

## REMARKS ON THE CONCEPTIONS OF PHILOSOPHICAL METHOD OF SCHELLING, HEGEL, AND KRAUSE

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“The A<sup>2</sup> is Light,” Schelling explains to us in the *Presentation of My System of Philosophy* (1801) (SW 4, 151). Is such a statement meaningful, so that its truth value can be asked? Is it an empirical statement, which can be tested and possibly confirmed through observations? Or is it a synthetic a priori judgment independent of observations? Such questions are not easy to answer, and they are related to the logical status of Schelling’s theory as a whole.

That such questions became important stems from the peculiarity of the philosophical systems that were developed in Jena after 1800. They were called “systems of absolute idealism,” but it is not clear what this means. These systems include not only Schelling’s but also Hegel’s and Krause’s. In the following, some commonalities, as well as specific particularities, of these systems will be examined in more detail from the standpoint of methodology.

First, then, let us consider Schelling. “The only unconditional knowledge is that of absolute identity” (ibid., 117). The proposition “A = A” should express the essence of pure reason; directly through it absolute identity is also posited. This also sounds strange. According to the contemporary view, a proposition of the form “a = b” means that the two singular terms refer to the same object; in Frege’s famous example “morning star = evening star,” what is conveyed is that both names refer to the same planet. But with only one term, as in “A = A,” this becomes trivial; if “A” refers to anything at all, then both instances refer to the same thing. How then is such a trivial proposition supposed to express the essence of pure reason? It appears, rather, to express virtually nothing.

In order to understand how Schelling arrived at his conception, one must take up the question he pursues in his theory. In a note to §2 of his *Presentation*, he writes: “There is no philosophy but from the standpoint of the

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1 Translated from the German by Swami Medhananda.

Absolute — about this point no doubt is raised in this entire presentation” (ibid., 115). But how does one arrive at this standpoint, from which alone philosophy is supposed to be possible? And why is it only possible from that standpoint?

At this point it becomes important to determine what Schelling takes to be the task of philosophy. The task is to understand the possibility of difference. To successfully fulfill this task, one must begin with “total indifference” (ibid., 114). Schelling calls this starting point the “total indifference of the subjective and the objective,” because he sees this difference between the subjective and the objective as particularly fundamental. But in this “total indifference,” not only this difference, but all differences *tout court*, are supposed to disappear. After it is shown how differences can come out of this indifference, it is said: “Difference cannot be understood in any other way than this” (ibid., 124). The goal of this theory can be gleaned from this formulation: to understand differences — that is, to show a way by which differences become possible. It goes without saying that if one has this goal, one should start with a “total indifference.” If one wants to investigate how life arises, one will start, after all, with a state of the world in which there is not yet any life and search there for the conditions of life. Indifference stands in the same relation to difference as such a state of the world stands in relation to life.

Nevertheless, Schelling’s way of posing the problem remains strange, because he treats “identity” and “difference” directly as object-language predicates. According to the contemporary view, they are actually higher-order predicates. Two objects are identical if every predicate that applies to one also applies to the other, and vice versa. The objects differ if a predicate applies to one that does not apply to the other. On this view, that predicates apply to objects is something more fundamental than the question of whether objects are identical with or distinct from one another. This was also Kant’s view. He counts identity and difference among the “concepts of reflection” (KrV B 319), i.e., concepts to which a higher-order function is assigned. Schelling’s “philosophy of identity,” however, does not want to be a “philosophy of reflection”; it is polemically directed against approaches that are called such. This accounts for the peculiar use of the categories “identity” and “difference.” From a historical perspective, one must see in this a resurrection of Neoplatonic motifs of thought. In Neoplatonism, the “One” (Greek “*hen*”) was regarded as the Absolute, and the question was how differences can arise

from it. Schelling refers to Spinoza as the exemplar especially with regard to method, but he interprets Spinoza in the light of Neoplatonism. Parmenides might be placed at the beginning of this tradition, with the radical thesis that in truth there is no plurality at all, and that only mortals think that there are many. Schelling's answer is a counterthesis: "Difference cannot be understood in any other way than this" — that is, precisely in the way he specifies.

In a fundamental respect, Schelling agrees with Parmenides: "Everything that is, is the absolute identity itself" (*ibid.*, 119) and "Everything that is, is in itself One" (*ibid.*). The existence of differences is not completely denied, but they are nevertheless deprived of their fundamental bite. To regard things as different or as multiple is not to regard them in themselves or from the standpoint of reason (*ibid.*). Differences are somehow downgraded to surface phenomena that are supposed to have an absolute identity underlying them as their deep structure. This relativizing downgrading of differences is an important aspect of the answer to the question of how they are possible at all. They are possible, but they do not "go all the way down."

Schelling concretizes these thoughts through the conception of a "quantitative difference" (*ibid.*, 123). Only in this way are differences possible at all, and only in a relativized form. He proceeds in such a way that he conceives the "absolute indifference" as the indifference of two components, which are one in their essence, but which can superficially appear to be different. Schelling calls them "subject" and "object" — the fundamental difference through which all further apparent differences become possible, when both are posited "according to the form of being." Between these two components (subject and object) only a "quantitative difference" is possible (*ibid.*, 123), and this structure should ultimately provide the pattern for all differences. What is meant is that on both sides of the differentiated both components must be present, but with a "preponderance" (*ibid.*, 123) of one or the other. Thus, identity and difference are secured at the same time — identity by the fact that for every difference both sides of the differentiated are present, and difference by the fact that one side preponderates over the other. To all a and b, the same predicates apply "in their essence," but just with a different accent. At the end of this demonstration comes the already quoted sentence that difference cannot be understood in any other way than this — a way that Parmenides correctly identified "according to the essence." One could almost say that Frege's morning star and evening star have been replaced by the model of the north pole and south pole

of a magnet. If Schelling had had some premonition of quantum mechanical entanglement, he would certainly have referred to it with enthusiasm. It might even be a better example than the magnet for what he is after.

