SUNY Series in Hegelian Studies

Quentin Lauer, S.J., Editor

F·W·J·SCHELLING

BRUNO

OR

On the Natural and the Divine Principle of Things

1802

edited and translated
with an introduction by

MICHAEL G. VATER

State University of New York Press · Albany

Published by
State University of New York Press, Albany

Printed in the United States of America

For information, address State University of New York
Press, State University Plaza, Albany, N.Y., 12246

Cover and text design by Bruce McPherson

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Schelling, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von, 1775–1854.
Bruno, or, On the natural and the divine principle of things.
(SUNY series in Hegelian studies)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
1. Metaphysics, I. Vater, Michael G., 1944– .
II. Title. III. Series.
B2864.E5V37 1984 110 83–5101
ISBN 0–87395–793–8
ISBN 0–89395–792–X (pbk.)
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

To Jeremy

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Abbreviations

BRIEFE F.W.J. Schelling, *Briefe und Dokumente* II & III, edited by Horst Fuhrmans, (Bouvier, Bonn, 1973/1975).

CRITIQUE Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* translated by Norman Kemp Smith, (MacMillan, London, 1963).

DIFFERENCE G.W.F. Hegel, *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy,* edited by H.S. Harris & Walter Cerf, (SUNY Press, Albany, 1977).

ETHICS Benedict de Spinoza, *Ethics,* edited by James Gutmann, (Hafner, New York, 1949).

ESSAYS F.W.J. Schelling, *The Unconditional in Human Knowledge: Four Early Essays,* translated by Fritz Marti, (Bucknell University Press, Lewisburg, 1980).

FAITH G.W.F. Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge,* translated by Walter Cerf & H.S. Harris, (SUNY Press, Albany, 1977).

F. WERKE J.G. Fichte, *Ausgewählte Werke,* edited by Fritz Medicus, Band IV, (Meiner, Hamburg, 1962).

PHENOMENOLOGY G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit,* translated by A.V. Miller (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1979).

SCIENCE J.G. Fichte, *Science of Knowledge*, translated by Peter Heath & John Lachs, (Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York, 1970).

SPIEGEL Xavier Tilliette, *Schelling im Spiegel seiner Zeitgenossen*, (Bottega d'Erasmo, Turin, 1974).

SYSTEM F.W.J. Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism*, translated by Peter Heath, (University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1978).

WERKE F.W.J. Schelling, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. K.F.A. Schelling, (Stuttgart and Augsburg, 1856ff.).

Preface

THE PRESENT TRANSLATION is based on the text published in *Schellings Werke*, edited by Manfred Schröter, (Beck, Munich, 1965), = the Jubilee Edition of 1927, Vol. 3 of the major series. Citation of texts is according to the original edition of 1856ff., edited by K.F.A. Schelling. The ornate style of the original has been sacrificed in favor of a more conversational style. It is my hope that greater conceptual clarity will be achieved thereby. To that end, I have also been quite liberal in interpolating clarifications into the text, and supplying transitions where they seemed lacking. All such interpolations are enclosed within brackets. I have learned much from recent translations of Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel by Peter Heath, Fritz Marti, Henry Harris, Walter Cerf, and A. V. Miller. I have sometimes altered their translations of technical terms in citing their texts, but that is only for the sake of preserving a uniform terminology. I have adopted the convention of not capitalizing terms that refer to the absolute, since I feel that capitalization often interferes with the work of coming to a philosophical understanding of what the term signifies.

The help and encouragement of many different people comes to fruition in this volume, though I alone am responsible for its accuracy and intelligibility. The research on the Schelling-Hegel collaboration in Jena was done on a Marquette University Summer Faculty Fellowship in 1975. Reduced teaching loads granted by the Marquette Philosophy Department enabled me to revise the translation in the Autumn of 1981, and a grant from the Dean of the Graduate School assisted editorial preparation in the Summer of 1982. Miklos Vetö graciously supplied copies of rare historical sources, and Joseph Bracken, S.J. and William E. Dooley, S.J. assisted me greatly by reading preliminary versions of the translation and

offering helpful suggestions. Professors Quentin Lauer and Robert Brown furnished helpful, and, I am afraid, needed, direction for the revision of the Introduction and the Translation respectively. David Latuch, Kerry Walters, Jerry Witkowski, and Anne Maloney provided enthusiastic and accurate assistance in research and editing, as did Keith Pheby, who is responsible for the index. Finally I must acknowledge the generous help given me by Sandra Brown, Tom McFadden, and Ann Mallinger of the Marquette Computer Services Division on the word-processing program on which the translation was executed.

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank the following publishers for permission to reprint copyrighted material:

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State University of New York Press for quotations from G. W. F. Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge,* translated by Walter Cerf and H. S. Harris (State University of New York Press, Albany). Translation © State University of New York 1977. Also for quotations from G. W. F. Hegel, *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy,* translated by H. S. Harris and Walter Cerf (State University of New York Press, Albany). Translation © State University of New York 1977.

University Press of Virginia for quotations from F. W. J. Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism,* translated by Peter Heath (University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville). Copyright © 1978 by the Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia.

I also wish to express my gratitude to Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundman for permission to translate materials from F. W. J. Schelling, *Briefe und Dokumente,* edited by Horst Fuhrmans, Volumes II and III (Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundman, Bonn). Volume II © Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundman Bonn 1973. Volume III © Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundman Bonn 1975.

INTRODUCTION

You are right, the spirit of Schelling killeth the letter of Kant!

JOHANN MICHAEL SAILER[1]

The Revival of Metaphysics

IN THE SUMMER of 1801, Schelling formed the idea of casting his new system or 'identity-philosophy' in the form of a dialogue. The immediate occasion was the receipt of a letter from Fichte, written late in May but not posted until August, wherein Fichte voiced his fears that Schelling had never properly understood his system. In placing a philosophy of nature alongside transcendental idealism as a parallel system, he charged, Schelling had abandoned the standpoint of idealism and was instead pursuing a metaphysic of being. Fichte wrote, with characteristic bluntness, "I think that your system, by itself, has no evidence, and I think I could prove it. It can have absolutely none, unless you tacitly introduce clarifications borrowed from [my] Science of Knowledge."[2] The two philosophers who for eight years had labored in common to construct a comprehensive system of Kantian idealism had privately come to a parting of the ways.[3] Early in October Schelling penned an even-tempered and genial reply which discussed their differences at some length before avowing that it was impossible to settle all their misunderstandings in one letter. "I must place," he said, "my hopes [for resolving our differences] on future discussion between us on this central point [namely, whether an idealism can coexist with a realism]. Meanwhile, you will shortly receive a philosophical dialogue of mine. I wish you would read it."[4] The dialogue referred to is the *Bruno,* which appeared in April of 1802, in which Lucian represents Fichte's position in the dispute and Bruno (loosely patterned on Giordano Bruno) represents Schelling's. Though Schelling's announced intentions were conciliatory, and though large portions of the dialogue seriously explore grounds for reconciliation, there was to be no rapprochement between the two thinkers. Schelling closes his reply to Fichte of 3 October with the curt

announcement, "Just today a book appeared, written by a very bright fellow, that bears the title *Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*. I had no part in it, but I could in no way prevent it."[5] The "bright fellow" in question was Hegel, and what the essay's publication signaled, other than the obvious public criticism of Fichte, was the collapse of Fichte's long-standing dream of establishing with Schelling a yearbook for critical philosophy, to be called *Review of the Progress of Philosophy*.[6] The alliance had shifted; 'Critical Philosophy' no longer meant Fichte and Schelling. It now meant Schelling and Hegel, and the first number of their *Critical Journal* appeared in January of 1802. And rather than facilitating the reconciliation of Kant's heirs and reestablishing the continuity of the Kantian tradition, the *Bruno* stands along with Hegel's *Difference* as a watershed, a break with the past, the sketch of a new direction, the manifesto of "Absolute Philosophy"—a philosophy now commonly called absolute idealism, but which was loathe to call itself idealism at the start or to acknowledge anything other than a dialectical debt to Kant and Fichte.

Indeed some of the most interesting features of the *Bruno* stem from the forceful, even vehement, way that Schelling expresses the discontinuity of his thinking with Fichte's. In attempting to systematize Kant's philosophy, Fichte had remained faithful to the transcendental stance which Kant first brought to philosophical inquiry, the investigation of consciousness with a view to uncovering, not metaphysically but heuristically, the underlying structures governing consciousness. Thus the *Science of Knowledge* took the form of a genetic deduction of the structure of empirical consciousness from the postulate of an original self and an equally original, though derivative, not-self. The spirit of Kant's philosophy was faithfully preserved; even though the postulated self and not-self seem to be rather otherwordly and metaphysical entities, philosophy was in effect confined to the domain of consciousness.

