

Schelling: Persistent Legends, Improving Image

VICTOR C. HAYES

Defiance College

The public relations activity in philosophy is an intriguing, though little examined, business. In a recent issue of this journal, Neil R. Luebke provides an interesting example.¹

Luebke calls attention to the trouble Hegel has had with his “image.” He then draws some cold comfort from the fact that Thomas Hobbes also had “image” problems, and quotes Stirling Lamprecht on the way Hobbes’s ideas have been caricatured in Hobbism.

Next, apparently trying to save Hegel’s image, Luebke “smears” Schelling. Schelling is called “Hegel’s erstwhile friend” and is debited with being “largely responsible for the image of Hegel as a concept-mongering rationalist and apriorist.”² (This assignment of “responsibility” is, of course, nonsense. There were far more general and profound reasons for the eclipse of both Schelling and Hegel—as there are for their current revival—and I shall mention them below.)

Finally in this little gossip skirmish in the constant public relations warfare that seems to go on in philosophy (though not only there), Luebke *says* that Walter Kaufmann *says* that Kierkegaard rejected Hegel not on the basis of having read Hegel but because of “the spiteful caricature presented in the lectures of the later Schelling.”³

I suppose all our quoting of who said what about whom could be avoided if we all just had the time, patience, interest, empathy, and objectivity to really study everything that every philosopher ever wrote. Impossible! So it becomes inevitable that we should gossip about one another in philosophy. But what this means is that the qualifications we slowly acquire for *informed* gossiping about some of the gossip about some philosophers becomes an important mark of distinction among us.

Ergo, since this writer has spent a large amount of his time for twelve

¹ Neil R. Luebke, “Hegel’s Image and His Views on Social Authority,” *The Southwestern Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. II, 1 and 2 (1971), pp. 139–51.

² *Ibid.*, p. 140.

³ *Ibid.*

years translating and trying to understand the “later” Schelling—that is, the 2,000 pages of Schelling’s *Philosophy of Mythology and Revelation*—and exploring a corner of the Schelling literature (now more than 1,000 volumes), he will make bold to claim enough qualification to justify discussing some of the gossip about Schelling. As a victim of ignorance, misrepresentation, and neglect, Schelling has few equals. But a better day is dawning!

It is almost two hundred years since the birth of one of Germany’s greatest philosophic geniuses: Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling (1775–1854). Yet legends still persist about the man, his ideas (particularly his mature thought), and his place in the history of philosophy. Three misrepresentations in particular stand in the way of responsible historical assessment, and it is now the purpose of this article to identify them and repudiate them.

Schelling is *not* merely “the link between Fichte and Hegel.” His thought is *not* a series of discrete systems, but possesses a fundamental continuity. His philosophy does *not* degenerate into obscurantism, but rises to a magnificent and comprehensive vision.

In 1954, Professor E. Fackenheim drew attention to the conventional opinion which dismissed Schelling’s philosophy in terms of a three-fold condemnation: “that it consists of a number of more or less disconnected systems; that none of these is properly worked out; and that from 1804 on, they get worse and worse.”⁴

A good example of a customary indifference to Schelling is to be seen in Bertrand Russell’s dismissal of the whole of Schelling’s *Collected Works*—twelve 600-page volumes—in three cursory sentences which bear the partial image of the conventional stereotype: Fichte’s immediate successor, Schelling was more amiable but not less subjective. He is closely associated with the German Romantics; philosophically, though famous in his day, he is not important. The important development from Kant’s philosophy was that of Hegel.⁵

Let us now briefly examine these three legends about Schelling.

Legend I—that Schelling is to be dismissed as merely the link between Fichte and Hegel.

Undoubtedly it was John Watson who did much to spread this legend among English-speaking philosophers. In Watson’s view (1882), Schelling’s only significance is as a link in the supposed gene-

⁴ E. Fackenheim, “Schelling’s Conception of Positive Philosophy,” *Review of Metaphysics*, Vol. VII, 4 (1954), p. 563.

