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Hegel and Schelling on the Path of Aristotelian Ascent

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Abstract: This essay argues that Schelling's late transition from Negative to Positive Philosophy constitutes a pointed inversion of the path of systematic ascent mapped by Hegel for the first time in the *Phenomenology's* Preface, which itself establishes Hegel's development out of and beyond Schelling's early philosophy; that a key notion to inspire the Hegelian vision articulated in the Preface returns to cap off the critique implicit in Schelling's late inversion, where this notion emerges from their divergent readings of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*; and finally, that while Hegel's theorization of the end of all philosophizing represents his innovative enlargement from within the framework he finds in Aristotle, Schelling's vision of this same end facilitates the crisis of reason which opens unto revelation, and so is akin to the vision which carries Aquinas beyond Aristotle, albeit in Schelling's post-Spinozist mode of thought.

In *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, born under the sign of Schelling's rising star at Jena, a developing Hegel tunes his ear to the needs of the age. Enthused by his friend and colleague's early efforts to recapture the presence of what both felt to be deeply lacking in the systems of Kant and Fichte, Hegel tills through the progression from Fichte's totalizing, subject-centered expansions within the Kantian framework to Schelling's twofold response to what he finds objectively lacking therein. In this 1801 debut an aspiring Hegel sets out to map the philosophical landscape and so to locate a path by which he might himself enter the limelight.

Schelling's early laboring substantiates his departure from Fichtean tutelage, beginning with the 1797-1799 works of Nature Philosophy.¹ Walter Cerf writes of this first face of Schellingian system, 'Its vision of the whole is the vision of an unconscious God (Spinoza's *natura naturans*) revealing Himself in the ever ascending levels of nature (*natura naturata*) until self-consciousness emerges in rational man.' Transcendental Philosophy, on the other hand, makes its first appearance in the *System of Transcendental Idealism* of 1800. This second face of system 'claims to trace God's coming to know Himself in a sequence of stages that culminate in art.'² Together these comprise Schelling's early Identity Philosophy, the banner under which Hegel writes his *Difference* essay.³

But such harmony is fleeting, as a shared trajectory soon splits in two mutually offensive directions.⁴ The *System of Transcendental Idealism* proposes that the task of philosophy is to

overcome each and every opposition ‘until all cognition is of the absolute,’ but in the year to follow Schelling has already begun to sense difficulties obstructing the road ahead, threats to the omnipotence of totalizing reason.⁵ His feeble first response to these intimations is to presuppose an undifferentiated unity preceding all difference: ‘In his 1801 essay *Presentation [Darstellung] of My System of Philosophy...* Schelling assumes from the very beginning that reason is identical with all reality, which makes any question of how it achieves unity with its other superfluous.’⁶ Famously, this directional shift in Identity Philosophy will incur Hegel’s early dismissal in his Preface to the *Phenomenology*.

The suspicion beginning to materialize as Hegel writes the *Difference* essay will emerge in full-blooded response to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), in Schelling’s *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom* (1809). Connecting difficulties motivating the dubious presupposition in Schelling’s *Darstellung* of 1801 with more substantial elaborations to come in the *Freedom* essay, Lauer notes of the former that in its ‘cancellation of all striving and dissolution of all opposition into the absolute,’ Schellingian reason ‘stands over against the incorporative drive of speculation, hinting at a dark core of irrationality that reason can never incorporate.’⁷ Coming to terms with the abyss of irrationality looming from just beyond the bounds of reason’s *Reich* will occupy Schelling for the rest of his career.

By his late lectures at Berlin, having ascended the throne left vacant at Hegel’s death, Schelling’s binal vision of philosophical system has transitioned fully to its final division into Negative and Positive Philosophy.⁸ While the former purports to subsume the path Hegel had developed unto completion, beginning from the early split into Transcendental and Nature Philosophy, the latter represents Schelling’s renewed commitment to the needs of the age. I argue that the transition from Negative Philosophy to Positive Philosophy in Schelling’s late lectures at Berlin constitutes a pointed inversion of the path of philosophical ascent mapped by Hegel in the *Phenomenology*’s Preface, host to the criticism that precipitated the end of their friendship.

Furthermore, the discovery which inspires Hegel to progress beyond the division of Schelling’s early Identity Philosophy and so to develop the vision of ascent expressed in the *Phenomenology*’s Preface (I) comes from the same text to which Schelling will turn in his final years, inspiring his claim to have located the ceiling of the path now deemed merely Negative (II). As it turns out, both antagonistic advances beyond one another are founded in conceptions of ἐνέργεια derived from divergent readings of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*. But whereas Hegel’s theorization of the *actus purus* at the heights of Science represents an innovative enlargement from within the framework he finds in Aristotle, Schelling’s vision is of the *actus purus* as both end *and* beginning, alpha and omega, and so is akin to that which carries Aquinas beyond Aristotle, albeit in Schelling’s post-Spinozist mode of thought (III).

I. HEGEL’S ARISTOTLE AND THE *PHENOMENOLOGY*’S PREFACE: VIA NEGATIONIS TO PURE ENÉRΓΕΙΑ

Having opaquely mapped the journey to follow in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the ascent from appearance to the summit of Science, Hegel addresses the pilgrim hesitant to go on: ‘Now, because the system of the experience of Spirit embraces only the *appearance* of Spirit, the advance from this system to the science of the *True* in its *true shape* seems to be merely negative, and one might

wish to be spared the negative as something false, and demand to be led to the truth without more ado. Why bother with the false?’ (*PS*, ¶ 38).⁹ One beginning the painstaking ascent plotted in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* might voice similar concerns, especially when slogging through hinterlands haunted by Aristotle’s spectral, pre-Socratic predecessors. Why traverse this path?