The dialectic arises from the fact that this idea of a quantitative difference is connected with the idea that there is a systematically ordered sequence of such differentiations, proceeding step by step from absolute indifference. This seems to be an independent new assumption. The thesis of the surface character of all differentiations could be defended without the further thesis that at least the fundamental differentiations found in reality can be systematically derived from indifference. But the program to derive such differentiations dialectically-deductively from a unity had already been pursued by Fichte in his system of "*Wissenschaftslehre*." Schelling had taken it up in his *System of Transcendental Idealism* of 1800, but also in his early writings on nature philosophy. So it must have been natural for him to combine this procedural rule with the new approach. "The quantitative difference of the subjective and the objective is the ground of all finitude, and conversely, the quantitative indifference of both is infinitude" (ibid. 131). There is the finite, and it should be philosophically possible to determine by which method of the formation of quantitative differences the finite is connected with absolute indifference.

The point of connection is that in indifference, both components whose indifference is concerned (the subjective and the objective) are already mentioned as possible partners of a differentiation. Since they are in equilibrium there, every subsequent preponderance of one side must be connected with a corresponding preponderance of the other. Schelling does not actually show that such differentiations must occur, but only that if they occur, then they do so only in this way. In no other way can difference be understood. In the schematism he then developed, such disequilibria are expressed through potencies of A (the subjective factor).  $A^0 = B$  is supposed to be an expression of indifference; positive or negative potencies of A are supposed to express a preponderance of the subjective or the objective, respectively. The differentiations take place, as it is now said, only through reflection, namely "by virtue of an arbitrary separation of the individual from the whole" (ibid., 126). "And the things of appearances, which appear to us as different, are not truly different, but in reality one, in such a way that, though nothing by themselves, yet all in the totality, in which the opposing potencies originally cancel each other out, represent pure unclouded identity itself" (ibid., 127ff.). At the same

time, each individual, since all factors are contained in it, is a relative totality in relation to itself. "Absolute identity is in the individual under the same form under which it is in the whole, and conversely in the whole under no other form than under which it is in the individual" (ibid., 132). At the same time, it is true that no first point in time can ever be given when absolute identity has passed into an individual thing (ibid.).

For the details of the dialectical developments, Schelling then largely falls back on procedures he had already used in his *System of Transcendental Idealism*. This is appropriate, because the fundamental factors here, as there, are supposed to be subjective and objective. That these factors may be transferred from the field of transcendental philosophy to that of natural philosophy and the Absolute must be considered a basic premise of Schelling's thinking, which is justified for him by the fact that without them these further disciplines would not be possible at all.

With this set of instruments, then, a dialectical sequence is developed in close analogy to the *System of Transcendental Idealism*, according to which the essential structures of nature are to be grasped as such quantitative differences or as relative totalities. That A<sup>2</sup> is Light, therefore, says in the first instance only that in it, the subjective factor within nature should preponderate. The necessary opposite pole is supposed to be gravity.

What does this tell us about light? Hardly anything that interests a physicist, e.g. nothing about its velocity or even about the strange circumstance that its velocity is the same in all frames of reference, nothing about frequencies, and so on. Even if one assumes the whole system to be correct, it only tells us something about the way light is distinguished from other natural phenomena (such as gravity) — albeit not by specifying the predicates that apply to it and not to something else (it is questionable whether this would still be a merely relative quantitative difference in Schelling's sense), but just by identifying a merely relative preponderance of one global factor over the other. The aim is to show a determinate relation between the infinite absolute identity and the finite. The phenomenon of light is characterized exclusively by a determination which is necessary for it, but which hardly says anything about its specific intrinsic being. In the case of light, both the subjective and the objective are present (as in the case of everything finite), but with a special preponderance of the former, which is not the case with everything. The concepts in which the relation to the Absolute is expressed (in this case A<sup>2</sup>) must

be deduced a priori; but one cannot say that the correlation between light and this dialectical position is likewise deduced a priori. After all, a concept like “light” cannot be formally deduced from the given premises; the phenomenon as such is taken up empirically, and the assignment to the dialectical position is made intuitively. Something in the phenomenal world must correspond to  $A^2$ ; light appears to be the best candidate among what is found there. Perhaps Schelling would claim to have proved at least the necessity of the existence of light a priori, but even this can hardly be established in accordance with the intention of the whole approach.

However, one consequence of this approach must be mentioned: it already implies a non-materialistic theory of nature. One of the factors of the Absolute is, after all, the subjective, which is also interpreted as cognition (*ibid.*, 122f.). The Absolute is also characterized as Reason, and specifically as a Reason apart from which nothing exists and in which everything exists (*ibid.*, 115). Thus, everything finite must contain at least a “splinter” of Reason within itself. This also follows from the kind of differentiation that is supposed to be the only possible one. “Absolute identity is the same in essence in every part of the universe” (*ibid.*, 130), “Absolute identity ... is wholly present in every individual” (*ibid.*, 132). But this “overcoming” of materialism remains external insofar as it plays no role at all in explaining real physical processes — for instance, the diffusion and reflection of light. For Schelling, nature as a whole must be conceived as “active,” but even for him this does not mean that physical processes can be explained in intentional terms. Cognition, even if it is a component in everything finite, is in almost all cases an ineffectual component that does not appear at all in the laws by which the processes can be explained. The overcoming of a strict materialism is thus probably intended by Schelling, but one can hardly say that it would be achieved even if one assumes the theory to be true.

