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## **Schelling in the Kierkegaardian Project: Between Kantian Critique and the Second Ethics**

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Abstract: Seeking to determine what it is that incites Kierkegaard's enthusiasm during Schelling's early lectures at Berlin, then what it is that thoroughly extinguishes his hope in months to follow, I establish: first, that the criticisms of Hegel in Schelling's negative philosophy depend upon Kantian distinctions and reflect Kant's critical methodology; secondly, that the leveling function Schelling assigns to these distinctions corresponds to the notion of irony as a destructive force found in *The Concept of Irony*; finally, that Kierkegaard will come to concretize an account that adheres more closely to Kant's transition from negative to positive than to Schelling's.

Having defended his dissertation just months prior, Kierkegaard traveled to Berlin to attend the lectures of F.W.J. Schelling. Early in the lecture course Kierkegaard's high expectations had apparently begun to be realized, but unfortunately, as is well known, his excitement gradually turned to frustration.<sup>1</sup> Fenves sets the stage thus:

Imagine this situation: a young scholar has just completed a brilliant thesis in which he sets out to prove that a particular phenomenon can, should, and must be understood in terms of a certain characteristic—call it unsystematic “negativity”—which, in turn, can be understood only in terms of its opposite, namely a “positive system.” He then takes a trip to hear a once-renowned philosopher lecture about a closely related matter: the relation of negative to positive philosophy. As the young scholar begins to take meticulous notes on these lectures, making a fair copy every night, he quickly realizes that the old philosopher calls “negative philosophy” what he, the young scholar, had previously understood as

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Much of the research for this project was done during my stay at the Howard and Edna Hong Kierkegaard Library at St. Olaf College during the summer months of 2016, and my thanks extend to Gordon Marino, Eileen Shimota, Susanne Jakobsen-Tinley, and Lucas Shurson for their interest, help, and kindness. I am also grateful to fellow scholars Will Williams and Jared Jones for prompting fruitful discussions throughout our time together there.

<sup>1</sup> A note often cited as the highpoint of the relationship provides evidence of Kierkegaard's early satisfaction: “I'm so glad to have heard Schelling's 2nd lecture—indescribable. I have been sighing and have been groaning long enough; when he mentioned the word ‘actuality’ concerning philosophy's relation to the actual, the child of thought leapt for joy within me” *SKS* 19, 235, *Not8:33* / *KJN* 3, 229. He goes on to reference his ensuing attentiveness and the role *actuality* has played in his own philosophical struggles: “After that I can remember almost every word he said. Perhaps here there can be clarity. This one word, it reminded me of all my philosophical pains and agonies.”

“positive philosophy,” and the old philosopher proceeds to develop a “positive philosophy” that, for all its obscurity, has something in common with what the young scholar calls the “negative position” with which he is principally concerned. The young scholar could not help to feel confused, lost, or, in any case, disoriented to the point where negativity and positivity would be reversed or—and this would be worse—lose their polar valences altogether.<sup>2</sup>

Comparing Hegel’s positive situation in *The Concept of Irony* with the negative recasting Schelling suggests at Berlin, Fenves makes an important supposition explicit: “No wonder Kierkegaard writes to his closest friend, even as he registers his disappointment with Schelling’s lectures: ‘confusion in my philosophical ideas.’”<sup>3</sup>

A footnote in the introduction to *The Concept of Anxiety* stands out as a source shedding the most light on Kierkegaard’s purported confusion, and a relevant selection from this note reads, “On the other hand, it was less clear to me what he really meant by positive philosophy, except insofar as it became evident that it was the philosophy which he himself wished to provide.”<sup>4</sup> The insinuation is that while Schelling was eager to deliver a novel position that would correct for fundamental errors in Hegel’s thought, what he delivered was neither clear nor compelling. Yet when coupled with Kierkegaard’s private admission to “confusion in my philosophical ideas,” the immediate implication is that Kierkegaard-Haufniensis’s somewhat patronizing appraisal of Schelling’s positive philosophy arises more from lack of understanding on his own part than from Schelling’s content and presentation. The synthesis of these two notes therefore lends credence to Fenves’s reading.

Developing in part from suspicions that this explanation does not yet capture the full situation at Berlin, the venture undertaken in what follows seeks to ascertain with greater precision what it is that so convincingly sparks Kierkegaard’s enthusiasm during Schelling’s early lectures and then what it is that absolutely extinguishes this enthusiasm a few months later, doing so especially with reference to the distinction between negative and positive philosophy.<sup>5</sup> My argument centers on the methodology employed in Schelling’s lectures on negative philosophy and on the distinctions he takes up, then on his view to *actuality* as the point of transition from the negative to the positive. Alongside his early focus on freedom as the essential clue to discovering the vocation of the human individual, Schelling’s acknowledged indebtedness to Kant’s first *Critique* sets the stage for the

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<sup>2</sup> Peter Fenves, “The Irony of Revelation: The Young Kierkegaard Listens to the Old Schelling,” in *The Concept of Irony*, ed. by Robert L. Perkins, Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press 2002 (*The International Kierkegaard Commentary*, vol. 2), p. 391. To be sure, Fenves admits just after this hook that his description does not perfectly relate Kierkegaard’s situation at Berlin.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Fenves, “The Irony of Revelation,” p. 393.

<sup>4</sup> SKS 4, 328n / CA, 21n.

<sup>5</sup> Frustration driven by confusion is Fenves’s answer to the second of these questions, and based on immediately available evidence this answer is likely to be that which presents itself to as the most plausible inference. Yet a dilemma arises when one begins to review Kierkegaard’s notes: comparison with the lectures themselves begins to counteract this supposition. From when he first stumbles upon the notion of *actuality* until he grows frustrated and ceases to attend, which is closer to the end of the course than one might expect, Kierkegaard’s lecture notes remain unexpectedly meticulous. He began attending on 15 November and the last of his notes was written on 4 February; one should consult his notes themselves to get a proper sense of how much of Schelling’s positive philosophy Kierkegaard actually imbibed. In my judgment these notes continue to carefully track Schelling’s argument longer than Haufniensis’s footnote, taken to reveal the source of Kierkegaard’s confusion, lets on.

type of “positive” philosophy that Kierkegaard comes to anticipate, which he himself would go on to develop: one that corresponds to the Kantian transition from the theoretical to the practical, albeit in a manner that concretizes the ethical task and adheres more faithfully to “the situation of existing subjectivity.”<sup>6</sup>

What incites Kierkegaard’s enthusiasm with respect to Schelling’s negative philosophy is the leveling function it takes on within his overall presentation. This function harkens firstly and foremostly to Kant’s critical methodology, which tears down dialectically constructed edifices and restricts the inquiry of pure reason to the realm of the practical (I), and secondly to Kierkegaard’s established understanding of negative philosophy as centered on irony as “infinite absolute negativity” (II). Negative philosophy exposes a foundation for the positive, undermining pseudo-positive pretensions constructed dialectically.