⁵ Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York, 1945), pp. 703, 718.

alogical series Kant-Fichte-Schelling-Hegel. Schelling is “only Hegel in germ and Hegel with much that is most valuable in him left out.”⁶

A number of Schelling students have attacked this facile dismissal of Schelling. Croce, for example, mentions Leo Tolstoy’s warning against “supposed genealogical series” (e.g., that of Balzac-Flaubert-Zola) and insists that “every genius begins again from the beginning, and is born only of himself.” “The problems of Fichte,” Croce continues, “are not those of Kant, nor the problems of Schelling those of Fichte, and so on, and if the later seem to arise out of the earlier it is because the later thought is richer and contains the earlier.”⁷

Walter Schulz is a recent voice calling for a revision of the conventional view that German Idealism developed from the early Fichte, through the early Schelling, to its consummation in Hegel. Such a view, Schulz insists, “overlooks the fact that both the late Fichte and the late Schelling conceived ways of putting the philosophical question which were not and could not be approached by Hegel.”⁸ Hermann Zeltner concurs: these three great philosophers of German Idealism are “so individualistic that it is scarcely possible to bring them to a common denominator.” He adds:

There is serious opposition among them which is by no means merely personal. Certainly Schelling and Hegel stand closer to one another than either does to Fichte, and Dilthey’s attempt at classification—one which contrasts Fichte’s Idealism of Freedom with the Objective Idealism of Schelling and Hegel—surely touches on something essential. But later there arise between Schelling and Hegel oppositions which, if it be possible, are even more violent and insuperable.⁹

Already in 1890 the distortion involved in viewing Schelling only in terms of this genealogical series had been noted and refuted by Lucien Herr,¹⁰ but the legend lived on. In 1927, T. L. Haering could declare:

In no other case has the history of philosophy been so roughly treated in its psychological and historical relations of dependence as with the pretended line of descent: Kant-Fichte-Schelling-Hegel. In

⁶ John Watson, *Schelling’s Transcendental Idealism* (Chicago, 1882), pp. 3, 193, 251.

⁷ Benedetto Croce, *History as the Story of Liberty* (Meridian M17; First published in English in 1941), p. 328.

⁸ Walter Schulz, *Die Vollendung des deutschen Idealismus in der Spätphilosophie Schellings* (Stuttgart, 1955), Foreword.

⁹ Hermann Zeltner, *Schelling* (Stuttgart, 1954), p. 1. My translation.

¹⁰ Croce, *History as the Story of Liberty*, p. 328. Croce refers to Herr’s article on Hegel in the *Grande Encyclopedie*. It may now be consulted in Herr, *Choix d’écrits* (Paris, 1932), I, pp. 117–19.

no other case have the relative originality and the independent development of personality been so sacrificed to a scheme of logical construction apparently simple and luminous.¹¹

Finally, in 1936, James Gutmann could describe this supposed line of descent as “a misreading of the history of modern philosophy,” and remind us that Schelling might be better linked to a philosophic tradition that has often passed as theology. It is true, as Professor Gutmann points out, that a strong resemblance exists between “the Problems and preoccupations of Schelling’s thought and those of Neo-Platonic Christianity in Patristic writings, in the Lutheran Reformation and in traditional Protestant mysticism.”¹²

Legend II—that Schelling’s thought is a loose series of discrete systems.

It is true that simple inspection of the titles in the long list of Schelling’s works is enough to make one wonder: Is this philosophy merely a loose series of very different philosophies? Or are there systematic connections, threads hidden perhaps beneath the surface, which provide continuity and coherence? C. M. Schröder believes this question of the inner unity of Schelling’s philosophy might be seen as the central question in Schelling studies, and he has drawn attention to some of the varied and opposed estimates.¹³

There are those for whom disunity, discontinuity, and continual transformation are the chief features of Schelling’s philosophical development. O. Braun (1906, 1907)¹⁴ considered Schelling’s thought to have undergone major recastings, and discerned “several completely different concepts of God.” Jaganath Das Choudhury (1926)¹⁵ doubted that Schelling was even aware of the breaks between the various periods of his development. For Windelband (1878–1880), there were five chief divisions in this development, and when Schelling insisted that all his writings were just “pieces of a whole,” Windelband decided that we could do the philosopher no greater injustice than to “take him at his word.”¹⁶ Typical of those historians of philosophy

¹¹ T. L. Haering, *Hegel, sein Wollen und sein Werk* (Leipzig-Berlin, 1929), I, pp. 56f. Quoted in Croce, *History As the Story of Liberty*, p. 328.

¹² James Gutmann, *Schelling: Of Human Freedom* (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1936), p. lii.