Hegel begins his ‘system of the experience of Spirit’ by considering the methodology proper to philosophy, proposing an approach that centers on the organic development of the whole rather than on static alignment with one single moment or another.¹⁰ Progress of the parts corresponds to progress of the whole, such that the advancement of Science corresponds to the progress of the philosopher. Those who dare to identify themselves as such are challenged to embrace the task of scientific development, where to *know actually*, to complete this task, is to be led by the negative into the realm of the *True*.¹¹

Layering historical detail over top of the obscure outline with which the *Phenomenology*’s Preface begins, Hegel’s *Encyclopedia Logic* opens by articulating the structure of development by which the thinking subject comes to understand its epistemic relation to the world, tracing a genealogy of successive standpoints that serves to situate his system against a background of recent conceptual development. The first of these positions as addressed in the lesser *Logic*, ‘The First Attitude of Thought to Objectivity,’ takes simple reflection to be *the* uncontestable ‘means of ascertaining the truth,’ which brings ‘objects before the mind as they really are’ (*EL*, ¶ 26). This naïve realism represents thought at its most primitive, with proponents among ancients and moderns alike.¹²

In reaction, an antithetical attitude turns skeptically toward the world of sense experience. ‘Empiricism’ (*EL*, ¶ 37) soon develops into to a second, intensified skepticism, which in turn begets an even more reflexively active position. Hegel labels this third empiricist position ‘The Critical Philosophy’ (*EL*, ¶ 40), a view that fully incorporates the empiricist’s doubt by calling appearances given in sense-experience into question and locating objectivity with the categories of the understanding (*Verstand*). The critical philosopher posits the realm of truth in an uncognizable *beyond* and finds compensatory solace in practical reason.

The third and final ‘Attitude of Thought to Objectivity’ arises as a response to critical philosophy, founded in a nostalgic desire to recover the basic objectivity that formerly characterized the most primitive attitude toward objectivity. This most historically proximate standpoint purports to be grounded in immediate intuition of the divine, in a supposedly direct, pre-rational access to the Truth that dwells ‘beyond’ rationality.

Hegel addresses this same standpoint early in the *Phenomenology*’s Preface, responding to a principal objection raised by those who maintain that *mediation* enervates the self-movement of Being by means of abstraction. He argues that in mediation the immediately familiar becomes an *object* for consciousness, thus enacting the *negation* by which an other becomes that which is not ‘subject,’ and *visa versa*.¹³ Such alienation stirs a desire to restore the primitive unity perceived as having been lost with the first reflective acts of mediation.¹⁴

True reconciliation, however, comes about only on the basis of a third movement by which the negated unity between subject and object is itself actively negated. Progress toward an absolute

end is brought about only by way of higher unifications, not by pursuing the contrary, regressive desire to restore lost primal unity: ‘And experience is just the name we give to this movement, in which the immediate, the unexperienced, i.e. the abstract, whether it be of sensuous being, or only thought of as simple, becomes alienated from itself and then for the first time in its actuality and truth, just as it then has become a property of consciousness also’ (*PS*, ¶ 36). Cognition of the absolute is the destination of Spirit’s pilgrimage, not its mere beginning. Any view purporting to approach this end by means of a simple unity achieved in immediacy mistakes clouded remembrances of a paradise lost for a fully articulated final destination, threatening to frustrate Spirit’s progress in self-knowing. Such positions serve only to tempt the pilgrim to turn back and seek a home that had never really been known.¹⁵

Developing this line of criticism, Hegel sets into motion the beginning of the end of his collaboration with Schelling. ‘Nowadays we see all value ascribed to the universal Idea in this non-actual form, and the undoing of all distinct, determinate entities,’ he writes, indicating that in this viewpoint the *abstract universal* snuffs out particularity (*PS*, ¶ 16).¹⁶ Focus shifts to the turn taken in Schelling’s Identity Philosophy: ‘To pit this single insight, that in the Absolute everything is the same, against the full body of articulated cognition, which at least seeks and demands such fulfillment, to palm off the Absolute as the night in which, as the saying goes, all cows are black—this is cognition naively reduced to vacuity’ (*PS*, ¶ 16).¹⁷

To the contrary, Hegelian Science strives toward the Absolute as expressed by means of the *concrete universal*, where abstract formalism is overcome by means of self-negating negations. Redressing the principal criticism of those whose hope rests in immediate intuition, their rejoinder that mediation enervates the inherent movement of Being, Hegel concedes that mere mediation is indeed a form of lifeless abstraction. However, he places blame on analyses carried out by the understanding (*Verstand*) and bids us to attend carefully to cognitive *acts* of separation.