But in attempting to place a philosophy of nature alongside transcendental philosophy, and even more so in trying to speculate about a world order behind appearances which unites the realms of nature and consciousness, Schelling places himself squarely in opposition to Kant's restrictions upon the domain and the method of philosophy. In order to systematically explain the whole of appearances, he must surpass the limitation of inquiry to the experiencing subject and investigate the law-like ordering of nature, the domain of nonconscious reality. And in order to investigate reality outside the context of experience, he must abandon the Kantian path of transcendental questioning and the merely heuristic answers it obtains, and boldly operate as a metaphysician, that is, seek to generalize certain features of experience and fashion a comprehensive account of all the domains of reality in terms of these generalized features. As will become apparent,

the features Schelling chooses to generalize are logical relations, the identity-and-difference of the subject and object in the situation of knowing, and that of the mental and physical aspects of the self-conscious organism. The fact that his metaphysical models are logical relations rather than properties may make Schelling's endeavor less suspect to Kantian eyes, but the *Bruno* abundantly and pointedly states Schelling's conviction that philosophy must once again acquire a metaphysical foundation if it is to be a systematic account of reality. The real target of many of Schelling's arguments is, therefore, Kant, not Fichte. Fichte's philosophy of consciousness is objectionable only in that it is a limited and regional stance, thus a willful refusal to think reality in all of its domains into a systematic whole. Schelling's adversaries are those "who make their fear of reason into the content of philosophy itself" (4:308).

Closely connected with the anti-Kantian and forthrightly metaphysical stance is the anachronistic cast of the dialogue's thought, a feature which is responsible for much of its charm but at the same time poses grave obstacles to understanding its philosophic content. Schelling boldly charges at Kant, leaps over his head, and runs—into the past! Echoes of the great metaphysicians of the past abound; Plato, Spinoza, Giordano Bruno, and Leibniz all contribute their doctrines and their distinctive vocabularies to the discussion. Their presence, which sometimes conveys the impression that the dialogue is set in the philosophers' Babel, is quite deliberate. Schelling wishes to vindicate the claims of metaphysics as such, to glorify the speculative courage of a Plato or a Spinoza, and to set their accomplishments above the petty attacks of a reason that cannot rise above the task of analyzing experience.

The metaphysicians of the past are present for another reason as well. A philosophical system that would claim to be absolute can establish itself in only two ways. Inside the system, it must provide a comprehensive and coherent account of everything that is. Outside the system itself, it must show that more limited philosophical stances are surpassed by being included in the system. To accomplish the latter task, systematic philosophy must argue that it is *the* philosophy or perennial philosophy, and that it alone can make sense of the bewildering variety of philosophic doctrines by providing the organizing principle for the history of philosophy. Insofar as it begins to work on this second task, the *Bruno* is one of the first modern documents that attempts to lay down the foundations of the history of philosophy, and Schelling's concern soon took firm hold on his philosophical colleagues as well.[7] Looking back on his identity-philosophy in 1827, when it was indeed only a surpassed moment in his thinking, Schelling credits it with two major accomplishments, a revitalization of the notion of nature as an organic whole, and the recovery of a vision of history that once again embraced the concepts of purpose and finality. He

described the divided post-Enlightenment culture, the culture that evoked absolute idealism, in these terms:

> Just as previously one turned nature into a show of externality, into an illusory play without any inner life or any real life-interest, so one remained content, and to the same degree, with a history that seemed to be an accidental play of lawless arbitrary choice, a play of senseless and purposeless drives. Though its scholars were accounted the most learned, for the most part they accentuated the senseless in history, indeed the absurd! The greater the event, the more exalted the historical phenomenon, the pettier, more incidental, and worthless were the causes they introduced to explain events. And this attitude was pretty much the dominant spirit of the universities.[8]

One can perceive the whole spirit of Schelling's philosophy of identity in the above quote and in the *Bruno*'s subtitle as well, "The Natural and Divine Principle of Things." There is but one principle governing reality, not two; nature and the world of spirit, in its personal as well as in its institutional forms, are not ultimately different. There is no ultimate contradiction between the rule of necessity in nature and the freedom manifested in human life. Any apparent contradiction must be thought away so that the wholeness of the world can again emerge, so that eyes deluded by the double vision of an alienated, divided culture can begin again to perceive spontaneity and organic adaptation operative in nature as well as blind mechanism, and can perceive again the lawfulness and rational ordering operative in the world of human actions and institutions, not just the unpredictable spontaneity of self-interested individuals.

The lesson that Schelling's and Hegel's age needed, and ours no less than theirs, was the advice offered long ago by Plato: Look closely at the universe you inhabit. You will see two sorts of causes at work, one which necessitates its outcome, and one which is divine, which freely works for 'the best.' If our limited nature is to be capable of fulfilment, we must seek after the divine in all things.[9] This was indeed a hard saying for a culture that simultaneously believed in hard material particles and immortal souls, and it is still a hard saying for us today, for whom matter has become less tangible and more metaphysical, but whose concept of psyche has become more 'material,' more conformed to the mechanism of the rest of nature. The real scandal that we confront in reading absolute idealism today, which we encounter no less in Schelling's *Bruno* than in Hegel's *Logic*, is its commitment to the seemingly unthinkable proposition: Freedom and necessity are in some sense identical. If we lack the courage or the stomach to think through this gravely problematic proposition, then our world falls apart into irreconcilable halves and the morally absurd (though logically possible) consequence follows that our understanding and

our action belong to flatly different territories, that our science and our self-knowledge simply contradict each other, that exact knowledge can have nothing to say to or about what is most important. Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, each with great clarity, drew the conclusion—nihilism, the intellect's silence about the ethical.

Bruno *is really the authentic*
Platonism of modern philosophy.
JOHANN JACOB WAGNER[10]

To the Future Through the Past

ON FIRST INSPECTION, the most striking feature of the *Bruno* is that it appears to be a return to the substance of Plato's thought as well as to its literary form. The great Kant was still alive, neither Fichte nor Schelling had yet gone public on their dispute, and the work was received with some surprise. A student at Jena writes to his father, "Schelling is called 'Professor Murky-Mind' by many here. I do not think he will maintain his academic reputation much longer."[11] Friedrich Schlegel writes to his brother August, "Schelling's *Bruno* deserves much praise. Of course I wish he would have presented the brave Italian himself instead of a pale shadow of Bruno."[12] And Goethe, treated to a prepublication reading of the dialogue on a visit to Jena, writes to Schiller, "Schelling has written a dialogue, *Bruno or On the Divine and Natural Principle of Things*. What I understand of it, or believe I understand, is excellent and coincides with my deepest convictions. But whether it will be possible for the rest of us to follow this composition through all its parts and actually think it as a whole, on that score I am as yet in doubt."[13] But the reaction to Schelling's philosophy that comes closest to that of a contemporary Anglo-American reader is that voiced by Henry Crab Robinson, a British student at Jena in the Autumn of 1802, in a letter to his brother:

> I shall at the close of this lecture instantly proceed to *Schelling* And purify my fancy polluted by the inspection of rotten carcasses &

smoked Skeletons, by hearing the modern Plato read for a whole hour his new metaphysi[c]al Theory of Aesthetik Or the Philosophy of the Arts. I shall in spight of the obscurity of a philosophy compounded of the most profound abstraction, & enthusiastick mysticism; be interested by par[ticu]lar ingenious remarks & amused by extravagant Novelties. The repeated Assertion of *Polytheism* will indeed no longer surprise me; nor the development of the platonic Theory of Ideas. And the absolute *Reality* of the Grecian Mythology of Jupiter Minerva & Apollo & I shall be a little touched perhaps by the contemptuous treatment of our english Critics And hear something like his abuse of Darwin last Wednesday Whose *Conceit* concerning the influence of the breast in forming our sensations of beauty; he quoted "only to shew what *bestialities* (the very words) the empirical philosophy of Locke leads And how the Mind of Man is brutalised unenlightened by Science." For that there is no science in empir[ic]ism is a point settled even to *my* Satisfaction. I shall hear again Burke and Horne & the "thick-skinned" Johnson & the "Shallow" Priestley briefly dispatched And hear it intimated that it is absurd to expect the *science* of beauty in a country that values the Mathematics only as it helps to make Spinning Jennies & Stocking-weaving machines And beauty only as it recommends their Manufactories abroad. I shall sigh & say too true! . . . At 4 [?5] I shall return again to *Schelling* And hear his grand Lecture on Speculative Philosophy I shall be animated if I happen to be in an enthusiastick frame, at the Sight of more than 130 enquiring Young Men listening with attentive ears to the Exposition of a Philosophy, in its pretensions more glorious than any publicly maintained since the days of Plato & his Commentators: a Philosophy equally inimical to Lockes Empiri[ci]sm, Hume's Scepticism & Kant's Criticism, which has been but the ladder of the new & rising Sect. But if I happen to be more prosaically tuned, I shall smile at the good nature of so great an assembly; who because it is the fashion listen so patiently to a detail which not one in 20 comprehends And which fills their heads with dry formularies and mystical rhapsodical phraseology. At P[M] 6 I shall come home And exhausted with my fourfold dose of the day, try to gain some nourishment from my apple pye which I with some difficulty have taught the Maid to make.[14]

The critic's writing skills leave something to be desired, but he eloquently voices the scandal of the (apparent) mystical Platonism which the reader encounters throughout the *Bruno*. Were all the earnest labors of Kant in vain? Did his efforts to guard speculation from contamination by sheer imagination serve merely as a ladder for a revival of Platonism? Does the

genial *Wunderkind* of German philosophy and letters in fact leap into an abyss of nonsense when he proclaims, "We shall not have scaled the summit of truth itself until our thought has reached up to the non-temporal being of things and to their eternal concepts. Only then shall we recognize things and explain them truly." (4:221)?