¹³ C. M. Schröder, *Das Verhältnis von Heidentum und Christentum in Schellings Philosophie der Mythologie und Offenbarung* (München, 1936), pp. 11–15.

¹⁴ O. Braun, “Die Entwicklung des Gottesbegriffes bei Schelling,” *Zeitschrift für Philosophie und philosophische Kritik*, Bd. 131 (1907), pp. 113, 141. Also O. Braun, *Schellings geistige Wandlungen in den Jahren 1800–10* (Jena, 1906).

¹⁵ J. D. Choudhury, *Das Unendlichkeitsproblem in Schellings Philosophie* (Berlin, 1926), p. 16.

¹⁶ W. Windelband, *History of Modern Philosophy* (First German Edition 1878–80), II, 4, p. 239.

who lightheartedly perpetuate this notion is R. A. Tsanoff (1953), who assures us: "In his speculative voyages [Schelling] sailed through four or five systems of thought."¹⁷ Finally, we may cite an early view, that of J. E. Erdmann (1874), who considered the Identity System (with its "Naturalism enthusiastic for antiquity") and the Later Philosophy (with its "Theosophy reminiscent of the Middle Ages") to be unbridgeable opposites, the inner agreement of which Schelling nowhere demonstrates.¹⁸

Now there can be no denying the fact that between Schelling's youth and old age a great deal occurs. His philosophical reflection is a restless process, and it is possible to point to a succession of phases, interests, and influences: the early period under the influence of Fichte's Ego-philosophy; the Romantic Philosophy of Nature which attempted to show the indwelling of the potential spirit in all objects and its coming to fulfillment in man; the Identity-system which developed to the extreme the Spinozistic principle of the ontological unity of everything in the eternal Substance, viz., the Absolute which is beyond all antitheses, beyond subject and object, spirit and matter, ideal and real; the Philosophy of Art in which art became a religion-substitute, and artistic intuition the way to see God; the Philosophy of Freedom; and the final Philosophy of Mythology and Revelation, an examination of religious consciousness which became a form of speculative theism.

Despite these transformations, however, there is strong testimony from those who see no breaks in the development of Schelling's thought. Hubert Beckers (1875),¹⁹ for example, considered Schelling's whole philosophy to be but a continuance of the principle of Freedom—"the freedom and independence of the spirit" is its underlying theme. Eduard von Hartmann (1897)²⁰ sought to establish an underlying unity, although he thought this could be done only by ignoring the "romantic-reactionary" features of the Late-Philosophy. E. Schertel (1911)²¹ regarded Schelling's system as "an organic structure" in which the beginning resides in the end and the end in the beginning. Paul Genth (1926)²² saw the problems of Schellingian philosophy as forming, by and large, the constants, while their solutions provided the variables. In 1923, Kuno Fischer²³ distinguished three or four epochs

¹⁷ R. A. Tsanoff, *The Great Philosophers* (New York, 1953), p. 469.

¹⁸ J. E. Erdman, *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, (1874), III, 2, p. 541.

¹⁹ H. Beckers, *Schellings Geistesentwicklung in ihrem inneren Zusammenhang* (Munich, 1875), p. 28.

²⁰ E. von Hartmann, *Schellings philosophische System* (Leipzig, 1897), p. 221.

²¹ E. Schertel, *Schellings Metaphysik der Persönlichkeit* (Jena, 1911), p. 14.

²² P. Genth, *Die Identitätsphilosophie Schellings in ihrem Verhältnis zur Religion* (Würzburg, 1926), p. 11.

and yet insisted that “nowhere is there an affirmative, definite break” in Schelling’s developing thought. And E. Stamm (1930)²⁴ was convinced that the later philosophy offered a synthesis of all the earlier periods.