While the understanding does paralyze in order to dissect, enervating the movement inherent to *Being*—Being conceived as external to the knowing subject—reason (*Vernunft*) approaches a higher standpoint from which it begins to recognize itself as the principle of all *becoming*. Hegel writes, ‘But what is thus *separated* and non-actual is an essential moment; for it is only because the concrete does divide itself, and make itself into something non-actual, that it is self-moving’ (*PS*, ¶ 31). The negating acts of what the *Encyclopedia Logic* calls ‘negative reason’ in turn come to be recognized as the principal force behind Spirit’s development, its motor of dialectical ascent.¹⁸ When viewed in its entirety this progression instantiates the formal structure of Logic: ‘In point of form Logical doctrine has three sides: (α) the Abstract side, or that of the understanding; (β) the Dialectical, or that of negative reason; (γ) the Speculative, or that of positive reason’ (*EL*, ¶ 79).¹⁹

Operating in the realm of negation, of *becoming* in contrast to the static realm of *being*, *Phenomenology* is ‘the science of the experience of Spirit’ which Hegel describes as ‘the *first* part of Science’ (*PS*, ¶ 35). At the height of this propaedeutic in self-knowing, consciousness comes to see that ‘what seems to happen outside of it, to be an activity directed against it, is really its own doing,’ and in this knowledge ‘Substance shows itself to be essentially Subject’ (*PS*, ¶ 37).²⁰ In absolute knowing the moments of Spirit’s development are transformed into ‘the True in the form

of the True,' where the dialectical path of negation gives way to the positive, to 'Logic or speculative philosophy.'²¹

Central in inspiring Hegel's vision is the notion of ἐνέργεια he derives from Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Alfredo Ferrarin argues as much, concluding that this notion is 'the root of the metaphysical conception of logic operative after 1805, especially the subjective Logic which is run through by the concept of telos grounding the identity of subject and object.'²² It is on this basis that Hegel theorizes the absolute knowing by which Substance knows itself as essentially Subject, this pure *actuality of thought thinking itself*, which becomes the teleological end of all systematizing.²³

Ferrarin weaves these threads together in making the connection to Schelling's early Identity Philosophy: 'The Preface to the *Phenomenology* is an important document in this regard, for it shows that Hegel now has Aristotle in mind as a model for the new concepts of teleology and purposive reason, a model he pits against Schelling's simple identity.'²⁴ The teleological notion of actuality found in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Hegel's innovative rendition of the *actus purus* conceived as the end of all philosophizing, thereby grounds his ascent from negative to positive, the upward path by which the *Phenomenology* develops beyond Schelling's earlier Identity Philosophy and parts with him indefinitely.

II. SCHELLING'S ARISTOTLE IN THE SPÄTPHILOSOPHIE: NEGATIVE TO POSITIVE

The Hegelian progression from negative to positive moves from the dialectical negations of the science of Spirit's experience to the Speculative operations of *Logic*, culminating in a vision by which the thinker finally beholds 'the True in the form of the True.' In developing Aristotle's path of ascent by negation, a movement from sensible to intelligible or from more known to more knowable, the *Phenomenology* progresses from appearance to reality. Materiality is gradually stripped away to reveal pure ἐνέργεια, finally giving rise to the standpoint at which thought beholds the infinite, cyclical gyrations of *thought thinking itself*.²⁵ Simultaneously developing Aristotle's *via negationis* and sublating Schelling's early division of Identity Philosophy into Nature and Transcendental Philosophy, therefore, the τέλος of Hegel's system is the thinking activity in which Substance knows itself to be essentially Subject.

Schelling responds in his late lectures at Berlin invoking the Kantian distinction between *Begriff* and *Erkenntnis*, concept and cognition, and so distinguishing sharply between essence and existence, between *what (Was)* something is and *that (Daß)* it exists. To explicate further he invokes medieval terminology:

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*. The former—the answer to the question *what* it is—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 have it *itself* within the concept. The other insight however, *that* it is, does not accord me just the concept, but rather something that goes beyond just the concept, which is existence. This is a *cognition* [*ein Erkennen*] 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.²⁶

Quid sit corresponds to mere *concepts* without reference to empirical content, to essence in the absence of existence. By contrast, *quod sit* corresponds to *cognitions* in which existence and essence necessarily combine.²⁷

This distinction helps found Schelling's division of philosophy into Negative and Positive, his inversion of Hegel's speculative progression from negative to positive. On his retelling Negative Philosophy constitutes an *a priori* Logic devoid of empirical content, constrained to address *whatness* or essence, the realm of necessity. Positive Philosophy, by contrast, picks up at the point at which the Negative leaves off, addressing *thatness* or existence and corresponding to the realm of freedom.²⁸

Tracing the relation between Negative and Positive in the history of western philosophy, and beginning in Ancient Greece, Schelling sets his sights on this same path of Negative Philosophy whose end is divine contemplation. He acknowledges from the onset that Aristotle brilliantly followed the 'path from the empirical to the logical,' and so discovered 'the innate and indwelling logic of nature.'²⁹ Far from being rendered superfluous by Positive Philosophy, then, such logical understanding of the structures of being inaugurates the same project Schelling had labored to advance in earlier years, further developed with Hegel's innovations to reveal the logical structures of being's unfolding.

Harkening perhaps to his own prior meditations on the *dark ground* of being, Schelling continues, 'If one follows him to the deepest depths from which he starts out, he begins his ascending progression with the *potency* (corresponding to the beginning) in which every antithesis is still enfolded. This progression ends in the *actus*, which subsists above every antithesis, even above every potency—and which is therefore pure entelechy.'³⁰ The contributions of all three metaphysicians blend as Schelling explains the ascending progression in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, alluding first to his own earlier investigations into the birth of being and secondly to the progress by sublation set forth in his earlier systematizing, subsequently substantiated and subjectivized by Hegel.³¹

In Aristotle's vision, Schelling explains, matter and potency are stripped away to reveal the end of science, facilitating purer and purer acts of intellection: 'In relationship to the approach to the end, being rules over nonbeing, the *actus* over the potency; all ὕλη (synonymous with potency) will be incrementally removed. The final telos is thus no longer potency, but is rather τὸ ἐνέργεια ὄν, potency fixed entirely as *actus*.'³² The way of negation begins from the pure potency of prime matter (ὕλη) and ascends gradually to behold the pure activity (ἐνέργεια) at the end of first philosophy.