Hegel also lets us know what, in his view, light is: “The first qualified matter is matter as its pure identity with itself, as unity of reflection-in-itself, thus the first, though still abstract manifestation. Existing in nature, it is the relation to itself as independent over against the other determinations of totality. This existing universal self of matter is light” (*Enz*, 232). So light is not  $A^2$ , but to a physicist Hegel’s description is likely to sound as bewildering as Schelling’s. And the question of the conceptual status of these propositions arises, just as it did in Schelling’s case: should they be valid a priori or do they

require empirical confirmation? And what would they tell us about light if they were true?

Hegel consistently uses a different terminology than Schelling. The fundamental concept of “identity” is essential for him, too, but phrases like “unity of reflection-in-itself,” “relation to itself” or “the existing universal self” are characteristic of Hegelian texts. The basic intention of the account, however, is certainly the same as for Schelling: a phenomenon such as light is to be understood in terms of its particular relation to the Absolute. This Absolute exists in a particular process, which the system traces as a whole; its individual stations can be gathered from the table of contents of the *Encyclopaedia*. A phenomenon is characterized by being assigned a position in this process. Hegel also often calls this Absolute “God.” The edition of the *Enzyklopädie* by Nicolin and Pöggeler (Hamburg 1959) contains a subject index. There are more entries for the keyword “God” than for any other. Thus, one could almost call it a theological work as well.

The phenomenon as such is taken up empirically (not unlike in the case of Schelling). Hegel himself describes his procedure: “The relation of speculative science to the other sciences is only this, that the former does not leave aside the empirical content of the latter, but acknowledges and uses it, and it likewise acknowledges what is universal in these sciences — the laws, the species, etc. — and uses them for its own content, but it also introduces into these categories others as well and validates them. In this respect, the difference between them consists only in this modification of categories” (ibid., 42). Philosophical presentation thus presupposes and assimilates the results of empirical science. A bit later in the *Encyclopaedia*, he writes: “As far as the first abstract universality of thought is concerned, it makes very good and sound sense to say that the development of philosophy is indebted to experience” (ibid., 46). Or: “Not only must philosophy be consistent with natural experience, but the origin and development of philosophical science has empirical physics as its prerequisite and condition” (ibid., 200).

Thus, it is the task of philosophy to take up the phenomena supplied by empirical science, but to replace the categories with which the phenomena have been described by it with other categories of its own. The categories which philosophical science has to use, instead of the given ones, result from its task: to show in which position in the process of the Absolute the given phenomenon belongs, in which relation to the Absolute it thus stands. It is

obvious that the categories used by the empirical sciences are not suitable for this purpose; they do not even have the concept of the Absolute. How the “modified categories” should look must result from the theory of the Absolute and cannot be taken over from the empirical sciences. Philosophical science is autonomous, not with respect to the objects with which it deals, but with respect to the categories it uses.

For Hegel these categories obviously look different than for Schelling. As we already said, for Hegel the light is in any case not  $A^2$ . Nor is it a question of a preponderance of one of two factors which, in indifference, constitute the absolute. For Schelling, these factors were the subjective and the objective. For Hegel, too, such ideas seem to play a role, for instance when light is described as the “existing universal self of matter.” This might remind us of Schelling’s “preponderance” of subjectivity in light. But in essence, Hegel does use totally different categories, namely those that arise from the conception of a differentiation process of the Absolute itself. Identity and difference are also for him the fundamental categories, and he, like Schelling, also connects them directly to their relata, not in a roundabout way through other predicates. Other fundamental categories are negativity, reflection, relation to itself, relation to the other, and so on. They are thought of as components of the differentiation process itself. Pre-given moments external to this differentiation process (like Schelling’s fundamental factors) are excluded. Since the “fundamental trinitarian form” of immediate identity, differentiation and concrete unity of the differentiated can be repeated, we end up with a comprehensive system of trinities, which is meant to encompass the entirety of logic, nature, and spirit. And to grasp a phenomenon is to assign it its place in this system of trinities. The external, abstract result can be read off the table of contents of the *Encyclopedia*. The place of light in it, for example, is: Part 2, 2nd Division, A, a, alpha. If we generally assume an inner structural depth of five nested triads, we could characterize it in the system by the code number 22111. Each object classified in the differentiation process would get its own code number. The substantive concretization of this division must be accomplished by means of the “changed categories.”