Two decades earlier, Paul Tillich had come to the same conclusion as Stamm. Tillich’s early work on Schelling (1912)²⁵ understood the antinomies in Schelling’s thought as having their reconciliation and synthesis in the Last-Philosophy, especially that primary and most profound antinomy between mysticism (the feeling of unity with the Absolute) and the consciousness of guilt. The Last-Philosophy (*The Philosophy of Mythology and Revelation*) is but a completion of the beginnings, the over-arching unity of opposites and periods. In similar vein, Walter Schulz (1955) expressed the conviction that Schelling remained an idealist to the end, carrying idealism to its extreme limit.²⁶ And Gabriel Marcel (1957), in supporting Schulz’ thesis, observes: “The importance of this (thesis) was stressed for us by Heidegger last summer.”²⁷

The conviction that there was much less discontinuity in Schelling’s thought than some had previously imagined was encouraged by the publication of a text discovered in 1913 by Franz Rosenzweig. As Marcel points out,²⁸ this text—“Das älteste Systemprogramm des deutschen Idealismus”—dates from 1796 when Schelling was only twenty-one. Admittedly, it does not bear the author’s name and is written in the hand of Hegel, but Rosenzweig, Schulz, Jaspers, and others are convinced that the text is Schelling’s and find in it a program which corresponds in advance to the complete development of a philosophy whose direction has in reality remained constant. It is here, for instance, that we hear the call for a Mythology of Reason, a mythology in the service of the idea. Philosophy must become mythological!²⁹ Father Copleston, who also discerns a visible continuity in Schelling’s thought, cites this System-program as evidence and summarizes as follows:

²³ Kuno Fischer, *Schellings Leben, Werke, Lehre* (Heidelberg, 1923), Fourth Edition. (This is the Vol. VII of Fischer’s *Geschichte der neuern Philosophie*), p. 690.

²⁴ E. Stamm, *Der Begriff des Geistes bei Schelling* (Göttingen, 1930), p. 8.

²⁵ Paul Tillich, *Mystik und Schuldbewusstsein in Schellings philosophischer Entwicklung* (Gutersloh, 1912).

²⁶ Schulz, *Die Vollendung des deutschen Idealismus in der Spätphilosophie Schellings*.

²⁷ G. Marcel, “Schelling fut-il un precurseur de la philosophie de l’existence?” *Revue de Metaphysique et de Morale*, 1 (1957), p. 74.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 74f.

²⁹ See the discussion in Schulz, *Die Vollendung des deutschen Idealismus in der Spätphilosophie Schellings*, pp. 304-306.

The projected system would proceed from the idea of the ego or self as an absolutely free being by way of the positing of the non-ego to the sphere of speculative physics. It would then proceed to the sphere of the human spirit. The principles of historical development would have to be laid down, and the ideas of a moral world, of God and of the freedom of all spiritual beings would have to be developed. Further, the central importance of the idea of beauty would have to be shown, and the aesthetic character of the highest act of reason. Finally, there would have to be a new mythology, uniting philosophy and religion.³⁰

Father Copleston finds this projected program of the young Schelling illuminating:

On the one hand it illustrates the element of discontinuity in Schelling's thought. For the fact that he proposes to start from the ego reveals the influence of Fichte, an influence which grew progressively less as time went on. On the other hand, the program illustrates the element of continuity in Schelling's philosophizing. For it envisages the development of a philosophy of Nature, a philosophy of history, a philosophy of art, a philosophy of freedom and a philosophy of religion and mythology, themes which were to occupy his attention in turn. In other words, though Schelling at first gave the impression of being a disciple of Fichte, his interests and bent of mind were already apparent at the beginning of his career.³¹

Today, then, one may feel assured that Schelling's philosophy is no mere succession of discrete systems, but a continuous reflection, each solution raising further problems requiring new solutions. "The modern student who fails to perceive a connection," warns Emil Fackenheim, "does well to suspect that the fault lies, not with Schelling, but with himself."³² We may even speak of a planned continuity in which, in a sense, the beginning and the end of Schelling's philosophizing coincide.

Legend III—*that Schelling's thought degenerates into obfuscation and obscurantism.*

This third legend began even before the publication of Schelling's Last-Philosophy. For the Berlin lectures (1841-42) were prematurely

³⁰ F. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy* (Image Books Ed., 1965), Vol. 7, part I, p. 126. For Copleston, the whole of Schelling's thought is "linked together by the theme of the relation between the finite and the infinite."