The *Bruno*'s Platonism is both real and apparent, a matter of polemical language, on the one hand, and the outcome of a considered decision, on the other, to contest Kant's claim that the boundaries of intelligibility coincide with the bounds of sense. Curiously enough, it is through Kant that Schelling returns to Plato, or rather, it is by standing Kant on his head that he does so. For Kant had consistently returned to Plato as a reference point in order to clarify his terminology and to elaborate the full-blown metaphysical counterclaims that stood opposite his critical positions. And it is this Platonic terminology, pedantically reintroduced into the philosophical vocabulary by Kant, that Schelling employs to combat Kant's Criticism, specifically the terms 'intellectual intuition,' 'idea,' and 'archetype.' Let us look at each of these in detail.

In 1770 Kant defined sensory intuition against the foil of a hypothetical 'intellectual intuition,' the sort of creative intuition a deity would possess and whose sole analogue in human experience is the artist's symbolic understanding, a knowing in and with the concrete singular, not mediated by abstract universal concepts.[15] Fichte and Schelling both employ the term to indicate a philosophical mode of cognition that (1) achieves full insight into philosophy's ground-principle (for Fichte, the self; for Schelling, the absolute) and that (2) establishes and realizes what it intuits. Schelling uses 'intellectual intuition' interchangeably with 'reason,' and he gives its most succinct and suggestive definition in saying, "One cannot simply describe reason; it must describe itself in everything and through everything."[16]

Kant had explicitly turned back to Plato when, in the *Critique of Pure Reason,* he uses the Platonic definition of 'idea' as a foil for elaborating his notion of a merely regulative employment of ideas. He begins his discussion with Plato:

> Plato made use of the expression 'idea' in such a way as quite evidently to have meant by it something which not only can never be borrowed from the senses but far surpasses even the concepts of the understanding. . . . For Plato, ideas are archetypes of the things themselves, and not, in the manner of categories, merely keys to possible experiences. In his view they have issued from highest reason, and from that source have come to be shared in by human reason.[17]

Kant later modifies the Platonic sense of the term to reach his definition of the ideas of reason:

> I understand by idea a necessary concept of reason to which no corresponding object can be given in sense-experience. Thus the pure concepts of reason, now under consideration, are *transcendental ideas.* They are concepts of pure reason, in that they view all knowledge gained in experience as being determined through an absolute totality of conditions. They are not arbitrarily invented; they are imposed by the very nature of reason itself, and therefore stand in necessary relation to the whole employment of understanding. Finally, they are transcendent and overstep the limits of all experience. . . . The absolute whole of all appearance—we might say—*is only an idea.* Since we can never represent it in images, it remains a *problem* to which there is no solution.[18]

When he asserts that ideas alone are real and that appearances are but debased images of ideas, Schelling is simply standing Kant on his head, brushing aside the criterion of experience the latter employed, and emphasizing their origin in reason itself. Now there is very much of a polemical stance voiced in passages such as, "Things that exist and the concepts of these things do not subsist within the absolute any differently than do nonexistent things and their concepts, namely within their ideas. Any other sort of existence is illusion, mere appearance" (4:251). What is obscured by such a flagrantly paradoxical assertion that things really do exist in the full sense only in their ideas is the ground of agreement Schelling shares with Kant, namely that ideas "view all knowledge gained in experience as being determined through *an absolute totality of conditions.*" Schelling insists that ideas are not mere ideas because he thinks an absolute totality of conditions is no mere idea, but the fundamental underlying reality instead. Ideas cannot be sensed or demonstrated, but if reason's attempt to achieve wholeness in its vision of itself and its world is to be successful, they must be postulated. Schelling will not be content to regard unity and totality as mere regulative ideas, as did Kant.

But it would be misleading to suggest that Schelling returns to a purely Platonic sense of the term 'idea.' When he says, "Considered absolutely, true being is located only within the idea, and conversely, idea is substance and being itself" (4:303), the term carries Spinozistic connotations as well. For Spinoza, an idea was not primarily a representation, not a dumb picture, but an active mentation, a thinking which is a realization of what it thinks, a particular expression of substance's power. So too for Schelling, the true nature of a thing, its idea or its being "within the eternal," is an elaboration and unfolding of the absolute's essence, a particular display of its power. As opposed to the mere abstract representation that 'the concept' accomplishes, an idea is a being that is at the same time a knowing. It is endowed with subjectivity and life, as Hegel will later make

evident when he takes over the term to describe the logical fulfillment and completion of the absolute. Hegel in fact introduces the term into his *Logic* in the very sense in which Schelling employed it:

> The idea is the *adequate concept,* the objectively *true,* what is true *as such.* When something has truth, it possess it through its idea, or *something only has truth insofar as it is idea.* . . . Inasmuch as the result follows that the idea is the unity of the concept and objectivity or what is true, it is not to be considered merely a *goal* to be approximated, but which itself remains forever something *beyond reach.* Rather, everything actual exists only insofar as it has the idea in itself and expresses it. The object, the objective and subjective realms generally, *should* not merely *harmonize* with the idea; they are themselves the congruence of the concept and of reality.[19]

A third point where Schelling employs Platonic terminology taken over from Kant is his assertion that the locus of ideas or archetypes is an 'archetypal intellect.' "Is it not rather the case," asks Anselm, "that all our effort is directed toward knowing things as they are exemplified in the archetypal understanding, of which we see only images in our understanding?" (4:220). Now in discussing the idea of a teleological organization of nature in the *Critique of Judgment,* Kant analyzed the idea of such an organization into that of the organism, a whole which is the ground of possibility of its parts. If nature were such an organism, it would have as its ground an "archetypal intellect." But Kant quickly qualifies this very speculative assertion, adding,

> It is here not at all requisite to prove that such an *intellectus archetypus* is possible, but only that we are led to the idea of it—which too contains no contradiction—in contrast to our discursive understanding, which has need of images (*intellectus ectypus*), and to the contingency of its constitution.[20]

Here again, Schelling takes what was for Kant a limiting concept, that which could be thought but never factually asserted, and asserts not only its reality but its preeminence over the empirically thinkable. Kant had used intellectual intuition, idea, and archetypal intellect as symbols of a thinkable, but never verifiable reality characterized by completeness, independence, and closure. Now for Schelling to assert the reality of what these Kantian terms suggested—a *constitutive* cognition, phenomenal experience as determined by a *totality of conditions,* the parts of nature determined in and through a *whole*—is to deny the fragmentary nature of experience with its inevitable subject-object dichotomy and to lay claim to an absolute stance. The philosophical motivation for such a claim is, as we have seen, the untenable cultural situation which imports double

vision into man's self-vision and bids him consider himself a creature of necessity and of freedom at the same time, and in the same respect. Nonetheless, such a claim is grandiose, for absolute philosophy claims nonempirical access to a foundational reality that is an existing totality of conditions, a whole not made of parts, but organically specifying them. And to secure this access, this philosophy claims the competence that pious ages reserved to the Creative Word—intellectual intuition, a knowledge identical with the absolute's self-specifying knowledge. The boldness of these claims can best be seen by considering another seemingly Platonic aspect of the *Bruno,* the pervasive contrast between time and eternity.