The statements formulated by Hegel are also (like those of Schelling) not pure synthetic judgments a priori, but a combination of these with empirically given facts. The formal development of the dialectical process as such must be regarded as a priori and as supported by a theory of the Absolute;



the reference to the phenomena investigated by the empirical sciences, on the other hand, is not a priori, as Hegel indeed admits. The categories in which the results of the sciences are to be described are changed, not these results themselves. Nor does this change aim at replacing the explanation of physical processes with other explanations. All this remains as the sciences present it. What is to be newly accomplished is to assign to every phenomenon its place in the process of the Absolute. However, this is connected with the claim that only by doing so is it “truly” comprehended. In the end, it is not the phenomena that force this change of categories; rather, the theory of the Absolute makes it necessary. The question arises, however, whether such a program, even if one recognizes it as reasonable in principle, can be carried out successfully if empirical science, which is admittedly presupposed in the program, is still in process and has not yet reached the end of its researches. The time-conditioned dependencies on the state of the sciences can be seen clearly enough in the carrying out of the program both in Schelling and in Hegel. One might suppose, for example, that in order to integrate light meaningfully into the process of the Absolute, it would have to be recognized as an electromagnetic wave.

In his doctrine of elements, Hegel states that the physical elements must be distinguished from the chemical ones (*ibid.*, 238). But as the specifically physical elements he then mentions the four time-honored ones (fire, air, water and earth) (*ibid.*), which is no recommendation for his natural philosophy. Today, he might instead refer to the elementary particles that physically underlie the chemical elements. One cannot know whether Hegel, were he active today, would try to bring dialectical order into the “particle zoo.” What is clear, however, is that derivations of the intended kind presuppose that empirical knowledge is sufficiently developed. As mentioned, Hegel was well aware of these dependencies. However, he probably underestimated the inadequacy of contemporary scientific knowledge.

An important difference between the conceptions of Schelling and Hegel is that Schelling places at the beginning of his account an absolute indifference identified with Reason, whereas for Hegel, Reason in the form of philosophy, which is at the same time the “thinking idea” (*ibid.*, 462), forms the conclusion of the dialectical process. The process of differentiation no longer presents itself as a descent from a Highest, but as an ascent toward a Highest, an Idea that is finally the Whole and thus the True. Hegel reverses, as it

were, Neoplatonism: The God-like Good is not that which contains the least difference within itself, but that which has most incorporated difference into itself, has “sublated” it. While for Plotinus every differentiation is a descent, for Hegel it is an ascent.

This reversal, however, does not change the actual objective of the dialectical process: to “comprehend” given phenomena by describing them with categories that arise from the formal structure of the process of the Absolute—with Schelling iterated imbalances of the two fundamental factors “subjective” and “objective,” with Hegel iterated constellations of identity and negativity. The intended benefit of this change of categories consists solely in integrating the phenomena into this process and thereby showing at the same time what their relation to the Absolute is. It is not the empirical-scientific descriptions and explanations themselves that are to be improved. What Schelling or Hegel say about light is of no use to an optician who is occupied with concrete problems. Changing the categories does not even help us to understand better the logical foundations of scientific theories, which had been the aim of Kant’s writings on natural science, for example. Kant did not intend to change their categories; he wanted to clarify their epistemic foundations. Schelling and Hegel, on the other hand, wanted to create a system of relations which, by means of its peculiar categories, would connect everything with everything, if possible, and thereby at the same time connect every individual thing with the Absolute in an intelligible way—an impressive project, but one that was bound to fail, if only because it could not be undertaken from a position that would only be available at the end of history.

Krause’s *System of Philosophy* (1828a) also represents a variant of absolute idealism. The author emphasizes his fundamental agreement with Schelling and Hegel: “In view, however, of the two most well-known systems, Schelling’s and Hegel’s, it is sufficient to say here the following. With respect to the assumption of foundational knowledge, I agree with Schelling and Hegel as well as with Plato” (ibid., 24f.). In all three systems, the Absolute—that is, God—is considered the foundation from which the entire system is to be developed. Krause’s system emerged from the lectures he gave between 1802 and 1805 as a lecturer in Jena, that is, as a direct colleague of Schelling and Hegel. The first publication is the *Entwurf des Systems der Philosophie* of 1804—published only three years after Schelling’s *Darstellung meines Systems* and Hegel’s first

work *Differenz des Fichteschen und Schellingschen Systems der Philosophie*. The following discussion restricts itself to the two works of 1828.

Even if all three systems start from the same “foundational knowledge,” Krause’s differs considerably from the other two. Krause attached great importance to the originality of his system. He repeatedly points to it, and he argues in detail with both Schelling (1828b, 405–411) and Hegel (*ibid.* 411–471). These differences will be discussed in the following. However, since I am not aware of any natural philosophy on Krause’s part, I cannot provide a third account of what light is supposed to be.

The differences already begin with the determination of the actual foundation. Krause thinks of God above all as ground — as ground of all being and all knowledge. God is the ground of everything finite, of the eternal as well as of the temporal (1828b 145ff.). The *Urwesen* is the ground of nature, reason and their union; these are contained in it as their ground (*ibid.*, 154). The concept of cause is also applied to God: God is recognized as “the ground and cause of the world” (1828a, 252). God is the sole ground of knowledge and being: all individual cognitions are contained in the intuition [*Schauung*] of “Being or God” (1828b, 159, 162); everything finite, limited, or partial “has God alone as its ground” (*ibid.*, 157).

The very fact that the category of ground plays such a central role in Krause’s system distinguishes his approach from that of Schelling or Hegel. Neither the formation of relative totalities out of absolute indifference, as with Schelling, nor the development of differences and unities in the Hegelian dialectical process can be described with the concept of ground. For Hegel, the category of ground is itself only a particular position in this process (Enz 130). This makes the question of how Krause understands this concept all the more urgent.