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² E. Fackenheim, "Schelling's Conception of Positive Philosophy," p. 565.

and poorly published “by an enemy of Schelling” and this “made him many critics,” as Tillich has pointed out.³³

Numerous harsh and even contemptuous comments may be found among those who bothered to take note of the appearance of the *Philosophy of Mythology and Revelation*. Michelet (1843), the Hegelian, declared it “a shameful apostasy such as has never been committed in the history of philosophy.”³⁴ Ferdinand Christian Baur decided the lectures were “balderdash” and wondered how anyone could build so much on so little.³⁵ Rosenkranz (1843) chided: “It appears that some attach the adjective ‘Christian’ to a thought, like a figleaf, as if they had to be ashamed of it in its nakedness.”³⁶ And Edward Zeller concluded that the whole system was “a verbose, muddled, abstruse Scholasticism; a disagreeable mixture of speculation, . . . cloudy theosophy, arbitrary Biblical exegesis and ecclesiastical dogma.”³⁷

Can such judgments possibly be fair-minded? It seems quite clear that they are not. Schelling’s critics, as Fackenheim has observed, were either theologians, positivists, or Hegelians, and what Schelling had to say pleased none of them.

If they were theologians, they looked to Schelling for an apologetic which they did not get, nor were meant to get. If they were positivists, they had even less sympathy with Schelling than with Hegel. And if they were Hegelians (as most of them were), they saw the most important criterion of judgment in systematic completeness, the very point in which Schelling was weakest; further, they were bound to regard his developments after 1804 as an aberration or an outright betrayal.³⁸

³³ Paul Tillich, *Perspectives on 19th and 20th Century Protestant Theology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 150. The unauthorized publications of Schelling’s lectures were by Frauenstadt (*Schellings Vorlesungen in Berlin*, Berlin, 1842) and by Paulus (*Die endlich offenbar gewordene positive Philosophie der Offenbarung, der allgemein Prüfung dargelegt* von H. E. G. Paulus, Darmstadt, 1843). Karl Schelling edited and officially published his father’s *Collected Works* in 1856–61.

³⁴ Michelet, *Entwicklungsgeschichte der neuesten deutschen Philosophie* (Berlin, 1843), p. 130. Quoted in E. Fackenheim’s “Schelling’s Philosophy of Religion,” *The University of Toronto Quarterly*, Vol. XXII, 1 (1952), p. 1.

³⁵ F. C. Baur, *Geschichte der christlichen Kirche*, Vol. V, Part III, p. 405. Baur uses the word “Galimathias,” i.e., jumble of words, grandiloquent nonsense.

³⁶ Rosenkranz, *Schelling* (Danzig, 1843), p. xxxiv. Quoted in Fackenheim, “Schelling’s Philosophy of Religion,” p. 1.

³⁷ Eduard Zeller, *Geschichte der deutschen Philosophie*, Second Edition, (Munich, 1875), pp. 560–62. Also quoted in Kuno Fischer, *Schellings Leben, Werke, Lehre*, pp. 715f.

³⁸ Fackenheim, “Schelling’s Conception of Positive Philosophy,” p. 564.

This negative barrage from Schelling's contemporaries and near contemporaries must be seen, however, against the background fact that times were changing! The last half of the nineteenth century saw new interests in metaphysics, religion, and politics; new-found faiths in materialism and economic man; a renewed natural science which, like the science of history and its associated disciplines, was moving away from idealism toward a nonspeculative Positivism; distinct shifts in the focus of theological attention (away, for example, from the mid-century concern with Christology)—such changes, all of which should be looked at critically, meant that for Schelling's mature thought there was no longer climate or audience.

One final reason for rejection of Schelling's work should be noted. Earlier in the century, as Zeltner has noted, Idealist philosophy had been "an essential factor in the formation of the new world-view of the German middle class." It had claimed scientific character and at the same time largely assumed the function of poetry and even of religion. Its identification with the German middle class, however, meant that Idealism "was to experience with peculiar intensity the attacks of the anti-bourgeois thinkers which arose after the mid-century against this world-view—in particular, the opposition of Kierkegaard, Marx and Nietzsche."³⁹ Schelling, of course, had moved far beyond his own earlier Idealism, but still he never *repudiated* its insights—"how should I give up that philosophy which I myself founded earlier, the discovery of my youth."⁴⁰ It seems that in addition to everything else, Schelling was also a victim of guilt by association.