Schelling’s announcement that the transition from negative to positive turns on the notion of *actuality* inspires Kierkegaard to place all his hope in the unfurling philosophy of revelation.<sup>7</sup> And this hope is not unfounded. Formed in conjunction with an understanding of Schelling’s earlier philosophy, Kierkegaard’s expectations leading up to Berlin shed additional light on the source of his frustration and confusion, revealing further why Schelling’s early proposal is met with such eager approval and then why the construal of *actuality* upon which Schelling’s positive account will turn so thoroughly frustrates his expectations.<sup>8</sup> To establish these connections I look to the introduction of *The Concept of Anxiety*, to the context surrounding the footnote in which Haufniensis references the distinction between positive and negative philosophy at Berlin (III).

### **I Negative Philosophy at Berlin: Schelling’s Kantian Criticism**

Intending to identify what it is that so peaks Kierkegaard’s enthusiasm during Schelling’s early lectures, this elementary section addresses the latter’s employment of the Kantian distinction between *concept* (*Begriff*) and *cognition* (*Erkenntnis*), where experience is the factor separating the conceptual illusions of reason from those things which can be cognized in actuality (*Wirklichkeit*). Conjuring this distinction summons Kant’s spirit of antipathy toward the dialectic of pure reason that would attempt to build upon the negative foundation that logic establishes, without reference to experience.

Schelling begins to set the stage for his coming criticism by introducing the fundamental problem Fichte seeks to overcome, an “insurmountable contradiction” arising from the unbridgeable chasm separating *noumenon* from *phenomenon*. He frames the problem in a manner that introduces the development upon which his claim to have gone beyond Fichte in the *proper manner*, traversing the path Hegel failed to follow, will depend: “Kant maintained that there is an a priori knowledge of things, but he removed from this a priori knowledge that which is precisely the most important

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<sup>6</sup> Michelle Kosch, *Freedom and Reason in Kant, Schelling and Kierkegaard*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2006, p. 139.

<sup>7</sup> SKS 19, 235, Not8:33: “Nu har jeg sat alt mit Haab til Schelling.”

<sup>8</sup> And not just in Schelling, but also in the prospects of academic philosophy. It is not coincidental that Kierkegaard’s pseudonymous authorship is beginning to take shape as his hope in Schelling diminishes.

thing, namely, that which exists, the ‘in itself,’ the being of the thing, that which *really* is in it.”<sup>9</sup> Emphasis on the being that *really is* in the things that exist, on their ontological *actuality*, will assist Schelling in his attempt to syncretize a post-Fichtean science of reason with the vitality of both Nature and Spirit he had always sought to preserve.<sup>10</sup>

Fichte had crossed the chasm separating noumenon from phenomenon by appealing to a substructural principle: “The unavoidable next step was therefore the insight that if there is a knowledge at all of things a priori, and even if that *which exists itself* can be known a priori, then the matter and form of things must be derived together and from the same source.”<sup>11</sup> With this insight the science of reason was able to proceed entirely *a priori*, and Schelling continues: “This thought came to fruition in the work of Fichte, whose greatest, most unforgettable service will always remain to have grasped within his spirit a *completely a priori* science.”<sup>12</sup> But Schelling’s admiration is mixed with a sense that something is still missing, and despite this praise he continues to stand by the sentiments urging him to move beyond Fichte. The task remains constant: within the parameters Fichte had established for a completely *a priori* science, Schelling seeks to incorporate the connection to lived experience that his predecessor had never been able to capture.<sup>13</sup>

To this end he takes up the Kantian distinction between concept (*Begriff*) and cognition (*Erkenntnis*), where intuiting objects of experience separates the former, which corresponds only to *form*, from the latter, in which form meets with positive *content*. To introduce his appropriation of Kant’s distinction Schelling invokes the medieval opposition between *what* a thing is, *quid sit*, and *that* it is, *quod sit*.<sup>14</sup> *Quid sit* maps onto *concept*: “The former...accords me insight into the *essence* of the thing, or it provides that I understand the thing, that I have an understanding or a concept [*Begriff*] of it, or I have it *itself* within the concept,” while *quod sit* maps onto *cognition*: “The other insight however, *that* it is, does not accord me just the concept [*Begriff*], but rather something that goes beyond just the concept, which is existence. This is a *cognition* [*Erkenntnis*] whereby it is readily clear that while there can be a concept without a real cognition, it is not possible for there to be a cognition without a concept.”<sup>15</sup> The trajectory of thought building up to

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<sup>9</sup> F.W.J. Schelling, *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy: The Berlin Lectures*, trans. by Bruce Matthews, Albany: State University of New York Press 2007 (*SW II/3*, 50-51 / *GPP*, 124; here and in the following the former designation refers to *Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling’s Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. by K.F.A. Schelling, I. Abtheilung, vols. 1-10, II. Abtheilung, vols. 1-4, Stuttgart: Cotta 1865-61; the latter refers to Matthew’s translation).

<sup>10</sup> In his late system Schelling approaches this insight from an angle divergent from those taken in his early *Naturphilosophie* and his later developments with respect to identity, freedom, the ages of the world, and so on.

<sup>11</sup> *SW II/3*, 50-51 / *GPP*, 124.

<sup>12</sup> *SW II/3*, 51 / *GPP*, 124.

<sup>13</sup> *SW II/3*, 50-51 / *GPP*, 124: “[Fichte] did not carry this idea out in actuality [*Wirklichkeit*].” Interestingly, Kierkegaard already has an established understanding of this Schellingian goal before he travels to hear him lecture at Berlin. The sole reference to Schelling in *Concept of Irony* makes this clear: “If [devotion] is only an element, then there is nothing to do but to produce it instantly again; if it is to fill the whole of life, then the actuality [*Virkeligheden*] never truly comes to exist. Hence it does no good for Solger to explain that we must not, as Plato does, think of the idea in a celestial or supracellular place; it does no good for him to assure us that he does not, as Spinoza does, have finitude vanish as a mere modus; it does no good for him not to have the idea come into existence in an eternal becoming, as Fichte does; it does as little good for him to frown upon Schelling’s attempt to show that perfect being is being in existence.” *SKS 1*, 344 / *CI*, 312.

<sup>14</sup> *SW II/3*, 57-58 / *GPP*, 128-129: “Here we should note that in everything that is real there are two things to be known: it is two entirely different things to know what a being is, *quid sit*, and that it is, *quod sit*.”

<sup>15</sup> *SW II/3*, 58 / *GPP*, 129.

this appropriation establishes explicitly that the first *Critique* is indeed the principal text informing Schelling's developing proposal.