Eternity is understood by Schelling in a Spinozistic, not in a Platonic manner. Eternity is simple existence as such or necessary existence, not qualified by duration or any other form of limitation.[21] It is not endless duration, an attribute that pertains to the second power or the domain of the concept. Subsisting in the third or eternal power, that is, as ideas, things are organic unities of the various possibilities and actualities which are displayed serially within appearance, in the causal-temporal order. And as simply and necessarily subsisting within the absolute, things are uncaused, or speaking more strictly, self-caused. For in eternity or the domain of the idea, the individual is its own ground of possibility. Furthermore, it is the ground of all the relations that within appearance seem to be external, for example, position in space, priority in time to another, or causal efficacy upon another. Schelling believes with Leibniz, then, that all relations are internal, at least within the absolute, and that internal relations are the foundation of apparently external ones. Schelling's metaphysics in fact commits him to the thesis that relations are more fundamental than entities, though he does not always seem to clearly grasp the point.[22]

If eternity is simple being without duration, and the individual subsisting as idea is a unitary nexus of relations, nothing more, then what of time? Time is the one metaphysical theme that Schelling treats most fully in the *Bruno,* and here again he pursues the strategy of using Kant to overturn Kant. He makes time into the primitive form of phenomenality as such: The thing is individuated by the act of its establishing its own time; it is time that externalizes relations which are unitary and internal in the absolute, thus producing the causal ordering of phenomena; it is time that establishes the phenomenal entity's individuality; and it is the independent and internal possession of time which makes certain high-level individuals centers of self-consciousness. In this complex doctrine of time, Schelling effects a simplification of Kant's epistemology which is comparable to Schopenhauer's elegant reduction of all forms of knowing to the one principle of sufficient reason.[23] Like the latter philosopher, Schelling's intention in reducing critical knowledge-theory to a simple formal scheme is to exhibit precisely the formality, the emptiness of the scheme, and thus

to point to a more profound dimension of reality that escapes phenomenal knowing. Time and causal determination are the hallmarks of finite existence and experience; phenomenal knowing is but a constant juggling of temporal and causal relations, a continuous apprehension of an endless splay of different states ordered only by temporal-causal connection, a series in which the identity and substantiality of individual entities is only a vanishing moment. In a passage written later in 1802, Schelling succinctly states the relationship between time and eternity:

> There exists no real finitude, no finitude in itself.—What in every sense of the word is really real is neither purely ideal nor purely real, but an eternal and necessary union of the two. . . . This absolute and essentially eternal identity, once reflected in the finite or even in the infinite, becomes a relation of time, or one of cause and effect, insofar as time is the ideal aspect of the causal relation and causality the real aspect of time.[24]

In eternity there obtains a simple identity or indifference of factors that stand forth within appearance, namely the material and the mental, and an organic interrelatedness of what stands forth in appearance as discrete individuals. In eternity, everything is unitary and internally related. Within the phenomenal orders, however, or what Schelling terms the domain of 'reflection,' identity and internality appear only as the discrete serial connection of external differences according to the order of time and causality, a linkage of individuals and states of individuals according to the empty formulae supplied by discursive understanding.

Before we can philosophically assess this line of thought, we must turn to the dialogue's complicated line of argument and examine it in some detail. For, despite the apparent simplicity of the dialogue as a form of philosophical exposition, the *Bruno* is a tangled web of philosophical argument, reflections on the history of philosophy, explorations of possible grounds for reconciling Schelling and Fichte, and sheer polemics directed against Fichte's subjective idealism.

Have you found out yet why Fichte and Schelling are quarreling? The one says: I = everything; the other: Everything = I. Mathematically, it is the same.

ACHIM VON ARNIM[25]

The Argument of the Bruno

THE DIALOGUE has a nonspecific, though anachronistic setting. Anselm is a Platonist; his character betrays a fustiness and a longing to return to the past. His speech is grandiose and long-winded, and it is he who tries to steer the conversation back to arcane subjects such as the mystery cults. Alexander does not seem to have any specific philosophical allegiances; in contrast to Anselm, he displays an empiricistic and this-worldly bent, also indicated by the directness of his speech. Later in the dialogue, he becomes the mouthpiece for the mystical hylomorphism which Giordano Bruno presented in his dialogues, *On the Cause, the Principle, and the One*. Bruno and Lucian, whose disputes provide the major focus of the dialogue, represent Schelling and Fichte respectively, or the competing claims of identity-philosophy and criticism. The conversation takes place outdoors, throughout the courses of a night, a fitting setting for a discourse in praise of the celestial motions and of the "the divine intelligence" of Kepler, who first framed their laws.[26]

I. *The Claims of Metaphysics Versus the Logic of Experience*

[4:217–234]

The preliminary discussion of truth and beauty, led by Anselm, has a threefold function: (1) to mitigate claims Schelling made in the 1800 *System of Transcendental Idealism* about the superiority of the artist to the

philosopher when it comes to intuiting and expressing the nature of the absolute, (2) to argue that metaphysical, or as they used to be called, 'transcendental' predicates such as truth and beauty must have an absolute or transempirical sense, and (3) to illustrate, in a preliminary fashion, the logic of indifference by establishing the nondifference or intersubstitutability of truth and beauty, each taken in the strongest sense. Only transcendental or purely metaphysical attributes—truth and beauty, identity and difference, reality and ideality, essence and form—can be indifferently related, i.e. 'identical' in the limited and technical sense of each member of a pair of opposites being equal and independent, while expressing the same content in irreducibly different ways.[27] As a contemporary review of the dialogue plainly stated, "The assertion that *indifference is the principle of philosophy* is the theme of this Platonic dialogue."[28]

But before Schelling can advance such claims, he must first argue against Kant's decree that terms such as 'identity,' 'difference,' and 'truth' are meaningful only within the context of experience. He must refute or in some way circumvent Kant's formulation of the logic of experience, with its insistence that the contents of cognition are ultimately heterogeneous, that experience rather than logical possibility is the touchstone of truth, and that the principle of noncontradiction is the ultimate law in the domain of concepts. The thrust of the dialogue's initial section, therefore, is to rehabilitate a metaphysical, or in Kant's terms 'transcendent,' meaning of 'truth.'

Schelling's discussion of truth (4:218–221) attempts to drive a metaphysical wedge between the sort of truth that is functional, exhibited in and confirmed by the coherence of experience, and a truth that is supposedly substantial and independent. Both correspondence and coherence are rejected as the marks of truth, and in their stead Anselm proposes the Cartesian-Spinozistic criteria of clarity, distinctness, and adequacy of knowing. More provocatively, he adds the requirement that truth in the fullest and the strict sense be atemporal or eternal. All connection between the truth of statements and ideas and the objects they represent is severed when Anselm then adopts the purely subjective criterion of certitude, and asks whether truth is to be viewed as a merely changeable certitude or as an inalterable one. When changeable certitude is rejected, so implicitly is the claim of all empirical or synthetic *a posteriori* judgments to be truths.

Alexander then proposes universality and omnitemporal validity as the marks of truth, thus narrowing the truth-claim to synthetic *a priori* or categorial statements that hold for all individuals and for all time, statements such as, "Every event must have a cause." But Anselm rejects these proposed criteria too, demanding that truth in the highest sense have no connection with time and finitude whatsoever. Eternity, absolute invariance, and the utter transcendence of finitude thus specify truth's nature.

Thus we can see that Schelling adopts a tenseless model of being in place of Kant's model of being as experience within time, the Spinozistic eternity of simple existence, unqualified by duration. In doing so, Schelling exploits the connection of being and time that Kant discovered at the basis of experience. For Kant, time is not only the fundamental form of intuition, it is the very nature of experiential synthesis itself, or schematization; time is thus the essence of phenomenality, or mere appearance. Schelling agrees, but argues that everything connected with time, even categorial concepts applicable to everything that appears in time, pertains to an inferior province of being. Absolute truth must "be independent of all time, without reference to time, wholly self-contained, and hence simply eternal" (4:221).

To this point, the argument has accomplished three goals: (1) In refusing to ascribe truth to the conceptual as such, the territory Kant called pure *a priori* cognition, Schelling implicitly criticizes Fichte's attempt to absolutize the domain of thought by attributing to it the fundamental role in the constitution of consciousness. (2) In illustrating how the pure concepts have an inbuilt reference to time and to sensory intuitions within time, Schelling demonstrates the necessary togetherness of conceptual infinitude and sensory finitude, and thus intimates that 'the eternal' is the indifference of the finite and the infinite, i.e. that the idea indivisibly comprehends both concept and intuition. (3) He effects the strict distinction of time and eternity, though it awaits the following investigation of imperfection to show that eternity is here conceived after Spinoza, and not as some all-perfect Platonic heaven. Eternity is simply the atemporal existence of the whole of what is; time is but the successive appearance of the severed parts, a dispersion of organic totality into externality.

At this point, Alexander inquires how one can attain this supposed region of eternal truth, but Anselm brushes aside the question, preferring to stick to the path of conceptual analysis. The question is important, however, and elsewhere Schelling provides a clear answer. The fundamental presupposition of all knowing, he argues, is reason, the abiding and eternal element in all cognition. And reason is nothing other than the identity of the knower and what is known. "The first presupposition of all knowing is that it is one and the same thing that here knows and that there is known."[29] This state is precisely the opposite of the stance of empirical subjectivity:

> In reason all subjectivity disappears, and this is exactly what our proposition [above] asserted. In reason, that eternal identity itself is at once what cognizes and what is cognized. It is not I who knows this identity, but this identity itself knows itself, while I am merely its instrument. Reason is precisely *reason* because in it the subjective

> is not the knower. Instead, within reason the identical knows the identical and the opposition of subjectivity and objectivity balances itself out in its highest instance. . . . If there were not in our very spirit some sort of cognition that is completely independent of all subjectivity, one that is no longer a cognition of the subject as subject, but a cognition of that alone which is and that alone which can be known, a cognition of the absolutely unitary, we would in fact be forced to renounce the sphere of absolute philosophy. In that case, our thought and knowledge would forever lie enclosed within the sphere of subjectivity. As a result, we would have to acknowledge the Kantian and Fichtean philosophies as the only possible position, and immediately make that position our own.[30]

The proper answer to Alexander's query, then, is: Abandon the stance of subjectivity, the empirical self-consciousness! The advice seems preposterous, at first blush. It is only when the structure of consciousness has been studied, and self-consciousness exhibited as but a special case of the general structure of identity-in-difference, that this abandonment of self can be properly evaluated. In general, Schelling thinks that the 'I' that thinks is just as phenomenal, just as transitory, as the empirical objects it entertains. Fichte's 'self' offers philosophy no enduring and secure foothold.

