

**THE PLACE OF EVIL/THE PLACE OF NEGATIVITY
SCHELLING/HEIDEGGER**

**A Thesis submitted to the Graduate
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Abstract

This thesis can generally be described as a close reading of Schelling's treatise *Über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit* (1809) in conjunction with a limited number of references to his later work *Die Weltalter*. This reading, however, is neither a line by line reading of the entire text, nor is it simply an "innocent" exposition. It is informed by Heidegger's reading of this text in *Schellings Abhandlung Über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit*, and attempts to confront a specific question arising from Heidegger's reading: the question of negativity.

Schelling's conception of freedom, and its relation to system, I will argue, leads to a conception of negativity which complicates, if not displaces, certain assumptions or even the entirety of modern subjectivity. Even though I do not argue that Heidegger inherits this problem from Schelling, the date of this lecture course (1936) suggests that it coincides with a period of radicalization in Heidegger's thought.

Admittedly, this thesis may be regarded as a retrospective reading to the extent that it participates in, and consequently approves Heidegger's arguably "violent" reading of Schelling. To the extent that this possible perception demands a restoration of Schelling's name, I do not wish to reply to it except to extrapolate (without getting into the question of proper name) from what Schelling himself says about the desire to label his position as pantheism: "Der Name tut's nicht; auf die Sache kommt es an [The name holds nothing, the thing (issue) is what matters]."

The significance of this thesis, I would like to imagine, is threefold: First, it reveals the importance of Schelling for Heidegger, which has not been sufficiently recognized. Secondly, it tries to deal with a philosophical question which is not merely that of Schelling or Heidegger, but has implications for a number of thinkers after Heidegger, and more importantly for "us." Finally, insofar as Schelling thinks negativity in terms of the notion of evil, my thesis has a pertinence for ethics, although it is not a question I deal with explicitly in this work.

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Drei Gefahren drohen dem Denken.

Die gute und darum heilsame Gefahr ist die Nachbarschaft des singenden Dichters.

Die böse und darum schärfste Gefahr ist das Denken selber.

Es muß gegen sich selbst denken, was er nur selten vermag.

Die schlechte und darum wirre Gefahr ist das Philosophieren.⁽¹⁾

I. To think thinking against thinking requires a cleavage comparable to "bring[ing] language as language to language."⁽²⁾ In *On the Essence of Human Freedom* (1809)⁽³⁾ Schelling attempts to think a certain conception of negativity at the ground of reason, system, and thinking. Yet this very attempt to think negativity leads to a certain closure, a limitation of thinking, which Heidegger designates as a completion (Vollendung). It is precisely this rare power (Vermögen) which manifests itself in Schelling's text as freedom. The problem of negativity which Schelling tries to think in terms of freedom implies a relation of thinking to "itself" as other. However, the way in which this otherness can be thought is enigmatic within the confines of subjectivist, or representational thinking. The other of thinking is specifically that which cannot be thought or even be a "that" which can be expressed. If the thought of this "other" is necessary for thinking to be "itself," then the other not only designates a limitation of thinking, but also its proximity to madness. Indeed, it is madness, according to Schelling, rather than reason (Vernunft) which should be set against understanding or intellect (Verstand). The constant solicitation (beständige Sollicitation) of madness is the indispensable requirement of the active living understanding (Verstand). "Where there is no madness (Wahnsinn) there is, of course, also no proper, actual and living understanding (rechter, wirklicher, lebendiger Verstand)"⁽⁴⁾ To be sure, this madness, according to Schelling, should be overcome (überwältigen), whereby understanding shows its highest power. Yet how (if at all) is it possible to think this madness within a rational discourse? Or what does this overcoming imply if not a completion (Vollendung)?

Schelling introduces the problem of freedom in terms of its connection to the notion of system. Initially, he suggests two possible paths for philosophical investigations into the nature (Wesen) of human freedom. The first is "to investigate the correct conception of freedom," and the second "to determine its relation to the whole of a scientific worldview (Weltansicht)." Yet these two questions are not distinct, because "no concept can be determined by itself, and the demonstration of its connection to the whole gives it too its ultimate scientific completion (Vollendung)" (MF, 336). This is especially true for the concept of

freedom, because freedom, as Schelling understands it, is not merely a concept to be made compatible with the system, but determines the possibility of a system; it is "one of the ruling (herrschende) central points of the system" (MF, 336). Hence, the task Schelling sets himself is not simply to meet the objection that the idea of a system is incompatible with the concept of freedom,⁽⁵⁾ but to show their interdependence. Without the proper clarification of freedom, a system in Schelling's sense is not possible, and freedom is not possible except in relation to a system. Yet why is the question of freedom inevitably a question of system? What is their interdependence?

The word "system," as Heidegger states, comes from the Greek *sunístemi*, "I place or set together (Ich stelle zusammen)." ⁽⁶⁾ Heidegger distinguishes two senses in which *sunístemi* may be understood. The first is "to conjoin (*fügen*)" an order that is projected (*entworfen*) over things. This order, however, is not a mere dumping together (*aufgestülpt*), but a projection which allows things to be visible in the unity of their proper structure (*jointure, Gefüge*). Secondly, *sunístemi* may also mean "shoving" (*schieben*) things together, a mere manipulation, as in the case of an accumulation of things.⁽⁷⁾ As Schelling later implies in his discussion of system as pantheism ("God is everything") the concept of system concerns everything there is. However, since God is by nature eternal, and things are so only with him, and as a consequence of his existence, in a derivative manner, their simple sum cannot be equal to God, God is not all individual things taken together (*alle einzelne Dinge zusammen*) (MF, 340). Hence, the unity of a system does not simply concern an external accumulation of all things. Still, it concerns a unity. Evidently, this unity is not to be found among entities.⁽⁸⁾ It is not something present among other present entities; rather it designates the presence of what is present, i.e., its Being.⁽⁹⁾ How, then, can this totality be known, and why does it require freedom? Why must freedom be understood together with a system?

Schelling clarifies the last of these questions through the consideration of the possibility of denying the notion of system altogether, because it seems to be incompatible with freedom. However, one cannot deny the possibility of a system and its coexistence with freedom at least in "divine understanding" (*im göttlichen Verstande*) (MF, 337). How does this claim relate to the question of freedom, and in particular of human freedom? The assertion that a system must be present at least in divine understanding, which is coexistent with freedom entails not merely that they could be compatible, but that they would already presuppose, or require each other. "God" is free with respect to the presence of entities.⁽¹⁰⁾ He is not bound up with, or reducible to a particular determinate present moment. Precisely because "he" is already free with respect to entities, he can know them, he can know their unity, the system. However, God's freedom cannot be understood as a particular property belonging to an entity, not just because freedom is not a property, but also because God is not a determinate

entity among others. If God were a determinate entity, then he too would belong to the totality of the system, and consequently, would not be "outside" of presence and know that presence. Suspending the relationship between God and system for a moment,⁽¹¹⁾ let us turn to the human scene, human freedom.⁽¹²⁾

The knowledge of a system may be available only to God, but not to the human being. Consequently, God may "have" freedom, but the human being may not. This is an immediate objection Schelling confronts. Indeed, Schelling presents the relationship between God and the human being in the form of an answer to this objection claiming that a system in divine understanding cannot be revealed to the human being. This objection does not really mean anything, according to Schelling, because it may be true or false depending on the determination of the principle through which the human being knows (erkennt)(MF, 337). That the knowledge of a system in divine understanding could be possible for the human being is justified according to the doctrine that "like is known by like" (MF, 337). This doctrine, reported by Sextus Empiricus, continues with the statement that the philosopher maintains such a divine knowledge because he alone can grasp the God outside himself with the God within himself (MF, 337). Even though we cannot possibly explain the nature of this "likeness" (Gleichheit) at this stage,⁽¹³⁾ we can see how the question of freedom is carried over to the human scene by Schelling. The system can be known by the human being. This entails that the human being is not reducible to a determined presence either. Similarly, just as God cannot be understood as an entity, the human being cannot be grasped merely as a determinate entity either. As soon as one tries to account for the unity of presence in terms of a constituted, determinate entity, that unity becomes reducible to something present within that presence. As the possibility of "grasp[ing] God outside [oneself] with the God within [oneself]" already implies, the relationship between God and the human being will complicate the questions of interiority, exteriority, and will lead to inevitable crossings between the "divine scene" and the "human scene" in Schelling's text.