Krause gives a first answer already on the first pages of his *System*: “For we call ‘ground’ that of which and in which something determinate has its essence” (1828a, 8). Similar statements are frequently found: “Now, however, we call everything ‘grounded,’ which is in another and which is determined according to the other’s essence [*Wesenheit*]” (*ibid.*, 125); “... because, as we saw above in the discussion of the concept of ground, an essence is ground only of that which is of and in it” (*ibid.*, 209); “For ground is called that essence of which or in which another is” (*ibid.*, 296). “Pantheism” then

means: God is the ground of everything; the concept of ground implies that what is grounded is in the ground; thus everything is in God.

Both premises of this inference definitely suffer from problems. We will come back to the certainty of the intuition of God later. But the second premise is also questionable: the preposition “*in*” (or also “*an*”) does not seem to be able to characterize satisfactorily what is meant by grounding. A remarkable aspect of Krause’s style is the astonishingly high value accorded to the logical power of prepositions: “Here I also note that at the same time the understanding of the following Essence-expressing [*Grundwesenheitliches aussagenden*] (categorical) words of our German language is given: *in, gegen, ant, ur, unter, neben*, and also, *entweder, oder, samm oder gesammen, mit, zugleich, wechselseits*, and others; and the fact that we have all these words in our speech is already a proof of the advanced intellectual development of the German people” (ibid., 405). In particular, the prepositions “*in*” and “*an*” and the difference between them is of considerable systematic importance for Krause (cf. ibid. e.g. 95, 102, 118, 123, etc.).

A more detailed discussion of the category of “ground” can be found on pages 116–125 of the same work. The description of its content is based mainly on these two prepositions. This is explained by the example of space (ibid., 117f.): space is ground of that which it is “of itself” (*an sich*), i.e. what concerns it as a whole, e.g. infinity, continuity, three-dimensionality; but it is also ground of what it is “in itself” (*in sich*), i.e. spheres, cubes, etc. Even the argument for the thesis that if there is not a ground for everything, then the question of ground is ultimately nowhere answered, relies on this preposition (ibid., 117). Krause cites and criticizes Kant’s determination of this concept in the *Metaphysics Pölitz*, but in doing so, he does not take note at all of what is crucial for Kant: that something should follow something according to a general rule (ibid., 118). In the explanations that Krause himself proposes, the concept “rule” (or “law”) does not occur; he contents himself with the prepositions “*in*” (“in”) or “*an*” (“of”).

Krause, however, distinguishes between the concepts “ground” and “cause” insofar as in the latter the “determination” of what the ground is, is to be added: “Ground is an essence in view of what is of or in it, and insofar as the ground is also the determining ground, i.e. insofar as the essence of the grounded is according to the essence of its ground, we think of the ground also as cause” (ibid., 213; similarly, e.g., 419, 437). Also absent from these

statements is any reference to a rule or a general law. “Ground” and “cause” are also not distinguished by the fact that the former concerns propositions, while the latter concerns events. For Kant, on the other hand, the concept of causality is bound up with that of laws (AA 4, 446). Through an appropriate law, the ground or cause acquires its specific content. If everything is in God and everything is grounded through Him, then the answers to “why?” questions threaten to become empty: Why a? Because it is in God. Why b? For exactly the same reason. We no longer get informative answers.

Krause’s proposed solution to this problem is based on his conception of how a theory must be constituted if it is to be considered a science. Like Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, he insists that his system meets all the requirements of strict scientificity. One of the works consulted here is entitled *Lectures on the Fundamental Truths of Science*. God, too, proves to be an object of scientific knowledge; indeed, he is the primary object of such knowledge. If there were not the science of God, there would be no science at all. Against Jacobi’s claim that a known God is no God, Krause objects, “But rather it is the one, only, — entire purpose of science: to know God, and indeed, through independent, pure knowledge, independent of feeling and will” (1828b, 481). He reproaches Jacobi for “overhastiness in judging what is possible or impossible for human scientific research” (ibid., 473).

The first and most important requirement that a science must fulfill is that it must be, as Krause expresses it, a “structure” (*Gliedbau*), that is, a systematically organized whole, in which each individual has its well-determined, appropriate place and is thereby also grounded in its own being (*Eigenwesen*). Scientificity is therefore not based on the fact that God is the ground of everything, but on the fact that it is a ground in such a way that a structure arises, in which every individual is grounded in its own particular way. Such a scientific structure is only possible because the cosmos, the object of science, is itself a structure. God is therefore the ground of everything in such a way that He is the ground of a cosmos which possesses such an “internally organized” (*gliedbauliche*) structure, and only insofar as it is also He who makes something like science possible. A science is possible only of an object which has of itself a constitution suitable for it, and that the cosmos fulfills this condition can only be explained by the fact that God is its ground. Thus Krause arrives at his claim that no science would be possible if God did not exist, and above all, if God could not also be an object of science. Kant wants to ensure

through the “legislation of understanding in nature” that the cosmos fulfills the necessary conditions; Krause instead recurs to God in a more traditional way. Kant’s proposal is bound up with an epistemic idealism; the understanding cannot prescribe anything to a reality that is independent of it. No such dependence applies to Krause’s theological approach. God, however, must be included in this structure. This is especially true if the grounding relation is so interpreted that the grounded must be in the ground. If the structure were outside of God, it could not be grounded by Him, thus ultimately not be a structure at all. Just as for Schelling nothing can be in itself apart from the absolute indifference and for Hegel nothing can be unsublated apart from the Absolute, so for Krause nothing can exist apart from the structure, which is in God insofar as it is grounded by God.

