschen vorgegebenen und unverzichtbaren Lebensquellen in ihrer systemischen Unverfügbarkeit philosophisch *durchdacht* zu haben: Natur, Kunst und Religion.[92]

[87] F. W. J. Schelling „Die Weltalter“ in *Schellings sämmtliche Werke* (s. Anm. 1), Bd. 8, S. 200.
[88] F. W. J. Schelling *Die Weltalter. Fragmente,* hg. v. M. Schröter, München 1966, S. 195.
[89] Gulyga *Schelling* (s. Anm. 7), S. 341.
[90] J. G. Fichte „Wissenschaftslehre 1804“ in *Johann Gottlieb Fichte's nachgelassene Werke,* hg. v. I. H. Fichte, Bd. 1-3, Bonn 1834-35; Bd. 2 (= *Fichtes Werke,* hg. v. I. H. Fichte, Nachdruck der Ausgaben Berlin 1845/46 und Bonn 1834/35, Bd. 1-11, Berlin 1971; Bd. 10), S. 199.
[91] *GWS, GW2* 27, 90.
[92] Gulyga *Schelling* (s. Anm. 7), S. 12.

The Legacy of Jacobi in Schelling and Kierkegaard

By Anders Moe Rasmussen

Abstract

In presenting the key theoretical notions of Jacobi's philosophical work, this paper shows how these notions are operative in Schelling's late philosophy and in Kierkegaard. It is argued that Jacobi's criticism of Spinozist rationalism is echoed in Schelling's and Kierkegaard's criticism of Hegelian speculation as it is shown that Jacobi's distinction between two different kinds of knowledge, i.e. demonstration and illumination, is also at the very heart of Schelling's and Kierkegaard's philosophy. On this background the article finally discusses some important similarities between Schelling and Kierkegaard, stressing the importance of the concept of the will as well as the relation between negativity and positivity.

Obviously German idealism draws from many different philosophical sources. In a certain way the idealists' theory of thought and rationality, the distinction between *"Verstand"* and *"Vernunft"* is nothing but a reinterpretation of ancient Greek thought about διάνοια and νοῦς. Similarly the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle is always present in the aesthetic and political writings of the German idealists. Kant's critical philosophy presents the main target of critical and constructive interaction, of course. It is certainly uncontroversial that the whole development of German idealism is unthinkable without Kant's groundbreaking work, which shaped a wholly new landscape of philosophical thought, a fact also acknowledged by all of the idealist philosophers. It is much less evident that the philosophy of Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi should have a similar significance. Nevertheless, that is what I want to suggest here. In distinctly different ways the philosophy of Jacobi plays a role comparable to that of Kant in the philosophical systems of the idealists. The suggestion seems strange enough, considering Jacobi's status as a proponent of the counter-Enlightenment, who fiercely at-

tacks not only Spinozist rationalism but also the idealists, especially Fichte and Schelling, accusing them of pantheism and atheism, and even "the honest Kant"; in fact in view of Hegel's and Schelling's extremely negative characterization of Jacobi the claim may seem altogether unintelligible. But this negativism is only one side of the idealists' highly ambivalent relationship to Jacobi. Jacobi is both a *"Prügelknabe,"* the worst example of theological and philosophical regression and a shining hero illuminating the very idea of modern thinking. How can that be? In order to answer that question one has to turn to Jacobi's most influential book, certainly the one that influenced and inspired the idealists, namely the second edition of *Über die Lehre des Spinoza in Briefen an den Herrn Mendelssohn* published in 1789. This book is a subtle criticism of the philosophy of Spinoza as the culmination of rationalism in defense of the freedom and personhood of God. Later I will come back to this book and its central arguments in more detail. For now I merely want to direct attention to the fact that, while rejecting Jacobi's defense of classical theism, the idealists agreed on and were highly inspired by Jacobi's criticism of Spinozist rationalism. As a philosophy of freedom, German idealism, no less than the philosophy of Jacobi, works out its ways of thinking in confrontation with the fatalism and determinism of Spinoza's philosophy, and in that regard Jacobi became a kind of model. One of the main differences between Kant's philosophy and the post-Kantian idealist thought is precisely that the challenge of Spinozist determinism is much more present in the writings of the idealists.

