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Figuring the Self

*Subject, Absolute, and Others
in Classical German Philosophy*

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40. *Fichte-Studien*, p. 312f, #62.
41. *Critique of Judgment*, p. 99 (emphasis added).
42. *Critique of Judgment*, p. 106.
43. Cf. Friedrich Hölderlin, *Essays and Letters on Theory*, tr. Thomas Pfau (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1988), p. 11, and R. Haym, *ibid.*, pp. 301–02.
44. "On the Law of Freedom," in Hölderlin, *Essays*, pp. 33–34.
45. Hölderlin, *Essays*, p. 37.
46. Cf. Fichte, *Science of Knowledge*, 110.
47. Hölderlin, *Essays*, pp. 20ff.
48. This aspect of Hölderlin's thought, Henrich points out, probably owes much to Hölderlin's "projection of Spinoza onto the *Science of Knowledge*" (*Konstellationen*, p. 74).
49. Hölderlin, *Essays*, p. 26.
50. Friedrich Hölderlin, *Hyperion or the Hermit in Greece*, tr. W. R. Trask (New York: Ungar, 1965), p. 90.
51. *Hyperion*, p. 91.
52. *Hyperion*, p. 76.
53. *Hyperion*, p. 91.
54. *Hyperion*, p. 57.
55. Cf. *Hyperion*, p. 93.
56. "Reflection," in Hölderlin, *Essays*, p. 46.
57. *Hyperion*, p. 114.
58. "Reflection," in Hölderlin, *Essays*, p. 45.
59. "The Ground for 'Empedocles,'" in Hölderlin, *Essays*, p. 60.
60. Cf. Ernst Cassirer, "Hölderlin und der deutsche Idealismus," in *Hölderlin: Beiträge zu seinem Verständnis in unserm Jahrhundert*, Alfred Kellert, ed. (Tübingen, 1961), p. 115.
61. *Critique of Judgment*, p. 420.
62. *Fichte-Studien*, p. 297, #8.

Realizing Nature in the Self: Schelling on Art and Intellectual Intuition in the *System of Transcendental Idealism*

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In the year 1800 Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (1775–1854) published his *System of Transcendental Idealism*, the work which is most responsible for this philosopher's reputation as the successor to Kant and Fichte, and as the immediate forerunner of the mature Hegel. This writing indeed presents features of two kinds of philosophical inquiry: the transcendental analysis of the conditions of self-relatedness developed by Kant and Fichte, and the beginnings of the dialectical mediation of self and other associated most closely with Hegel. In what follows I shall raise an issue that indicates the distinctive interest and independent worth of this major philosophical essay.¹ The *System* brings the Idealist discussion of the self-relatedness of the "I" to a critical stage. For in its attempt to achieve a final integration of Fichte's starting point with Schelling's recently developed natural philosophy, it constitutes a turning point in the systematic program of Idealism. As I will argue, the critical point is most manifest in the treatment of art. The relation between this treatment and problems surfacing in the project of basing a comprehensive system on the infinite activity of the prediscursive "I" or self, sheds much light on the subsequent course of Idealist thought. In order to address this relation I must briefly consider three pairs of ideas in the *System*: (1) eros and totality, (2) system and consciousness, and (3) nature and preestablished harmony. I shall then proceed to discuss two of Schelling's declarations on art: (4) that art is the true organon of philosophy and brings about unity in philosophical knowledge; and (5) that the art of genius resolves the fundamental contradiction in being, thereby completing the system of philosophy.

First, a preliminary statement about the System of 1800 is in order, to set forth some of the terms of the problem of this essay. The central idea of the System is the "infinite gulf or contradiction" between the primordial infinite productive activity at the origin of all being, life, and spirit, and the same activity's effort to give itself objective and conscious form. The ground of existence is an infinite striving that can never fully realize itself. To "objectify" itself it must give itself finite form, and no such form satisfactorily actualizes its infinity. Yet this striving is not an infinite chaos of despair or an irrational blundering desire. The gulf inherent within the activity between striving and achievement makes possible the appearance of finite selves, minds, and worlds, which dwell as it were in the space between longing and never-achieved resolution. The world we inhabit is a largely comprehensible order formed by the successive spatiotemporal unfolding of the activity of an absolute self that is unable to intuit itself simultaneously.² Yet comprehension of this ground surpasses the finite categories of discursive rational thought. Schelling makes the extraordinary claim in the concluding sixth chapter of the System of 1800 that art, alone among forms of human intuition, is able to offer an intuition of the nonobjectifiable infinite activity of the absolute self. To the extent it is possible, the artistic productivity of genius brings about a resolution—at least for human experience—of the striving of the infinite activity. I wish to explore the meaning of this claim and its implications for Schelling's thinking about the goal of attaining systematic completeness in philosophy.

At the same time, I want to indicate something that I cannot actually discuss here: that Schelling's position is of much interest for the understanding of high claims made for art and the aesthetic in post-Hegelian philosophy, above all in Nietzsche and Heidegger.³ For Schelling, artistic intuition enables philosophy to achieve a comprehension of totality that overcomes the dichotomies of reason and nature, of the conscious and the unconscious. In other words, art achieves a level of thinking beyond discursive reason that complements and fulfills, but does not invalidate, discursive reason. Schelling's central ambition (at least until 1809) is to provide a justification, or "theodicy," of reason in the form of a systematic completion of all of the various demands of reason (metaphysical, moral, religious, and aesthetic). This ambition, which he shares with Kant, Fichte, and Hegel, sets his views on art apart from those of Nietzsche and Heidegger. Yet Schelling's position has certain difficulties, and these help to clarify three things: (1) why Schelling abandons giving to artistic genius the systematic function of resolving contradiction shortly after the System, although art remains quite central to all later phases of his thinking; (2) why Hegel, consistently maintaining the goal of a systematic justification of reason, would grant a smaller role to art; (3) why the revival in Nietzsche and Heidegger of philosophic priority for poetry and art would be accompanied by a rejection of a theodicy of reason. I shall return to these issues (but only

fleetingly) at the close of the essay, when I conclude with the theme of "genius." My purpose in this short discussion is only to present some basic points of orientation for evaluating the significance of the System for later European philosophy.