Considered alongside his emphasis on the central importance of the *Critique of Pure Reason* for all subsequent philosophizing, including his own, the milieu from which this Kantian distinction has been lifted gestures toward the negative to positive transition internal to the first *Critique* itself. In this context an expectation that Schelling's own transition might correspond to Kant's transition from negative to positive begins to take shape. Speaking of the "great movement ushered in by Kant," Schelling reveals the origin of his deliberations.<sup>16</sup> The negative philosophy to follow corresponds to Kant's understanding of general logic as a "negative touchstone of truth," where logic is the merely negative. Schelling's criticism of Hegelian constructions corresponds to Kant's critique of pretensions erected dialectically, where both edifices are razed on the basis of a distinction between cognition and conception.

Kant juxtaposes form and content in the introduction to the *Transcendental Logic*, mapping these onto a further division between negative and positive: "This part of logic can therefore be called an analytic, and is on that very account at least the negative touchstone of truth, since one must before all else examine and evaluate by means of these rules the form of all cognition [*Erkenntnis*] before investigating its content in order to find out whether with regard to the object it contains positive truth."<sup>17</sup> The analytical investigations of logic, therefore, provide us with a merely negative touchstone, with a form that still lacks definitive content. "Further, however, logic cannot go," Kant writes just earlier, "and the error that concerns not form but content cannot be discovered by any touchstone of logic."<sup>18</sup> Attempts to determine content *a priori*, from within or from beyond the domain of logic, can only be considered *sophistic*.

Whereas the *Transcendental Analytic* addresses logical form prior to the reception of determinative content, dialectical employments of reason consist in those vain attempts of reason to obtain positive truth without reference to experience.<sup>19</sup> The ancients recognized this dialectical pretension: "among them it was nothing other than the *logic of illusion*—a sophistical art for giving to its ignorance, indeed even to its intentional tricks, the air of truth, by imitating the method of

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<sup>16</sup> *SW* II/3, 32-33 / *GPP*, 111: "If I were therefore to recommend some type of research at the beginning of this presentation, I would know of nothing more enlightening and useful than the study of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*."

<sup>17</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1998, p. 198 (*KrV* A60 / B84-85).

<sup>18</sup> Kant, *Critique*, p.198; *KrV* A59-60 / B84. Schelling's lectures demonstrate his adherence to this Kantian qualification, which links logic with negative philosophy, experience with positive philosophy. For both Schelling and Kant the merely logical finds completion only in relation to experience—and yet Schelling's task is to incorporate experience into a science operating completely *a priori*. He will call his position *metaphysical empiricism*. Relying on Kantian notions in his own critical project, it seems that Schelling must be careful to avoid the dialectical use of reason, lest he incur the wrath of the very charges he brings against Hegel. If I am right about Kierkegaard's enthusiasm building in conjunction with Schelling's Kantian methodology and the Kantian distinctions that he utilizes, then his frustration with the positive philosophy proposed at Berlin may well be mounting in conjunction with a perception that Schelling's positive philosophy falls victim to the critique directed against Hegel.

<sup>19</sup> "Nevertheless there is something so seductive in the possession of an apparent art for giving all of our cognitions the form of understanding, even though with regard to their content one may yet be very empty and poor, that this general logic, which is merely a *canon* for judging, has been used as if it were an organon for the actual production of at least the semblance of objective assertions, and thus in fact it has thereby been misused. Now general logic, as a putative organon, is called *dialectic*." Kant, *Critique*, p. 198; *KrV* A60-61 / B85.

thoroughness, which logic prescribes in general, and using its topics for the embellishment of every empty pretension.”<sup>20</sup> Allowing his disdain for the speculative use of unbridled reason to show forth, Kant builds another layer of connotative sediment, the charge of *sophistry*, onto what will become the foundational distinction between conception and cognition.

Kant explicitly introduces this distinction in the second edition of the Transcendental Deduction, where he sets the pure concept, or category, over and against cognition. He elaborates,

To *think* of an object and to *cognize* an object are thus not the same. For two components belong to cognition [*Erkenntnis*]: first, the concept [*Begriff*], through which an object is thought at all (the category), and second, the intuition, through which it is given; for if an intuition corresponding to the concept could not be given at all, then it would be thought as far as its form is concerned, but without any object, and by its means no cognition of anything at all would be possible...Consequently the categories do not afford us cognition of things by means of intuition except through their possible application to *empirical intuition*, i.e. they serve only for the possibility of *empirical cognition*. This, however, is called *experience*. The categories consequently have no other use for the cognition of things except insofar as these are taken as objects of possible experience.<sup>21</sup>

This, then, is the Kantian distinction Schelling uses to set up the coming transition from negative to positive philosophy. Negative philosophy remains within the realm of the merely formal, while positive philosophy pertains to the realm of experience.

The division between conception and cognition sets the stage for Schelling’s principal criticism of Hegel, to whom he will vengefully apply Kant’s distinction. He notes that the philosophy of another has muddled his own more recent emphasis on the separation between thought and experience, which has been poorly received “since in a preceding philosophy [those who have

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<sup>20</sup> Kant, *Critique*, p. 198; *KrV* A61 / B 85-86, emphasis retained. He writes further: “...it teaches us nothing at all about the content of cognition [*Erkenntnis*], but only the formal conditions of agreement with the understanding, which are entirely indifferent with regard to the objects,” and therefore “the effrontery of using it as a tool (organon) for an expansion and extension of its information, or at least the pretension of so doing, comes down to nothing but idle chatter, asserting or impeaching whatever one wants with some plausibility.” Kant, *Critique*, p. 199; A61 / B85-86. When the distinctions Schelling takes up against Hegel are considered in light of their role in Kantian criticism, and when accusations of *dialectic* are imported connotatively, an accusatory word, vital to Kierkegaard’s countless anti-Hegelian criticisms, materializes: *sophistical*.

<sup>21</sup> Kant, *Critique*, p. 254; *KrV* B146-147. In the next section he continues, “The above proposition is of the greatest importance, for it determines the boundaries of the use of the pure concepts of the understanding in regard to objects, just as the Transcendental Aesthetic determined the boundaries of the use of the pure form of our sensible intuition. ...The pure concepts of the understanding...extend only to objects of intuition in general, whether the latter be similar to our own or not, as long as it is sensible and not intellectual. But this further extension of concepts beyond our sensible intuition does not get us anywhere. For they are then merely empty concepts of objects, through which we cannot even judge whether the latter are possible or not—mere forms of thought without objective reality—since we have available no intuition to which the synthetic unity of apperception, which they alone contain, could be applied, and that could thus determine an object. *Our* sensible and empirical intuition alone can provide them with sense and significance.” B148. The section is titled, “The category has no other use for the cognition of things than its application to objects of experience,” and it is worth recalling that with the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant is especially concerned to combat the charge of idealism, as is evinced by the added Refutation and the extensive revisions to the Deduction.

misunderstood] had heard of a wrongly understood identity of thought and being.”<sup>22</sup> Schelling does not wish to deny this identity thesis, principally because it derives from his own, earlier work: “I will certainly not contest this identity, correctly understood, for it derives from my own writings, but the misunderstanding, and the philosophy that derives from that misunderstanding, I *must* indeed contest.”<sup>23</sup> The tone is polemical because the transgression is personal.