In his *Wissenschaftslehre* (1828b, 226–243), Krause develops the more concrete structure of his methodology. His first step is to identify certain basic concepts as “categories.” With their help, the structure is to be organized. The inadequacy of the Aristotelian or Kantian tables is explained in detail (1828a, 171ff; against Aristotle and Kant especially *ibid.* 186f., also 1828b, 194 and 202. On Krause’s theory of categories cf. Göcke 2012, 112ff.). For Krause, the categories are “fundamental essences” (*Grundwesenheiten*) that cannot be derived from a table of judgments, but must be obtained from the “intuition of God.” This corresponds to the approach of Schelling and Hegel, for whom the basic dialectical concepts also cannot be derived from a table of judgments. Krause, moreover, claims completeness for his table, which will not be explained in detail here (1828a, 425). He states, for example: “These are the highest fundamental concepts which constitute a complete, self-contained structural whole” (1828b, 198).

In the methodical construction of his system, Krause relies on the trinity of intuition (i.e. *Schau*), deduction, and construction. The combination of these three moments forms the essence of a scientific structure as he conceives it. It also illustrates how his “scientific” procedure differs from the way Schelling and Hegel proceed. Both know nothing of such a trinity, although it can be shown that their “deductions” are also hardly cogent without a strong admixture of intuition.

Fundamental for Krause is undoubtedly the concept of intuition. The objects of intuition are “essences” (*Wesen*) (i.e. entities) or “essentialities” (*Wesenheiten*) (i.e. properties of essence). These two concepts are also of

great importance for Krause. With reference to essences, answers to “what is?” questions are given in a traditional manner. The terminology is obviously reminiscent of Husserl’s “*Wesensschau*.” Whether there was a direct influence is not known to me.

In an intuition of Essence (*Wesensschau*), the intuited and the intuiting are seen as united. The most intimate union is in the self-intuition of God, in which every other finite intuition participates: “With respect to the fundamental idea of the science of man and of humanity, however, we recognized that it should be a thoroughly finite, gradually developing structure of God’s cognition and of the structure of all beings in God, that is, that it should be the intuitive structure of the structure of the Essence, and insofar as it stays within the truth, can nevertheless be concordant with God’s cognition, and a finite image and likeness of the same. We found that, as our essence is only in God, so also our truth is only in God’s truth, our intuition of Essence is only in God’s intuition of Essence, and actualizes itself in time” (1828b, 229).

Every cognition is therefore, through an intuition, connected with the cognition by which God cognizes Himself and the cosmic structure in Him. Thus it is a “finite image and likeness” of this cognition. In God we find the “structure of the Essence,” the systematic organization of all essences; science is supposed to be an “intuitive structure” of this structure of the Essence. To the intuition we have of God belongs the intuition of the system of Essence which is in God. The intuition thus includes in unity the intuitive comprehension of individual Essence and the intuitive comprehension of the system of this Essence in God.

In order to clarify this idea, another passage may be cited: “The ground and content of the One Science, that is, the principle of it, is essence or God, cognized in the intuition of Essence, which in itself is neither concept nor judgment nor inference, but the One, whole, same intuition, which is before and above every opposition, but at the same time is in itself the structural or organic intuition of all that which God is in itself, or of that which is in and through God. We have seen that the intuition of Essence can also be called the fundamental Idea, or preferably the Idea, and that it is in itself a structuration of all subordinate fundamental ideas” (ibid. 230). Thus, the intuition of Essence is “in itself” pure (as it were Plotinian) unity without all inner differentiation and thereby neither concept nor judgment nor inference, without any propositional structure. At the same time, however, it also has as its con-



tent the “structural,” i.e. systematic, structure of the world in God, and is thus accordingly also highly differentiated in itself. In this form it is first of all the “fundamental Idea,” then thirdly it is a “structural intuition,” thus an intuition which is itself systematically organized, of a systematic order. The intuition of a structure should be at the same time a structural intuition.

For the development of the intuition into the form of a science, two moments have to be added, which Krause calls “deduction” and “construction.” By deduction he understands the determination of the subordination relations in the structure. Accordingly, it concerns the “forming of the cognition in descending direction toward the intuition of Essence” (ibid. 231). Each subordinate essence is further determined with respect to its essentialities (i.e. properties) according to the structure of the fundamental concepts, namely “by means of those highest principles of determination, or synthetic principles, which result from the table of categories” (ibid.).

Krause thus intends, like Schelling and Hegel, to construct, on the basis of synthetic principles, a scientific system, which should be an image of the structure that is in God. However, he emphasizes (unlike his two colleagues) the continuous dependence of all deductions on intuition: “But the derivation or deduction of an essence or essentiality does not yet give the full intuition of it, but this is always self-evident in consciousness, and immediately present, and must be grasped through a primal activity of the intuiting spirit; — it is the self-intuition of every object, or intuition” (ibid.). Krause explains this through the example of space: even if it is deductively shown that there must be a general form of all natural existence, this can still only be determined as space through an intuition. This fundamental connection of all deductions to an intuition might be one of the most essential differences between Krause’s methodological approach and that of Schelling and Hegel. Hegel, for example, finds without a further intuition that space is the first immediate determination of nature (Enz 206).