EROS AND TOTALITY

Schelling many times reformulated and reconceived the basic problem of how the infinite ontological ground (whether conceived as self-intuition in 1800 or as the absolute identity of subject and object after 1800) relates to finite existence, including the finite conscious minds of human beings. In the System of 1800, Schelling conceives this problem in terms of eros regarded as dialectically striving reason. Here I want to introduce a rather broad historical observation. It can be said that German Idealism rediscovered, for modern thought, the Platonic notion of erotic reason. In spite of its centrality, the "erotic" strain in this tradition has been mostly neglected by its later adherents and interpreters. Yet one cannot make sense of the thought of any of the German Idealists without noting that reason is in each one characterized as a striving for self-actualization.⁴ Already in Kant, the striving for the unconditioned is regarded as essential to reason, and also as forcing reason into a "dialectic" of fundamental perplexities. Reason is compelled by its striving for totality to raise questions which it is unable to answer. Since Kant connects this striving with a revised notion of the Platonic "idea," the sense of eros is certainly present, as well.⁵ For Kant the real urgency of the critical inquiry lies in its resolution of this dialectic, so that the striving of reason for totality will not turn into a nihilistic rejection of reason. In other words, the erotic striving of reason is in some sense legitimate, for reason cannot be reason without it. But all the same that striving must be satisfied in some nontheoretical fashion, since speculative metaphysics, that is, all efforts to find a totality in nature or being, must fail. Kant's proposed solution is to satisfy reason's demand for the unconditioned by the endless practical striving toward the highest good—by the "primacy of practical reason."

One can put the general point about erotic reason in German Idealism as follows. In a manner that is much beholden to Rousseau, the leading Idealists (Kant, Fichte, Schleiermacher, Hölderlin, Novalis, Schelling, and Hegel) reinterpreted the modern self and subjectivity in terms of the dialectical striving of an antinomic reason to arrive at unity with itself.⁶ Struggling on a path of manifold forms of alienation, which make up human history, the self strives after a satisfactory recognition of its own essence, in the complete realization of its free activity. Thus, reason can be seen as dynamic and erotic; but in this modern version of eros, the striving of reason does not culminate in a contemplation of a

supersensible world of ideas or the divine intellect, but in an ultimate self-legislation or self-intuition that realizes a self-projected ideal. The new erotic reason achieves a degree of systematic integration and totality never before attempted or imagined. Yet each system of German Idealism seeks to improve on its predecessors, which it regards as having failed to account adequately for self-unity. The Kantian system, while aiming at an ultimate legislative unification of reason, leaves matters at a bifurcation: pure practical reason, with its noumenal basis in self-legislative freedom, is separated from the laws of phenomenal nature determined by the categories of the understanding. Fichte's revision of critical philosophy is animated by the desire to overcome that dichotomy. His account of the productive self-intuition of reason, uniting practical and theoretical, becomes the starting-point for the later Idealist systems that seek greater unity, integration, wholeness, and concreteness than Kant provides.

Schelling's philosophy is a series of attempts to achieve a genuine totality, and initially he builds on Fichte's principle of self-intuition. At the same time, his restless quest is constantly disturbed by a sense of the elusiveness of this totality, which awareness is connected with his sense of the questionableness of systematic solutions based on conscious and discursive thinking alone.⁷ Perhaps for these reasons he is the most truly "Platonic" of all the idealists. Unlike Hegel, he cannot remain satisfied with absolute conceptual mediation, although his philosophy of identity between 1801–1804 comes close to that position. But unlike Kant and Fichte, who have open-ended systems of limitless striving (what Hegel calls "bad infinity"), Schelling strongly insists that human striving not be understood as the effort to master nature as the other (or the "not-self") of our self-conscious willing. Nature instead is the other as our deeper self, the true ground of the more superficial conscious self. The goal of striving is not to incorporate this other into the conscious self through subordinating it to the morally superior will. Unconditioned moral autonomy is not the highest standpoint; there is a yet deeper freedom than human moral freedom which is at work, although not yet realized, in the preconscious powers of nature.⁸ True systematic completeness (such as was sought by Kant and Fichte) comprehending both nature and freedom, is possible only if preconscious intuition is the starting point in the account of reason. For natural beings and human free rationality can have a common intelligible ground only in such intuition as precedes the self-objectification of the conscious mind.⁹

SYSTEM AND CONSCIOUSNESS

While having learned from Fichte that the self is a self-intuiting and self-producing act (the *Tathandlung* of intellectual intuition) that does not rest on a

prior substrate, and that cannot be related to any such substrate without paradox, Schelling claims to be able to demonstrate the existence of the infinite activity of self-intuition in nature, prior to its appearance in the conscious human self.¹⁰ This claim gives rise to the philosophy of nature and thus to Schelling's early departure from Fichte.¹¹ Whereas in Schelling's view Fichte is the creator of the true "doctrine of science," which uncovers the first principle of intellectual intuition for a true system of philosophy, Fichte did not provide the system itself. This system must include an account of nature—both in its otherness and in its identity with the human spirit.¹² The aim of Schelling's account is to release and actualize the hidden freedom lying in nature and to disclose its identity with our deeper selves. The introduction to the *System* of 1800 describes that aim, or what it calls the principle task of philosophy, as the explanation of the coincidence or agreement (*Übereinstimmung*) between subject and object, or intelligence and nature. Natural philosophy, in which Schelling had already composed substantial treatises, argues toward that coincidence from the objective pole. The present work on transcendental idealism argues toward it from the subjective pole. Together the two parallel approaches constitute the whole system of knowledge.

Transcendental idealism shows that the coincidence can be developed from the conditions of subjectivity, since this coincidence is presumed by both knowing and acting, by both theoretical philosophy and practical philosophy. Hence transcendental idealism will uncover the common ground of the theoretical and the practical, much as did Fichte's *Doctrine of Science*. It does so also in a fashion that recalls Fichte, by philosophical reconstruction of the constitutive activity of consciousness that goes unnoticed by ordinary consciousness. Philosophical thought is here engaged in watching ordinary consciousness gradually disclose its own essence, and thus also its ultimate identity with the principle of nature. But Schelling also makes clear his view that the Fichtean philosopher has not achieved that identity solely through grasping in consciousness the principle of identity, in the form of the "postulate" of intellectual intuition. As we shall see, this is because the fulfilling mediation, or achievement of identity, cannot occur simply on the plane of conscious reflection, either as thought or action. The final mediation indeed is of an ontological, not solely reflective, sort. It must actualize a harmony between nature and the human spirit which, while already somehow latent and preestablished, is also disrupted by human consciousness.¹³