As I said earlier, Jacobi's influence on German idealism took many different forms. As Dieter Henrich[1] has shown in his many excellent studies on early German idealism, Jacobi's philosophy influenced and inspired Hölderlin and Fichte even if in quite different ways. But Jacobi's influence is not restricted to the formation of early German idealism. It reaches to the very end of the idealist philosophical tradition, that is to Schelling's late philosophy and to Kierkegaard. In the following I will try to show how deeply Schelling's late philosophy is inspired and influenced by, indeed even modeled on the philosophy of Jacobi, starting with Schelling's criticism of Hegel.

In the late writings of Schelling the number of direct references to Jacobi is not overwhelming, but there are some substantial passages

[1] Dieter Henrich *Der Grund im Bewusstsein. Untersuchungen zu Hölderlins Denken (1794-1795),* Stuttgart 1992; *Konstellationen. Probleme und Debatten am Ursprung der idealistischen Philosophie (1789-1795),* Stuttgart 1991.

that witness Schelling's acknowledgment and even admiration of Jacobi. In his lectures given in Berlin 1841/42, the lectures Kierkegaard attended, Schelling says: "Im 'Denkmal an Jacobi' (1812) ist der Anfang der positiven Philosophie."[2] Now, how is this brief statement to be understood? The book referred to in the quotation is Schelling's polemical answer to Jacobi's book *Von den göttlichen Dingen und ihrer Offenbarung* published in 1811, in which Jacobi accuses Schelling's philosophy of atheism. I find it difficult to read Schelling's *Denkmal an Jacobi* as the beginning or as the prefiguration of Schelling's late positive philosophy, let alone to detect any positive influence that Jacobi might have had on the formation of Schelling's positive philosophy. If we take Schelling's word about *Denkmal an Jacobi* as the beginning of positive philosophy for granted and if this book were the only text documenting the relationship of Schelling's late philosophy to Jacobi's thinking, then one would likely conclude that the relationship between Schelling and Jacobi is a purely negative one. However, there is evidence of a much more positive relationship. In his lectures on the history of modern philosophy delivered in Munich in the 1830's Schelling writes as follows: "Mit seinem Verstand gehörte er ganz und ungetheilt dem Rationalismus an, mit dem Gefühl strebte er, aber vergebens, über ihn hinaus. *Insofern* ist vielleicht Jacobi die lehrreichste Persönlichkeit in der ganzen Geschichte der neueren Philosophie." A bit further on in the text we find: "Indess kann ich Jacobi gewiss nicht *mehr* Gerechtigkeit widerfahren lassen, als indem ich ihm zugestehe, dass Er von allen neueren Philosophen am lebhaftesten das Bedürfniß einer geschichtlichen Philosophie (in unserem Sinne) empfunden hat."[3]

Here Jacobi's philosophy is directly related to the program of Schelling's late philosophy. Furthermore, these quotations are taken from a separate chapter on the philosophy of Jacobi, a chapter that, as pointed out by Axel Hutter,[4] very much has the character of a summary of Schelling's late positive philosophy. According to Schelling's general account of Jacobi's philosophy as *Uebergang von Rationalismus zum Empirismus* the chapter is placed right between his account of rationalism/idealism and his account of empiricism, but following right after

[2] F. W. J. Schelling *Philosophie der Offenbarung 1841/42,* ed. by Manfred Frank, Frankfurt am Main 1993, p. 138.

[3] *Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schellings sämmtliche Werke,* ed. by K. F. A. Schelling, 14 vols., Stuttgart and Augsburg 1856-61; vol. X, p. 168.

[4] Axel Hutter *Geschichtliche Vernunft. Die Weiterführung der Kantischen Vernunftkritik in der Spätphilosophie Schellings,* Frankfurt am Main 1996, p. 275.

Schelling's critical analysis of Hegel's philosophy, which is characterized as the culmination of negative philosophy. Thus the chapter very much has the status of a brief presentation of Schelling's alternative positive philosophy. Based on these clues I think it is possible to show that the influence of Jacobi's philosophy reaches into the very core of Schelling's late philosophy. I am not going to suggest a reading of Schelling's late philosophy as a *Weiterführung der Jakobischen Vernunftkritik,* but I will try to show some striking parallels between the philosophy of Jacobi and Schelling's late thinking concerning both the philosophical motif and the kind of philosophical argumentation. Stating that Schelling's criticism of Hegel can be seen as a renewal of Jacobi's criticism of Spinozist rationalism, I will try to show that there is a striking similarity between Schelling's argument against Hegel's *Science of Logic* and Jacobi's argument against Spinoza.