What is the relationship between God and entities, then, if God is not reducible to those entities? This problem cannot be solved by thinking God as simply "external" to entities. In fact, thinking God as "external" would lead to a determination of God as a non-physical entity, and reduce him to a different kind of entity among others that ultimately belongs to the totality. The relationship between God and other entities will become more and more problematic in the text, and Schelling begins to introduce this problem in terms of the question of pantheism.⁽¹⁴⁾ "The only possible system for reason [which strives towards unity] is pantheism" (MF,338). Pantheism pertains directly to the relationship between God and all things (panta), a relationship in which the human being plays an essential role. Therefore, the relationship between system and freedom as an attribute of human existence translates into the relationship between God and the human being. System, thus understood, has a distinctive

meaning, expressed in one of the possible interpretations of pantheism: "God is everything." As Heidegger notes, this interpretation of pantheism is not as easily rejected as the one that states that "everything is God" (SA, 88), i.e., that identifies each individual thing with God. The designation that God is everything "delimits" the scope of the system; the system thus concerns everything there is. However, expressed in these terms, system seems to render freedom impossible, because it entails the absolute causality of God. In other words, if God has absolute causality, then every other creature has to be passively determined. As Schelling later explicitly states however, he views freedom as a power (Vermögen) which pertains to the possibility (Möglichkeit) of acting. Hence, freedom is basically related to the future. The problem with pantheism is that it appears to make this requirement impossible, i.e., it leads to fatalism. In other words, the fatalism which seems to be implied by pantheism yields a closed future which has always already been determined. This causal power attributed to God is not merely something undetermined and general (unbestimmtes Allgemeines), but uniquely determines every thought, desire, and action.⁽¹⁵⁾

The problem of fatalism is particularly important for the question of freedom. The reason why the human being is generally regarded as being free is because he or she can act. In other words, the human being is open to future possibilities with regard to the present moment. Pantheism seems to make this openness impossible, because "God" determines not only the present, but the future as well. Schelling responds to this implication in two interrelated ways. First, he uproots the idea of understanding freedom in terms of the causality of the human being against that of God, and consequently understanding God and the human being as separate "entities." Schelling maintains that the problem regarding the absolute causality of a being (God) is not only the problem of pantheism, but of any possible system of reason. In fact, insofar as God and the human being are considered to be separate entities, human freedom is not possible. It is this externality that should be displaced through pantheism: "the human being is not outside...but inside God, and his activity itself belongs to God's life" (MF, 339). According to Schelling, pantheism, insofar as it is the teaching of the immanence of things in God, must be accepted by every rational view (Vernunftansicht). To place human activity, and thereby freedom into God's life is the only way that leads to a proper conception of freedom. The incompatibility of system and freedom is the problem emerging from previous attempts to construct a system of reason, because these are based upon an inadequate conception of freedom understood in terms of causality.

The immanence of all things in God, however, is not to be interpreted as a sameness or oneness (Einerleiheit), but as an identity (Identität) which necessarily requires a difference, a difference *toto genere*. Hence, the objection to pantheism which claims that it deflates the difference between God and created beings which leads to the interpretation of every individual thing as God is

based upon a misunderstanding of the principle of identity, and the meaning of the copula in judgment. The notion of identity properly understood will clarify the immanence of things in God. The sentence, "God is everything" does not declare the mere oneness (Einerleiheit) of the subject and the predicate, but implies that the relationship between them is that of antecedens and consequens. This is to say that what is expressed in the subject is the ground of what is expressed in the predicate. Thus "the law of ground (das Gesetz des Grundes, the principle of sufficient reason) is just as originary as that of identity" (MF, 346).⁽¹⁶⁾ "God is everything" does not mean that God and all beings are simply one and the same (einerlei), but that their identity is based upon God's being "somehow" the ground of all beings. God is the ground of all things, God "determines" everything. Yet how is this ground, or determination to be understood? Is it a question of a simple, present ground or that of a "grounding"?⁽¹⁷⁾ What is the significance of this question? If God were simply a ground which could somehow be present among other entities, then God too would be within the delimitation of "everything." Subsequently he would be reduced to an entity. This would imply, as I indicated above, that God would not be free from entities. The problem with freedom is that that which is "outside" of the presence of beings, can itself not be understood as belonging within that presence like any other entity within that presence. If God is the ground of entities, he himself cannot be understood as "present," because this would lead to understanding of him as a "present thing." This is precisely the problem Schelling seems to have with Spinozism: "The flaw of [Spinoza's] system is not in any way due to the fact that he posits all things in God, but that they are things-- to the abstract concept of world-creatures, indeed to the infinite substance itself, which is also a thing for him" (MF, 349). Schelling continues his criticism of Spinozism by claiming that Spinoza treats even the will as a thing (MF, 349).⁽¹⁸⁾ It is clear that Schelling does not think God as a present-at-hand ground of all things. Consequently, the identity between God and everything is not the sameness of two present entities. Schelling hints at how he envisions the ground of things in his understanding of the nature of the law of identity. The law of identity in question is not merely a problem of thinking, but one of life, of God's life. As Schelling puts it, "the unity of the law [of identity] is an immediate, creative (schöpferisch) one" (MF, 345). It is progressive and lively (MF, 345). For "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (MF, 346).⁽¹⁹⁾ Since the unity of God and entities is a creative one, God is not the ground of entities as an ever present entity, but as grounding. This implies that the question of system now concerns how beings come into being, with respect to their ground. The notion of grounding is not merely the act of an agent,⁽²⁰⁾ but the way in which God reveals himself. Schelling says that God's activity of creation cannot be understood as mechanical, as mere bringing about, causing (Bewirken) or setting forth (Hinstellen) (MF, 347). The procession (die Folge) of things out of God is a self-revelation of God. In other words, the way in which God is the ground of things is such that what is grounded is not outside

this ground. Since God can only be revealed in what is similar (ähnlich) to him, what is grounded must also be free, as God is. At this stage Schelling does not make a distinction between human freedom and the freedom of other worldly-creatures (Weltwesen), or indeed of nature. For God to reveal himself, that in which he reveals himself must be free, because freedom belongs primarily to God. It is through this thought that Schelling elevates the dichotomy between freedom and nature to that of freedom and necessity. Freedom is no longer set against nature, or rather a dead conception of nature, but against necessity. This conception of idealism is not in opposition to realism anymore, but leads to their interpenetration (Wechseldurchdringung) (MF, 350).

Although all beings are grounded in God, this does not entail the impossibility of freedom, but rather points the way to the only possible conception of it. "The concept of derived absoluteness or divinity (Göttlichkeit) is so little a contradiction that it is more like the central concept (Mittelbegriff) of the whole of philosophy" (MF, 347). The reason why previous attempts to form a system of reason regarded being grounded in God and freedom as incompatible is that they were based on an inadequate conception of freedom. This conception is imprisoned within the opposition of freedom and nature. Consequently, freedom is considered as the mere mastery (Herrschaft) on the part of the intelligent principle over the sensuous (sinnliche) and desires (Begierden) (MF, 345). This mastery does not merely concern acting according to intelligence, but also acting from "outside" the chain of causality, which determines the sequence of time and constitutes the laws of nature. According to this Kantian conception, to be free is to be outside of every causal nexus of nature, to be the cause and the ground, and thus to stand within oneself. Freedom does not mean to act without a law, without a ground, but to act according to the law which is given to one by oneself (Selbstgesetzgebung). It is this conception of freedom that Schelling wants to attribute to nature:

"It will always remain strange that Kant, after first distinguishing things-in-themselves from appearances only negatively, as being independent of time, and later, in the metaphysical explications of his Critique of Practical Reason, treating independence-of-time and freedom as correlative concepts, did not proceed to the thought of transferring this only possible positive conception of per-se-ity (An-sich) to things" (MF, 351-52).