The demand for a comprehensive system in Schelling is, in one sense, only taking further the efforts of Reinhold and Fichte to develop an improved, more integrated version of the critical philosophy, by modifying Kant's doctrine of the transcendental unity of apperception so that it yields a unitary reason that is at once theoretical and practical.¹⁴ Yet Schelling's version of such a system is profoundly ambiguous, and it becomes so precisely in the way it demands

completeness. For in requiring the conscious human spirit to recognize itself in the infinite activity of its other, that is, nonhuman nature, it discloses an impossible tension, or as Schelling says, an "infinite contradiction."¹⁵ The true self that the human spirit discovers in nature—the hidden infinite unconscious self beneath the apparent finite conscious self—is a self whose objectification by the finite categories of discursive reason is quite impossible. It would seem that the effort to complete the system of reason opens up an abyss, the necessary elusiveness of the unity of being and hence of all "system." The modern (post-Cartesian) striving for satisfaction in universal foundations would seem to result paradoxically in an insight that endangers all systematic aspirations. Schelling indeed states in the System that philosophy is compelled to return to its primordial origins in myth and poetry, lying on the other side of discursive reason; but it does so precisely in order to fulfill its systematic aspirations. Eventually Schelling is forced by the logic of his position, that is, by the eros that demands a relation to something beyond the conscious self, to move beyond modern systematic thought. But he is not ready to take that step in 1800, when he argues that art can complete the system of knowledge, by providing the objectification that discursive categories cannot provide.

NATURE AND PREESTABLISHED HARMONY

It seems that the boldest of speculative leaps is taking place when, in the concluding sixth part of the System of 1800, Schelling claims that "art is the only true and eternal organon and document of philosophy."¹⁶ This claim, unprecedented in the history of Western philosophy,¹⁷ is intelligible only as the conclusion of an argument from the premises of the System, which include a Leibnizian-Spinozist natural philosophy revised by Fichtean idealism, and a Kantian effort to provide a link between nature and freedom through art and teleological reflection. I shall offer brief descriptions of these premises and then show that they are necessary but not sufficient to account for Schelling's view of art as providing the ultimate unifying horizon that completes the system of reason.

The post-Kantian who restores Leibniz's principle of preestablished harmony is Schelling. As in Leibniz's philosophy, all of nature and being is understood in terms of an infinite striving or appetite for perception; but this appetite or conatus is itself reinterpreted in terms of Fichte's intellectual intuition whose dynamic is that of a striving for self-objectification.¹⁸ The infinite productive activity seeks to intuit itself; it can do so only by self-limitation (since as with Spinoza's infinite substance and Fichte's "I," nothing external to it can limit it); and to limit itself it must render itself "objective" by creating worlds of objects. A lesson that Schelling wishes us to draw from this philosophy of nature is the

existence of a preestablished harmony of nature with human intelligence, such that we are justified in expecting nature to be receptive to our rational and conscious purposes.¹⁹ Hence Schelling regards nature as offering providential support for human history; the ground of history is an ultimate identity of natural necessity and human freedom.²⁰ These speculations also recall in many respects the central concerns of the *Analytic of Teleological Judgment*, the second half of Kant's *Critique of Judgment*: the search for evidence of purposiveness in nature, the characterization of organism as nonmechanistic self-production, and the overarching systematic concern with providential signs of nature's regard for human moral purposes. But also quite clearly the role of art and genius in the culmination of Schelling's system is indebted to Kant's *Analytic of Aesthetic Judgment*, i.e., the first half of the same Critique. For that part also is an inquiry into the grounds for making the transition (*Übergang*) from nature to freedom: aesthetic judgment is, in Kant's view, an indicator of a possible regard of nature for our faculties.²¹

But there are great differences between Kant and Schelling, as well. Whereas Kant proposes a realizing of the human self in nature for the purposes of free self-legislative morality, Schelling seeks a realizing of nature in the human self for the accomplishing of a deeper unity of freedom and necessity. In Schelling's case, providential support for the realizability of the ends of freedom in history is only a provisional moment. Furthermore, Kant's tentative notions of teleology are merely regulative, and in his account of organism he is not seeking a true "natural philosophy." Kant speaks only of a possible supersensible substrate that unites nature and freedom purposively. Schelling more constitutively affirms the existence of a harmony of nature and freedom, so that the human spirit looking at nature genuinely beholds itself therein: "The external world lies open before us, so that we can find in it again the history of our spirit."²² Going well beyond what Kant regards as "critically" permissible (which is to have only subjectively regulative notions of the operation of freedom within nature), Schelling speculates on the evolutionary emergence of rational life out of the prerational in his reflection on nature as our "transcendental past."

Yet if this is Schelling's view, we can well ask why a philosophy of art is needed, beyond a philosophy of nature, in order to uncover the harmony we seek? As a post-Kantian, Schelling regards human freedom or self-consciousness as expressing some fundamental divide between nature and the human spirit that needs to be mediated.²³ Leibnizian continuity between prerational and rational spirits cannot be the final word. Yet, as we have seen, Schelling opposes the Kantian-Fichtean position that the striving of moral freedom is the highest standpoint. The productivity of genius in works of art is a higher standpoint, accomplishing the real identity of nature and freedom, of unconscious nature and human consciousness. Pure freedom opposed to the object is

shown to be a mere "appearance." Clearly the function of art as ultimate mediator rests on assumptions that are neither simply Leibnizian-Spinozist nor Kantian-Fichtean. To throw light on this matter we need to consider now more closely the function of art in Schelling's version of "transcendental idealism." This requires us to unravel further the sense of the "infinite contradiction" mentioned earlier.

ORGANON AND UNITY

In addition to the statement about art as the organon and document of philosophy, already quoted, Schelling also writes: "The universal organon of philosophy—and the keystone of its entire arch—is the philosophy of art."²⁴ The reference to "philosophy of art" makes clear that Schelling does not intend a simple replacement of philosophic argument by poetic production, with his new account of a philosophic "organon." The mention of philosophy of art also indicates that the organon-function and the documenting-function of art are not identical. As document, art provides an objective form of intellectual intuition in the sense of a public manifestation or declaration of the highest principle in a universally accessible form.²⁵ But that the system of philosophy will culminate in philosophy of art means that the philosophic reflection on art is somehow extending the philosopher's own insight, not only making the insight he already has more communicable to others. The term "organon" of course has a venerable history that includes the Aristotelian logical writings, modern attempts to provide a new logic of discovery (as in Bacon and Lambert), and Kant's claim that practical reason or morality, not theoretical science, is the highest organon of philosophical doctrines. ("The keystone of the arch" is an obvious reference to Kant's claim about "freedom" in the *Critique of Practical Reason*.) This prehistory of the term indicates that Schelling sees in the reflection on art a means to provide an organizing principle of unity within our knowledge, to replace the earlier unifying principles of logic, scientific method, and practical reason. One must keep in view the relations between organon, organization, organism, and system. An organon extends insight through giving knowledge the form of organic unity, or systematic form.²⁶