Anselm proceeds to illustrate the difference between temporal cognition and eternal or holistic cognition by raising the issue of the reality of imperfection and evil (4:221–223). Though imperfection and error seem real to our eyes, in the perspective of nature as a whole, nothing is false or flawed, for in fact nothing could be otherwise than it is. An individual's psychological states, his statements, and his actions are all causally necessary within the order of nature, argues Anselm, and each failure or flaw can be explained by the agent's character or outside environmental influences. What is false and illusory is not this or that aspect of some concrete state of affairs, but the limited perspective of finite individuals as such, for only the whole exists as such.

Alexander objects that this theory makes imperfection and error necessary, and demands an account of their origin. Anselm employs a Kantian argument to sidestep this task: Imperfection, and more generally finitude, pertains only to phenomena ordered according to the law of cause and effect. To ask after the origin of finitude or imperfection is thus to pose an illicit question, for it is a causal question and, as Kant showed, causal explanation applies only to discrete elements within experience, not to the whole of experience. Anselm concludes that only *positive* logical, aesthetic, and metaphysical predicates can be ascribed to what is intrinsically real. All negation, including a privation such as imperfection, is a function of the limited temporal perspective of experiential cognition. In the perspective

of time, everything is limited, flawed and debased. In arguing this way, Schelling seems to conflate Spinoza's dictum, "All determination is negation," with Kant's position that all determination proceeds by way of temporal synthesis.

Anselm underscores this association of time and imperfection by contrasting 'archetypal nature' to 'productive nature' (4:223–224), Platonic sounding terms for what Spinoza called *natura naturans* and *natura naturata* respectively. A nature composed of ideas or archetypes must be conceived as perfect, invariant, and without all reference to time, while the nature that embodies these types in individuals must be conceived as subject to the conditions of time and operating through causal conditioning. Thus an individual thing's existence in time, under the sway of causal necessitation, is in fact at variance with the thing's own nature, its eternal concept. A finite individual is never all that it can be, as Giordano Bruno put it.[31] Anselm concludes that imperfection is essentially tied to existence within time, and perfection to eternal being. This conclusion in turn will serve as a premise for the further argument that beauty is never created.

Anselm next tries to establish the claim that only the eternal concepts of things are beautiful (4:224–226). Beauty alone, among all other values, is an ontological excellence, for beauty is an intrinsic property and is never valued merely as a means to some other end. But since beauty requires independence from external conditions, it can never come to be within the temporal order. Strictly speaking, phenomenal objects existing in space and time cannot be called beautiful; beauty enters appearance only insofar as things are created which imitate beauty, and this imitation of beauty depends on the indifference that unites archetypal and productive nature. Aside from this phenomenal imitation, however, atemporal and ungenerated beauty is the very essence of things, freed from all limitation and negation, and this can only be the eternal concepts of things—Bruno will call them 'ideas.' They alone are properly said to be beautiful. And since a previous argument concluded that these same ideas are the sole criterion of truth, Anselm claims that the identity of truth and beauty is demonstrated (4:226–227).

It is important to note that the 'identity' of truth and beauty asserted is not strict identity, but indifference. 'Truth' means the invariant adequacy of eternal concepts, 'beauty' their ontological excellence and independence. Since both terms refer to a single set of entities, each expresses the essential nature of eternal concepts or ideas, but in irreducibly different ways. Truth and beauty are different angles from which to view the reality of ideas, so to speak, since they are different in meaning, but identical in reference. The 'identity' of truth and beauty thus furnishes the dialogue's first major instance of indifference, the relational structure of the absolute, and the bond between the absolute order and the phenomenal as well. This section

closes with some comments on imperfect artistic approximations of beauty, which fall apart into the equal and opposite aberrations of naturalism and formalism. And so the focus of the conversation shifts to the practice of the creative artist.

Since truth and beauty have been shown to be equally profound and eternal aspects of the reality we could term 'absolute' or transphenomenal, the question arises whether it is the philosopher or the creative artist who more adequately intuits and expresses the nature of the absolute (4:227–234). Anselm begins with the nature of the work of art and its production. The work of art exhibits the identity of truth and beauty, but it does so as a thing, a spatio-temporal object which issues from the thought and work of a finite individual, and which represents various other finite objects or persons as well. The artwork is thus a paradoxical object, at once a limited thing and an exhibition of transfinite perfection. Anselm argues that the eternal must be considered the work's true creator, since only the eternal can unite the finite and the infinite. However paradoxical it may sound, the work of art is an infinite thing.

But the creative individual or artistic genius must be brought into the account as well. The only way, says Anselm, that the eternal can produce beauty while one individual produces this concrete work is if the eternal idea of the individual is really the creative agent. This move brings together the absolute order and the work of the creative artist, but unless another limitation is introduced, the artist's creation would be his self, not a work of art. The additional limitation is that beauty attaches to one or more *things* related to the individual's eternal idea. Thus three levels of being come together in the artwork: (1) the eternal or beauty itself, (2) as mediated through the personality of the creative artist, and (3) expressed within finite objects that represent other things, persons, or sensuous qualities.

Schelling notes that the more the idea of the creative individual is bound into the ideas of all other things, the more universal the artist's person will be, and the less the artwork will be a reflection of a limited and idiosyncratic personality. The work of art is thus the *Bruno*'s first example of the organic individual, the ideal form of individual existence wherein the individual is a recapitulation of the whole universe, a perspectival interpretation of an organically interrelated community of individuals. But Schelling's point is aesthetically valid as well. We may well be interested in some work wherein the artist has perfectly expressed the mood of his time in the language of his time, or in which he has literally poured out his small soul, but we are more profoundly moved by the creations of 'universal persons' such as Shakespeare or Goethe, artists who fabricate a whole world of distinct individuals and who voice the human sentiments in every dialect of their language.

A further problem arises in accounting for the universality of the creative genius's scope and for the rarity of such genuinely universal artists. Is it the case that in the process of artistic creation beauty itself is directly related to the artist's personality, to just this precise individual consciousness, or is it instead the case that the idea impinges on the creative individual in some absolute and global manner, but without full consciousness? Anselm opts for the latter alternative, emphasizing the ultimately unconscious nature of artistic inspiration. In the last analysis, then, the artist is possessed by the idea, but not fully in conscious possession of it. The artist is ultimately the tool of the absolute, and therein lies the key to distinguishing the artist and the philosopher. Since the former comprehends the absolute accidentally and unconsciously, his knowledge is said to be 'exoteric,' while the philosopher's, which is characterized by an inward and essential grasp of the idea, is said to be 'esoteric.'

The mention of esoteric knowledge brings the pedantic Anselm back to the theme of the mystery rites, and in describing their purported philosophical content, he presents a sketch of Platonism that is really the identity-philosophy in Platonic guise. In doing so, he touches on several noteworthy themes that will be developed later: (1) The self-identity of individual entities is an image of absolute identity (see 4:264–265); (2) it is the finite aspect or antitypal element of a thing that is responsible for its individual existence (see 4:316–318); and (3) the thing's separated existence is temporal because of the identity-in-difference of its psychical and material dimensions, the relative identity of its body and its soul (see 4:281–285).

II. *Indifference: The General Principle of Identity-Philosophy* [4:234–242]

Bruno now assumes direction of the discussion, and immediately dissociates himself from the peculiarities of Anselm's way of thinking. He is uninterested in historical surmise on the content of the mysteries, and promises instead the true philosophy, or at least a sketch of its foundations. In a poetic peroration he calls attention to the composite nature of the universe, which is neither finite nor infinite, neither material or spiritual, but is instead both at once. He thus distances himself from Anselm's Platonism, and from the simple dichotomy of the eternal and the finite that the latter's argument presumed. He admits, however, that the starting-point of his thought had been implicit in Anselm's treatment of the indifference of truth and beauty. Stated in its full generality, this is the idea of absolute identity, an intrinsic identity of opposites prior to any distinction of opposites one from another.

Schelling is emphatic on the point that this absolute identity is original and primary, not a result, not a synthesis of sublated opposites. Fichte had tried to describe consciousness in terms of just such a synthetic unity, yet the *Science of Knowledge* had ultimately been unsuccessful in its search for a ground for the synthesis of self and not-self.