As Dieter Henrich pointed out, Jacobi's *Über die Lehre des Spinoza* is a very complex book containing three main philosophical efforts intertwined with each other. First there is a reinterpretation or rather reconstruction of Spinoza's philosophy, secondly a criticism of Spinoza on the basis of the reconstruction, and thirdly a formulation of Jacobi's alternative to Spinoza's philosophy. In the following I will concentrate on the first two points and later come back to consider Jacobi's alternative. In Jacobi's opinion, the philosophy of Spinoza is the only consistent form of rationalism or the very culmination of philosophical rationalism. When one considers the many objections that had already been raised against Spinoza's thought, this claim seems highly questionable, and so it is only in a reformulation or a reconstruction that Jacobi can maintain his claim about Spinozist philosophy being the culmination of rationalism. In his reconstruction the fundamental theoretical operation substitutes or replaces Spinoza's notion of "substance" with the notion of "being." According to Jacobi, all the difficulties and flaws in Spinoza's thinking go back to his Cartesian vocabulary, that is "substance," "attributes," "modus," "causality" and so on. By replacing "substance" with "being," Jacobi hopes to avoid the flaws without distorting the core of Spinoza's thinking. This means that the notion of "being" must entail all the central features that Spinoza ascribes to his notion of "substance," that is oneness, actuality and necessity. In this Jacobi was inspired by Kant's pre-critical work *Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund zu einer Demonstration des Daseins Gottes,* where Kant argues that every single thought of a sheer possible existence presupposes a necessary "being," and since every possibility is only intelligible in relation to possibility as such this necessary being also must be one. In Jacobi's thinking this also leads to the idea that the notion of "being" could not be a mere thought, since in the thought due to which we can think of anything existing, the notion of "being" must correspond to something real and actual. In the words of Jacobi, "being" is "das lautere Principium der Wirklichkeit in allem Wirklichen, des Seyns in allem Daseyn."[5] So all features of Spinoza's notion of "substance" are contained in the notion of "being." Furthermore, it avoids Spinoza's flaws by keeping clear of Cartesian vocabulary, especially by keeping clear of the concept of causality. According to Jacobi, the fundamental flaw in Spinoza's philosophy emerges from his extensive use of the concept of causality. This concept is restricted to the domain of experience and cannot be used outside that domain, that is the concept of causality is in fact no rational concept at all. When used outside the domain of experience as in the case of Spinoza, it leads to sheer nonsense. So the philosophy of Spinoza, as the most consistent rational philosophy, is also at the same time the result of an absurd enterprise. So much for Jacobi's critical reconstruction.

Let us now move to his criticism, remembering that reconstruction and criticism are intertwined. Avoiding the fatal amalgamation of the logical notion of "ground" and the experience-based notion of "causality" and at the same time maintaining the fundamental features of Spinoza's notion of "substance," Jacobi's concept of "being" is more than a reconstruction of Spinoza; in fact it is the point of departure of his criticism. The knowledge we have when we think the concept of "being" is rational in the sense that it does not emerge out of experience. On the other hand this knowledge is by no means grounded in rational demonstration. The notion of "being" is not a product of theoretical considerations. The notion of "being" has a peculiar kind of evidence or certainty; every time its existence is considered, the notion is already understood and justified. In that sense the notion of "being" contains a presupposition that is necessarily justified out of itself. All there is to do for philosophers and thinkers is to illuminate the notion of "being" and the peculiar kind of certainty connected to it. Any effort to prove it is absurd. So substituting "substance" with "being" rules out any kind of demonstration or proof, which is always a possibility where "substance" is to be the fundamental notion.

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[5] F. H. Jacobi *Über die Lehre des Spinoza in Briefen an den Herrn Moses Mendelssohn,* 2. Aufl., Breslau 1789 (hereafter Jacobi *Spinoza*), p. 61.