The transgressor and his error are exposed in the lines that follow: “One need not read very far into Hegel’s *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* to find repeatedly in the first pages the dictum that reason concerns itself with the ‘in itself’ of things.”<sup>24</sup> He goes on: “Now you may well ask what the in itself of these things is. Is it, perhaps, the fact that they exist; is it their being? Not at all, for the in itself, the essence, the concept [*Begriff*]*—*for example, the nature of man*—*remains the same even if there were no people on earth, just as the in itself of a geometrical figure remains the same whether or not it exists.”<sup>25</sup> According to Schelling, Hegel has failed to properly distinguish between essence and existence.<sup>26</sup> In light of this failure, he tacitly maligns, Hegel’s system took a wrong turn around the time of its very conception, ascending a path marred by misalignment.

Schelling will go on to make his criticism of Hegel even more explicit, and here the Kantian connotations, the underlying polemic against the sophisticated illusions of reason, lurk more menacingly than ever. Again the transgressor is addressed directly: “Since Kant of course, the word ‘dogmatism’ has acquired such a nasty ring to it, and even more so as a consequence of that logical dogmatism that Hegel later wanted to ground solely in the abstract concept [*Begriff*] (which is the most repugnant form of any dogmatism, since it is the most miserly...)”<sup>27</sup> The Kantian distinctions and their implicit context make clear that logic must content itself to operate within the realm of the negative, while attempts to construct in the sophisticated, dialectical mode of pure reason can only ever produce persuasive deceptions. A proper transition to the positive necessitates adherence to that which can be cognized in the realm of experience.

## II Negative Philosophy in *The Concept of Irony*: Leveling the Sophistically Positive

Schelling’s return to Kant as a means to level dialectical constructions echoes the appraisal of Socratic irony found in Kierkegaard’s dissertation. What piques Kierkegaard’s enthusiasm with respect to the Schellingian presentation of negative philosophy is its reliance upon the methodology employed in Kantian critique, a methodology which corresponds to the destructive function of the irony Socrates sets against the pseudo-positive constructions of the Sophists, and the turn to actuality (*Wirklichkeit*) as a positive point of departure.

Irony serves a twofold function in *The Concept of Irony*: it is primarily a negative, destructive force that levels the positive pretensions of sophisticated reason, but it is also a first step in the process

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<sup>22</sup> *SW* II/3, 59 / *GPP*, 129.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *SW* II/3, 59 / *GPP*, 129-130.

<sup>26</sup> Essence corresponds to *quid sit*, *what* something is, arrived at via conception, and existence corresponds to *quod sit*, *that* something is, arrived at via cognition.

<sup>27</sup> *SW* II/3, 81 / *GPP*, 146.

of becoming an individual, of actualizing one's subjectivity. With respect to his own position Socrates claims ignorance, and unlike Hegel he delivers no positive philosophy. His task is to help others recognize that their own claims to knowledge are ultimately unfounded and untenable, and his position is therefore fundamentally negative.<sup>28</sup> Irony as "infinite absolute negativity" is his weapon of choice.<sup>29</sup>

Early in his dissertation Kierkegaard calls to attention the Socratic emphasis on situation, "which found no phenomenon too humble a point of departure from which to work oneself up in the sphere of thought."<sup>30</sup> Appended to this thought is a note addressing one foreseeable objection concerning the coming characterization of irony as a purely negative force. Although he interprets Socrates' view of the relation between phenomenon and idea as being fundamentally *positive*, he does so on the basis of "Socrates' polemic against the Sophists, who were totally unable to cope with actuality [*Virkeligheden*], whose speculation finally became so high-flying and their eloquence to hyperbolized that in the end they could say nothing at all because of an excess of ideas."<sup>31</sup> The Socratic move in this case is to center the conversation on the "lowest," most practical aspects of daily life, thereby forcing the Sophists to "recognize their own pretense."<sup>32</sup> To fatally wound high-flying positive constructions, then, one must facilitate their jarring collision with experiential actuality. Irony is the means by which Socrates orchestrates the collision.

This Socratic shakedown corresponds to the negative undertaking enacted in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, where pretensions of dialectical reason are cleared away in order to expose a firm epistemic foundation from which to begin again. Rather than attempting to erect another structure-*sans*-experience, Kant presents logic as a merely negative touchstone of truth, establishes boundaries beyond which pure reason cannot justifiably make claims to knowledge, and then hints at the possibility of finding positive content in another realm. The theoretical leveling that occupies the author for the vast majority of the work culminates in a transition from the realm of the theoretical to the realm of the practical.

The Canon opens with a candid admission to pure reason's humiliation at having accomplished nothing in its pure use, finding only that it must continually discipline itself to remain within

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<sup>28</sup> Stewart explains this characterization: "The view that Kierkegaard consistently urges throughout his analysis is that Socrates has no philosophical doctrine or theory, but rather merely refutes what others say without presenting any constructive alternative. In this sense Socrates represents a negative, destructive force." Jon Stewart, *Søren Kierkegaard: Subjectivity, Irony, and the Crisis of Modernity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2015, p. 11. He reiterates, "Socrates is negative in the sense that he undermines the position of others but refuses to present a positive thesis or doctrine himself" (ibid.).

<sup>29</sup> *SKS* 1, 299 / *CI*, 261: "Here, then, we have irony as the infinite absolute negativity. It is negativity, because it only negates; it is infinite, because it does not negate this or that phenomenon; it is absolute, because that by virtue of which it negates is a higher something that still is not."

<sup>30</sup> This line in context: "This emphasis on situation was especially significant in order to indicate that the true center for Socrates was not a fixed point but an *ubique et nusquam*, in order to accentuate the Socratic sensibility, which upon the most subtle and fragile contact immediately detected the presence of the idea, promptly felt the corresponding electricity present in everything, in order to make graphic the genuine Socratic method, which found no phenomenon too humble a point of departure from which to work oneself up into the sphere of thought. This Socratic possibility of beginning anywhere, actualized in life...this unerring Socratic magnifying glass for which no subject was so compact that he did not immediately discern the idea\*\* in it." *SKS* 1, 78-79 / *CI*, 16-17.