There follows a highly abstract dispute between Bruno and Lucian on the logical status of a first principle. What is at issue within the dispute is whether the principle must be thought to be single, and philosophical procedure accordingly analytic, or whether a pair of ultimate opposites such as Fichte's self and not-self must be presumed, and philosophy's procedure seen as a progressive synthesis of these opposites. This is indeed a crucial decision point for any metaphysics. As Joachim said,

> For any monistic philosophy the fundamental difficulty is to find intelligible meaning within its system for the relative independence of the differences in the One. For any pluralistic philosophy the fundamental difficulty is to make any union of its ultimate simple entities intelligible without destroying their simplicity.[32]

Schelling argues that a metaphysics ultimately dualistic in its principles cannot provide a coherent or ultimately unitary account of reality. At the same time, he is aware of the difficulties monism must face in accounting for otherness or difference. Now while he wishes to reject Fichte's particular dualism, he must somehow build a principle of difference into his monistic principle and must argue that identity itself includes a dependent principle of limitation or differentiation. At first glance, the effort seems fraught with paradox. All depends, ultimately, on Schelling's establishing the plausibility of an absolute *identity of opposites,* that is, the ultimate nondifference of the absolute's identity *realiter* and its self-specification into a coordinated system of differences *idealiter,* in its 'form' or quasi-mental aspect. For the moment, let us take a closer look at Schelling's argumentation.

As he works to elaborate the conceptual definition of absolute identity as "the identity of identity and opposition" (4:235–239), Bruno argues that a first principle can have no opposite and that no pair of opposites can be fundamental, since opposition always obtains only within some embracing unity or synthesis. Lucian advances Fichtean-style arguments to the effect that, if identity is posited as the principle, its opposite must be posited too, since positing involves thinking, and the meaning of 'identity' is secured for thought only in virtue of its conceptual contrast to difference. The ideal or conceptual contrast of identity and difference, he suggests, implies that they must be equally fundamental and absolutely opposed in reality. Bruno responds with a complicated argument (4:236–238) that the logical and semantical opposition whereby a pair of opposed categories

is meaningful need not be mirrored in reality. The contrast between identity and difference whereby the one term has meaning by excluding the other does not imply any real mingling of the two or any participation of the one in the other. Difference somehow depends on identity without modifying it, just the way that multiplicity depends on unity without destroying the fundamental character of the latter. In the course of this argument, Bruno specifies two different senses of 'identity' and 'opposition.' Relative opposites such as chemicals with widely differing properties can be brought to a relative identity (or synthesis) by reacting and forming a third substance, but absolute opposites such as an object and its mirror image can never be synthetically or relatively identified. Identity and difference are opposites in the latter sense; they are absolutely and infinitely opposed, and so can be united only in an absolute and infinite way. Lucian commits the fallacy of misplaced concreteness, conceiving identity and difference as if they were opposite things, capable of interacting and altering one another. This misapplication of experience-bound categories of substance, causality, and interaction to metaphysical fundamentals is typical of what Schelling will later attack as the standpoint of 'reflection.'

Lucian attempts to avoid the force of Bruno's argument by noting that, as the terms are defined, 'absolute identity' becomes synonymous with 'absolute opposition.' Surprisingly, Bruno agrees. Only absolute opposites can be absolutely identified, he says, and only the absolutely self-identical can be opposed to itself. He suggests a world order modeled upon the relation between object and mirror image: "If an object exists, so does an image, and if an image exists, so does an object. Necessarily, for that very reason, image and object would be together everywhere since they nowhere coincide" (4:239). The object-image model is significant, since the imaging relation prefigures Schelling's solution to the problem of the mind-body relation, and that of the natural and conscious orders of phenomena as well.

But we must ask by what logic Schelling can advance an assertion as paradoxical as, "What is absolutely self-identical and absolutely indivisible must, for this very reason, be absolutely opposed to itself." Kant had termed one species of judgment, negative in content, but affirmative in form, the 'infinite judgment,' reasoning that an assertion such as, "Soul is non-mortal" in fact asserts an infinite class in its predicate term.[33] And in the "Difference" essay of 1801, Hegel made the antinomy, the direct joining of opposites, the very paradigm of rationality.[34] The most probable origin, however, for the paradoxical assertion that self-identity is self-opposition, is Schelling's own prior reflections on the nature of the judgment. In a passage explaining how consciousness comes to represent its objects as external to itself or "in the world," Schelling reasoned as follows:

> But now if concept and object originally coincide so far that neither of them contains more or less than the other, a separation of the two is utterly inconceivable without a special act whereby they become opposed in consciousness. Such an act is that which is most expressively denoted by the word *judgment* (Urteil), in that by this we first have a separation of what was hitherto inseparably united, the concept and the intuition. . . . In the judgment, therefore, concept and object first come to be opposed, and then again related to each other, and set equal to one another.[35]

Judgment is therefore a function of differentiating the identical and reidentifying the differentiated. Now if the absolute is self-identical in a rational and expressive way, and not in the trivial way an inorganic object is, it will have this judgmental character, i.e. it will specify itself in an infinity of differences which are systematized or gathered back into identity. In the highest and most abstract case, the absolutely self-identical will be absolutely opposed to itself, or it will be indifference itself, or to say the same, the identity of identity and opposition. The formula aptly states the relation that obtains between the absolute's essence and its elaboration in 'form,' and between the absolute as a whole and the phenomenal universe; within the latter, the natural or finite order and the conscious or infinite order are related in the same way.

To this point, Bruno has argued that philosophy must be founded on one sole principle, the identity of the finite and the infinite or, borrowing Hegel's terminology, the identity of identity and opposition. Identity is the real essence of the absolute, difference a dependent modification. As ordinarily understood, namely as mere relative identity and difference which finite things exhibit, the concepts are meaningful only within this broader framework of absolute identity and absolute opposition. Schelling now turns his attention to the conceptual framework of Fichte's philosophy and attempts to demonstrate that the logic of indifference is fundamental to both their approaches (4:239–242).

Lucian asks whether Bruno's formula, the identity of identity and opposition, is sufficiently general to comprehend all conceptual oppositions. Bruno replies that 'identity,' 'opposition,' and 'identity and opposition' are perfectly general metaphysical predicates and offers to demonstrate that they will cover any pair of opposed categories put forward. Lucian suggests that the supreme identity should be conceived as the identity of the real and the ideal, or of thought and intuition. Schelling is here drawing upon sketches communicated to him by letter of Fichte's 1801 revision of the *Science of Knowledge,* where the formula, 'the identity of thought and intuition,' is advanced as the definition of absolute *knowing.*

Bruno first hints that Lucian's categories are one-sided and not sufficiently general, but he passes on immediately to the clarification of the terms 'intuition' and 'thought.' The discussants agree that intuition comes on the scene completely determined, specified in full detail. Bruno interprets this determination Spinozistically, as endless serial determination within the self-contained order of intuition, wherein one intuition i_n is determined by its predecessor i_{n-1}, which in turn is determined by i_{n-2}, and so on. Schelling has good reason to interpret intuition this way. Since for Fichte intuition is the first determination of what appears, the first production of a something 'there' for presentation, it is equally subjective and objective, and so may be viewed as *sui generis.*[36] Now since individual intuitions are completely determined and thus different from one another, Bruno reasons that the concept 'difference' is coextensive with 'intuition,' and that the latter may be substituted for the former.

Whereas intuition is seen to be equivalent to difference, the discussants agree that 'thought', the universal concept that is applicable to all appropriate determinate intuitions, is equivalent to indifference, for the concept applies to what is appropriate in a whole class of intuitions and is indifferent to what is individuating or ultimately specific in any given intuition. Thus the Fichtean notion of the identity of thought and intuition turns out to be the idea of the universal determining the particular, or the mutual establishment of concepts and objects in inseparable unity. Bruno finds this to be but another instance of the relation of indifference: The orders of general concepts and determinate intuitions are equal and opposed, each expressing the same content (from a different point of view, we might say). Because each is but an aspect or a facet of knowing, they are indivisibly united. Since the concept implies an infinity of as yet unspecified applications, while the intuition is the presence to consciousness of an individual finite entity, Lucian concludes that his formula—the identity of concept and intuition—coincides with Bruno's—the identity of the infinite and the finite. At this stage of the argument, Schelling eschews mention of the thoroughly subjective nature of Fichte's categories (but see 4:252–257, 303–307, and 326–327).

A noteworthy feature of the foregoing argument is Schelling's suggestion that the infinitude of the conceptual order is negative, not positive. Thought's infinity consists in the potentially endless repeated application of an abstract conceptual outline to a succession of determinate somethings. The concept's infinity is thus empty generality, abstractness, a standing apart from all content except in one general respect. It is Schelling's contention that Fichte's idealism attempts to absolutize this order of empty generality, an order that Kant saw was merely an aggregate of logical functions necessary to transform disparate intuitions into the continuous coherent totality we call experience.