Moving to Schelling's critique of Hegel's *Science of Logic* formulated most extensively in his lectures on the history of modern philosophy, one is struck by some fundamental similarities between this criticism and that of Jacobi's arguments against Spinoza. This is not to say that the whole of Schelling's critique can be traced back to Jacobi. Schelling does use the same expression to characterize Hegel's philosophy as "reversed Spinozism" as Jacobi uses in his polemic against Fichte. But Schelling's criticism has quite a different look, due also to the very specific character of Hegel's dialectics. Nevertheless there are two very important points in Jacobi's critique that are shared by Schelling's. (1) The first point is the conviction that neither in the order of being nor in the order of knowing is there first the possibility of being and then following from this, the fact of being. Rather there is first existence, being, and actuality itself which exists out of sheer necessity. In the case of Jacobi it has to be said that this is not really part of his criticism of Spinoza, but rather belongs to his critical reconstruction. The idea that first there is being and actuality which exists out of sheer necessity is essential to Spinoza's notion of "substance," but according to Jacobi it is better secured by replacing "substance" with the notion of "being." In the case of Schelling this starting point is an essential part of his critique of Hegel. (2) The second point, and indeed the most interesting point concerning the relationship between Jacobi's criticism of Spinozist rationalism and Schelling's criticism of Hegelian rationalism, is the idea that this being existing out of sheer necessity cannot be grasped by any kind of proof or demonstration. This is the heart of both Jacobi's and Schelling's criticism. Now in showing why this is so, Jacobi and Schelling differ from one another. As we have seen, according to Jacobi, each consideration of the notion of "being" immediately implies its fulfillment and justification out of itself. Schelling's way of showing thought's inability to grasp being is a quite different one. Moving to a – however brief – presentation of Schelling's critique, I want to start with the key premise in his attack on Hegel, namely the idea that "Das Denken hat eben nur mit der Möglichkeit, mit der Potenz zu thun."[6] Now what makes Schelling so sure that it is so? I certainly think Stephen Houlgate[7] has a point in suggesting that this idea goes back to Kant's critique of the ontological proof of God's existence, stating that "being" is what Kant calls a

[6] *Schellings sämmtliche Werke* (cf. note 3 above), vol. II/3, p. 161.

[7] Stephen Houlgate "Schelling's Critique of Hegel's *Science of Logic*" in *The Review of Metaphysics,* vol. LIII, no. 1 (1999), pp. 99-128.

"position" and not a predicate. Considering the fact that the critique of the ontological proof of God's existence plays an essential role elsewhere in Schelling's late philosophy, Houlgate's suggestion seems highly plausible. Without going deeper into this issue, I just want to highlight what crucial role this idea plays in Schelling's critique of Hegel. One of the crucial moves in Schelling's criticism is the assertion that Hegel's so-called negative philosophy points below itself. A closer consideration of Schelling's description of Hegel's way of setting out negative philosophy culminates in a consideration of the final possibility. As the final conceivable possibility, this possibility in fact is nothing but sheer or pure actuality. But in another way negative philosophy or rationalism cannot culminate in pure actuality, and this is exactly where the key premise, that thinking is only concerned with the mere possibility of a thing's existence, comes in. Because pure actuality means that there is no longer any possibility as such to think, negative philosophy, subscribing entirely to thought, that is considering only the mere possibility of a thing's existence, is unable to grasp pure actuality. The fundamental flaw or even *aporia* in Hegel's negative philosophy then is that it points to something that is in principle unable to grasp. According to Schelling, this also means there is a limit to thought asserting at the same time a different kind of knowing, an activity not of presenting or picturing but of intuition of things, in the vocabulary of Schelling called *"Vorstellung."* I will later come back to this notion and to the contrast between two different kinds of knowing, knowing as representation and demonstration corresponding to negative philosophy and knowing as intuition corresponding to positive philosophy.

Returning to Jacobi and to the third aspect of his *Über die Lehre des Spinoza,* namely his alternative to Spinoza, I want to begin with the following passage: "Nach meinem Urtheil ist das grösste Verdienst des Forschers, *Daseyn* zu enthüllen, und zu offenbaren ... Erklärung ist ihm Mittel, Weg zum Ziele, nächster – niemals letzter Zweck. Sein letzter Zweck ist, was sich nicht erklären läßt: das Unauflösliche, Unmittelbare, Einfache."[8] Having the character of a dictum, Jacobi here distinguishes between two distinctly different ways of thinking: on the one side a thinking devoted to explanation and demonstration and on the other side a thinking governed by the goal of illumination. But it is not only a dictum but also a program. So Jacobi's alternative is to be understood in terms of what could be called a philosophy of illumination. Now what

[8] Jacobi *Spinoza* (cf. note 5 above), p. 42.

does this mean? As we have seen, the criticism of Spinoza ended in the idea that there is a kind of certainty, which is not a result of discursive reasoning. Jacobi now tries to work out this idea in considering two thoughts: (a) the thought that all knowledge rests on the presupposition of the immediate; (b) the thought about the certainty of the existence of the infinite. (a) Jacobi's thought about immediacy – in Jacobi's vocabulary *"Glaube"* – has a lot to do with British empiricism, remembering that the other masterpiece by Jacobi is a book on this philosophical tradition, entitled *Hume über den Glauben, oder Idealismus und Realismus* from 1787. But the assertion that knowledge presupposes the immediate is not reducible to the principle of empiricism. The claim that existence or *"Dasein"* can only be illuminated is just another formulation of Jacobi's notion of "being," stating that this notion is prior to any kind of deduction. So *"Dasein"* is a specification of "being," giving content to the notion of actuality and to the peculiar kind of certainty connected to "being." "Being" now means a certainty of experience, a certainty of "something there existing," through which all experience is made possible. Here the vocabulary of rationalism and empiricism is brought together in a way peculiar to Jacobi.