Marcela García points out that in the final years of his life, having presented the developments of Positive Philosophy at length in lecturing on the philosophies of mythology and of revelation, Schelling returns to the task of completing Negative Philosophy. He 'saw the need for a purely rational explanation that would make clear once and for all the insufficiency of the purely rational method itself' and further that 'Negative philosophy should *itself* become the "bridge" from pure

or a priori thought to actual existence that is at the beginning of positive philosophy.³³ To assist in this final project Schelling turns again to the guide who inspired Hegel's consummation of the negative path.

The notion of ἐνέργεια Schelling finds in Aristotle, the end of the *Metaphysics*, inspires one last retaliatory move against his former ally. Reading Schelling's final work, the *Presentation of Purely Rational Philosophy*, García writes, 'Aristotelian actuality, as Schelling understands it, makes it possible to obtain certain traits of actuality and therefore at least to attempt to think actuality. Schelling presents this attempt as a path that traverses different senses of actuality in the search for the primary one.'³⁴ Hegel's conception of the *actus purus* at the end of Aristotle's investigations, the primary sense of *actuality* to which all others point, purports to be the end of all thought. Directly challenging the primacy of Hegel's system, however, Schelling maintains in these final years that Aristotle's conception is merely the height of *Negative Philosophy*, the philosophy of pure reason.

Further challenging the primacy of Hegelian system, Schelling argues that the primary sense in which being is spoken reveals two traits that will assist in the task of Positive Philosophy. García summarizes, 'Pure reason *can* envisage some traits that belong to what is actual: "separation" and "individuality." These traits, modeled on the Aristotelian elucidation of actuality, become the motor of the purely rational process that leads to the realization of the limits of pure reason.'³⁵ Reason strives beyond itself toward an actuality it will never be able to cognize, demonstrating the paradoxical nature of a pure reason that finds itself 'attracted by actuality,' but which 'cannot attain its goal' so long as it remains in the realm of pure thought.³⁶ This crisis of pure reason facilitates the transition from Negative Philosophy to Positive Philosophy.

III. POSITIVE PHILOSOPHY: ἘΝΕΡΓΕΙΑ TO *ESSE*

Negative Philosophy charts a path to Positive Philosophy by pointing to a realm beyond itself, echoing the vision of ascent mapped in the *Phenomenology's* Preface. But according to Schelling, Hegel follows the Aristotelian path that begins from experience, proceeds to essences, and thence ascends to conceptualization of pure ἐνέργεια. The latter is articulated in Hegelian terms as the absolute unity between subject and object, the unity of unity and opposition in which *thought thinks itself*. Schelling characterizes this path as merely conceptual, as Negative Philosophy.

Early in his lectures on Negative Philosophy at Berlin, having established his central distinction between concept and cognition, Schelling writes,

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. 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—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.³⁷

In Schelling's adopted terminology, Hegel has failed to distinguish properly between essence and existence, *quid sit* and *quod sit*. Schelling is not the first to employ such terms; in this respect his Latin distinction is telling.

Note the affinity with Aquinas, who writes in *On Being and Essence*, 'Now, every essence or quiddity can be understood without knowing anything about its being. I can know, for instance, what a man or a phoenix is and still be ignorant whether it has being in reality. From this it is clear that there is being other than essence or quiddity...'.³⁸ Schelling's premise corresponds precisely to Aquinas's: essences can be understood without reference to existence, except perhaps in the case of the *actus purus*. The essence of the phoenix can be conceptualized without necessitating that a phoenix exists, or indeed that one ever existed. As Aquinas illustrates, *that* essences can be conceptualized without reference to 'being'—*categorical* being, rather than *propositional* being—makes clear that *esse* must be added to *essentia* in order for such a being to enter into reality.³⁹

From the very beginning, according to Schelling's appraisal, Hegel's thought set out upon on a path that leads further and further away from existence. *On Being and Essence* opens with the following: 'A slight initial error eventually grows to vast proportions, according to the Philosopher. Now the first conceptions of the intellect are (as Avicenna says) "a being" and "an essence." If, then, we are to avoid mistakes through ignorance of these, we must begin exploring their difficulty by stating what is meant by saying "a being" and "an essence."' ⁴⁰ Ironically, Aristotle warns that a trajectory whose ἀρχή is marred even only by marginal misalignment will end miles away from its proper τέλος.