Had Kant taken this step, he would have transformed the opposition between freedom and nature. Kant recognized that independence from time, and thus freedom, can only be made sense of in terms of the being of the human being. The determination of beings as appearances and things-in-themselves is possible only on the basis of "I act," rather than on the basis of "I think" or "I know". As

Kant states, the distinction between appearance and thing-in-itself, which leads to the distinction between the intelligible and sensible realm, is made "...as a result of observing the difference between representations which are given to us from without and in which we are passive from those which we bring forth entirely from ourselves and by which we prove our own activity (Tätigkeit)." ⁽²¹⁾ Schelling tries to take the step "beyond" Kant by claiming that "in the last and most elevated instance there is no Being (Sein) other than Willing (Wollen). Willing is primordial Being (Ursein), and all predicates apply alone to this: groundlessness, eternity, independence of time, self-affirmation" (MF, 350). Willing is the Being of both nature and reason, and the freedom attributed to nature has to be understood as the freedom of God. However, this conception of freedom would seem to throw human freedom back into generality. Independence from time cannot be regarded as a correlative concept to human freedom, because the former does not show the specific difference, that is, the particularity of human freedom (MF, 352).

For system to be possible for the human being, he or she must be free. Hence, the being of the human being is not reducible to the presence of what is present, but he or she is open to the future. In this sense, the being of the human being cannot be a determined, delimited unity. Consequently, it becomes more and more difficult to understand freedom in terms of an interiority, precisely because interiority implies a determination. The appropriate conception of the being of the human being is also in terms of willing (Wollen). However, independence of time, although a characteristic of primordial being, is not sufficient to understand human freedom as human, because it applies to the being of all nature. There is a non-reducible negativity in human freedom, which separates the human being not only from nature, but also from God. However, since this "mark" cannot be interior, human freedom has ultimately to be understood with regard to the ground of beings (God) and with regard to all beings (world). This is not to say that human freedom may be understood in terms of other beings. Human freedom and the being of the human being are different from the being of other entities, but human freedom requires a certain relationality to the ground of all beings (God). ⁽²²⁾ The reason why this relationality is necessary is because the being of the human being, although not reducible to any determinate present moment, is still "determined" according to Schelling (das Bestimmte der menschlichen Freiheit)(MF, 352). Although the human being is not reducible to other entities, its being, as we shall see, is still not interior to it, but somehow "within" the totality of beings. ⁽²³⁾ Moreover, this relationality seems to be necessary for God to reveal himself, because, as Schelling established in the law of identity, "the one is what it is, one, only in distinction from the other (in Unterschied zum anderen)"(SA, 95). For God to reveal himself, there has to be a difference in that to which he is revealing himself, and this difference manifests itself in human freedom. The required difference might suggest that God is

somehow dependent upon human freedom. However, this is not an unproblematic inference. In fact, in his initial discussion of pantheism Schelling seems to agree with Spinoza, that "God is that which is in itself, and which alone can be grasped in terms of itself; but the finite is that which is necessarily in another, and can be grasped from this."⁽²⁴⁾ Indeed, Schelling wants to sustain a difference between God (infinite) and created things (finite). Hence, since he thinks that God can be grasped (*begriffen*) in himself, he understands God, rather than human freedom, as the center of the system. However, the crossings between the divine and human scene will make it more and more difficult for Schelling to maintain this difference, especially at the point where he states that the actuality of evil is necessary for God to reveal himself, because otherwise there would be no difference between God and the human being (MF, 373). It seems that only through human freedom is there in actuality certain relation between the ground of beings (God) and all beings (world), an identity as well as a difference of *theos* and *panta*. As Heidegger states alluding to Kant, "man [is understood] as the copula" (SA, 48), as the expression of Being through "is."⁽²⁵⁾

How is the negativity of human freedom to be understood, the negativity that separates man from God, on the one hand, and from all other entities on the other? The answer will come from Schelling's conception of human freedom, in its specificity (in contradistinction to freedom as a general idea): the power (capacity) for Good and Evil (*Vermögen zum Guten und Bösen*). Schelling introduces this "definition" as the "real and living concept" of freedom.⁽²⁶⁾ This concept complements the general and merely formal concept of freedom that idealism has provided. Schelling, in other words, does not simply reject previous idealistic conceptions of freedom (as self-determination out of one's own law of being, *Wesensgesetz*), but investigates their basis.⁽²⁷⁾ The question of the basis of freedom is the point of the most profound difficulty (*der Punkt der tiefsten Schwierigkeit*). The source of this difficulty is evil (*Böse*). How can evil be rendered compatible with God, and with the system in God's understanding? The question of the possibility of evil, of course, is a question of freedom. If the problem concerning the origin (*Ursprung*) of evil cannot be sublated (*aufgehoben*), but only displaced one point further down the line (*nur um einen Punkt weiter hinausgerückt*) (MF, 355), then freedom, as well as the system of reason, will be impossible. How was this problem of admitting evil into the nature of divine being displaced throughout the tradition, further down the line, the difficulty of explaining (away) evil, and thereby, the real, living basis of God? Schelling considers three ways: i) Immanence (of evil in God, (*innenbleiben*), ii) *Concursus* (accompaniment, *Begleiterschaft*), and iii) System of Emanation (the flowing-out of things from God). Each of these possibilities, however, ends up denying either the reality of evil, which amounts to denying the reality of freedom, or compromising the unity of the system, by admitting that God is the cause of evil. The underlying problem of these ways of dealing with the question

of evil is that they do not raise the question of the structure of Being radically enough. Why not? What, if anything, does evil have to do with the structure of being?

II. As I said above, human freedom is to be understood with respect to the totality of beings, in terms of a unity of the totality of entities, i.e., system. In this sense the unity of system is not a determinate thing, but rather the configuration of beings with respect to their determination. I delineated this configuration in terms of presence, which may not be completely determined even at a particular moment, and which is not a "static" unity. Therefore, it is more appropriate to speak about "presencing" rather than a determinate presence, or the "beingness" of an entity. This, I suggested, is the reason why Schelling talks about God as a life, a life in which beings come into being. The unity of God's life is the unity of a system.⁽²⁸⁾ Human freedom, which is necessary for there to be any knowledge of system, is precisely the power over presence. However, this power (Vermögen) necessarily implies the possibility of evil. Now, the question is as to whether evil can be understood as one being among others. On the other hand, it may have something to do with the constituted presence of beings, and ultimately it may somehow be related to the "process" of presencing, the way things come into presence, the way they are apparently "grounded" within the process of "grounding," to the extent that it (evil) makes it impossible to understand this process of presencing in terms of grounding.

As Heidegger states, throughout the tradition, evil has been considered as a lack (destitution, Mangel), an absence (Fehlen), "non-good" and ultimately non-existent (nicht-seiendes), in the sense of not being present (Nichtvorhandensein). The problem of evil, therefore, concerns the being of the non-existent (Seyn des Nichtseiendes), because "lack (Mangel) as absence (Fehlen) is indeed a not being present (Nichtvorhandensein); nevertheless this absence is not nothing (nicht nichts)" (SA, 122). To investigate the nature of evil is to question whether non-being is, and how "it is." Schelling's own understanding of evil indicates the necessity of Heidegger's question. In a paragraph which starts as a discussion of the general possibility of evil, Schelling goes into a reflection on the beginning of sin. Sin starts when man enters from genuine being (eigentliches Sein) into non-being (Nichtsein) (MF, 390). There are also several passages in the text in which Schelling himself discusses the problem of evil in terms of the question of non-being.⁽²⁹⁾ The answer to such a question requires an elucidation of the structure of being (Seynsfuge), which means, at the same time, an elucidation of the Wesen of the "not" and of nothingness. This is the one point further down the line which Schelling pushes the question of evil in order to overcome (aufheben) it. This point, however, is a point of limit (Grenze) which, according to Heidegger, does not simply mean a deficiency, but a completion of a certain understanding of being. This understanding, as we shall see, concerns willing in terms of

subjectivity, where the most extreme possibility of subjectivity manifests the possible overcoming of subjectivity itself. This overcoming will not be a triumph of reason, but something tremendous, or extraordinary (ungeheuer), since "nothingness is not nugatory, but rather something tremendous, the most tremendous [thing] in the Wesen⁽³⁰⁾ of being (...das Nichts ist nicht Nichtiges, sondern etwas Ungeheures, das Ungeheuerste im Wesen des Seyns...) (SA, 122). The question of evil has to be raised with respect to its root, in order to explain the nature of freedom. It cannot be left intact by claiming that freedom, the positive that comes from God, is indifferent with respect to good and evil. The appeal to such an indifference (Indifferenz)⁽³¹⁾ does not eradicate the necessity of understanding evil in terms of its ground in God. This indifference needs to be thought not negatively, but as a living, positive capacity (Vermögen) for good and evil. Neither can the problem of evil be resolved by attributing its root to something other than God, because this would lead to a dualism that is incompatible with the requirement of unity that reason is striving for. To deny the reality of evil would amount to reducing God to a "mere moral order" and to denying his living forces of movement (Bewegungsgründe), his reality, and the body (Leib) of philosophy. The question must be pushed one point further.