Coming to (b) one has to remember that Jacobi's book on Spinoza is a passionate defense of the freedom and personhood of God. *"Glaube"* means not only an immediate certainty of existence but also an immediate certainty of God's existence. In the vocabulary of Jacobi this has to do with the relationship between the infinite and the finite. Against Spinoza Jacobi both wants to ensure the transcendence of the infinite and the independence of the finite without drawing on the idea of a *"creatio ex nihilo."* This is worked out by contrasting the concepts of the conditioned and the concept of the unconditioned, asserting that we cannot think about the conditioned without at the same time thinking of the unconditioned since the latter is presupposed by the former, as its presupposition. In understanding its conditions it is possible to know the conditioned, but in that way we can never know of the unconditioned. In contrast, in knowing of the existence of something conditioned we also *eo ipso* have knowledge of the unconditioned. In this way Jacobi combines the transcendence of the unconditioned with the independence of the conditioned in showing that, although being the external cause of the conditioned and thereby giving independence to the conditioned, the unconditioned is always present in the conditioned, namely as its internal condition.

Coming back to Schelling and to the legacy of Jacobi in his late philosophy, one is tempted also to see his positive philosophy as prefigured in Jacobi. So Schelling's fundamental distinction between negative and positive can be understood as a reformulation of Jacobi's distinction between two distinctly different kinds of practicing philosophy, by way of explanation or by way of illumination. Furthermore, their common distinction is a distinction between different kinds of knowing, that is knowing by way of theoretical considerations and knowing by way of immediate certainty. There is a striking parallel between Schelling's alternative to Hegelian conceptualism, called *"Vorstellung,"* and Jacobi's notion of immediate certainty, which constitutes the core of Jacobi's own theory. Finally, there is also the common conviction that an alternative way of practicing philosophy can only be worked out through an immanent critique of the opponent's theory. Critique and positive alternative are intimately linked together. Neither in the case of Jacobi nor in the case of Schelling is the distinction between opposing kinds of philosophy to be understood in a dualistic way. Certainly there are also differences between Jacobi and Schelling. One of the big differences is that Schelling's alternative is not so much a new epistemology as it is a program of practical philosophy stressing the human will, a new way of thinking human life. Schelling takes Jacobi's notions of *"Glaube"* and *"Gefühl"* to point in this direction. Commenting on the antagonism between *"Gefühl"* and *"Wissenschaft,"* he says:

> *So* aber hat die Aeußerung dieses Gefühls gegenüber von den rationalistischen Systemen nur den Werth einer individuellen Erklärung: '*ich* will dieses Resultat nicht, es ist mir zuwider, es widerstrebt meinem Gefühl.' Wir können eine solche Aeußerung nicht für unerlaubt erklären, denn wir selbst räumen dem *Wollen* eine große Bedeutung wenigstens für die vorgängige Begriffsbestimmung der Philosophie ein. Die erste (der Philosophie selbst noch vorausgehende) Erklärung der Philosophie *kann* sogar nur der Ausdruck eines Wollens seyn.[9]

This quotation, I think, is to be understood as Schelling's practical reformulation of Jacobi's idea of an illuminating philosophy. That Schelling transforms or reformulates Jacobi's notion of immediate certainty into a practical kind of philosophy is strongly indicated later on in the text. Discussing the relation between *"Glaube"* und *"Wissen,"* Schelling claims that *"Wissen"* not only can contain *"Glaube"* but that *"Glaube"* is an essential part of *"Wissen."* In this connection he distinguishes between *"Glaube"* as immediate knowledge (*"unmittelbares Wissen"*) or sight (*"Schauen"*) and *"Glaube"* as mediate knowledge (*"mittelbares Wissen"*). Schelling asserts, that only in the

[9] *Schellings sämmtliche Werke* (cf. note 3 above), vol. X, p. 166.

case where *"Glaube"* is understood as immediate knowledge is dualism installed. This could very well be a critical comment on Jacobi's assertion of the priority of the immediate. Siding with mediate knowledge, Schelling thereby does not subscribe to the program of explanation or to theoretical consideration. That this is not the case is demonstrated in his linking together *"Glaube"* and action. "Glaube ist daher nicht, wo nicht zugleich *Wollen* und *Thun* ist, glauben und sich nicht bewegen, ist Widerspruch."[10] Here the notions of action and movement come to the fore as two otherwise fundamental concepts in Schelling's positive philosophy opposing the lack of movement characteristic of negative philosophy.