Thus, Schelling's claim that in art or aesthetic intuition, the principle of intellectual intuition becomes objective, has to be related to his conception of art as the unifying moment in the system. We have seen that the system must be able to show the identity of the infinite activity of nature and the self-intuition presupposed by human self-consciousness. That art is the unifying moment, and not solely documentary, illuminates the meaning of the "entire mechanism" of the transcendental deduction of the postulated identity, from

the subjective conditions of human knowledge.²⁷ Schelling asserts that "the whole sequence of the transcendental philosophy is based merely upon a continual raising of self-intuition to increasingly higher powers, from the first and simplest exercise of self-consciousness, to the highest, namely the aesthetic."²⁸ But the question naturally arises, whether the "history of consciousness" is an account of progress in representing the postulated identity-principle of self-intuition, in which case the principle is somehow already fully actual at the start of the System, but not yet adequately described there; or whether this "history" is the progressive actualization of the identity itself? Is aesthetic intuition the best representation, or is it the true actualization, of the primordial self-intuition? It is clear that art as unifying organon is to effect an actualizing, and not just representational, completion of the system. The pre-reflective self-intuition of nature must be realized in the unification with reflective and conscious self-intuition. A mere representation or description of nature's prereflective intuition is already accomplished by natural philosophy, in its account of the nonmechanistic self-production of organism. But that description is still external to the natural productive forces themselves. In the desired unification, the unconscious production must become conscious of itself as prereflectively intuitive or self-productive.²⁹ How this is so will become apparent only from the manner in which art, or more especially genius, resolves "infinite contradiction." This contradiction, being infinite, is not of a logical sort, but rather ontological. To resolve this contradiction is to heal a fundamental conflict in being.

Yet any such conception of a conflict in the infinite activity of being would seem to call into question all notions of preestablished harmony between nature and the human self. It is also far removed from a Kantian or Fichtean view of nature and freedom as dichotomous, as separate independent realms which can at best converge. The latter model of the relation between two realms can be described in terms of giving the inward (i.e., freedom) an outward expression: placing the stamp of human freedom or morality on nature as the other. But clearly Schelling cannot resolve the contradiction of nature and freedom, or of the unconscious and the conscious, in that way. His project is not a convergence on the basis of freedom, but a resolution on the basis of identity. If art effects the resolution, then it cannot be simply offering an external complement to an internal activity which has priority to the external representation. Again, one can propose such a mistaken notion of art as "externalization" only if one entirely ignores the reconciliation with nature that occurs through art. When art objectifies infinity activity it discloses more than the self-intuiting of the conscious human self; it reveals nature as an active power within the self. Hence only mythic and religious art, not modern portrayal of individual interiority, possesses the requisite powers to complete the system.³⁰ With this in mind, we must turn to the contradiction to be resolved by art.

INFINITE CONTRADICTION AND GENIUS

A crux found throughout Schelling's philosophy is the defectiveness of conscious thinking and acting: both must divide the unity of subject and object that exists whole in the original infinite activity. The very first act of philosophical reflection divides, and does not capture whole, the reality of intellectual intuition.³¹ A certain dividing also is present already in nature, insofar as the infinite activity limits itself in the producing of any being; but the division there does not yet take the form of the distinction between the conscious and the unconscious. Nature attempts to embody its infinity in finite products, and while failing, it maintains its infinity in the form of infinite becoming. But it is not conscious of its failure. Human consciousness has this dubious privilege of being conscious of the gulf between its finite conscious acts and the infinite that the acts seek to realize. That gulf is the same as the one between the human self, which Schelling calls the "eternal fragment,"³² and the relative wholeness of nature's "unconscious poetry of the spirit."³³

The task that is then set for philosophy to solve would seem to be literally impossible for it. It is expressed now this way: "An intuition must therefore be exhibitable in the intelligence itself, whereby in *one and the same* appearance, the self is at once conscious and unconscious *for itself*."³⁴ This demand, which expresses the fulfillment of the postulate of intellectual intuition, requires more than the recognition of the principle of the infinite activity; it demands the actualization of that principle itself, qua infinite, within finite human consciousness. This requires that the human self actualize at once its own infinite unconscious basis and the finite conscious reflection on that basis, within consciousness itself. None of Schelling's predecessors made this demand; and Schelling sees that philosophy itself, by purely conceptual means, cannot bring this about. Conceptual thinking simply perpetuates the infinite contradiction between infinite activity and finite thought. It would seem to be utterly impossible, an ontological absurdity, to suppose that finite thought could recover the undivided unity of the whole. Schelling's systematic goal cannot even be formulated as an ideal to approximate. There is no way to approach by degrees the absolute indifference of the undivided infinite.

The intuition that philosophy cannot exhibit, is accomplished in the creative production of works of art by genius. This intuition, combining the unconscious production of nature with conscious human reflection, is the wonder, the incomprehensible gift, the grace granted by nature, which makes possible the impossible: the wholly unexpected harmony that philosophy seeks. It provides the unifying horizon that indeed nature in its infinite striving has always sought. Thus, art is the sole and eternal revelation.³⁵ I do not want to give the details of Schelling's account of genius, which resembles closely that of Kant.³⁶ My concern is only to show how Schelling employs this notion for a systematic aim

that goes well beyond anything Kant would give it: "to resolve a contradiction which threatens our whole intellectual existence."³⁷

Now a most remarkable feature of this resolution must be underlined. It is especially noteworthy that Schelling calls the resolution a sheer "contingency," even though it is at the same time the "highest potential of self-intuition."³⁸ In the end, preestablished harmony is understood to be fulfilled by miraculous harmony. One is confronted with the paradox of a systematic completion occurring on a profoundly antisystematic basis, that of an event (genius) beyond all human calculation and control. Schelling had more than one reason for being dissatisfied with this solution. It is not satisfying that the true organon of philosophical insight, which finally justifies the original striving of self-intuition to achieve objective form, can be employed wholly contingently, and not as an anticipated telos within the original striving. This deprives the "dialectic" of advancing insight (on the part of the intelligence being observed by the philosopher) of any true inner necessity. Hegel accordingly took a very different approach in his account of the history of consciousness in the *Phenomenology of Mind* (1807), for there the "natural consciousness" discovering its own deficiencies does so through a genuine self-correction based on the dialectic of the self-mediating concept.³⁹ Hegel's developing consciousness brings about its own education, as it were. In Schelling's account, even at the stage where intelligence has become philosophical and has seen the incompleteness of both natural philosophy and practical philosophy, it must then await the miracle of artistic genius to acquire the intuition that reconciles opposites.