To explain the possibility of evil as originating from human freedom, and as a difficulty of negativity, necessitates an investigation of the structure or jointure of being. This jointure consists of a distinction (Unterscheidung) which Schelling presents as established by the philosophy of nature of "our" time. The distinction, between "Wesen insofar as it exists, and Wesen insofar as it is merely the ground of existence" (MF, 357), is that upon which the whole investigation is based (sich gründet). These two determinations concern all beings. However, they have different characteristics with regard to God and created beings. God is, in Kant's words, "das Wesen aller Wesen."⁽³²⁾ He is a Wesen, and as Heidegger notes, Wesen is not meant here in the sense of the essence of a thing (Sache), but in the sense in which we speak of a living being (Lebewesen) (SA, 129).⁽³³⁾ Indeed, God is a life (Leben), even though Heidegger will insist that this life is different from biological, animal-plant life (SA, 194). Yet, as we shall see, there is an analogical relationship between God's being and the being of other beings. The distinction between Ground and Existence applies primarily to God's being, and is the basis of Schelling's response to the problem of evil. "Since there is nothing before or outside of God, he must have the ground of his existence in himself" (MF, 357). Schelling makes the qualification that this ground is not God regarded absolutely. The absolute in God is his existence. The ground, on the other hand, is his nature (Natur), which is inseparable from him, but nevertheless a distinct (unterschiednes) Wesen. Just as gravity (Schwerkraft) precedes light as its dark ground, so does the nature of God precede his existence. But gravity (ground) is not in actu, and flees into the night when light (existing) appears. Therefore, gravity is not an actual Wesen,⁽³⁴⁾ nor is it the actual being (das aktuelle Sein) of

absolute identity (MF, 358). Nature (Ground) in general is everything that lies beyond the absolute being (Sein) of absolute identity. Hence, "being has identity as its Wesen, and identity [as Schelling has already pointed out] is the unity as the belonging together of what is different" (SA, 126). The absolute in God is that which truly exists, that which exists as egressing from itself (heraustreten), and thereby revealing itself (sich offenbaren). In this "movement" from out of itself and back to itself, a being has the character of unity, as moving towards the different and thereby coming back to its being. As Heidegger insists, Schelling does not think ground and existence as concepts, but as forces. God's coming back to himself is not simply a conceptual move, but the living of the living (Leben des Lebens). Hence, God is a becoming God (werdender Gott!)(SA 131). This becoming is not in opposition to his being, but is God's being (SA, 131). This conception complicates a potentially ordinary understanding of the relationship between ground and existence in God. Schelling does not think this relationship in terms of a temporal order as ground preceding existence, or in terms of the priority of Wesen, but as a circle (Zirkel), where there is not a first and a last. God has in himself the ground of his existence; he lets his ground exist as the ground. The becoming of God is not simply an emergence from the not-yet-existent (Noch-nichtseienden) understood as non-present (Nichtvorhandenes), to the existent (Seienden). Hence, God's ground, that out of which he exists, must somehow "be." ⁽³⁵⁾ Schelling has already pointed out that Willing is primal Being (Wollen ist Ursein). Therefore, the primal Being of God's ground is indeed a will, it is not merely no-thing. How can one then distinguish the willing attributed to ground from that of existence?

The Wesen of ground in God is the longing (Sehnsucht) ⁽³⁶⁾, which the eternal One feels (empfindet) to give birth to itself. This longing is equally eternal (gleich ewig) with the eternal One; it is not a unity (God considered as the absolute existence), but it is still a will (Wille), i.e., it is. Yet in this will there is no understanding (Verstande) (MF, 359). ⁽³⁷⁾ Hence, ground considered in itself does not "exist." "Existence, for Schelling, always means that which is (das Seiende) insofar as it is alongside itself (bei sich selbst), present to itself. Only that which has gone--and in a certain way is--out of itself can be "bei" itself (SA, 131). The longing (will) of the ground in God is precisely that which does not go out of itself, but remains eternally in the ground (ewig im Grunde bleibt) (MF, 360). As the first stirring (Regung) of divine existence (göttliches Dasein), this longing is the dark ground of all rule, order, and form, the non-comprehending (verstandlose) root of all understanding, the unfamiliar and nameless. The will of the ground has to lack understanding (verstandlos) somehow, since it is never alongside itself (bei sich), it does not exist. The notion of existence as being alongside itself (bei sich) is, Heidegger remarks, determined by a conception of subjectivity. "Schelling also means by existence the subject of existence" (SA, 133). However, it seems that being understood as willing "exceeds" the conception of

existence as being by itself. Willing is not limited merely to "existing" *subiectum*, but it also extends to the ground of existence, because this ground somehow "is." Indeed, this "non-subjective" willing is not only allowed by existence, but is necessarily required as its ground. How can the being of the ground be understood then? Can it ever be present? It seems that understanding being in terms of willing runs into a limit at this point. As Heidegger claims, the *hupokeimenon*, or the basis (of *subiectum*) turns out to be in opposition to *subiectum* (SA, 133). The extreme possibility of subjectivity, namely understanding the being of all beings, including God (*Wesen aller Wesen*), in terms of *subiectum* leads to an internal reversal, a limitation within subjectivity. This reversal also reveals the "limitation" of onto-theology, understanding God as Being in the sense of ground. This is the thrust of Heidegger's reading of Schelling in Schellings *Abhandlung Über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit*. Schelling's understanding of life, according to Heidegger, is inextricably bound up with the movement of a subject, i.e., Schelling understands Being, as well as life, in terms of subjectivity.

The distinction between ground and existence constitutes the structure of Being (*Seynsfuge*) of all beings. Although Schelling first discusses this structure in terms of God's Being, he claims that the same distinction may be derived from the view which proceeds from things. This contention refers to the analogical understanding I referred to above, "every being which has arisen in nature...has a double principle within itself (*ein doppeltes Prinzip in sich*, MF, 262)." (38) The only notion that is appropriate for the nature of things is that of becoming (*Werden*). However, the becoming of created things (*Geschaffenen*) ought to be different from that of God, i.e., God considered in the absolute sense. Things cannot participate in God's becoming, cannot become in God, if they are infinitely different from him. Therefore created things must become from a different ground if they are separated (*geschieden*) from God. But nothing can be outside of God (if God is everything), thus things must have their ground "in whatever in God himself is not he himself, that is, in that which is the ground of his existence (*in dem...was Gott selbst nicht E r S e l b s t i s t*, d.h. *in dem was Grund seiner Existenz ist*)" (MF, 359). The possibility of evil is grounded in this "not." The principle (*Prinzip*) through which creatures are separated from God is the self-will (39) (*Eigenwille*) of the created. Schelling claims that in God the unity (40) of these two living forces, the will of the ground (longing), and the will of existence (love), is indissoluble (*unauflöslich*) (MF, 364). Yet the separation of the unity ("*Zertrennlichkeit der Einheit*") of the two is necessary for God to reveal himself (for *Offenbarung*). This separation (*Scheidung*) happens in no creature other than the human being. As Schelling says:

"The whole power (*Macht*) of the dark principle is in the human being, and in the same there is at the same time the whole force (*Kraft*) of light. In him there is the

deepest abyss, and the highest heaven, or both centers. The will of the human being is the seed, concealed (verborgne Keim) in the eternal longing (Sehnsucht), of God present as yet only in the Ground, of the divine look of life (Lebensblick), which God saw (ersah), when he grasped the will of nature (MF, 363).