Finally, coming to Kierkegaard and to Jacobi's influence on Kierkegaard, it is worth noting that the references to the work of Jacobi are almost entirely concerned with one single passage in *Über die Lehre des Spinoza,* namely the passage where Jacobi speaks of a *"salto mortale":* "Ich helfe mir durch einen *Salto mortale* aus der Sache."[11] Now Kierkegaard is rather critical about Jacobi's idea of a leap or a decision, through which Jacobi wants to escape from Spinozist pantheism. According to Kierkegaard, there are two essential flaws or mistakes in his idea of a *"Salto mortale"*: (a) by opposing the leap to the rationalistic system of Spinoza, Jacobi puts the notion of a leap in the wrong place; (b) by overlooking the interiority of the leap, Jacobi makes it into something that can be given some kind of reason. It says:

> His *"salto mortale"* is, in the first instance, only the subjectifying act as over against Spinoza's objectivity, not the transition from the eternal to the historical. In the next place, he is not dialectically clear about the leap, so as to understand that it cannot be taught or communicated directly, precisely because it is an act of isolation, which leaves it to the individual to decide, respecting that which cannot be thought, whether he will resolve believingly to accept it by virtue of the absurdity. Jacobi proposes, by a resort to eloquence, to give assistance in making the leap. But this is a contradiction.[12]

While the direct references to Jacobi have this rather negative outlook, with Kierkegaard using the opportunity to stress his own concept of leap or decision, the story about their relationship has not yet been told. In some essential regards Kierkegaard, I think, has been positively inspired by Jacobi.

As has been shown, in the history of modern philosophy, Jacobi develops a new kind of thinking by replacing systematic ways of reasoning with the contraposition of different kinds of reasoning. This new philosophical method is also to be found in Kierkegaard's writings, as it is in the case of Schelling. Trying to reveal truth by pursuing different kinds of perspectives certainly is characteristic of Kierkegaard's writings. Meanwhile it is possible to move beyond this methodological parallel. If we turn to Kierkegaard's use of the word *"tro"* ("faith," *"Glaube"*), one is struck by the many different meanings of this word. Among these different meanings, the word *"tro"* refers to Jacobi's notion of *"Glaube."* As in the case of Jacobi, Kierkegaard claims that immediate certainty is not only a precondition to any kind of experience but also a precondition to the realization of human life, and Kierkegaard here stresses especially the certainty of our own existence. Jacobi also comments on the certainty of our own existence. However, here lies an important difference between Jacobi and Kierkegaard. In commenting on the certainty of our own existence, Jacobi also tries to explain the structure of human self-consciousness. Kierkegaard, following his general dislike of epistemology, shows no interest in what could be called "theoretical self-consciousness" but is only concerned with "practical self-consciousness."[13] The following quotation from *The Concept of Anxiety* shows how Kierkegaard gives Jacobi's notion of immediate certainty a practical reinterpretation. It says:

> The most concrete content that consciousness can have is consciousness of itself, of the individual himself – not the pure self-consciousness, but the self-consciousness that is so concrete that no author, not even the one with the greatest power of description, has ever been able to describe a single such self-consciousness, although every single human being is such a one. This self-consciousness is not contemplation, for he who believes this has not understood himself, because he sees that meanwhile he himself is in the process of becoming and consequently cannot be something completed for contemplation. This self-consciousness, therefore is action.[14]

Like Schelling, Kierkegaard gives a practical reformulation of Jacobi's central ideas stressing the notions of action, movement and becoming.

However, there is another parallel concerning theological motives that is worth noting. In the so-called *"Beylage 7"* Jacobi applies his theory about the relation between the unconditioned and the conditioned to the knowledge we have of ourselves. Self-knowledge is here taken to be a knowledge of our existence as a conditioned existence. At the same time it is emphasized that this knowledge is presupposed

[10] Ibid., p. 183.
[11] Jacobi *Spinoza* (cf. note 5 above), p. 27.
[12] *PLS,* p. 92.