Yet another deficiency afflicts the position of the System. Unlike the one just mentioned, this problem is indicated by the text itself. If reconciliation is dependent on the miraculous appearance of genius, then the documentation of the highest philosophical insight in objective form has perhaps only an ephemeral character. But the highest insight must be available not only to philosophers, for philosophy has the task of reconciling the human spirit with nature on a larger scale. The true goal of the philosophical system is to universalize intellectual intuition in the form of a philosophical religion, or in a symbolic embodiment of the highest ideas. Clearly Schelling aims through the philosophy of art to prepare the ground for such a religion, which replaces both revelation in dogmatic theology and the purely rational faith of critical (Kantian) theology. Yet for this to occur, the human spirit must create a new mythology; and this cannot exist merely as the radiant accomplishments of rare individuals, but as the universal bond of an entire people. Thus philosophy must return to the "universal ocean of poetry" from which it emerged, to prepare for the creation of this mythology. But how a future race will create this universal work of art, as a single poet, is a problem that can be solved only in the future destiny of the world.⁴⁰

For neither problem does the contingent appearance of artistic genius provide a solution. These difficulties help to explain why Schelling shortly after the *System* proposes another view of the completability of philosophy through a nonmiraculous and nonpoetic intuition; such is the philosophy of identity that he develops in 1801.⁴¹ Even so, the ambition of philosophy remains that of providing humanity with a philosophical religion that expresses in symbolic form the ideas or archetypes of philosophy. The philosophy of identity does not abandon this.⁴² What is more, Schelling, for reasons that cannot be discussed here, turned away from the purely rational account of the absolute starting point found in the writings between 1801–04, toward the primacy of non-discursive poetry, myth and revelation in the later philosophy after 1809.⁴³ One could say that Schelling discovered no adequate way to bring together the demands of a noncontingent and rational basis for the completion of the infinite striving in a universal mythology, and of the insight that this mythology is to convey about the infinity of the primordial erotic striving.

To express this point more fully: the *System's* proposal that all intelligibility rests on a prereflective infinite erotic striving that can never be comprehended by finite categories, rightly culminates in a high claim made for the nondiscursive thinking of poetry and myth. Such thinking must come to the aid of conceptual thinking, unable by itself to disclose this situation. But in that case, art discloses to us the nature of erotic striving as unsatisfiable, not the harmonious completion of a unified system based on the "I" of self-relation (or on another principle such as the absolute identity of subject-object). The passage on art in the *System* of 1800 is of lasting interest, even though it is in some sense "transitional," precisely because it shows in a paradigmatic way the problematic character of what Schelling sought. At the same time it throws light on two other developments in German philosophy: Hegel's adoption of a rational noncontingent standpoint in the Absolute without the revelation of an infinite unsatisfied eros through art; and the recovery of the contingent poetic revelation of eros in Nietzsche and Heidegger without the rational Absolute. Schelling's exposure of the struggle between artistic eros and systematic reason—a version of the ancient quarrel of poetry and philosophy—inaugurates a new era by giving the first clear expression to one of the central problems of later modern philosophy.

NOTES

1. References to the *System des transzendentalen Idealismus* will employ the standard edition of K.F.A. Schelling, *Schellings Sämmtliche Werke* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1856–61; hereafter cited as *SW*), I/3, 327–634. Many works in this edition, including the *System*, have been reissued in a six-volume paperback collection edited by Manfred Frank, *F. W. J. Schelling, Ausgewählte Schriften* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985),

which reproduces the Stuttgart pagination. The English translation cited here is that of Peter Heath, *F. W. J. Schelling, System of Transcendental Idealism (1800)*, with an introduction by M. Vater (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1978; hereafter "Heath"). Dieter Jähnig's massive two-volume study is still the most comprehensive reading of the *System* of 1800: *Schelling: Die Kunst in der Philosophie; Schellings Begründung von Natur und Geschichte*, vol. I; *Die Wahrheitsfunktion der Kunst*, vol. II (Pfullingen: Neske, 1966 and 1969). Unlike Jähnig I am most concerned with underlining what is problematic in the *System's* treatment of art. For other discussions of Schelling on art, see notes 3, 21, 42, and 43 below. There is a growing body of literature in English on Schelling. The principal book-length study is Andrew Bowie, *Schelling and Modern European Philosophy: An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993). See also Alan White, *Schelling: An Introduction to the System of Freedom* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1983), Werner Marx, *The Philosophy of F. W. J. Schelling: History, System, and Freedom*, tr. T. Nenon (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1984), and Heidegger's path-breaking study, *Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, translated by J. Stambaugh (Athens, Ohio: Ohio Univ. Press, 1985). The entire volume XIX, 3 of *Idealistic Studies* (September 1989), edited by Joseph P. Lawrence, is devoted to Schelling. It contains several valuable essays relevant to the present topics.

2. This thought in the *System* is basic to Schelling's other presentations of his natural philosophy. Thus, in the *Abhandlungen zur Erläuterung des Idealismus der Wissenschaftslehre* (1796/97): "It is as though in every moment the soul is striving to represent the infinite, but because this cannot be done, it strives necessarily beyond every present moment to represent the infinite at least successively in time," *SW*, I/1, p. 384. Here and elsewhere Schelling relates his account of the ground of being as a spiritual activity seeking to intuit itself through an infinite succession of representations, to Leibniz (see also *SW* I/1, pp. 357–58, 386–87). This connection is further discussed below.

3. A discussion of the *System's* treatment of art that relates it to post-Nietzschean thinking on art is Andrew Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity: From Kant to Nietzsche* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1990), especially chapter 4. His discussion is similar in approach to that of Manfred Frank, *Einführung in die frühromantische Ästhetik: Vorlesungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1989), ch. 10, pp. 155–74.