In the human being the unity of these principles is a free and living bond (lebendige Band), which is, for Schelling, the soul (Seele). If this bond were also inseparable (unzertrennlich) in the human being, then there would be no difference between God and the human being, i.e., God would not be revealed (MF, 363), because every Wesen can only be revealed in its opposite, or counterpart (Gegenteil). The self-will (Eigenwille) of the human being, which, according to Schelling, is a certain conception of being alongside oneself (bei sich), implies a bond of the human being to God's ground. This bond constitutes the possibility of both good and evil, i.e., of freedom.

The possibility of good and evil is grounded in this separability of the unity of forces. The condition of evil lies in the potential in the human being for the particular-will (Partikularwille), separated from God, to raise itself in the place of the universal-will (Universalwille). The will of ground, which eternally is in the dark in God, is separable from the will of existence in the human being. Since the necessary bond in God (Geist) is a free one (Seele) in the human being, it is also possible for these two principles (ground and existence) to be reversed. Evil manifests itself as this reversal (Umkehrung, or as a positive pervertedness, Verkehrtheit, MF, 366). Thus, the "mere" separation of the forces is not evil in itself, but evil is their reversal in the human being. Thereby, Schelling attempts to separate evil from its ground.

This conception of evil as a domination of a particular-will of the soul over the spirit in God (universal-will) indicates that there is a resistance to a certain conception of subjectivity in Schelling's text: "The principle which is raised up from the ground of nature, through which the human being is separated from God, is selfhood in the human being.." (MF, 364). However, the manifestation of evil does not merely occur in the individual human being, but also has a universal effectiveness (universelle Wirksamkeit) (MF, 373). This crisis (Scheidung) between ground and existence points out a very radical negativity which cannot be exhausted by the distinction between universal-will and particular-will. The crisis is within willing itself, which is the defining characteristic of subjectivity. Ultimately, the ground of this subjectivity cannot be understood in terms of presence, even if (or exactly because) this ground has to be thought as absence, as a modification of presence. This ground is not merely non-existent, but it requires a more radical conception of nothingness. This nothingness cannot be adequately thought, assuming it can ever be thought at all, in terms of existence understood as subjectivity. Yet it is precisely this thought of negativity which defines the possibility of human freedom, and specifically of evil. The human being has a power (Vermögen) which is the

power of negativity, in terms of which the being of the human being is "related" to the absence "prior" to presencing.

III. In order to illuminate the nature of evil, Schelling offers the simile (Gleichnis) of illness. Illness is the true replica of evil or sin. Just as illness is the result of a reversal, rather than a disharmony of forces -- a "false" unity (of the forces of ground and existence), rather than something simply negative-- evil, too, is something spiritual, not merely something non-present, but a life, a life of lies (ein Leben der Lüge)(MF, 366). Still, evil does not have the character of Wesen (it is nichts Wesenhaftes). It is a seeming-picture (Scheinbild) of life, a swaying between Being and Non-Being (MF, 366). The question remains as to whether this conception of non-being (mè ón) (MF, 373fn) is radical enough to think the negativity of the human being. The result of illness, Schelling admits, is death (Tod): "Illness is ended by death (Krankheit wird durch den Tod geendigt)" (MF, 371).⁽⁴¹⁾ Even though it is true that the thought of evil does require something present, namely a spiritual (geistiges) unity, the ground of this possibility may demand a more radical conception of finitude. The principle of finitude in itself, as Schelling says, does not result in evil (MF, 372), but leads to evil only if this finitude is brought to the center. Is it possible then that evil, or the unity Schelling understands as evil, is thought in such a way that it ultimately joins the ranks of existence, of presence, in the war against the last enemy (der letzte Feind), death (der Tod)?⁽⁴²⁾ Why does Schelling, who is otherwise always very conscientious in setting correct oppositions, place illness, rather than death, against life? Is it perhaps because there is a non-opposition between life and death? Why does he think death only in the context of dead conceptuality? And whose death is the last enemy? That of God?⁽⁴³⁾ Is a certain conception of death immanent in God from the "start"?⁽⁴⁴⁾

If human freedom, as the separation (Scheidung) of forces which are otherwise indissoluble in God, is necessary for God to exist, to reveal himself, then it is not and cannot be merely a "property" of man, a power internal to the human being, which he or she can sometimes exercise. Freedom refers to the being of the human being. The human being must be so that God "exists" (SA 143). The self-revelation⁽⁴⁵⁾ of God is also the creation (Schöpfung) of the human being. There is a certain relationality of the human being to the primal stirring (Regung) from which God's existence (Dasein) "proceeds." However, this relationality is a decision (Ent-scheidung); the human being does decide his or her own Wesen, according to Schelling. This sole appropriate conception of de-cision (Ent-scheidung here is not simply human decision) is simultaneous with the "beginning" of God's becoming as the scission (Scheidung) of ground and existence. Yet neither the becoming of God nor human decision can be thought in an ordinary conception of time. As Schelling has already pointed out, the relationship between God's existence and his ground cannot be regarded as

either precedence in time or in terms of the priority of *Wesen*. It is a circle (*Zirkel*), in which "it is not a contradiction that that through which the one is produced (generated, *erzeugt*) itself again is reproduced (given birth to, *gezeugt*) from it (the one)" (MF, 358).⁽⁴⁶⁾ The circle Schelling thinks in this becoming is not a formal concept; this is to say that it is not simply a transition (*Übergang*) from not-yet-present-at hand to present-at-hand. The ground of non-being itself is in becoming; the ground becomes the ground through existence. Thus, the "becoming of God cannot be lined up in terms of individual segments in the succession of the everyday conception of time, rather in this becoming, everything is 'simultaneous' (*gleichzeitig*)" (SA, 136). In Schelling's words, "all [happens] at the same time in one magical stroke" (...alles in Einem magischen Schlage zugleich geschieht...)(MF, 387). Simultaneity does not mean an obliteration of the past and the future, but rather, as Heidegger puts it, "the original simultaneity emerges in that being-as having been (*Gewesensein*) and being-futural (*Künftigsein*) assert themselves and strike (*schlagen*) into one another equiprimordially (*gleichursprünglich*) with being-present (*Gegenwärtigsein*) as the essential fullness (*Wesenfülle*) of time itself" (SA, 136). It is this stroke (*Schlag*) of authentic temporality, this Moment (*Augenblick*),⁽⁴⁷⁾ which is the essence of eternity in God, rather than eternity as an everlasting present (*nunc stans*).⁽⁴⁸⁾ It is also this origin from which time, as well as eternity, springs forth, which points to a radical thought of nothingness as the "origin" of creation. The thought of an origin of both time and eternity implies that in the act of creation the radical difference between the creator and the created is overcome, and yet reinstated.⁽⁴⁹⁾ "The creator itself in the act of creating turns itself into a created...(das Schaffende selbst als Schaffen sich in ein Geschaffenes wandelt...)" (SA, 163), turns itself into the individuation of the created while withholding itself as ground (...wandelt sich das Schaffende selbst in die Vereinzlung des Geschaffenen)(SA, 164). Heidegger calls this originary animatedness (*Bewegtheit*) of any living being (*Lebendigen*) in general, "life-movement" (*Lebensbewegtheit*, *Metabolè*), which is considered in terms of the originary stroke (*Schlag*) of the past and the future, *Umschlag*. The act of creation which happens in a magical stroke cannot be anteceded. God's existence is a beginningless becoming (*anfangloses Werden*), but yet it is also "grounded." Hence, this ground can never be past, in an ordinary sense of time. It can never be overcome by God's existence either, because that would undermine the eternal existence of God. Therefore, the not-yet in God's becoming has to remain as the eternal past (*ewige Vergangenheit*) in his ground. This eternal past is that which has never been present and did not become past, but was the past primordially and from all eternity.⁽⁵⁰⁾