The path of Negative Philosophy excludes existence from the onset. Schelling argues that while Aristotle intends to describe the unmoved mover 'as what actually exists,' not merely as an idea devoid of content, 'Nonetheless, it is not a question of existence, for existence is, as it were, the contingent element in all this, and has worth for him only as far as it is that from which he can extract the whatness of things. Existence is the mere presupposition; it is only the point of departure.'⁴¹ In Kantian terms, Negative Philosophy ends in mere *conceptualization* of the *actus purus*, not cognition thereof.⁴² The *existing* God is inconceivable from within the bounds of Negative Philosophy, the path that ends in a God only of pure ἐνέργεια, not of pure *esse*.⁴³

IV. CONCLUSION

Somewhat surprisingly, Schleiermacher's *Speeches on Religion: To the Cultured Among its Despisers* (1799) receive honorable mention at the end of the preface to Hegel's *Difference* essay (1801). Hegel explains, 'When one can say of a system that fortune has smiled on it, it is because some widespread philosophical need, itself unable to give birth to philosophy—for otherwise it would have achieved fulfillment through the creation of a system—turns to it with an instinct-like propensity.'⁴⁴ Despite lacking in speculative content, Schleiermacher's *Speeches* call forth the deep longings of the age and bring them to light.

Hegel himself begins to address these longings when he concludes that the *Speeches*' enthusiastic reception 'indicate[s] the need for a philosophy that will recompense nature for the mishandling that it suffered in Kant and Fichte's systems, and set Reason itself in harmony with nature, not by having Reason renounce itself or become an insipid imitator of nature, but by Reason recasting

itself into nature out of its own inner strength.⁴⁵ This is the *τέλος* toward which both Schelling and Hegel set out, but their paths soon diverge.

Schelling continues to harbor his suspicions, watching from far off as Hegel consummates the path he had abandoned years earlier. Jason Wirth writes of Negative Philosophy that it ‘not only characterizes Schelling’s earlier work but culminates in the 1807 appearance of the grandest monument to negative philosophy, namely, Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*. In a manner of thinking, one could say that Hegel helped reveal to Schelling the limit of negative philosophy by perfecting it.’⁴⁶ In the *Freedom* essay of 1809, Schelling responds by articulating his own desire to humble the lofty ambitions of totalizing reason. In doing so, and for the rest of his career, he seeks to reestablish preeminent place for an Other reason cannot subsume, for a Being beyond being, for the God of revelation.⁴⁷

Notes

¹ These are Schelling’s *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur als Einleitung in das Studium dieser Wissenschaft* of 1797, *Von der Weltseele* of 1798, *Erster Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie* of 1799, and *Einleitung zu dem Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie* of 1799.

² Walter Cerf, ‘Speculative Philosophy and Intellectual Intuition: An Introduction to Hegel’s *Essays*,’ in G.W.F. Hegel, *The Difference Between Fichte’s and Schelling’s System of Philosophy*, trans. H.S. Harris and Walter Cerf (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press), p. xii.

³ Whereas Nature Philosophy incorporates the objectivity that had been eclipsed with Fichte, thus demonstrating ‘the objective unity of subject and object by presenting the development of objectivity into subjectivity’ and so grounding the existence of the subject in a continuum that relates nature’s development into spirit, Transcendental Philosophy demonstrates ‘the subjective unity of subject and object by showing how the intelligence (subjectivity) raises itself to suspend every opposition between itself and its other.’ Christopher Lauer, *The Suspension of Reason in Hegel and Schelling* (London, England: Continuum, 2010), p. 79.

⁴ Fackenheim notes of such tendencies, ‘Schelling was able to penetrate with extraordinary swiftness to first principles and ultimate implications. No sooner had he conceived a system than he perceived implications which made it problematic.’ With Hegel surely not far from sight he explains one implication: ‘While others would plod along, working out the details of a system Schelling had outlined, he himself already found it necessary to go beyond it. Thus time and time again he faced philosophical crises.’ Emil L. Fackenheim, ‘Schelling’s Conception of Positive Philosophy,’ In *The God Within: Kant, Schelling, and Historicity* (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1996), p. 110.

⁵ While Hegel is at work recapitulating Schellingian developments in the *Difference* essay, Schelling begins to foresee the problem that would radically shift the trajectory of his Identity Philosophy. Lauer summarizes further, writing, ‘Given that Schelling traces this crisis to reason’s self-conception as striving for identity with all reality, a simple alternative is to assume this striving always already fulfilled.’ Lauer, *Suspension of Reason*, 78. Nevertheless, he continues, ‘as vacuous as this response to the dilemmas raised in the *System of Transcendental Idealism* is, it is not a simple reversion to childhood, but part of the working-out of reason’s midlife crisis.’

⁶ Lauer, *Suspension of Reason*, 78.

⁷ Lauer, *Suspension of Reason*, 84.

⁸ That is, assuming in 1841 the chair of Philosophy at Berlin left vacant upon Hegel’s death in 1831, having been hired by King Friedrich Wilhelm IV to ‘stamp out the dragon seed of Hegelian pantheism.’ Quoted in Fred Rush, ‘Schelling’s Critique of Hegel,’ in Lara Osteric (ed.), *Interpreting Schelling: Critical Essays* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 217.

⁹ References to Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* will be cited by paragraph and prefaced by *PS*. G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Arnold V. Miller (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1977). References to the first part of the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* will be cited by paragraph and prefaced by *EL*. G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel’s Logic: Part One of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, trans. William Wallace (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1975). References to the second part of the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* will be

cited by paragraph and prefaced by *LHP*. G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy, Volume Two*, trans. E.S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson (London, England: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1955). References to the earlier portion of Schelling's Berlin Lectures will be cited with reference to the German edition of *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy* in F. W. J. Schelling, *Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling's Sämtliche Werke*, ed. K.F.A. Schelling, I. Abteilung, vols. 1-10, II. Abteilung, vols. 1-4 (Stuttgart, Germany: Cotta 1865-61), and also with reference Matthews's English translation, cited as *BL*. Schelling, F. W. J., *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy: The Berlin Lectures*, trans. Bruce Matthews (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2007).