[13] In the work of Kierkegaard faith as certainty also has an epistemological and a metaphysical meaning, but the ethical meaning is the predominant one.
[14] *CA, KW* VIII, p. 143.

by knowledge of the unconditioned. That is the reason why we need "das Unbedingte nicht erst zu suchen, sondern haben von seinem Dasein dieselbige, ja eine noch größere Gewißheit, als wir von unserem eigenen *bedingten* Dasein haben."[15] At first glance this seems like just another illustration of Jacobi's overall theory about the unconditioned preceding the conditioned, saying nothing about what is specific and characteristic of the knowledge we have of ourselves. But in the same passage Jacobi directly addresses the specific structure of self-knowledge:

> Ich nehme den ganzen Menschen, ohne ihn zu theilen, und finde, dass sein Bewusstseyn aus zwei ursprünglichen Vorstellungen, der Vorstellung des Bedingten und des Unbedingten zusammen gesetzt ist. Beyde sind unzertrennlich miteinander verknüpft, doch so, dass die Vorstellung des Bedingten die des Unbedingten voraussetzt, und in dieser nur gegeben werden kann.[16]

Jacobi here both claims that the representation of the unconditioned is the fundamental component in the knowledge we have of ourselves and – as the representation of the unconditioned is connected with the certainty of its actual existence – that the certainty of the actuality of the unconditioned is what makes knowledge of our existence possible. So certainty of God is the internal prerequisite of self-knowledge as well as the constituent of the specific structure of this knowledge.

With a quite different vocabulary Kierkegaard seems to hold the same opinion on there being a relation between self-knowledge and the representation of the unconditioned. In his famous passages on the self as a relation in section A of *The Sickness unto Death* it says:

> Such a relation that relates itself to itself, a self, must either have established itself or have been established by another. If the relation that relates itself to itself has been established by another, then the relation is indeed the third, but this relation, the third, is yet again a relation and relates itself to that which established the entire relation. The human self is such a derived, established relation, a relation that relates to itself and in relating itself to itself relates to another.[17]

And later on in the text Kierkegaard speaks about the "dependence of the relation (of the self)."[18] What is interesting here is that Kierkegaard strictly rules out the possibility that the self has established itself, meaning that an external power is the fundamental component in the structure of the self. In that sense there seems to be a similarity between Jacobi and Kierkegaard concerning self-knowledge and self. Nevertheless it is a quite different kind of dependence that Kierkegaard is talking about. When speaking about the self, Kierkegaard does not refer to a certain kind of knowledge but to a certain kind of attitude or performance. This is spelled out in his characterization of the self as a relation. Kierkegaard is, as pointed out earlier, not concerned with theoretical subjectivity but only with practical subjectivity. This also affects the notion of dependence. Kierkegaard speaks only of dependence in relation to a specific human task, the task of becoming oneself, and so dependence is the expression of "the inability of the self to arrive at or to be in equilibrium and rest by itself." To assert that the unconditioned or the absolute is the internal prerequisite of the self is something that Kierkegaard never could have said. This disagreement also reflects very different kinds of theological motives in Jacobi and Kierkegaard. Against Spinozist pantheism Jacobi wanted to secure the transcendence of God without at the same time subscribing to the idea of a *"creatio ex nihilo."* Jacobi thought to have achieved these goals through his theory about the unconditioned being the internal condition of the conditioned. The unconditioned is the cause of the conditioned while at the same time being present in the conditioned as its internal condition. Surely Kierkegaard also wanted to secure the transcendence of God, but in his view Jacobi's theistic solution cannot avoid a relapse into pantheism. So Kierkegaard's answer to the kind of pantheism he was confronted with, i.e. Hegelian pantheism, took quite a different route as the Christological notions of incarnation and the "absolute paradox" became his solution.