<sup>31</sup> *SKS* 1, 79n / *CI*, 17n.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

theoretical bounds. “The greatest and perhaps only utility of all philosophy of pure reason is thus only negative,” Kant writes, “namely that it does not serve for expansion, as an organon, but rather, as a discipline, serves for the determination of boundaries.”<sup>33</sup> The *Critique of Pure Reason* ends where the *Critique of Practical Reason* begins, with the transition from the leveling function of theoretical reason to the possibility of positive cognitions on the part of pure practical reason.

From the beginning, for Kierkegaard, irony is practical in the sense that it pertains fundamentally to the realm of experience. However, by the end of *The Concept of Irony*, irony has begun to point in the direction of the practical as conceived in a broadly Kantian, ethical sense. Haufniensis writes in the concluding section, “Irony limits, finitizes, and circumscribes and thereby yields truth, actuality [*Virkelighed*], content; it disciplines and punishes and thereby yields balance and consistency.”<sup>34</sup> It is a means to a greater end, and the end to which it points includes a process of actualization that goes beyond the negative.<sup>35</sup> Although what exactly it is that the individual is supposed to actualize is not here addressed, *Irony* concludes by establishing a trajectory for the authorship to come: “Therefore actuality [*Virkeligheden*] acquires its validity through action.”<sup>36</sup>

Schelling announces that the transition from negative to positive centers on the notion of actuality (*Wirklichkeit*), and Kierkegaard declares in private correspondence that he has set all of his hope in Schelling. Taking the dual functions of Socratic irony into account—leveling the pseudo-positive, and concretizing one’s subjectivity through action—we acknowledge that Kierkegaard comes to Berlin with his own notions of *negative philosophy*, *actuality*, and *positive philosophy*. Acquaintance with Schelling’s middle period, which develops an account of the emergence of moral evil and its relation to human freedom, further lends itself to the expectation that Schelling will develop his positive account with reference to the freedom of the individual.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, he suggests in his early lectures that freedom may be key to discovering the purpose of humankind.<sup>38</sup> An expectation that positive philosophy will center on the ethical life of the

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<sup>33</sup> Kant, *Critique*, p. 672; *KrV* A795 / B823. Rather than extending to the theoretically positive, reason “has only the silent merit of guarding against errors.” Having determined these boundaries Kant anticipates developments that find fruition in the *Groundwork* and the second *Critique*: “Everything is practical that is possible through freedom.” Kant, *Critique*, p. 674; *KrV* A800 / B828. Furthermore, “Practical freedom can be proved through experience.” Kant, *Critique*, p. 675; *KrV* A802 / B830.

<sup>34</sup> *SKS* 1, 355 / *CI*, 326.

<sup>35</sup> *SKS* 1, 356 / *CI*, 327: “Irony as the negative is the way; it is not the truth but the way.” *SKS* 1, 356 / *CI*, 329: “Irony as a controlled element manifests itself in its truth precisely by teaching how to actualize actuality [*Virkeligheden*], by placing the appropriate emphasis on actuality...life’s content must become a genuine and meaningful element in the higher actuality whose fullness the soul craves.”

<sup>36</sup> *SKS* 1, 357 / *CI*, 329.

<sup>37</sup> I refer the reader to the “Excursus” chapter in Michelle Kosch, *Freedom and Reason in Kant, Schelling and Kierkegaard*, pp. 122-138. Her account mitigates Olesen’s argument that Kierkegaard had not read the *Freiheitschrift*, only Rosenkranz’s secondhand account of it, by providing background that includes an account of the publications that informed Kierkegaard’s expectations leading up to Berlin. Cf. Tonny A. Olesen, “Schelling: A Historical Introduction to Kierkegaard’s Schelling,” in *Kierkegaard and His German Contemporaries*, Tome I, *Philosophy*, ed. by Jon Stewart, Aldershot: Ashgate 2007 (*Kierkegaard Research: Sources, Reception and Resources*, vol. 6), pp. 229-275.

<sup>38</sup> “Therefore, if this becoming has achieved any kind purpose it is achieved only through humanity, but not *for* humanity; for the consciousness of man does not = equal the consciousness of nature. But, one answers, of course the ultimate end and highest purpose does not lie in the human faculty of cognition, since if nature is impenetrable to man, conversely, man is foreign to a nature that indeed continues beyond him and his works, and thus for which he has no significance. The reason for this lies precisely in the fact that man has *separated* himself from nature and in the fact

individual is therefore not entirely unfounded, and when Schelling announces that the transition from negative to positive centers on actuality, the type of *actuality* that Kierkegaard would have anticipated is the type he comes to concern himself with: one centering on the practical freedom of the individual.<sup>39</sup>

### III Positive Philosophy as Practical Philosophy

Hegel and the Danish Hegelians will become the principal targets at which Kierkegaard's anti-speculative vitriol takes aim. As Schelling clears away Hegelian constructions and makes room for a positive philosophy that takes actuality into account, so Kierkegaard will seek to level these same Hegelian constructions in order to shift the conversation to a more concrete, ethical actuality. He does so in a manner that corresponds more closely to Kant's transition from theoretical to practical than to Schelling's transition from negative to positive philosophy.

Schelling's return to Kant is quite literally a return, insofar as he levels Hegelian constructions and looks to begin again from an exposed foundation. He predicts this retrogressive movement when

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that—as experience shows—man was by no means merely destined to be the goal or culmination of a process independent of him, but was rather destined to be himself the originator and creator of a new process, of a second world that would lift itself above the first. The true purpose of man lies in what he, through the freedom of his will, should be in this different world. Man was the goal of nature only to the extent that he was destined to *sublate* nature within himself, to continue beyond nature, and to begin for himself a new chain of events." *SW II/3*, 6 / *GPP*, 93. Telic ignorance leads to despair, however, and only in the human animal: "But far from hoping to be able to arrive at the *true* reason for the world through this deferment of the ultimate purpose, this freedom of the will—which I have conceded to man and from which I now should expect the solution of this great riddle—itself leads to a new one that indeed is the greatest of all riddles, and plunges man into an even deeper (if possible) ignorance than that in which he previously found himself with respect to only nature. For when I consider the actions and consequences of this freedom in general—and I had also taken at least a general look at history before I turned to the study of philosophy—this world of *history* presents such a dreary spectacle that I completely despair of there being no purpose and therefore no true reason for the world." *SW II/3*, 6-7 / *GPP*, 93. As the Dane eager to discover his life's task listens on, Schelling provides a glimpse, it seems, into the desires and frustrations driving his own philosophical development.