It is precisely in this past that the *Wesen* of human freedom has to be posited. Since this ground is also the ground of creation, the problem of freedom concerns not simply human freedom as a property, but the very being of the human being

as a created entity. Schelling designates this self-determination of the human being which is simultaneous with God's creation as the formal concept of freedom. "The Wesen of the human being is essentially his own deed" (MF, 385). Even though the human being is in the originary creation an undecided (unentschiedenes) Wesen, he or she cannot remain so for God to reveal himself. The human being has to decide (entscheiden)⁽⁵¹⁾; however, this action (Tat) cannot fall into time, it must be outside of time (ewige Tat). The thought of the eternal deed (ewige Tat) seems to contain the seed of what Schelling later calls the eternal past (die ewige Vergangenheit).⁽⁵²⁾ Schelling does not explicitly say that the eternal deed has never been done. He claims that "even though this idea may seem beyond the grasp of the common way of thinking (gemeine Denkweise), there is in every man a feeling which is in accord with it (übereinstimmendes Gefühl), as if he has been what he is from all eternity, and in no way has come to be in time (MF, 385)."⁽⁵³⁾ This Wesen has already been decided in a life before life, and that is why it is an intelligible Wesen. With this thought Schelling attempts to displace the opposition between possibility and necessity, which is based upon a present-at-hand conception. Freedom does not mean choosing from a set of options which are present to human beings, but rather determining one's "Wesen" according to unnamed ground, which is never one's "own." This determination is not an abstract self-assertion, but a concrete attunement (Stimmung) to history as the revelation of God which is necessary.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Historically, this attunement, for Heidegger, speaks to an overcoming of subjectivity. The relationship of the human being to his or her ground implies that human existence cannot be understood in terms of the "subject" of existence. Human existence with respect to its ground is that which can never come back to itself. In the originary movement of life there is no identity human existence may come back to. The desire to postulate this ground in terms of human existence is the origin of evil.⁽⁵⁵⁾ "All existence requires a condition (Bedingung) in order that it may be actual, that is, personal existence." However, "man never gets this condition under his rule (Gewalt)"(MF, 399). The activated selfhood is necessary for life's intensity, and without it there would be death" (MF, 400). Nevertheless, "the condition of this selfhood is independent of the human being" (MF, 399). This dispossession is also "relatively" present in God as well.

This is the sadness which adheres to finite life, and inasmuch as there is, even in God himself, a condition which is at least relatively independent, there is in Him, too, a source of sadness which, however, never attains actuality, but serves for the eternal joy of triumph. From it comes the pall of despondency (Schleier der Schwermut) draped over the whole of nature--the profound and indestructible melancholy of all life (die tiefe unzerstörliche Melancholie alles Lebens)(MF, 399).⁽⁵⁶⁾

Schelling regards the feeling (Gefühl) of freedom, through which the human being is not only free from nature, but also from God,⁽⁵⁷⁾ as an attunement (Stimmung), when he refers to the call of the ground as the mysterious voice (eine geheime Stimme) of the depths (MF, 381). Yet this inner voice of one's own (die innere Stimme seines eignen) (MF, 389)⁽⁵⁸⁾ is perhaps the voice of the other, and recalls Heidegger's remark from Being and Time on the voice of the friend. In Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom, Heidegger indeed alludes to the feeling that we are what we have always already been as an uncanny (unheimlich) and at the same time friendly (freundlich) feeling (SA, 185). Yet what is this friendly voice? What does it mean to hear this voice? Is it, as Heidegger remarks in Being and Time: "Hearing (Hören) which constitutes the primary and authentic way in which Dasein is open for its ownmost potentiality to be"? Heidegger continues "...as in hearing the voice of the friend whom every Dasein carries alongside itself (bei sich)"(p.163). Does this being alongside oneself (bei sich) (existence according to Schelling) not prove to be precisely that which does not belong to the human being, but to the other? Is hearing this friendly voice, the voice of a friend, an openness to one's ownmost potentiality-for-being, also an openness to being-towards-death? Is the friendly voice of ground, in other words, the voice of death? Is freedom fundamentally a freedom towards death?⁽⁵⁹⁾

Can this thought of negativity, of the ground as nothingness, of the nothingness out of which the human being has always already been "created," and finally of nothingness which does not merely indicate a past, but strikes together (zusammenschlagen) with the past and the future in the present, be reconciled with existence? Is there a Wesen which was there before there was ground, and before the existent? If so, as Schelling asks "how should we describe it? (Wie sollen wir es bezeichnen?)"(MF, 406). Is it impossible to bring "it" into language? Heidegger seems to think so when he says that "[h]ere the word leaves the thinker too (hier verläßt auch den Denker das Wort)" (SA, 154). Yet in Schelling this silence does not last very long.

"At the highest point of the whole investigation"(MF, 406) Schelling raises the question as to whether there is a middle-point (Mittelpunkt) between the Wesen insofar as it is the ground and insofar as it exists, or whether one should concede an absolute dualism. Since this primal ground (Urgrund) is before all ground and all existence, it must be prior to all oppositions. Since identity is a belonging together of what is different, this ground cannot be an identity, because there is no difference to constitute the identity. The absolute unity is in God's existence, but not in the ground. Hence, this primal ground, which is "more like non-ground (Ungrund),...cannot be described as an identity, but as the absolute indifference (absolute Indifferenz) of both" (MF, 406). Schelling designates the absolute indifference as a Wesen. However, that which is before all oppositions cannot be a Wesen, if Wesen is that which goes outside itself and comes back to

itself, i.e., necessarily requires its opposition. Hence, the only predicate (which is constituted by contraries) absolute indifference can have is a lack of predicates (Prädikatlosigkeit). Nonetheless, Schelling does not surrender to this lack of predicates, even though he warns that some people forget that all oppositions have now really disappeared and predicate the same oppositions of indifference. Indifference is not a product of oppositions. However, principles such as good and evil can be predicated of the non-ground as non-oppositions (MF, 407). Each of them can only be attributed to the non-ground as each is in itself, and therefore not as both at the same time (zugleich), because that would lead to reducing them to one again. Since without the indifference, without the non-ground, there would not be a twofoldness of principles, the non-ground (the only proper conception of the absolute, according to Schelling), cannot be anything other than a going-apart (auseinandergehen) into two equally eternal beginnings (zwei gleich ewige Anfänge), not both at the same time, but in both in the same way (gleicherweise)(MF, 408). These two equally eternal beginnings can be one through love, i.e., the non-ground divides itself into two so that there may be love. In this thought there is the mystery of love, that "it unites those, each of which could be for itself, and yet is not so, and cannot be so without the other"(MF, 408). From this Schelling concludes that there is only one principle in the system. This is the unity (Einheit) which rules over the spirit of the non-ground, which is not the identity (Identität) of both principles, but the general, the same towards all and yet that which is not seized by anything: in a word, love, which is all in all (MF, 408).

Schelling struggles with a number of difficulties after introducing indifference as the relationship between the ground and existence. Positing two equally eternal beginnings seems to indicate a resistance to admitting a finitude within being, within God's life (the life of all life). Setting aside the formal question as to how two equally eternal beginnings are possible, we can ask whether positing two equally eternal beginnings would not make a unity eternally impossible. Schelling thinks that it does not. However, then the problem is to sustain the reality of evil. Schelling tries to sustain the duality (Dualität) of principles as long as they are not understood as oppositions. However, later he denies good and evil not only an oppositional structure, but even a duality. To those who find an identity between good and evil Schelling answers that "good and evil in no way form an original opposition, least of all a duality. There is a duality where there are really two Wesens standing against each other. Evil, however, is not a Wesen, but anUnwesen" (MF, 409). How can an Unwesen be something spiritual, a unity? What is the meaning of Wesen here, or rather Unwesen? Does this notion of Unwesen not point to the radical absencing we were alluding to all along? Schelling proposes the unity of love as the principle of system. But how is a system possible after denying a Wesen to evil, and consequently to freedom too? How does Schelling's claim that "even for the highest concepts, a clear insight of

reason (Vernunftinsicht) must be possible" (MF, 412) stand with the mystery of love? These problems indicate almost a reversal in the text after the appearance of the words "indifference" and non-ground." Schelling's subsequent argument seems to be an attempt to rescue the system, unity, and God's life. The discussion ends with the contention (or hope) that everything should be understood by reason, by thinking, by metaphysics (by onto-theology), and by language. This hope seems to be less and less visible in Schelling's later works. The problem of thinking and language, in thinking and speaking about the lack of predicates, leads to the question as to whether this lack of predicates not only indicates, as Heidegger claims, a limitation of Logos, but also demands the conclusion that the Wesen of all Being is finitude (Endlichkeit), that the thought of Being is a thought of nothingness. Does Schelling come to see Wesen as essential unfolding in presencing, as finite, bound up in a "prior" absencing? Does "prior" point out the eternal past (Vergangenheit), which Heidegger interprets as concealment (Verborgenheit)? Or does Schelling try to resist this finitude when he says, in *The Ages of the World*: "How should that which is being itself be nothing? Being must after all once again be (wie sollte das Nichts sein, das doch das Sein selber ist? Das Sein muß eben auch wieder sein" (p.222). Whatever the answer is (and at this stage the name Schelling may be said to be referring to "us," without suggesting a generalizable subject, but precisely by intensifying the question of singularity) it is important to remember the powerful negativity pointed towards in the text of Schelling, the negativity which here problematizes the very terms "of" and "Schelling."