¹⁰ Hegel heightens this contrast from the outset: 'The more conventional opinion gets fixated on the antithesis of truth and falsity, the more it tends to expect a given philosophical system to be either accepted or contradicted.' Desiring a system to vanquish all counterfeit systems, supplanting erroneous views with *Truth* found once and for all, '[conventional opinion] does not comprehend the diversity of philosophical systems as the progressive unfolding of truth, but rather sees it in simple disagreements' (*PS*, ¶ 2).

¹¹ Or, by implication, to the realm of the positive. 'It is this coming-to-be of *Science as such* or of *knowledge*, that is described in this *Phenomenology of Spirit*' (*PS*, ¶ 27). Hegel's method thereby aligns with Aristotle's as exemplified in the *Metaphysics*, which begins by carefully combing through the views of historical predecessors. These become a point of departure by which to consider in more conceptualized form the primary senses in which 'being' is commonly spoken. See especially Aristotle, *Metaphysics* A.1-a.1. *First philosophy* strives toward the $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omicron\varsigma$ of thought by negating what is false in positions considered, meticulously culling away falsehoods and so vivifying what Hegel will refer to as the budding Concept (*Begriff*). One commentator notes, 'What Hegel finds in Aristotle's metaphysics is the expression of a speculative logic containing and developing an "architectonic" principle on which the other parts of philosophy rely.' Gilbert Gérard, 'Hegel, Reader of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*: Substance as Subject,' *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* 74, no. 2 (2012), p. 6. The *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* demonstrate that Hegel considers Aristotle's *first philosophy*—'or, as we call it, logic'—to be metaphysically foundational, after the manner in which the medievals distinguished *logical* from *chronological* priority. He arranges Aristotle's thought into sections that match for the most part with those of the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*: 'Metaphysics,' 'Philosophy of Nature,' and 'Philosophy of Mind [Spirit]' (*LHP*, ¶ 138). The prominent difference is that in *LHP* Hegel appends a fourth section, addressing what he refers to as 'Aristotelian logic' (*LHP*, ¶ 219) in order to distinguish it from the ontological Logic of metaphysics, or first philosophy. Gérard writes further, 'Without a doubt, what Hegel discovers with excitement in Aristotle is the brilliant anticipation, in the context of the beginnings of philosophy in Greece, of an approach that he also uses in the very different and more mature context of his [own] modern achievement.' Gérard, 'Hegel, Reader of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*,' p. 2. Both Gérard and Ferrarin address the seeming contradiction between Hegel's high praises of Aristotle as a 'modern' thinker and his developmental view of history. See also Alfredo Ferrarin, 'Hegel's Aristotle: Philosophy and Its Time,' in *A Companion to Hegel*, ed. Stephen Houlgate and Michael Baur (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2011).

¹² 'Philosophy in its earliest stages, all the sciences, and even the daily action and movement of consciousness, live in this faith' (*EL*, ¶ 26).

¹³ This basic movement will return in more familiar fashion in the movements of 'Self-Consciousness': from Recognition to Lordship and Bondage, and so on. Speaking in the Preface of the more basic subject-object relations, Hegel continues, 'Quite generally, the familiar, just because it is familiar, is not cognitively understood. The commonest way in which we deceive either ourselves or others about understanding is by assuming something as familiar, and accepting it on that account; with all its pros and cons, such knowing never gets anything, and it knows not why' (*PS*, ¶ 31). Furthermore, 'The disparity which exists in consciousness between the "I" and the substance which is its object is the distinction between them, the *negative* in general. This can be regarded as the *defect* of both, though it is their soul, or that which moves them' (*PS*, ¶ 37).

¹⁴ In the *Encyclopedia* Hegel identifies Jacobi as the principal proponent of this view, but nevertheless one thread that ties views that comprise this position together is their emphasis on the *existence* of God over and above his *essence*. Hegel writes, 'This immediate knowledge, consists in knowing that the Infinite, the Eternal, the God which is in our Idea, really *is*: or, it asserts that in our consciousness there is immediately and inseparably bound up with this idea the certainty of its actual being' (*EL*, ¶ 64). Scorning overemphasis on mere intuition of God's existence, Hegel aligns himself with views seeking to determine God's *essence* by employing the tools of Reason.

¹⁵ 'Of the Absolute it must be said that it is essentially a *result*, that only in the *end* is it what it truly is; and that precisely in this consists its nature, viz. to be actual, subject, the spontaneous becoming of itself' (*PS*, ¶ 20).

¹⁶ 'The beginning, the principle, or the Absolute, as at first immediately enunciated, is only the [*abstract*] universal' (*PS*, ¶ 20).

¹⁷ Hegel insinuates that Schelling would have particulars abandon their particularity in order to become one with the Absolute. The difference lies in the development of the Concept: 'Just as when I say "*all animals*," this expression

cannot pass for a zoology, so it is equally plain that the words, “the Divine,” “the Absolute,” “the Eternal,” etc., do not express what is contained in them’ (*PS* ¶ 20). Lauer makes the contrast more explicit: ‘Whereas in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* absolute knowing is reached only at the end of a series of negations, after spirit has expanded itself to the point where it can realize that it has always been identical with all being, Schelling would maintain for the rest of his career that any knowing must begin with knowledge of (double genitive) the absolute.’ Lauer, *Suspension of Reason*, p. 96.