4. In this respect I see a deficiency in the philosophical renewal of the Idealist accounts of self-consciousness in Henrich, Frank, and the so-called Heidelberg School. My objection is that it is not sufficient to uncover the immediacy and irreducibility of the self-familiarity (*Vertraulichkeit*) of consciousness, although the arguments made to establish this have certainly been compelling. But human consciousness is also characterized by an inherent striving to objectify itself, or to ground itself conceptually. This striving necessarily fails, and one could speak then of a natural dialectic of reason in this connection. For Fichte and Schelling, this striving for self-objectification is inseparable from primary self-awareness, and even though it has a dialectical character, it is essential to the growth of human self-consciousness. Each failure at self-objectification is followed by a more enlightened attempt, which then brings about an advance in human freedom and maturity. Human reason strives toward the most comprehensive form of

self-unity, one in which the categories of self-understanding are truly adequate to the inner being of reason as freedom. This is what I call the “erotic” element in the Idealist accounts of reason. It has been neglected in favor of a view of self-consciousness in which an initial immediate (and “undialectical”) self-intuition is a satisfactory foundational principle, one that evades the critiques of the self made by linguistic-analytic, naturalistic, and Heideggerian-poststructuralist thinking. Yet the view of the self, once the self is rescued from those critiques, must include this erotic-dialectical element (which need not be understood in a Hegelian fashion).

5. Thus the following passage in *Critique of Pure Reason* (A314/B370–71), in the section on “The Ideas in General”: “Plato very well realised that our faculty of knowledge feels a much higher need (*Bedürfnis*) than merely to spell out appearances according to a synthetic unity, in order to be able to read them as experience; and that our reason naturally exalts itself (*aufschwinge*) to modes of knowledge which so far transcend the bounds of experience that no given empirical object can ever coincide with them, but which must nonetheless be recognised as having their own reality, and which are by no means mere fictions of the brain” (Kemp-Smith translation, slightly modified).

6. Dialectical eros as the ground anterior to reason (as “will” or “drive”) has an eminent post-Idealist history (Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Freud, Spengler, etc.). Rousseau’s thought is transmitted to German Idealism most crucially through Kant, but also through Hamann, Jacobi, Herder, and Goethe. Kant admitted to being converted to a fundamentally new view of philosophy and its human significance by Rousseau. I have described that transformation elsewhere, in *Freedom and the End of Reason: On the Moral Foundation of Kant’s Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1989). I argue it is chiefly thanks to Rousseau that Kantian transcendental analysis replaces a more traditional epistemological or metaphysical analysis. For Kant’s primary aim in the transcendental deduction of the categories is not epistemological; it is to disclose the grounds for the self-consistency of reason. That disclosure has the urgency Kant says it has, because reason’s very existence is threatened by its theoretical dialectic. More closely regarded, this threat is posed to reason’s capacity for self-determination, that is, to practical reason. Kant asks: “What use can we make of our understanding, even in respect of experience, if we do not propose ends to ourselves? But the highest ends are those of morality” (*Critique of Pure Reason*, Kemp-Smith translation, A816/B844). But as early as 1764–65, Kant understood Rousseau as showing that in both ethics and metaphysics, reason falls into dialectic through a mistaken “realism,” that is, through seeking to ground itself in an independent order of nature or being. Thus Kant arrived at the general problematic of the self-subversion of reason. A fundamental premise of this conception of reason is the inherent “erotic” striving of reason for a delusory totality (a wholeness of “unconditioned” satisfaction through nature or being) that leads to dialectic.

7. In recounting his natural philosophy in the Munich lectures on the history of modern philosophy (1833–34), Schelling expresses this elusiveness in the following terms: “Being what it is, the Subject can never possess itself, for even in being drawn to itself it becomes something other; this is the fundamental contradiction, or we could say, the misfortune in all Being—for either it neglects itself, and then it is like nothing, or it

is drawn to itself, and then it is an other and to itself unequal. . . . The first being, this *primum existens* as I have called it, is thus also the first contingent reality (the primary contingency).” Schelling goes on to say that the construction of reality in natural philosophy begins with a “dissonance” (SW I/10, p. 101).

8. Wolfgang Wieland, “Die Anfänge der Philosophie Schellings und die Frage nach der Natur,” in *Natur und Geschichte: Karl Löwith zum 70. Geburtstag* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1967), is a classic statement on the motives for natural philosophy in Schelling. It should be emphasized that the critique of Kantian-Fichtean morality of autonomous reason, central to the natural philosophy, is not replaced by an “amoral” necessitarianism. Schelling is searching for a deeper unity of freedom and necessity, one he hopes to disclose in the three related areas of nature, art, and history. As to history, Schelling’s effort is to uncover a morality of political life that unites free human beings by the common bonds of a religion that symbolically expresses the highest speculative ideas in sensuous form, that is, a mythology of reason. The effort is surely akin to Hegel’s notions of *Sittlichkeit*; the so-called “Oldest System-Program of German Idealism” of 1796, of disputed authorship, already proposes such a “mythology of reason,” and outlines how the three areas of nature, art, and history will be reformed in a new Idealism, thus indicating the common points of departure for Schelling and Hegel. See *Materialien zu Schellings philosophischen Anfängen*, ed. M. Frank and G. Kurz (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1975), pp. 110–12.

9. Manfred Frank argues for the decisive importance of Hölderlin’s insight into the deficiency of Fichte’s account of the self, for Schelling’s turn to a preconscious unity of the self (which makes thinkable the attribution of self-intuition to nature). According to Hölderlin, if (as in Fichte) the self is a productive self-positing, then it must be understood in terms of the opposition of subject and object, which reintroduces the “circle of reflection”; to avoid this circularity, the self must be seen as a primordial unity (Being) preceding the explicit self-awareness that divides the self from itself in judgment. This prepares the way for Schelling’s wholly prereflective notion of intuition. See Frank, *Eine Einführung in Schellings Philosophie*, pp. 61–70. But unlike Hölderlin, Schelling underlines the infinite activity of the primary intuition (in a quasi-Leibnizian theory of *conatus*), which becomes its own object through self-limitation.

10. See *System*, SW I/3, 376: “The eternal, timeless act of self-consciousness which we call *self*, is that which gives all things existence, and so itself needs no other being to support it; bearing and supporting itself, rather, it appears objectively as *eternal becoming*, and subjectively as a *producing without limit*.” Heath, p. 32.

11. Between 1774–96, Schelling published several works that are quite close to Fichte in approach and spirit (*Über die Möglichkeit einer Form der Philosophie, Vom Ich als Prinzip der Philosophie, Philosophische Briefe über Dogmatismus und Kritizismus*), then between 1776–99 several treatises of the new natural philosophy (*Abhandlungen zur Erläuterung des Idealismus der Wissenschaftslehre, Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur, Von der Weltseele, Erster Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie*). The first of this last group is the earliest attempt to relate natural philosophy to the Fichtean starting-point.

12. SW I/3, 330: "Now the purpose of the present work is simply this, to enlarge transcendental idealism into what it really should be, namely a system of all knowledge" (Heath, 1).