III. *The Idea as the Identity of the Finite and the Infinite*

[4:242–247]

Lucian asks Bruno to clarify the notion of the union of opposites in the supreme principle. Bruno remarks that this question is central to all philosophy, since the whole enterprise is guided by a dialectical impulse, "the tendency to posit the infinite within the finite, or the reverse, to set the finite within the infinite" (4:242). And not only is this inbuilding of opposites central to our mental life, it corresponds to the absolute's eternal process of systematically specifying differences within identity, to its 'form' or quasi-mental aspect. Bruno suggests, rather elliptically, that since our cognition involves a process of continuously discriminating and identifying differentiated features, there must be an ultimate unity in which all differences are established, preserved, harmonized, and integrated. "It is necessary that there be one idea of all things, and hence that all things subsist in one idea, too" (4:243).

Now whereas the concept is an abstract unity set over against the multiplicity of intuitions, the idea comprehends and identifies both the unity of the bare concept and the multiplicity of objects furnished in intuition. The idea is therefore what the abstract formulae—the identity of the finite and the infinite, or of thought and intuition—indicated, and what Anselm suggested as well, in talking of "eternal concepts." The idea is the sole criterion of truth and beauty, for beauty is nothing else than the perfect identification of opposite features of reality, for example, of universality and particularity, or of the infinite possibilities of the species with the determinate nature of this one individual. The mature Hegel will call such an identity 'the concrete universal.'

Bruno proceeds to delineate the nature of the idea (4:243–245) and that of the concept (4:245–247) in some detail. First of all, the idea is situated within the nature of the absolute. The absolute has two aspects or poles, called 'essence' and 'form.' Essence is sheer identity; it is neither finite nor infinite, nor can it be characterized by any other disjunction of predicates. Form is indifference or identity-in-difference; it is both finite and infinite, and it can be characterized by *every* other conjunction of contrasting predicates. Form is the locus of ideas, for 'idea' signifies an individual entity within the system of differences elaborated in the absolute's form, while 'the idea of all ideas' indicates the absolute's form as such.

In the idea, all relations are relations of indifference. "Everything that is ideal is immediately also real, and everything that is real is directly also ideal" (4:243). The idea cannot be characterized as either real or ideal, and the same holds for less basic conceptual contrasts. It is an indifferent identity or, to say the same thing, a 'both . . . and . . . ,' of possibility

and actuality, of unity and multiplicity, of limitation and unbounded reality. It is obviously inaccessible to finite cognition, which depends on the difference between conceptual counterparts to make sense of things. Everything fundamental to the comprehension of finite reality, the distinction of possibility and actuality, of being and nonbeing, even the modal contrast of possibility and impossibility, is without application to the idea.

From the foregoing argument the conclusion follows that no concepts that depend on the principle of semantic contrast can apply to the idea. But how else are metaphysical categories meaningful except through such contrast? For plain and unequivocal instances of 'abstractness' and 'concreteness' cannot be furnished, while indeed those of 'house' and 'automobile' can. The upshot is that Schelling is forced by his logic of indifference to forego any positive metaphysical characterization of the absolute. In essence, the absolute is the 'neither . . . nor . . .' of all contrasting predicates, in form their 'both . . . and . . . .' It hardly needs mention that the coexistence of both aspects is formally a paradox. If the absolute can be indicated at all, it is solely in terms of logical relations, not in terms of metaphysical predicates such as substance, cause, or unity. Although this procedure does not violate Kant's prohibition against extending mere concepts beyond the territory of empirical use, the emptiness of such a formalism is evident.

Bruno then turns to discussion of the concept, the domain of infinity. The concept has a genuine and completed infinity, not the pseudo-infinity of an endless serial progression in time, which is indefinite in that it is incapable of completion. In virtue of its infinitude, a concept is applicable to all relevant finite individuals over the course of time. It is thus said to comprehend and indeed comprise the possibility of individuals, but only their bare possibility.

A comparison of the natures of the idea and of the concept yields this surprising result: The finite exists in or is expressed in the absolute in two distinct ways. Though the absolute's essence is a strict identity that excludes all difference, even the opposition between thought and being, its form or quasi-mental elaboration of differences will be both thought and being at one and the same time. Form or the idea of all ideas is thus both 'infinite thought' and 'infinite reality.'[37] The former is the foundation of the phenomenal order of consciousness, the latter the basis for the correlated order of things.

Now infinite thought and all the concepts it includes have essential infinitude and constitute the timeless possibility of things. But the absolute's form is unitary and undivided, thus an identity of infinite thought and infinite reality wherein concept and intuition, the finite and the infinite dimensions of a thing are indivisibly one. The individual finite thing, therefore, exists not only as finite in the phenomenal world, but is included

in the absolute's form in a double manner—as infinite concept and as eternal idea. As idea, the thing subsists as a simple identity of its real and ideal factors, an identity of its possibility and actuality, lacking any relation to time. But this involves a striking paradox, for though we can readily comprehend how the finite individual subsists qua possibility in its concept, it seems to have a double actuality, once in its separated existence within time, and again in its eternal idea. This implies that its specifically finite elements, the moment Fichte would call 'intuition,' must exist as discrete, differentiated, and serially determined within time and yet subsist in an infinite and atemporal manner within its idea.

There is a good deal of obscurity in the foregoing argument, some of it caused by terminological slippage, and some caused by lack of clarity on the ontological status of the individual finite thing. The following table may clear up the terminological matter:

the real = the finite = intuition	viewed as a totality	= infinite reality
the ideal = the infinite = concept		= infinite thought
identity = the eternal = the idea of real & ideal		= the form of the absolute

Some remarks on the table are necessary. Schelling faces no small difficulty in attempting to forge the convergence of his more naturalistic stance with Fichte's subjective idealism. Often he solves the difficulty *ad hoc,* sliding between Fichtean terms appropriate for the description of acts of consciousness to Spinozistic terms such as 'infinite thought' and 'infinite reality,' and to the quasi-Platonic terminology coined specifically for this dialogue, e.g. 'the finite,' 'the infinite', and 'the eternal.' This difficulty leads to the other mentioned above, a lack of clarity on matters of ontological commitment. To clear up this difficulty, we must anticipate Schelling's development of the concept of the powers (see 4:266–267 and 290–293) and state that all the triads in the above table name *aspects* of things, that is, features distinguished in philosophical analysis, but not distinguished in being. 'The finite' denotes the finite aspect of a thing, the sensuous content or actuality that appears in space and time. The term also refers more generally to the structure of appearance that involves individuality, materiality, and spatio-temporal existence, the first or finite 'power.' In neither case does the term refer to an individual or a thing. Schelling

indeed faces the difficult task of maintaining a double ontological commitment, namely to the absolute and to individuals in the phenomenal order. But in talking, for instance, of intuition, concept, and idea, he is talking of aspects of entities distinguishable in thought; he is not talking of discrete entities. As we shall see, it is the third aspect or power, in other words the idea, that alone has any claim to being an entity in itself.

IV. *The Finite-and-Infinite Nature of the Finite* [4:247–252]

Lucian draws attention to the paradox implicit in the preceding discussion: How can the endless serial determination of things within appearances be reconciled with their eternal being in ideas? Bruno replies that neither the finite nor the infinite is intrinsically real; that is, neither things nor concepts are the fundamental entities. The eternal ideas alone are real, and they are the indifferent subsistence of the finite and the infinite. The finite and the infinite are not different in reality, for each is but a different expression of the same fundamental contents; their difference, the contrast whereby the one is what the other is not, is but the work of our limited understanding, or a function of reflection. If in any sense, therefore, one of the two can be said to be real, it possesses being only in and with the other. Things and concepts are not independent entities, nor are they individuals in their own right; they are but correlated aspects of phenomenal individuals, and, as we shall later see, the latter are but images of ideas, ideas perceived from the limited standpoint of reflection. Thus Bruno dissolves the initial paradox: The endlessly determined series of finite states or intuitions has real being only in and with its conceptual possibility in the identity of the ideas. Its existence as spread out in time is but a matter of appearance. But a new and deeper problem emerges here: Precisely how are intuitions and concepts identified in ideas? What common measure could there be between the finite and the infinite? What is it in each of the opposed orders that makes the identity of absolute opposites possible?

In answer to these problems, Bruno advances the paradoxical notion of 'the infinitely finite.' Within the absolute, he says, the finite possesses essential infinitude and lacks all reference to time, limitation, or difference, although it indeed remains finite. How this is so is best explained from the point of infinite thought, the aggregate of concepts, each of which is the ground of possibility for the succession of finite states of its object.

Within infinite thought, all finite entities are identical insofar as they are possible, argues Bruno. As merely possible, though not at all actual, there is no distinction between kinds of objects or between relations of priority and succession, as in the temporal sequence. The finite subsists atemporally in the absolute, then, so there is no intrinsic connection between

finitude and existence within a temporal framework. Bruno concludes that nothing need interfere with the conceivability of the finite's possessing an infinite mode of being in the absolute. In fact the literally endless character of the time span exhibited in the phenomenal orders is only reflection's deficient manner of translating the infinite finitude of things in the absolute order.