<sup>39</sup> Whence derives A's well-known quip: "What philosophers say about actuality [*Virkeligheden*] is often just as disappointing as it is when one reads on a sign in a secondhand shop: Pressing Done Here. If a person were to bring his clothes to be pressed, he would be duped, for the sign is merely for sale." *SKS 2*, 41 / *EOI*, 32. This background is relevant to Stewart's argument that Kierkegaard comes to Berlin with a preconceived notion of *actuality* that is ultimately philosophically untenable. Cf. Jon Stewart, "The Notion of Actuality in Kierkegaard and Schelling's Influence," *Ars Brevis*, vol. 17, 2011, pp. 237-253. Almost a decade earlier Kosch delivered an argument with a similar conclusion, although her essay focuses on Kierkegaard's adaptation of Schelling's critique with reference to the ontological argument. Kosch maintains that Kierkegaard's criticism of the ontological argument in *Postscript* derives from the argument Schelling had presented toward the beginning of the Berlin Lectures, and she evaluates the critiques of both Schelling and Kierkegaard on epistemological and metaphysical grounds. Anticipating Stewart's position, she concludes that neither Schelling's argument nor Kierkegaard's adaptation withstand philosophical scrutiny. Her evaluation draws primarily upon concepts and arguments gleaned from contemporary metaphysicians, whereas Stewart's argument is primarily historical. Michelle Kosch, "'Actuality' in Schelling and Kierkegaard," in *Kierkegaard und Schelling: Freiheit, Angst und Wirklichkeit*, ed. by Jochem Hennigfeld and Jon Stewart, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter 2003 (*Kierkegaard Studies Monograph Series*, vol. 8), pp. 235-251. Both Stewart and Kosch consider Kierkegaard's notion of *actuality* in a primarily metaphysical sense, although Kosch does carefully categorize three different senses early in her essay—briefly mentioning the ethical sense as it comes up in *Postscript*—before focusing in on this sense. Against the background proposed above, the ethical sense seems to me to be foundational. The following section gestures in the direction of an argument that takes the ethical sense to be primary, at least by *The Concept of Anxiety*.

he declares that one endeavoring to take philosophy to its highest point of culmination must return to Kant.<sup>40</sup> The characterization of negative philosophy as merely conceptual corresponds to Kant's description of the critique of pure reason as negative and boundary-determining, and the Kantian distinctions used employed therein further suggest that Schelling is himself stepping backward over Hegel and returning to Kant.

The Kantian transition from the theoretical as negative to the practical as a source of possible positive cognitions did not find new expression in Schelling's lectures at Berlin, however.<sup>41</sup> For Kant the transition is clear: "We now concern ourselves with a labor less spectacular but nevertheless not unrewarding: that of making the terrain for these majestic moral edifices level and firm enough to be built upon; for under this ground there are all sorts of passageways, such as moles might have dug, left over from reason's vain but confident treasure hunting, that make every building insecure."<sup>42</sup> At this point in the first *Critique* the pseudo-positive has been leveled, the bounds of experience have been established, and it remains to search for a source of positive cognitions that might satisfy reason, if only from within the realm of the practical.

It is with an ethical notion of *actuality* in mind that Kierkegaard begins to devise his pseudonymous authorship.<sup>43</sup> This notion is the cornerstone upon which the introduction to *The Concept of Anxiety* has been constructed, a stumbling block for the dialectician.<sup>44</sup> Criticizing the author who entitles the last section of his *Logic* "Actuality [*Virkeligheden*]," Haufniensis calls to our attention the thesis that thought has reality: "The notion that thought on the whole has reality was assumed by all ancient and medieval philosophy. With Kant, this assumption became doubtful."<sup>45</sup> *Kant's skepticism*, however, was surpassed in the efforts of his idealist progeny:

If it is now assumed that Hegelian philosophy has actually grasped Kant's skepticism thoroughly (something that might continue to remain a great question despite all that Hegel and his school have done with the help of the slogan 'method and manifestation' to conceal what Schelling with the slogan 'intellectual intuition and construction' openly acknowledged as a new point of departure) and now has reconstructed the earlier in a higher form and in such a way that thought does not possess reality by virtue of a presupposition—does it therefore also follow that this reality, which is consciously brought forth by thought, is a reconciliation? In that case, philosophy has only been brought back to where the beginning was made in the old days.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> *SW* II/3, 32-33 / *GPP*, 111: "Philosophy, still in development even if engaged in the final stages of its becoming and the explication of its final result, does not, at least for the time being, allow itself to be presented in an instructive, informative, and universally convincing manner without going back to Kant."

<sup>41</sup> Hence Kant's declaration in the Canon, signaling his transition to the realm of practical philosophy: "There must somewhere be a source of *positive* cognitions that belong in the domain of pure reason," Kant, *Critique*, p. 672; *KrV* A795 / B823.

<sup>42</sup> Kant, *Critique*, p. 392; *KrV* A319 / B376.

<sup>43</sup> Again, I find it highly significant that Kierkegaard is writing early portions of *Either/Or* as he attends Schelling's lectures during the winter semester of 1841-42.

<sup>44</sup> In other words, the ethical notion of *actuality* presented in the book's introduction wells up and overflows into its body.

<sup>45</sup> *SKS* 4, 319 / *CA*, 11.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

Haufniensis believes that Hegel and the Hegelians have not grasped this skepticism thoroughly, as the parenthetical qualification lets on, and he contends that they have taken the same tack Schelling had acknowledged to be a *new* point of departure, distinct from Kant's limitations of the reign of pure reason.

Inclusion of the Schellingian slogan in this indictment affirms his continued association with those who have not held fast to Kant's distinction between the realm of logic and the realm of experience. Thulstrup would therefore seem to be correct when he pinpoints the source of Kierkegaard's hasty departure at Berlin as bitter disappointment in response to the fact that Schelling's earlier proposal concerning *actuality* culminates in a "new attempt at system-building."<sup>47</sup> Rejecting the possibility of erecting yet another system upon the foundation that Schelling's leveling had uncovered, Kierkegaard looks to begin again with an altogether different sort of *actuality*, one adhering more faithfully to "the situation of existing subjectivity."<sup>48</sup>

The Kantian skepticism that Haufniensis calls upon is of a metaphysical variety. He sides with Kant over both Schelling and Hegel, and his insinuation is that the idealists have retrogressed past the Greeks in their failure to question the metaphysical assumption that thought has reality. Haufniensis goes on to craft a parallel construction that will serve as a point of transition into the heart of his project, however, and here his indictment will extend even to Kant: "As all ancient knowledge and speculation was based on the pre- supposition that thought has reality, so all ancient ethics was based on the pre- supposition that virtue can be realized. Sin's skepticism is altogether foreign to paganism."<sup>49</sup> Kant's metaphysical skepticism is hereby extended to the *ethical* thesis that virtue can be realized, the assumption that *ought* implies *can*.<sup>50</sup>

Failure to extend Kant's skepticism to the realm of the practical is rooted in the top-down directionality that ethics, especially of the Kantian variety, typically assumes.<sup>51</sup> Haufniensis maintains that what we need is a science which begins with actuality, and which can thus assess more accurately the manner in which the ethical task is or is not able to be realized.<sup>52</sup> He thereby proposes a new science, a second ethics that begins by considering the attempts of the individual to actualize the ethical ideal.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Niels Thulstrup, *Kierkegaard's Relation to Hegel*, trans. by George L. Stengren, Princeton: Princeton University Press 1980, p. 274.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Kosch, *Freedom and Reason in Kant, Schelling and Kierkegaard*, p. 139.