NOTES:

¹ M.Heidegger, *Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens* (Pfullingen: Günther Neske, 1954), p.15. "Three dangers threaten thinking. The good and hence healing (salutary) danger is the neighborhood of the singing poet. The evil and hence keenest danger is thinking itself. It must think against itself, which it is only seldom capable of doing. The bad and hence muddled danger is philosophizing."

² Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (Pfullingen: Günther Neske, 1959), p.242. "Die Sprache als die Sprache zur Sprache bringen." Even though I will not make this "comparison," I hope that it will be clearer that the Logos speaking in Schelling's text will require its own transformation, which led Schelling to a different type of understanding of discourse in his later works such as *The Ages of the World* (*Die Weltalter*) and *after* (*Philosophie der Mythologie*).

³ F.W.J. Schelling, *Philosophische Untersuchungen Über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit und die damit zusammenhängenden Gegenstände, Ausgewählte Werke* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1974), 9, pp.275-360 (hereafter MF). I shall cite the page numbers appearing in brackets on

this edition which refer to the *Sämtliche Werke* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1860), 7. The translations are mine.

⁴ F.W.J.Schelling, *Weltalter, Ausgewählte Werke* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1976), 10, p.338. The page number refers to the *Sämtliche Werke* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1861), 8. The translation is mine.

⁵ Schelling designates this objection as an "ancient, but in no way silenced [verklungenen] rumour [Sage]" (p.336).

⁶ Heidegger, *Schellings Abhandlung über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit*, (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1971), p.31. Hereafter referred to as SA followed by the page number.

⁷ Schelling uses the word "system" in its first sense. Clearly, I am not suggesting that Schelling understands "system" directly as this Greek meaning (if this were possible). As we will see, Schelling writes within a modern conception of system. As Heidegger indicates, there are several assumptions associated with this conception: 1) The predominance of the mathematical as the knowledge-standard (*Wissensmaßstab*). 2) The self-grounding of knowledge in the sense of this requirement as the precedence of certainty over truth. 3) The founding of certainty as the self-certainty of the "I think." 4) Thinking, ratio, as the court of justice (*Gerichtshof*) for the essential determination (*Wesensbestimmung*) of Being. 5) The shattering of the exclusive dominance of church faith in the shaping of knowledge, at the same time taking over (*Übernahme*) of the previous Christian experience of Being as a whole into the new questioning. 6) The setting free (*Befreiung*) of the human being for the creative conquest and rule, and the new formation of beings in all areas of human existence (SA, 36ff). Even though I will not discuss these assumptions explicitly, I hope it will be clear to what extent they determine Schelling's thinking.

⁸ The source of this thought is Kant's transcendental ideas: God, world, and man. These ideas are not ostensive, they do not bring what is represented before us bodily, but only point out the direction in which we must search out the manifold of what is given with regard to its possible unity. The transcendental idea of God belongs to the third class, "the absolute unity of the condition of all objects of thought in general" (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A334/B391).

⁹ System, according to Kant, is "the unity of manifold knowledge under an idea (*die Einheit der mannigfaltigen Erkenntnisse unter einer Idee*)" (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1990, A832/B860). It designates the unity of beings as a whole, in other words the horizon upon which beings are present.

¹⁰ The reason I write "God" in quotation marks is because it seems that hereby I treat God as an entity among others that has a relationship to other entities. However, this conception of God will very soon be displaced by Schelling, Hence, this sentence needs to be considered as merely provisional.

¹¹ It is important to note, however, that a "system in the divine understanding" does not mean that God is a system. As Schelling later states: "...God himself is not a system, but a life" (MF, 399).

¹² At this point a word of caution is in order. In what follows it will seem that I do not make a distinction between human freedom and the being of the human being. The reason, I hope, will be clear. The question of human freedom will inevitably take us to the question of being, especially in the context of the eternal deed (see below).

¹³ Schelling does not explicitly raise the question of how this likeness is to be considered either. It does not seem to be a similarity in terms of outward appearance (eidos). Schelling will understand this likeness (Gleichheit) in terms of the negativity which determines human freedom and God's ground.

¹⁴ It is important to note that the question will not receive an immediate answer. Therefore, Schelling's discussion needs to be considered as a way (passage), rather than as a definitive answer to the question.

¹⁵ This seemingly off-hand reference to thought, desire, and action connects the discussion to the immediate question of human existence. Evidently, the discussion of system and freedom is not an abstract philosophical question, but directly pertains to human activity, and only consequently to God's life.

¹⁶ "Reason," as in "The Principle of Reason," does not seem to be the correct rendition of what Schelling means by the word "Grund." "Ground" for Schelling, as we will see, is not ratio, but foundation, basis (Grund-lage), or base (Unterlage), not the rational, but precisely the non-rational.

¹⁷ This question will be especially exigent below in the context of the discussion of the ground as the nature of God in contrast to His existence.

¹⁸ This point will be especially important, because Schelling will define being (Sein) as Willing (Wollen).

¹⁹ This conception will ultimately lead to the idea of God as historical, which is pervasive throughout the Freedomessay.

²⁰ This statement needs qualification, because Schelling later states that "creation is not an event (Begebenheit) but an act (Tat)" (MF, 395/396). Nevertheless, as we shall see, there is no other possibility for God than to act because his action is a

self-revelation. An act by which, Schelling claims, God "creates himself," cannot be understood merely as that of an agent.

²¹ Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, in *Kants Werke*, (Akademie Ausgabe, Vol.IV, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1968), p.451.

²² At this stage it is necessary to note that Schelling does not simply appeal to a traditional distinction between the human being and other beings in terms of an "excessive quality" of the former, such as reason, Logos etc. The being of the human being can only be understood as a kind of negativity.

²³ Yet, the question still remains and becomes more critical as to whether the being of human being can be understood in terms of the notion of presence in any way.

²⁴ "Gott ist das, was in sich ist und allein aus sich selbst begriffen wird; das Endliche aber, was notwendig in einem anderen ist, und nur aus diesem begriffen werden kann.." (MF, 340).

²⁵ Ultimately, this difference between human being and God will lead to the difficult thought of absence Schelling wants to think in terms of "the eternal past."

²⁶ Because of the problems of delimitation I discussed above, it will turn out be impossible to have this conception of freedom as a definition.

²⁷ Indeed the problem will be the law (Gesetz) of the Wesen. It is difficult to attribute a univocal meaning to the notion of Wesen. In the first instance, Schelling uses it to refer to any creature, living being (Lebewesen), as opposed to a dead notion of an ever-present essence; in this sense, the notion of life (Leben) is crucial. In terms of God's being it may designate the coming-into-being of beings. Finally, as Heidegger reads it, Wesen may refer to an essential unfolding in presencing, even though it is problematic to determine to what extent Schelling is going along with this understanding. Hereafter I will leave the word Wesen untranslated within the text.

²⁸ However, this assumption will be very difficult to sustain, and will entail a radical absence in the very being of God, in the very heart of presencing.

²⁹ See MF, 366, 372, 373, 404, 405. It is important to state, however, that Schelling does not want to consider evil simply as non-being (Nichtseiendes), nor as weakness (Schwäche) or lack (Mangel). It is a unity, spiritual, and real. See the discussion of illness below. Nevertheless, in the very end he does claim that evil is a Unwesen.

³⁰ Wesen here means an essential unfolding in presencing.

³¹ It remains to be seen how the conception of Indifferenz referred to here (MF, 354) differs from the absoluteIndifferenz Schelling proposes as the relationship between ground and existence (MF, 406).