13. See Section 3 of the Introduction for the account of the "problem" of transcendental philosophy as the demonstration of such coinciding of nature (the unconscious) and freedom (the conscious) on the basis of intellectual intuition.

14. Recent accounts of this development of critical philosophy in Reinhold, Fichte, and so on are Frederick C. Beiser, *The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard Univ. Press, 1987) and Frederick Neuhouser, *Fichte's Theory of Subjectivity* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1990).

15. SW I/3, pp. 620–24. In this passage Schelling states that natural science (Newton) is not capable of resolving infinite contradiction; art is necessarily higher than science, and only the productive spirits of the former have "genius" in the strict sense.

16. SW I/3, 627; Heath, p. 231.

17. See Frank, *Einführung in die frühromantische Ästhetik*, p. 151: Schelling's System "is the first in Western philosophy which ascribes to art the role of bringing about the objectivity of that which is anticipated in intellectual intuition—and thus the reality of its own principle." It is as "organon" of philosophic insight that art objectifies the principle of self-intuition, that is, it brings about (through the productivity of genius) the intuition's realization in a finite sensuous form, thus realizing the unconscious productive activity of nature in the same act as conscious self-relation (more on this below). For Schelling's originality, see also D. Jähnig, *Schelling: Die Kunst in der Philosophie*, vol. I, pp. 9–19.

18. See note 2 above on the *Abhandlungen zur Erläuterung des Idealismus der Wissenschaftslehre* (1796–97), which contains accounts of the new dynamic-teleological approach to nature with explicit acknowledgment of debts to Leibniz. Note such statements as "The ascending scale of organisms and the transition from nonliving to living nature disclose clearly a productive power, which eventually develops into freedom. Spirit seeks to intuit itself in the succession of its representations. . . . Every organism is a unified world (according to Leibniz, a confused representation of the world)" (SW I/1, 387). Schelling's "renewal" of Leibniz is further elaborated in the important introduction to *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur* of 1797 (SW I/2, pp. 11–56). One must also give attention to the role of Solomon Maimon as mediator of Leibnizian philosophy to the post-Kantian thinkers. See H. H. Holz, "Der Begriff der Natur in Schellings spekulativem System. Zum Einfluss von Leibniz auf Schelling," in *Natur und geschichtlicher Prozess. Studien zur Naturphilosophie F. W. J. Schellings*, ed. H. J. Sandkühler (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984).

19. For "pre-established harmony," see SW I/3, p. 348 (Heath, pp. 11–12): "How both the objective world accommodates to presentations in us, and presentations in us to the objective world, is unintelligible unless between the two worlds, the ideal and the

real, there exists a *pre-established harmony* (*vorherbestimmte Harmonie*). But this latter is itself unthinkable unless the activity, whereby the objective world is produced, is at bottom identical with that which expresses itself in volition, and *vice-versa*" (translation slightly modified). There is a discussion of the "pre-established harmony of intelligence" at pp. 545–46; the ultimate implications of this harmony for the providential account of history, as based on the harmony of nature and freedom, are discussed in Part Four, pp. 593–606. The language of harmony, like that of correspondence (*Übereinstimmung*), actually represents a provisional standpoint; for the apparent duality of principles that "harmonize" is replaced by insight into true identity; see Part Five, pp. 610–11. I leave out of the discussion here whether the language of preestablished harmony might not similarly for Leibniz represent only a provisional and imperfect formulation of a true identity of principles of mind and body (based on dynamics).

20. SW I/3, 605–06. An excellent discussion of the place of providence and history in Schelling, making the argument that his philosophy "from beginning to end is a philosophy of history," is H. M. Baumgartner, "Vernunft im Übergang zu Geschichte. Bemerkungen zur Entwicklung von Schellings Philosophie als Geschichtsphilosophie," in *Schelling. Seine Bedeutung für eine Philosophie der Natur und der Geschichte*, ed. L. Hasler (Stuttgart, 1981). The concern with a providential account of history, in conjunction with a new nonmechanistic physics and an account of aesthetics as the highest human activity, is already present in the so-called "Oldest System-Program of German Idealism," from just a few years before the *System* of 1800. See note 8 above.

21. See *Critique of Judgment*, Introduction, section IX, for the transition from nature to freedom by means of the determination of the "supersensible substrate" (the postulated common ground of nature and freedom) through concepts of purposiveness. Kant appeals to the idea of this ground to clarify the moral significance of the aesthetic judgment of natural beauty (*Critique*, section 42): this substrate is the ground of nature's apparent regard for our rational faculties in producing beautiful forms for our disinterested pleasure, whose freedom is analogous to moral self-determination. But also the productivity of genius is given moral-regulative significance (section 57, Remark I), since genius's natural capacity for the production of aesthetic ideas, which cannot be brought under the rule of concepts but in which all the faculties harmonize, is another indicator of a supersensible ground of both nature and freedom. Genius thus permits Kant to extend moral significance to beautiful art, and to go beyond natural beauty in speaking of the beautiful in general as the symbol of morality (section 59). Kant's treatment of genius is clearly in the immediate background to Schelling's conception of genius as the unity of freedom and necessity rendering conscious the unconscious productivity of nature. K. Düsing, "Schellings Genieästhetik," in *Philosophie und Poesie I: O. Pöggeler zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. A. Gethmann-Siefert (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1988), for the relations between Schelling and Kant on genius.

22. *Abhandlungen*, SW I/1, p. 383.

23. Thus, see the praise of Kant for the discovery that the idea of freedom is the "Archimedean point" outside the world that permits reason to be a unified system; SW I/1, 400.

24. *SW I/3*, p. 349; Heath, p. 12.

25. *SW I/3*, p. 625.

26. Significantly Kant and Schelling both employ a striking metaphor in connection with the notion of system: monogramma. Kant states that the basic schematic idea for a system is a "monogram" (*Critique of Pure Reason*, A833–34/B861–62), in the context of characterizing a true system of reason as an organism. Schelling writes that "every organism is a monogram of that original identity," that is, of the principle of the system of reason (*SW I/3*, p. 611; Heath, p. 218).

27. *SW I/3*, pp. 625–26; Heath, p. 230: "The aesthetic intuition is indeed the intellectual intuition become objective. The work of art reflects to me only what is otherwise not reflected by anything, namely that absolutely identical which has already divided itself even in the 'I'; hence that which the philosopher allows to be divided even in the primary act of consciousness, and which would otherwise be inaccessible to any intuition, comes through the miracle of art to be radiated back from the products thereof." Two points should be underlined here: (1) the "aesthetic intuition" spoken of occurs only through works of art, and is not a general aesthetic faculty; and (2) the work of art has a unique privilege of making possible an intuition that would otherwise be inaccessible—even to the philosopher.