<sup>49</sup> SKS 4, 319 / CA, 11.

<sup>50</sup> SKS 4, 324 / CA, 16: "Ethics points to ideality as a task and assumes that every man possesses the requisite conditions."

<sup>51</sup> Ethics is "an ideal science" in that it "proposes to bring ideality into actuality [*Virkeligheden*]." SKS 4, 323 / CA, 16.

<sup>52</sup> He looks to dogmatics to extend a lifeline, and it does: "With dogmatics begins the science that, in contrast to the science called ideal *stricte*, namely, ethics, proceeds from actuality [*Virkeligheden*]. It begins with the actual in order to raise it up into ideality." SKS 4, 327 / CA, 19. Dogmatics, according to Haufniensis, recognizes the contradiction that an idealized ethics has failed to grasp: "The more ethics remains in its ideality, and never becomes so inhuman so as to lose sight of actuality [*Virkeligheden*], but corresponds to actuality by presenting itself as the task for every man in such a way that it will make him the true and whole man, the man *κατ' ἐξοχήν*, the more it increases the tension of the difficulty." SKS 4, 325 / CA, 18. There is no mistaking the sense in which Haufniensis takes up Schelling's view to *actuality*: he refers to the concrete, ethical actuality of the existing individual.

<sup>53</sup> First, though, he introduces a division between the German and the Greek. Speaking of Schleiermacher's "immortal service," he continues, "Yet Schleiermacher was a thinker in the beautiful Greek sense, a thinker who spoke only of what he knew. Hegel, on the contrary, despite all his outstanding ability and stupendous learning, reminds us again

With *Anxiety*'s motto squarely in the background—its emphasis on distinguishing between the known and the unknown echoes the Kantian distinction Schelling had invoked at Berlin, with its application to Hegelian constructions—Haufniensis introduces the transition from the first ethics to the second, likening it to Aristotle's division between first and second philosophy. This comparison introduces a characterization of the first as that science whose essence is *immanence* consisting in *recollection*, and of the second as that science whose essence is *transcendence*, consisting in *repetition*.

At Haufniensis's behest we now recall Schelling's transition from negative philosophy to positive philosophy.<sup>54</sup> In the Schellingian context, thinking ourselves back into to the methodological and contextual situation at Berlin, we recall the Kantian transition from the theoretical to the practical conjured in the distinctions and methodology that Schelling employs. The negative refers to logic, while the positive leads into the realm of ethics; the transition from recollection to repetition maps onto the Kantian transition from theoretical to practical, an alternative to Schelling's transition to the positive.<sup>55</sup> Kierkegaard's recurring criticisms of Hegel mirror Kant's methodology, inspired by Schelling's negative philosophy.

The influence of Schelling's work upon Kierkegaard does not end at Berlin. The concretized, practical notion of *actuality* incorporated by his pseudonyms has been conceived according to

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and again by his performance that he was in the German sense a professor of philosophy on a large scale, because he *à tout prix* must explain all things." *SKS* 4, 327-328 / *CA*, 20. Implicit in this characterization of Schleiermacher is a reference to the motto that opens the work, a beautiful lamentation of the fact that the work of drawing distinctions, the Socratic task of distinguishing between what one does and does not know, has been overcome by the system: "The time of distinctions is past, the system has overcome it. Whoever in our day loves to make distinctions is an eccentric, whose soul hangs onto something that has for a long time been missing. That must be so, yet Socrates became what he was, the simple, wise man, by his peculiar distinction, which he made noticeable in words and made complete in life, which the odd Hamann first repeated admiringly two millennia later: 'For Socrates was great in that he distinguished between what he understood and what he did not understand.'" (*SKS* 4, 310 / *CA*, 3), my translation. Schleiermacher is a thinker in the Greek sense, Hegel in the German sense, but Schelling may have one foot in each era. He goes beyond Schleiermacher in his characterization of evil in the *Freiheitsschrift*, but also keeps with the system-building tendency of the age. With respect to Schleiermacher's immortal contribution, see Chandler D. Rogers, "Schleiermacher in the Kierkegaardian Project: Between Socratic Ignorance and Second Immediacy," *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook*, 2016, pp. 141-158. In the introduction to *Anxiety*, allusion to this motto introduces the methodology of the second ethics, which takes Schleiermacher's immortal contribution as its dogmatic point of departure. In contrast to the ideality of the former ethics, the second ethics "does not have its ideality in making ideal demands." Instead, "it has its ideality in the penetrating consciousness of actuality, the actuality of sin," and whereas the first ethics was shipwrecked on the individual's inability to meet the demands of ethical ideality, the second ethics starts with this inability, "sets ideality as a task," and works upward toward ethical ideality. In this context, comparing the ineptitude of the first ethics with the developments of the second, Haufniensis introduces the Aristotelian division between first and second philosophy. Cf. *SKS* 4, 328 / *CA*, 20.

<sup>54</sup> *SKS* 4, 328 / *CA*, 21. The full footnote reads, "Schelling called attention to this Aristotelian term in support of his own distinction between negative and positive philosophy. By negative philosophy he meant 'logic'; that was clear enough. On the other hand, it was less clear to me what he really meant by positive philosophy, except insofar as it became evident that it was the philosophy that he himself wished to provide. However, since I have nothing to go by except my own opinion, it is not feasible to pursue this subject further." *SKS* 4, 328n / *CA*, 21n.

<sup>55</sup> A note on *Repetition* makes this especially clear: "I have dealt with repetition within the realm of freedom. It is significant that among the Greeks freedom was not posited as freedom; therefore its first expression became recollection, for only in recollection did freedom have eternal life. The modern view must be precisely that of expressing freedom with a view toward the future, and here repetition belongs." *Pap.* IV B 111; cf. *CA*, 227.

insights into human freedom revealed three decades earlier in Schelling's *Freiheitsschrift*.<sup>56</sup> Kierkegaard's adaptation seeks to move beyond Kant's ethics of autonomy by situating the individual in a manner adhering more faithfully to the situation of ethical subjectivity, and Schelling's earlier critique of the idealist ethics of autonomy finds concretized [expression] therein. Thus while Kierkegaard rejects the positive philosophy proposed at Berlin, the members of his pseudonymous corpus utilize Schelling's earlier, more explicitly ethical innovations.