³² Kritik der reinen Vernunft A334/B391. Kant maintains that God is "...the thing that contains the highest condition of the possibility of all that can be thought of."

³³ It seems that Heidegger understands Lebewesen "itself" in terms of an essential unfolding.

³⁴ Here, Schelling himself seems to be using the word *wesen* in a verbal sense, as an essential unfolding. As we saw above, this notion of *Wesen* will be the one attributed to God. Similarly, the word *Wesen* in the title of the essay (*Über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit*) may be understood in this sense.

³⁵ Insofar as one understands God's life as presencing this requirement implies that there is an absence "in God" which always accompanies his presence.

³⁶ Against the possible objection that to attribute longing (*Sehnsucht*) to God is a transference of a human state onto God, Heidegger asks who has ever shown that longing is merely something human; who has ever disproved that "what we call longing and within which we stand is at the end something other than we ourselves (*ein Anders ist als wir selbst*)?" (SA, 150)

³⁷ This implies that the system is limited to existence, because the system is in God's understanding (*im göttlichen Verstande*), but there is no understanding in the ground.

³⁸ The problem concerns the meaning of both words, *in* and *sich* in the designation "within itself (*in sich*)." It becomes clear that the being of an entity that these principles speak to cannot be understood in terms of interiority, or belonging.

³⁹ *Eigenwille* may also be rendered as the individual (or proper) will. The context of the discussion, namely the possibility of evil in the individual, may suggest that "individual-will" is more precise. Moreover, the nature of self, and of propriety, will be problematic in the ensuing discussion.

⁴⁰ It is not clear what Schelling means by this "unity," if unity is always the unity of two differends. Schelling will take up this problem at the very end, when he considers the connection of these two principles. The problem is as to how there can be a unity (presence) in God "prior" to the separation of these forces if presencing "proceeds" from this separation.

⁴¹ The suspicion here (following Schelling's comparison) is as to whether death may be the "condition" for illness, rather than its end.

⁴² "Death as the last enemy" are Schelling's own words. Yet he admits that death is also necessary for the scission; "Der letzte Feind, der aufgehoben wird, ist der Tod (denn der Tod war nur notwendig zur Scheidung...)(MF, 405).

⁴³ These apparently rhetorical questions do indeed point towards a difficult problem of thinking the negativity (nothingness) at the ground of existence, the finitude in Being as Heidegger puts it. Indeed in *The Ages of the World*, Schelling tries to think a limit (Schranke) in God, which is not a limit from the outside, but a limit through which God himself encloses (abschließen) himself, because infinity (Unendlichkeit) does not mean perfection (Vollkommenheit)(p.212).

⁴⁴ Again, as Schelling states in *The Ages of the World*, "No living is without simultaneous dying" (Kein Leben ist ohne gleichzeitige Sterben)(p.260). Yet God is...imperishable (Unverderbliche)and alone has immortality (Unsterblichkeit) (p.261). Why is life itself (God is life itself but not living) (p.238) without death?

⁴⁵ At this stage the question arises as to whether even God's being belongs to Him. As I said, Schelling claims that God's self revelation is not an event (Begebenheit,) but an act (Tat)(MF, 396). If in God, the forces of ground and existence are inseparable, then creation cannot be His own act. This is necessary to keep the ground separate from the evil, in which case the implication is that God's being does not belong to Him. If, however, God's self-revelation were indeed His act then He would have willed evil, along with his existence. Schelling's formulation is the following: "Thus, if there were no evil, God himself would not have been (Damit also das Böse nicht wäre, müsste Gott selbst nicht sein)"(MF, 403). This implies that the conditions for the possibility of the evil are also conditions for the possibility of God's life.

⁴⁶ Schelling understands creation as a self-revelation, as giving birth (gebären): God's giving birth to him (her) self. Yet that which is born (existence) in turn "produces" the ground. As I said earlier, existence lets the ground be the ground which does not exist in actu. The self-revelation of God is a matter of Logos: [God] speaks and [the creatures] are there (MF, 347) See footnote 2).

⁴⁷ In *The Ages of the World*, Schelling states that the scission of forces did not happen once and for all but eternally, and always, and yet in each moment (Augenblick). This reference indicates that Schelling's understanding of simultaneity is indeed very close to Heidegger's conception of ecstatic temporality, the thought of a temporality temporalizing itself, as well as Nietzsche's thought of eternal return.

⁴⁸ Schelling himself opposes the conception of eternity as nunc stans to a real and living eternity (*The Ages of the World*, p.260).

⁴⁹ The fact that the relationship between the human being and God is radicalized within a thought of temporality indicates not only that God as geistiges is historical, but also that God needs man in order to be God. Indeed, Heidegger finishes Schellings Abhandlung with an excerpt from Hölderlin's Der Rhein which ends with a reference to the "need" (brauchen) of the gods for the human being. With Hölderlin, Heidegger thinks the gods as nothing but time: Für Hölderlin sind die Götter 'nichts als Zeit.' Hölderlins Hymnen "Germanien" und "der Rhein" GA.39, p.55.

⁵⁰ Schelling introduces the notion of the eternal past in The Ages of the World (p.254). The important point about the eternal past is that it has never been present. As Schelling says: "...a past which has not first been past,...but was past from all eternity" (p.254). It seems that with this notion, Schelling admits that there is a radical absence at the very heart of presencing, even though this is not an uncomplicated conclusion within the Freedom essay.

⁵¹ Entscheiden here does not mean an arbitrary choice, but literally a scission, the human being's separation from God, and a scission of the forces within the very life of God.

⁵² It is very difficult to understand the nature of the eternal deed. It does not seem to be an act that could "take place." The significance of this problem concerns the question as to whether the being of the human being belongs to him/her or not, and consequently as to whether it can be reduced to presence. I prefer to leave this as an open question. Even though there is a strong tendency in Schelling to understand the being of a Wesen as belonging to that entity, his meditation leads to the impossibility of this understanding.

⁵³ This statement takes us back to the beginning of this essay. The question is as to how something beyond the grasp of common thinking could be present in every man as a feeling. Does Schelling imply that there is a limitation within the very nature of thinking?

⁵⁴ The impossibility of possibilities as choices applies mainly to God. In his attempt to justify God's existence in the face of evil, as I said above, God cannot let evil not be, because otherwise he would give up his own existence. Since God has a necessary selfhood, he does not have infinite possibilities. A necessary Wesen which has everything in him (God) cannot have a possibility outside of himself. At this point the distinction between necessity and possibility in God does not make sense (MF, 397-398). As Heidegger says, possibility belongs only to the finite. Consequently, any distinction between possibility and actuality in the essence of Being indicates that Being itself is finite (SA, 192).

⁵⁵ The analogical understanding of being in terms of subjectivity proves to be reversed; it is not from God to the human being, but from the human being to

God. In fact, there is a very close connection between the death of God and that of the subject.

⁵⁶ The last sentence is D.F.Krell's translation in "The Crisis of Reason in the Nineteenth Century: Schelling's Treatise on Human Freedom," *The Collegium Phaenomenologicum-The First Ten Years*, ed. John.C Sallis, Giuseppina Moneta, and Jacques Taminiaux, (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1988) p.30. It is clear that there is at least a "relative" finitude in God's life, which is also in the very nature of presencing, determined by an absence which cannot be thought in terms of presencing.

⁵⁷ Schelling calls this powerful (mächtig) effect of the ground in the human being the dread of life (Die Angst des Lebens) (MF, 381), a word which Heidegger uses in *Being and Time* mainly with respect to death without the word "Leben": "Das Sein zum Tode ist wesentlich Angst"(p.266). See especially §40, pp.184-191, and division II Chapter 2.

⁵⁸ Heidegger refers to this voice as the voice of conscience (Gewissen) in *Being and Time* (p.268). Indeed, throughout the entire second chapter of the second division of *Being and Time*, Heidegger tries to think of an ontic attestation for the authentic potentiality for Being (eigentliches Seinkönnen), where he radicalizes the thought of ground. Many terms Heidegger employs in that chapter in order to think the "being-ground of nothingness" (Grundsein einer Nichtigkeit) have striking Schellingian overtones which promise an interesting comparison to Schelling's *Freedom Essay*, as well as to Heidegger's own lecture course on this *Essay* (1936).

⁵⁹ *Being and Time*, p.266

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