¹⁸ ‘This power is identical with what we earlier called the Subject, which by giving determinateness an existence in its on element supersedes abstract immediacy, i.e. the immediacy which barely is, and thus is authentic substance: that being or immediacy whose mediation is not outside of it but which is this mediation itself’ (*PS* ¶ 32).

¹⁹ Hegel immediately explains, ‘These three sides do not make three *parts* of logic, but are stages or “moments” in every logical entity, that is, of every notion and truth whatever. They may all be put under the first stage, that of understanding, and so kept isolated from each other; but this would give an inadequate conception of them. The statement of the dividing lines and the characteristic aspects of logic is at this point no more than historical and anticipatory’ (*EL*, ¶ 79).

²⁰ Gérard argues at length to validate the connection between Hegel’s conception of Science and its foundations in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*: ‘...What Hegel finds in the theory of substance presented by Aristotle in his metaphysics seems to be nothing other—and this will have to be established—than a first formulation of his own conception of truth as stated in the famous passage from the Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*: “In my view, which can be justified only by the exposition of the system itself, everything turns on grasping and expressing the True, not only as *Substance*, but equally as *Subject*.”’ Gérard, ‘Hegel, Reader of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*,’ p. 4 (quoting *PG*, ¶ 17).

²¹ When Hegel addresses Aristotle’s investigations in traditional logic, it becomes clear that Aristotle’s ascent from what is more known to what is more knowable has had a critical influence. Hegel writes, for instance, ‘Aristotle has rendered a never-ending service in having recognized and determined the forms which thought assumes within us. For what interests us is the concrete thought immersed as it is in externalities; these forms constitute a net of eternal activity sunk within it, and the operation of setting in their places those fine threads which are drawn throughout everything...’ (*LHP*, ¶ 219).

²² Alfredo Ferrarin, ‘Hegel on Aristotle’s *Energeia*,’ *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain* 53 (2006), pp. 79–80.

²³ Ferrarin explains, ‘But more important is the fact that the systematic conception within which Hegel is thinking spirit has undergone a change which will never be reversed in his later philosophy: the new structure of the system is that of a Self, the absolute self-consciousness whose foundation is for the first time the concept of life.’ Ferrarin, ‘Hegel on Aristotle’s *Energeia*,’ p. 79.

²⁴ Ferrarin, ‘Hegel on Aristotle’s *Energeia*,’ p. 79.

²⁵ ‘At the end of what is considered his system, Hegel simply apposes one of the most famous passages from Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*; he does not translate the text, which he quotes in Greek, let alone comment on it or explain it. One can hardly imagine a stronger endorsement, especially given the rarity of such unqualified approvals in the Hegelian corpus: Aristotle’s passage on divine thought appears like an authoritative seal affixed to the system of the true.’ Alfredo Ferrarin, *Hegel and Aristotle* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 5.

²⁶ *SW* II/3, pp. 57–8 / *GPP*, pp. 128–9.

²⁷ The anti-Hegelian polemic is becoming apparent. Whereas Hegel will repeatedly criticize proponents of immediate intuition, those who emphasize *that* God exists, for their avoidance of the cognitive labor needed to determine *what* God’s essence might be—e.g. ‘...The immediate consciousness of God goes no further than to tell us *that* he is: to tell us *what* he is would be an act of cognition, involving mediation’ (*EL*, ¶ 73)—Schelling criticizes Hegel’s reactionary focus on *essence* to the exclusion of *existence*. ‘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. 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—for example, the nature of man—remains the same even if there were no people at all on earth, just as the in itself of a geometrical figure remains the same whether or not it exists’ (*SW* II/3, p. 59 / *GPP*, pp. 129–30). Early in the *Encyclopedia Logic* Hegel claims that Reason concerns itself with the in itself of things, or with that which for Kant was unknowable. But, Schelling asks, is this really the *actuality* (ἐνέργεια) of things?

²⁸ ‘Thus, at least regarding everything that occurs in experience, it cannot be an issue for a science of reason to prove *that* it exists; to do so would be superfluous. *What* exists, or more precisely, what will exist...is the task of the science of reason, which allows itself to be realized a priori’ (*SW* II/3, 58 / *BL*, 129).

²⁹ *SW* II/3, p. 103 / *GPP*, p. 161.

³⁰ *SW* II/3, p. 103 / *GPP*, p. 161.

³¹ Schelling's *Freedom* essay sets out to reconstruct the origins of being's unfolding, beginning with the development of a dark ground—*nonbeing*—into matter, by which spirit thence emerges from out of 'the womb of indeterminacy and infinitude of potency' (*SW II/3*, p. 103 / *GPP*, pp. 161-2). Hegel's *Phenomenology*, on the other hand, reconstructs the manner in which ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny in the experience of Spirit's development. Both Hegel and Schelling cultivate seeds sown in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* by further articulating a linearized unfolding whereby 'nature elevates itself step by step toward its end, towards which, as Aristotle says, it is attracted' (*SW II/3*, p. 103 / *GPP*, p. 162). Aristotle, the Neoplatonists, and Spinoza—to name a few major influences—are synthesized in this vision of harmonious progression.

³² *SW II/3*, p. 104 / *GPP*, p. 162.

³³ Marcela García, 'Schelling's Late Negative Philosophy: Crisis and Critique of Pure Reason,' *Comparative and Continental Philosophy* 3, no. 2 (2012), pp. 143-4; p. 146.