Coming to an end, I will say just a few words on the relation between Kierkegaard and Schelling. I have tried to show how some fundamental characteristics of Schelling's and Kierkegaard's philosophy can be understood as reinterpretations of Jacobi's thinking. Meanwhile, there is an even closer connection between Schelling and Kierkegaard. While it is difficult to decide to what extent Schelling has influenced Kierkegaard's thought, it is evident that Kierkegaard's criticism of Hegel cannot be understood without taking Schelling into account. Where Kierkegaard's criticism of Hegel is something else than irony and satire it draws substantially on that of Schelling. The following quotation taken from *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* repeats some of the key arguments in Schelling's criticism of Hegel. It says:

> Reflection has the remarkable property of being infinite. But to say that it is infinite is equivalent, in any case, to saying that it cannot be stopped by itself; because in attempting to stop itself it must use itself, and is thus stopped in the same way that a disease is

[15] Jacobi *Spinoza* (cf. note 5 above), p. 423-24.
[16] Ibid., p. 423.
[17] *SUD, KW* XIX, pp. 13-14.
[18] Ibid., p. 14.

cured when it is allowed to choose its own treatment, which is to say that it waxes and thrives.[19]

Thought or reflection is, according to Kierkegaard as it is to Schelling, only concerned with possibility. But other features of Schelling's criticism of Hegel, which I have not presented, are also echoed by Kierkegaard. The ideas that there is no such thing as movement in logic and that the development of dialectical thought depends on a human desire or interest are substantial in Schelling's criticism. Kierkegaard's criticism of Hegel may have other sources but surely Schelling is the important one.

Furthermore, the fundamental distinction in Schelling's late philosophy between *"das Nichtseiende," "das Nichtseinsollende"* and *"das Seinsollende"* are also reflected in Kierkegaard's work. In *The Concept of Anxiety* all three elements are present, whereas in other texts, such as *The Sickness unto Death,* Kierkegaard is exclusively concerned with the relation between *"das Nichtseinsollende"* and *"das Seinsollende."* In this respect there is a discrepancy because Schelling insists on there being an unbreakable relation between all three elements. But in spite of this discrepancy it is a common conviction that freedom and truth can only be grasped through the negation of the negative or the pathological.[20] In this connection Schelling and Kierkegaard develop different kinds of what could be called "phenomenological pathology." Following the overall historical scheme of his late philosophy, Schelling deploys this phenomenology as a *"Philosophie der Mythologie,"* illustrating negative philosophy in picturing different kinds of coercion or constraint on the human mind, while at the same time pointing to the positive as the liberation from the pathological. As an anthropological or existential counterpart to Schelling's mythology, Kierkegaard develops his negative phenomenology by describing different ways in which the human will fails, while, as in the case of Schelling, at the same time pointing to the positive, in Kierkegaard's vocabulary called "faith," as the liberation from practical coercion. In developing these different kinds of phenomenology, Schelling's and Kierkegaard's philosophy exemplify Jacobi's original idea of philosophy as being an illuminating enterprise.

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[19] *PLS,* p. 102.

[20] See Michael Theunissen "Kierkegaard's Negativistic Method" in *Kierkegaard's Truth: The Disclosure of the Self,* ed. by J. H. Smith, Psychiatry and the Humanities, vol. 5, New Haven and London 1981, pp. 381-423; Arne Grøn *Subjektivitet og negativitet: Kierkegaard,* Copenhagen 1997.

Self-Liberation, Reason and Will

By Steen Brock

Abstract

The essay discusses two notions of self-liberation that can be ascribed to the considerations of Kierkegaard in *Philosophical Fragments* and the later Schelling in *The Philosophy of Revelation,* respectively. It is shown how, to Schelling, it is reason that is set free from itself, whereas to Kierkegaard, it is the will that is set free from itself. I argue that only a combination of Schelling and Kierkegaard's respective views would provide an adequate account of self-liberation to the effect that, ultimately, self-liberation is to be understood, not, as they both have it, as the liberation from a certain "Christian self" from itself, but as freedom *itself* being set free from itself.

In this essay I want to illustrate how the "positive philosophy" of the later Schelling and the considerations presented by Kierkegaard in *Philosophical Fragments,* respectively, might well be seen as hinging on two different ideas of self-liberation. Still there are certain parallels between the two ideas. First, both Schelling and Kierkegaard point to an internal relation between reason and will, and they both stress how the will can, and should, be set free from certain forms of reason. Second, they both address the question of the interrelation of reason and will by considering the interrelation of philosophy (understood as the historical tradition of systematic metaphysical thought) and Christianity (understood as a historical tradition). Accordingly, they both see philosophy and Christianity as ways in which to assess the *historical* character of both the reason and the will. However, I want to argue, while Schelling sees this liberation of the will from various forms of reason as a manner in which reason is liberated from *itself,* Kierkegaard discusses the way in which the will realizes itself by making a shift within that special part of the will that is related to certain forms of reason. In short, to Schelling, it is the reason that is set