The connection of intuition and deduction is to take place through a construction: “I call the unification of the derived or deduced with the self-intuited, grasped in one’s own intuition, ‘intuitive unification’ or ‘constructing,’ and the procedure thereby ‘construction’” (1828b, 232). Krause orients himself by appealing to the method of geometry: intuitions and purely formal deductions must be brought together and united according to synthetic rules, so that real knowledge is achieved: “From this it follows that derivation, self-



intuiting, and the intuitive unification of both — or deduction, intuition, and construction — are the three fundamental activities or fundamental functions necessary for the inner development of science as a whole and of every particular science” (ibid.).

From the function of intuition Krause also explains the possibility of specific essence in the structure of the cosmos. God is indeed the ground of everything, but of everything as a structure, in which different essences are possible, and the structural intuition must grasp this also, if it wants to remain with the truth. Structure and the intuition of structure correspond to each other; in this correspondence the possibility of individual being is founded. These, however, are contained in the deductions, so that a philosophical system carried out entirely according to Krause’s principles would have to provide a representation of the entire cosmic structure. Thus, the demands Krause makes on such a system are ultimately no less than those imposed by Schelling and Hegel. The *System* published in 1828, however, contains, as the author himself states, only the foundations for it, not the worked out system itself.

With the specific essentiality of individual beings Krause also explains why special sciences are possible in a limited domain without going back to the final ground, i.e. God. For example, one can engage in the science of mineralogy without talking about God. However, the chains of reasoning of such special disciplines must be limited. Thus, unproven synthetic judgments must be presupposed a priori. If one demands the completion of all chains of reasoning for a genuine science, no sciences are genuine in this sense. The individual sciences are not yet “part of the One Whole Science” (1828b, 234); the position of the particular essence in the whole structure is not clear. This is true for Krause as well as for Schelling and Hegel; the claims in their respective systems correspond to one another.

Krause summarizes his conception as follows: “Then, however, the fundamental idea of each special science — which has been deduced, intuited, and constructed in general — is first to be determined as a whole fundamental idea according to the structure of all individual and connected fundamental concepts, and then again to be developed further in its inner structure according to the synthetic principles, by applying the actions of derivation, self-intuition, and intuitive unification to the inside of it” (ibid. 232f.). The three fundamental activities have to be applied again to the interior of each science, so that the structure of the whole framework is repeated in the inte-

rior of each part, just as in the Hegelian system in one part of a triad another can be formed.

The whole conception, however, depends on the fundamental intuition of Essence, the intuition of God. In this respect, Krause's "fundamental knowledge" is similar to that of Schelling and Hegel, whose systems likewise lose their unity without the premise of a given Absolute. The dependence of all individual cognitions on the cognition of God is often emphasized by Krause. For example, he states: "Now all our thinking is in itself, whether we know it or not, directed to the cognition of Essence, of the Principle; and also everything determinate that we cognize is in itself cognizable only through the fact that we relate it, knowingly or unknowingly, to the fundamental thought: Essence, which is the One, same, whole cognition, and which, as part of its essence and act of being, contains the cognition of all determinate finite entities which, in turn, are of, or in, under and through Essence itself, according to their content and form" (1828a, 302; cf. *ibid.* 304, 356, etc.). God — that is, "the Essence" — causes all cognition (*ibid.* 305). For Krause, this has certainly been a weighty argument for his whole approach: Without the intuition of the Absolute Essence, there is no science at all.

On account of this reliance on a knowledge of the Absolute, all three theories discussed here seem to be in direct contradiction to Kantian criticism, for which there can be no epistemically successful reference to such an object. It is astonishing that such a radical departure from the critical "demarcation of boundaries" occurred so soon, while Kant was still alive. Motives that were historically important, however, can be indicated. It was undoubtedly particularly influential that Jacobi pointed out the great importance of Spinoza's metaphysics in 1785. Kant, only a year later in his *Critique of Practical Reason*, was thereby prompted to recognize Spinoza's metaphysics as the only rational alternative to his own transcendental idealism. Spinozism thus seemed to offer, especially after it had been interpreted and reinterpreted in Neoplatonic terms, a way to go beyond the limits set by Kant. In addition, in response to objections that had also been raised by Jacobi against the Kantian conception, Fichte developed the view that the Kantian conception could be consistently held only if the "I" itself were posited as Absolute, that is, as uninfluenceable by any effect of a reality independent of it (which must not be confused with the fact that there can be no sensory perceptions for it; these must only be interpreted in a way that is compatible with the absolute status of the "I").

Once the Spinozistic Absolute Substance and the Fichtean Absolute “I” were united, one could indeed have formed the impression that a philosophy of the Absolute was virtually a consequence of Kantian criticism.

Krause has grappled with this issue in detail several times. In essence, his stance can be summed up in two theses: 1. Kant’s critique of the proofs of God is correct; God’s existence cannot be derived from any premises. 2. Kant’s claims about the limited use of Ideas are unfounded and therefore to be rejected; the intuition of God provides the absolute fundamental Idea.

However, both theses are bound up with problems, particularly the first one. According to Krause, God is the ground of everything. As cited earlier, there is no cognition if there is no God. This suggests the following simple *modus ponens*: if God does not exist, there is no cognition; now, there is cognition; therefore, God exists. Krause admits both premises as true. Why then does he not allow the argument to be proof of God?