³⁴ García, 'Schelling's Late Negative Philosophy,' p. 150. This attempt at Negative Philosophy's consummation occurs in Schelling's *Darstellung der reinrationalen Philosophie*, composed in Berlin from 1846-1854. Its key source of inspiration is explicit: 'The path of purely rational philosophy is based on the search for the primary sense of being in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.' García, 'Schelling's Late Negative Philosophy,' p. 153.

³⁵ García, 'Schelling's Late Negative Philosophy,' p.144. See also Marcela García, 'Energeia vs. Entelecheia: Schelling vs. Hegel on *Metaphysics* Lambda,' *Tópicos, Revista de Filosofía* 51 (2016), pp. 113-137.

³⁶ And reason's 'attempt to *think* actuality, although it can never *know* actuality, gradually empties pure rationality of its content and precipitates its crisis, which ultimately leads to its abandonment.' García, 'Schelling's Late Negative Philosophy,' p. 146.

³⁷ *SW II/3*, p. 59 / *GPP*, p. 129-130.

³⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*, trans. Armand Maurer (Toronto, Canada: PIMS, 1968), p. 55.

³⁹ Laughland traces the affinities regarding the Being in whom *esse* and *essential* are one: 'Indeed, Schelling seemed to call explicitly on Scholastic vocabulary when, having discussed being in general, he turned to the question of God's being and quoted the well-known Latin formula: "In Deo essentia et existential unum idemque sunt." ...Using Latin freely, Schelling trotted off other very Thomist-sounding phrases, one of which in fact is a direct quote from St Thomas' *Tractatus de spiritualis creaturis* – "est ipse suum esse ... suum esse est ipse.'" John Laughland, *Schelling versus Hegel: From German Idealism to Christian Metaphysics* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2016), p. 131.

⁴⁰ Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*, p. 28.

⁴¹ *SW II/3*, p. 104 / *GPP*, p. 162.

⁴² In the context of his larger system, however, Schelling is not construing Negative Philosophy as the product of an erroneous trajectory. To the contrary, Negative and Positive are equally vital to the health of philosophy. Schelling's inversion of his former colleague's progression from negative to positive is meant to expose the principal error of Hegel's system: 'The philosophy that Hegel presented is the negative driven beyond its limits: it does not exclude the positive, but thinks it has subdued it within itself' (*SW II/3*, p. 80 / *GPP*, p. 145). However, in the overblown manner of one who has been hired to stamp out 'the dragon seed of Hegelian pantheism,' and is thus only earning his bread when he sets his advancements over against Hegel's in this way, early in his Berlin lectures Schelling contends hyperbolically that Hegelian philosophy cannot even be deemed negative: 'I am not able to inflict this honor upon it, nor can I even concede that it is the negative, since, on the contrary, its fundamental error consists precisely in that it wants to be positive.' But more particularly, the error rests in reason's claim to be identical with all reality, its claim to *absolute* identity in absolute knowing.

⁴³ Aquinas also believes that we can ascend from experience to knowledge of the First Cause, but here enters the classical distinction echoed in Schelling's late distinction between Negative and Positive Philosophy. Reason alone can know much by way of *natural theology*, but it cannot approach the personal God of theology proper without that God's own free acts of revelation.

⁴⁴ G. W. F. Hegel, *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, trans. H. S. Harris and Walter Cerf (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1977), p. 82. 'The acceptance of the system seems to be passive but this is only because what it articulates is already present in the time's inner core and everyone will soon be proclaiming it in his sphere of science or life.' Hegel, *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, p. 82.

⁴⁵ Hegel, *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, p. 83.

⁴⁶ By *nearly* perfecting it, we add, taking account of García's arguments about Schelling's late return to the task of perfecting Negative Philosophy. Jason M Wirth, "Foreword," in *Historical-critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*, trans. Mason Richey and Markus Zisselsberger (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2007), p. ix.

⁴⁷ Positive Philosophy attends to divine revelation as manifested in all avenues of experience, the realm of nature and of history: ‘The experience toward which positive philosophy proceeds is not just of a *particular kind*, but is the entirety of all experience from beginning to end. What contributes to the proof is not a part of experience, but all of experience. For precisely this reason, though this proof *itself* is not just the beginning or part of a science, it is the entire science, that is, the entire positive philosophy—and this is nothing other than the progressive, strengthening with every step, and continually growing proof of the actually existing God’ (*SW* II/3, p. 130 / *GPP*, p. 181). The seeds of truth in the standpoint dismissed and incorporated early in the *Phenomenology’s* Preface and the *Encyclopedia Logic*, a standpoint which arises in response to “the critical philosophy” and centers on immediate intuition of the divine, the standpoint that leads into Hegel’s famous criticism of Schelling in the Preface, are thus taken up and reincorporated at a higher level in Positive Philosophy’s attention to the outworkings of the divine. In this light, one begins to sense the appeal and potential influence of Schelling’s late response to Hegel at Berlin, on, say, the young Søren Kierkegaard—who eagerly attended Schelling’s early lectures for a few months before growing frustrated, leaving to embark on his own path of ascent via pseudonymous authorship. I have addressed the causes behind Kierkegaard’s early excitement and growing frustration in Chandler D. Rogers, ‘Schelling in the Kierkegaardian Project: Between Kantian Critique and the Second Ethics.’ *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook* 21 (2017), pp. 245-265.