#### IV Objections and Conclusion

The Fichtean might object on grounds that Schelling's positive philosophy *does* take freedom as its point of departure—a notion of *Fichtean* freedom by which Schelling's appropriation of the distinction between conception and cognition differs from and goes beyond Kant's. Schelling's positive philosophy does indeed have *freedom* as its basis, mirroring the Kantian transition from theoretical to practical philosophy, and does go beyond Kant, as Kierkegaard will later determine to do. Perhaps Kierkegaard seeks to go beyond Kant on these or similar grounds.

In the context of my argument, with respect to the influence of Schelling's lectures on Kierkegaard's ensuing thought, I find it untenable to maintain that Kierkegaard himself attempts to move beyond Kant on Fichtean grounds in any substantive epistemological or metaphysical sense. While it may be tenable to argue that Kierkegaard attempts to do so on *ethical* grounds, perhaps following Fichte in a qualified manner, it is nevertheless certain that he does not attempt to do so with respect to Schelling's Fichtean, *a priori* application of the Kantian distinction between cognition and conception.

This first objection helps make an implicit premise in my account explicit. Kierkegaard does not retain Schelling's Fichtean restraint concerning the need to remain within the *a priori* bounds of a science of pure reason. He forthrightly rejects this limitation and the positive philosophy it enables Schelling to develop, retaining instead the Kantian distinction between conception and cognition, where experience is the factor separating *a priori* conception from cognitions whose content must be derived *a posteriori*. Schelling has shown Kierkegaard a way forward, especially with respect to his Kantian methodology and the transition from the negative to the positive as it centers on a notion of *actuality*, but Kierkegaard refuses Schelling's *a priori* stipulation as necessarily conditioning development in the direction of the positive.

Addressing Kierkegaard's notion of *actuality* against the background of Schelling's influence at Berlin, Kosch indicates that Kierkegaard's notion, especially with respect to the existence of God, is properly Humean, and that he takes this to be his only available alternative to Schelling's *a priori* account.<sup>57</sup> She suggests that Kierkegaard's views have likely been shaped by Jacobi, and particularly by his *David Hume on Faith, or Idealism and Realism*. In conjunction with Kosch's

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<sup>56</sup> The same insights, presumably, that informed his expectations regarding Schelling's positive philosophy. Kosch argues that the theory of agency that will inform Kierkegaard's pseudonymous works "is a descendent of Schelling's as presented in the *Freiheitsschrift*—fuller, more coherent, less strange, better psychologically and phenomenologically informed, but a relative of Schelling's nevertheless and informed by his primary concerns" (Kosch, *Freedom and Reason in Kant, Schelling and Kierkegaard*, p. 139). Before this slightly more accessible work was published (1809) Schelling sought to present these insights in his opaque *Philosophy and Religion* (1804).

<sup>57</sup> Michelle Kosch, "'Actuality' in Schelling and Kierkegaard," p. 244.

suggestion, an objection arises that Kierkegaard's understanding of the relation between thought and being, ideality and actuality, is mistakenly more Humean than Kantian, or perhaps even that his reading of Kant is more Humean than Fichtean.

In line with Kosch's accusation, I have argued that at least by *The Concept of Anxiety* Kierkegaard maintains a firm distinction between *ideality* and *actuality*, where "Kant's skepticism" concerning the reality of thought is the principal feature he sets in contradistinction to the positions of Hegel and Schelling. And this criticism extends also to Fichte by way of Kierkegaard's unequivocal rejection of Schelling's attempts to move beyond Kant by upholding Fichte's *a priori* stipulation.

Kierkegaard's views of the relation between ideality and actuality have been shaped by his acceptance of Schelling's premises and his rejection of Schelling's conclusion. In this context it is worth noting that at the precise point at which he begins to introduce Fichte's attempt to bridge the chasm separating *noumenon* from *phenomenon*, Schelling himself directs his hearer to consult Jacobi. Mentioning the synopsis in *David Hume*, Schelling maintains that Kantian philosophy contained "different elements" which "just do not allow themselves to be thought together."<sup>58</sup> Kant seemed to recognize this, he suggests, and these different elements must be properly reconciled in thought: "Even Kant appeared ambivalent, since there are various statements that can only be united with a perfect idealism."<sup>59</sup> This recommendation is perfectly in line with Kosch's suggestion that Kierkegaard considers his options to be either full-blown idealism or Humean realism. The salient point is that Schelling himself reinforces this dichotomy, or perhaps even helps to inspire it, such that he takes on even more responsibility for Kierkegaard's anti-speculative turn.

In the realm of the practical Kierkegaard seeks to move beyond Kant while remaining within boundaries that his critical leveling had established. This is partly what Haufniensis insinuates when he maintains that Hegel and Schelling have failed to grasp Kant's metaphysical skepticism. The pseudonymous authors illustrate Socratically that the idealists' formulations of an ethics of autonomy belie insufficient attentiveness to the existing individual's attempts to concretize or make actual the demands of ethical ideality. Following the retrogressive movement Schelling had proposed at Berlin, Kierkegaard returns to Kant's metaphysical skepticism. He then cuts even further down, by means of a more thoroughgoing skepticism, and thus orchestrates a collision between ethical ideality and experiential actuality. Thulstrup recapitulates, then presents a hypothesis of his own:

Although Kierkegaard continued to attend Schelling's lectures and to write out his rather complete summaries for a while, it is quite clear that his main interest was Schelling's criticisms of Hegel, that is, the negative aspect of Schelling's positive philosophy. Certainly, as he indicated in the letters written before his arrival and just at the beginning of the lectures, he entertained very great expectations for Schelling's counterpart to Hegel's system; but these hopes did not come to fruition. On the contrary, Schelling's later lectures were such a great disappointment to him that he did not attend them to the end...The fact was simply that he was fully occupied with work on his own, for the time being mainly indirect, critique of Hegel, and at the same time his own positive counterpart.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> *SW* II/3, 50 / *GPP*, 124.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.* With this final statement, Schelling refers his listeners to Jacobi's *David Hume*.

<sup>60</sup> Niels Thulstrup, *Kierkegaard's Relation to Hegel*, p. 274.

Kierkegaard can be seen as devising a “positive” counterpart to the Schellingian criticisms of Hegel’s constructions, beginning from the foundation exposed by Schelling’s Kantian distinctions and general methodology.

The developing Dane exits Schelling’s lecture hall with a greater sense of direction. With respect to possible confusion, the pseudonymous outworkings that follow may contain covert attempts to grasp problematized notions like *positive*, *negative*, and *actuality* on his own terms. The type of “positive” philosophy Kierkegaard had come to anticipate would find unique expression in his subsequent writings, operating on the basis of a skepticism extending even into the realm of ethics, incorporating earlier Schellingian insights into the nature of human freedom. The result: a body of work conceived on the basis of foundational frustrations intensified at Berlin.