The answer is contained in what was said about the status of the special sciences. According to Krause, an atheist can be a scientist, as he does not have to make use of the intuition of God. He does not have to know anything about the fact that his knowledge is only possible because God exists; in fact, he does not have to be versed in epistemology at all. Moreover, the first premise in the aforementioned inference can be recognized as true only on the basis of the intuition of God. Whoever does not have this intuition can have no insight into the connection between the existence of God and the possibility of cognition. That the first premise in the *modus ponens* is true can, therefore, only be known if one independently knows that the conclusion is true. In this sense, then, there is no real proof of God. The intuition of God cannot be replaced or even supported by arguments; it must remain on its own. Can it carry this burden? Or is Kant right — against Krause, but also against Schelling and Hegel — that here a limit is inadmissibly crossed?

Now the fact of religious experience can hardly be denied. Krause also presupposes that a presentiment of God is already present in every human being before all effort of philosophy and science, which must only be raised to clarity as knowledge. In some form every human being has this idea in himself.

In his scientific structure, he sees such a clarification as possible, but also as necessary. He divides his system into two main parts, a “subjective-analytical” and an “objective-synthetic” one (1828a, 15, 30, 357). The first one is supposed to lead from the certainty of self-knowledge to that of the intuition

of God, the second one is supposed to develop the structure objectively from this intuition of God. Krause sees the first part as an original achievement of his own; he reproaches Schelling, for example, for having only presupposed and postulated the knowledge of the first principle (ibid. 25, 1828b, 409); he had thus not arrived at a “scientific presentation” (1828b, 410).

However, the function of this first part is not easy to understand. Since there is no proof of God, and since it also does not furnish one, there is no argumentative justification of the principle which is supposed to be the basis of science. It is only meant to lead to this insight, which is presupposed as potentially already present in every human being, and thus to bring a hidden insight to light. Krause states that the cognition of the reciprocal interaction of nature and spirit compels one to ascend to a shared Higher Principle in which they are both grounded (1828b, 154). However, this fundamental Idea of the “Higher Essence” common to spirit and nature does not first gain its certainty through the basic ideas of spirit and nature; we are only “induced” by them to remember the Higher Essence. Nevertheless, this remembrance is to come about through our application of the principle of sufficient reason to the fundamental ideas subordinate to the Higher Essence (ibid. 154). The question whether these thoughts correspond to something real should be shown to be meaningless: “The question of factual validity or objective validity in the ordinary sense, therefore, does not arise at all with respect to the intuition of Essence, but is itself only possible in and through the recognition of God in the intuition of Essence and is justified by the same; it applies only to finite entities, insofar as they are in a limited way of being, and can also be resolved by them only in and through the intuition of Essence” (1828b, 165). The question whether God exists is thus supposed to be meaningless because it is itself only possible if the existence of God is recognized in the intuition of Essence — a very extreme variant of an ontological proof of God, of which, however, at the same time it is claimed that it is no proof at all.

Krause also directly formulates such an ontological proof: The existence of God is not something particular alongside the essence of God, as if one could think of the essence of God but without His existence (1828a, 375). This is reminiscent of Hegel’s contemporary efforts to revive the ontological proof of God, but this will not be discussed further here. For Krause, the so-called proofs of God are not proofs at all, but only reminders that we already know that God exists. If this recollection is not present, no appeal to any kind

of proof can help. In this respect Krause can agree with the Kantian criticism of the proofs of God and still find in the intuition of God the foundation of all scientific knowledge. However, the reverse is also true: whenever the recollection is not present, Krause's considerations are of no use either; they remain sophistries without the power to convince. In the end, Krause admits this himself, by constantly ruling out logical proofs and appealing only to the certainty of intuition.

That God should be the ground of everything has always led to the problem of theodicy. God should then also be the ground of all evil, of all crimes, etc. Like the theologians before him, Krause rejects this conclusion (1828a, 517ff.). From a religious point of view this is understandable, but there remains the problem of consistency. For Krause, God is, after all, the ground of every cognition that any human being has. One would like to know, then, how it can be that God is not the ground of so many evil thoughts. Of course, he shares this problem with all theologies that emphasize the concept of omnipotence. At some point they must all impose limits on it.

The existence of religious experience is undeniable. In contemporary philosophy of religion, the question of whether epistemic value can be ascribed to it is being actively discussed (cf. e.g. Alston 1991, Sindermann 2012). But even authors who are sympathetic to religious experience no longer claim that it is the foundation of all science. Now, it is true, as described above, that even for Krause individual sciences can do without a recourse to God within certain limits because of the specific essentiality of their objects. For him, however, they are precisely for that reason not yet sciences in the strictest sense. In any case, modern theories of science, which are sworn to fallibilism, no longer endorse such a conception of an ultimately complete and perfectly certain universal science. According to these modern theories, individual sciences, which are only provisionally and hypothetically valid, are the only things possible for human beings. The hope for a "scientific Absolute" is considered deceptive. In the two writings consulted here, Krause presents his idea of what science is in the first pages. There is no mention there of fallibility, provisionality, uncertainty, the limits of the knowable, etc. No modern theorist of science can endorse the account of the "essence" of science that is sketched there.

Such utopian claims also underlie the systems of Schelling and Hegel. They too are founded on a concept of the Absolute, without which the deductions have no basis, and they fail because these deductions lead one astray

without an adequate scientific basis. They have not been able to withstand the course of intellectual development. Compared to them, Krause's methodology, with its insistence on the trinity of intuition, deduction, and construction, seems to form an interesting alternative. Admittedly, as Krause himself admits, the "fundamental cognition" is common both to his system and to the other two, but so are the problems associated with it. To conclude with a dialectical paradox: A system grounded in a concept of the Absolute with such claims might not have any chance of being realized, not even in Krause's version, but the chance is somewhat better in his version.

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