28. *SW I/3*, p. 631; Heath, p. 233.

29. Hence the insufficiency of natural philosophy taken by itself, to complete the system of reason. The complementary insufficiency is found in practical philosophy, wherein consciousness is fully aware of itself as freely productive, but only in opposition to the prereflective intuition of nature. Art alone can bring about the unity of nature and freedom (*SW I/3*, p. 611).

30. The stress on mythology and religious art is a persistent feature of Schelling's treatment of art. In spite of profound affinities with Goethe's natural philosophy and, therefore, with Goethe's understanding of art as the symbol of nature, Schelling has the highest estimation of Christian art; it is able to disclose the deepest unity of nature and creative freedom. For this see his lectures on the philosophy of art, and also the essay of 1803, "Über Dante in philosophischer Beziehung," *SW I/5*, pp. 152–63.

31. *SW I/3*, pp. 610, 625.

32. *SW I/3*, p. 608; Heath, p. 216.

33. *SW I/3*, p. 349; Heath, p. 12.

34. *SW I/3*, pp. 610–11; Heath, pp. 217–18; also *SW I/3*, p. 349.

35. *SW I/3*, p. 618; also p. 628 (Heath, p. 231): "Art is just for this reason the highest to the philosopher, because it opens to him, as it were, the holiest of holies, where burns in eternal and original unity, as if in a single flame, that which in nature and history is torn asunder, and in life and action, no less than in thought, must forever fly apart" (translation slightly modified).

36. See note 21 above.

37. *SW I/3*, p. 621; Heath, p. 226.

38. *SW I/3*, p. 634; Heath, p. 236.

39. Werner Marx has sharply portrayed this contrast between Schelling in 1800 and Hegel in 1807 in "The Task and Method of Philosophy in Schelling's *System of Transcendental Idealism* and in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*," in *The Philosophy of F. W. J. Schelling*, especially pp. 50–57.

40. *SW I/3*, pp. 628–29.

41. K. Düsing has discussed the very interesting fact that Schelling developed a three-part plan for a system in which philosophy of art would become an independent part on a level with natural philosophy and transcendental philosophy, soon after the *System* of 1800, but then abandoned it not long after working with Hegel, who arrived in Jena in early 1801. Düsing argues that Hegel moved Schelling away from this plan and indeed toward the philosophy of identity—opposing the traditional view that Schelling was the greater source of influence in the pair. See *Schellings und Hegels erste absolute Metaphysik (1801–1802): Vorlesungsnachschriften von I. P. V. Troxler*, edited and interpreted by K. Düsing (Cologne: Dinter, 1988). But it should be noted that Schelling presents a three-part structure of philosophy (philosophy of nature, history, and art) in the lectures on the philosophy of art in 1802–03 (see note 42 below).

42. In the lectures on the *Philosophy of Art (1802–03)* the very high status of art is connected to the essential task of mythology. "Mythology is the necessary condition and the first content of all art." And: "Mythology is nothing other than the universe in its higher manifestation, in its absolute form, the true universe in itself. . . . The creations of art must have the same reality as, indeed an even higher reality than, those of nature." See Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, ed. and tr. D. W. Stott (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1989), p. 45 and *SW I/5*, p. 405. Again Schelling speaks of the project of creating a new mythology: "Neither do I hide my conviction that in the philosophy of nature, as it has developed from the idealistic principle, the first, distant foundation has been laid for that future symbolism and mythology that will be created not by an individual but rather by the entire age" (*I/5*, p. 449; Stott translation, p. 76). Furthermore, art is still an important source of insight for the philosopher: "The philosophy of art is a necessary goal for the philosopher, who in art views the inner essence of his own discipline as if in a magic and symbolic mirror." Indeed, the true "archetypes and forms" are more visible in works of art than in nature (*I/5*, pp. 351–52; Stott translation, 8). As an objective presentation of the infinite ideal, philosophy of art is on the same plane as philosophy of nature and philosophy of history (*I/5*, p. 368). Genius also instructs the philosopher, acquainting him with an "absolute legislation" (*I/5*, p. 349; Stott translation 6). However, Schelling no longer maintains that ontological reconciliation can be brought about only through the activity of genius; instead the principle of absolute identity is that of an eternal *Indifferenz* of ideal and real, subject and object. For the relation

between mythology and art, see Manfred Schröter, *Kritische Studien: Über Schelling und zur Kulturphilosophie* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1971), especially pp. 111–22.

43. A fine account of the phases of Schelling's thinking on art is found in J. P. Lawrence, "Art and Philosophy in Schelling," *The Owl of Minerva* 20, 1 (Fall 1988):519. See also Xavier Tilliette, *L'Absolu et la philosophie. Essais sur Schelling* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1987), ch. 5 ("La philosophie de l'art").

Schleiermacher on the Self: Immediate Self-Consciousness as Feeling and as Thinking

David E. Klemm

Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834) is best known for having reconstructed the discipline of theology as an interpretation of religion in human culture.¹ His monumental work in systematic theology, *The Christian Faith* (1822, 1830) conceived the essence of religion as a particular determination of "immediate self-consciousness" or "feeling," namely, the "feeling of absolute dependence."² Immediate self-consciousness has a "religious" determination, according to Schleiermacher, because it includes not only an awareness of the self in its reciprocal relatedness to the world, but also includes an awareness of the absolute dependence of the entire relatedness between self and world on a "Whence" ("Woher"), an absolutely first principle that he calls "God" in *The Christian Faith* (CG #4.4, p. 28). Religious self-consciousness in the nature of the case actualizes itself in concrete, individual forms of action and communication within historical communities (CG #6, pp. 41–47). Theology gives systematic description of the expressed contents of religious self-consciousness and interprets the meaning of the different elements making up the contents within a particular tradition (CG #15–19, pp. 105–118).

Less well known, at least in English-reading circles, is the fact that Schleiermacher lectured and wrote not only on the full range of studies within the "theological encyclopedia,"³ but also on philosophical topics such as moral theory and ethics, aesthetics, psychology, political theory, history of philosophy, hermeneutics, and dialectic. Schleiermacher worked out his positions on these topics on the basis of a conception in outline of the systematic unity of all thinking.⁴ He constructed his systematic conception in direct engagement with the central philosophical controversies and movements of his time. Early appro-