A Positive Approach

Accumulated prejudice, ignorance, and neglect of Schelling's Spätphilosophie, *The Philosophy of Mythology and Revelation*, do not alter the fact that the work represents an original and profound attempt at a reconciliation of Philosophy and Religion, of Intellect and Will, of Reason and Faith. Its ninety lectures which came to fill four volumes (2,000 pages) were produced between 1825 and 1854, although its roots go right back to the works of Schelling's youth. It is impossible here to indicate the amazing complexity of this work, let alone offer any criticisms of it. But we can, at least, indicate the way in which the whole, in general, is conceived.

In Schelling's magnificent vision, *God himself becomes* in his world and especially in the world's religious consciousness. *Mythology* (=

³⁹ Hermann Zeltner, *Schelling*, p. 4. My translation.

⁴⁰ Schelling, *Works* (Munchner Jubiläumdruck), VI, p. 758. The words are from his *First Lecture in Berlin*, No. 15, 1841.

“Paganism” = the non-Christian religions) has to be explained. So Schelling examines “all actual and possible” explanations (religious and non-religious), exploring the origins of mythologies, languages and peoples, and distinguishing various stages in man’s religious development. He concludes that Mythology is a necessary *theogonic process* with objective and universal meaning; and man is the being who necessarily seeks after and posits God.

The “birth of the gods” actually and historically takes place. From the unconscious depths of reality in which men have their roots, powers emerge to grasp man, and the theogonic process unfolds in human consciousness as its source and *subjectum agens*. Since God is understood as pluralizing himself and creating himself step by step as the true God, his completeness and perfection lie at the end of the process, not at the beginning. He cannot be the object of rational proofs, for the “proof” of God’s existence is literally the whole history of man.

We discern history’s meaning when we see it as the age-long process by which the divine, through the instrument of human freedom and through an eternal mediation, overcomes estrangement through love. The resultant dynamic, evolutionary theology (metaphysics) makes possible a new understanding of Good and Evil, Creation and History, Church and Culture.

Metaphysically, the problem of the Last-Philosophy is to understand how this necessary theogonic process is possible. In the section entitled “Pure Rational Philosophy” Schelling carefully traces the successive liberations of *reason* from past “authorities” and its emerging autonomy in modern philosophy. He then develops a speculative metaphysics in which an autonomous reason seeks—through a form of induction or rational dialectic—to find the structure of (noetic) reality and its first principle. Result: if there is an historical succession of gods (i.e., a mythological process), it will be determined by the logical succession of the moments or potencies of being itself. This “pure rationalism” is the “negative” aspect of Schelling’s overall task which is the development of “philosophical religion.”

The “positive” (= existentialist) aspect is the working out of the Philosophy of *Revelation*—its nature and content. Against the vast background of mythological religion, Christianity appears as its truth and fulfillment and end. Revelation is the free and gracious act of God in which he overcomes the effect of the Fall and negates the principle of his own wrath. Reason alone gives us no certainty that God is Redeemer or even Creator, but Revelation discloses it. That is, we *know* what God *wills* because of what he *does* in both Creation and Redemption. The divine will could never be known *a priori*—it is “beyond

reason,” *κρεγτων τον λογισμ*—but it is not therefore unintelligible. Reason can make intelligible the divine decision and act, producing Philosophical Religion (religion of the Spirit) which transforms “blind” faith into understanding and free affirmation.

Ultimately, Satan and Christ—the Devil and the Logos, Wrath and Love, Darkness and Light—are seen as principles in the divine economy, moments in the “higher history” of the life of God. Since the Philosophy of Mythology “can comprehend the *content* of Mythology but cannot *explain* its existence,” a higher explanatory context is needed, and this the Philosophy of Revelation provides.

“Philosophical Religion,” as the fulfillment of both “Mythological Religion” and “Revealed Religion,” emerges as that faith of the future, that “courage to be,” in which all mankind will one day be united. In that day the structures of self-will, of estrangement and destruction, shall be finally done away. In that day, Christian and non-Christian, pious and cultured, church and world, will come together in the unity and truth of a free “religion-less” religion of all mankind—an authentically *human* truth.

Let’s say good-bye to those legends about Schelling. He is *not* merely the link between Fichte and Hegel, but a profoundly original thinker. His thought is *not* a series of discrete systems but possesses a fundamental coherence. His philosophy does *not* descend into obscurantism, but evolves into a vast and carefully articulated Philosophy of Religion. We may not choose to follow Schelling, but there is no doubt that his Last-Philosophy intelligibly illuminates the significance of human life and of the whole cosmic process.