The heart of the foregoing argument is the claim that there is nothing self-contradictory in the concept of an infinite finitude, once time is dissociated from the concept of finiteness. Schelling has not adequately argued for the latter condition, however. He intuitively perceives that it is the mutual externality of sequential states or events that makes phenomenal existence a deficient sort of being, but he nowhere makes plain in the *Bruno* how reason can overcome reflection and abolish the externality of relations—spatial, temporal, and causal—that are the framework of phenomena. The mature Hegelian system meets the same difficulty by advancing the methodological claim that thinking as such is the transformation of external relations into internal ones.

Another difficulty with the above argument is that Schelling has not yet clearly distinguished the powers or potencies from things, especially when talking of 'the finite.' The indifference of the infinite (or second power) and the infinitely finite (or first power) in the absolute means that the two poles of mentality and materiality which comprise the absolute's form are perfectly congruent; each expresses the same reality in decidedly different, though complementary ways. Schelling sometimes calls individuals 'finite things,' though, given that ideas are the only true individuals, they would be better termed 'phenomenal entities.' As we shall see, both the infinite and the finite power must be ingredient in any phenomenal individual, which is to say that each one will have a mental dimension of some sort and a correlated material one as well. Separated existence, or the individual's profoundly inexplicable apostasy from the integral life of the absolute, will involve a relative differentiation of its infinite and finite aspects, but no actual division. The finite simply never exists in and of itself.

Bruno proceeds to argue that since the finite (power) is both finite and infinite, finite entities or individuals will have a double nature (4:249–251). Examined in its concept, that is, within the limitations it establishes for itself, the finite entity is utterly individual; its ground of existence is external to its actual existence, its possibility divorced from its present actuality in time, and its concept an impoverished image of its essence. Its individuality, however, does not imply that the thing is independent or existing in its own right. Instead there is an endless diaspora of possibility and actuality that both interconnects finite beings and limits each of them individually. The possibility of some individual Y lies outside of it and

behind it, in some other individual X, while it in turn bears the unactualized possibility of some future individual Z. Thus arises the sequential ordering of time and causality. "Since the finite individual is itself an actuality whose possibility is located in another individual, it will contain the endless possibility of other individuals, which, for the same reason, will contain the boundless possibility of still other individuals, and so on without end" (4:249–250). The dynamic nature of phenomenal existence stems from its deficiency, namely that the individual's full essence can never fully *exist* in any one moment or state. Existence in time means causally passing the buck.

Yet the individual's limited concept is at variance with its real standing in the absolute, where all divorce of actuality from possibility disappears, and only their indifference obtains. For within the absolute, the individual has its being as a member or a function of the whole, as part of the total organism in fact. Bruno argues that the organism is the most suitable sensible model for the absolute as form, for (1) organic interrelation is such that the possibility of the organism as a whole is vested in every part and function, while (2) it is the total pattern of interrelation among the various members and functions that establishes the function of any given member or part, and (3) the functioning part of an organism is indeed independent in its specific function, although only the organic totality exists as such. Anselm will later express this notion of organic individuality in Leibnizean terms, as the interdependence yet independence of all monads, each one a perspectival interpretation of the universe as a whole (see 4:318–320). For the moment, Bruno concludes that it is the organic character of the finite's infinite life in the absolute that requires an endless and indefinite span of development within time in order to phenomenally approximate its original and self-contained infinitude. Clearly, Schelling has grasped the difference between infinitude and endlessness, between what Hegel will call the real and the 'bad' infinite.[38]

Since the finite entity has a double nature, the question naturally arises of how individual existence is possible (4:251–252). This is clearly a difficult question for Schelling to answer; Kantian constraints on the applicability of causal or substantialistic explanation explicitly prohibit any explanation of the relation between the absolute and the phenomenal world in terms of concepts appropriate to explain phenomena. The best Schelling can do is to offer a two-sided explanation, a discussion of the conditions of individual existence from the point of view of the existing individual, and an account of the logical possibility of self-identity from the point of view of the absolute (for the latter, see 4:257–260). The connection between the two, the crucial 'why,' must remain essentially hidden and invisible.

Pursuing the first track of explaining the conditions of individual existence, Bruno argues that a finite entity is individual only within its own perspective, or, to say the same, that it is individual only insofar as it takes a limited perspective upon its real being within the absolute. Individuality is autolimitation. And this limitation of perspective is a temporal limitation, for the finite entity is in fact individuated in the act of generating its own time. The individual, explains Bruno, sunders the indifference of actuality and possibility in the absolute, interprets the logical priority of possibility over actuality as a priority of cause over effect, and places cause and effect within a schema of succession from prior to posterior. Thus it establishes its own time, for it posits the actuality of other finite beings, disconnected from their possibility, as its past. Likewise it posits the possibility of other things, disconnected from their actuality, as its future. Its view of the influence of other contemporary finite entities constitutes its present. Thus individuality is in fact explained as the collapse of the organic community of individuals within the absolute, the dispersion of their perfect coexistence without time into a temporal spread, whose measure is the distinction of past and future, and prior and posterior. From the point of view of the existing phenomenal individual, existence is time.

Bruno finds himself in the position to clearly outline the contrast between the temporal existence and the absolute being of things. In the absolute, the concepts of all things are inclusively or organically interrelated so that existent and nonexistent things subsist in an identical manner within their ideas, whereas the temporal existence of things involves the self-temporalization of each of them, the exclusion of all others as belonging either to its past or its future, and thus the generation of the whole continuous time series. Note that the general order of time as formulated by the abstract relation of prior to posterior is derivative, while the order of tensed relations among individuals is fundamental. The unique features of Schelling's treatment of time are thus (1) that each individual establishes its own time, since its separated existence is a temporal ecstasis, and (2) that the separation of one individual from the absolute precipitates the separation, or as Schelling later expressed it, the 'fall,' of all others. That one individual's attempt at self-realization involves the sequential realization of them all shows that separated, individual existence is an ontological irony; there is really no breaking of the internal and organic interrelatedness of everything, only a faulty translation of it into the medium of sequential differentiation. Separate existence is thus not real separation. Time may be the original form or framework of phenomena, thus the primary condition of reflection or discursive understanding, but it is an image of eternity as well.

Bruno concludes this section with a rhapsodic description of the absolute in the vocabulary of trinitarian theology. The strictly identical essence of the absolute is equated with the eternal Father, who in one single act of

intellection (= the form of the absolute) generates the infinite and the finite powers. The infinite power is the Spirit, the unity of all, while "the finite, though in itself equal to the infinite, is yet by its own accord subjected to time and made into a suffering God" (4:252). Lucian suggests that Bruno's speculative fancy has soared into the incomprehensible and demands that the discussion return to the theme of consciousness. The stage is set for a confrontation of the claims of Fichte's phenomenalism with those of Schelling's identity-philosophy.

V. *Absolute Identity and the Domain of Knowing*

[4:252–257]

Lucian squarely poses Fichte's chief objection to the philosophy of identity, that it takes abstract formulae that legitimately describe the structure of empirical consciousness and extends them beyond the realm of evidence. Schelling's thought is apparently no longer transcendental idealism, but transcendent metaphysics. Lucian charges, "You have interpreted this identity [of thought and intuition I proposed] in such a way that it is no longer the principle of knowledge" (4:252). Bruno retorts that Lucian has done this as well, for he claimed not only that the identity of the real and the ideal is the structure of actual consciousness, but that it is the philosophical or metaphysical principle of consciousness as well. If Lucian in fact ascribes to absolute knowing the same structure of indifference that Bruno attributes to the absolute as such, then he has himself surpassed the territory of empirical consciousness and is operating as a metaphysician. Lucian explains that he employs the indifference principle transcendentally, as a heuristic device for examining empirical consciousness. Absolute identity is assumed as a principle in and of consciousness, nothing more. Philosophy, he concludes, has no warrant to entertain any notions of an absolute consciousness except in the context of explaining empirical consciousness. Having clearly stated Fichte's objection to his procedure, Schelling proceeds to ignore the considerable force of his argument. Fichte has *evidence* on his side, inasmuch as philosophy begins and ends with the given of consciousness; an absolute consciousness structured by relations of indifference is but a theoretical assumption in his philosophy. Schelling recklessly goes beyond the domain of consciousness and speculates about an absolute as such, outside of all relation to the territory of experiential consciousness.

Bruno argues his opponent into the position that consciousness is just a relative identity of thought and intuition, not an absolute one (4:254–256). Lucian concedes, perhaps too readily, that the identity of the principle of knowing is different from the identity exhibited in actual consciousness.

Bruno argues that empirical consciousness or actual knowing is but a relative, thus divisible, identity of its factors; only the metaphysical principle of knowing is characterized by complete indifference and indivisibility of its factors. But if there is one relative identity that exists outside the absolute, the ideal one or consciousness, there must be another one that does so too, a real relative identity, or *being*.

There are, claims Bruno, no real entities as such, nor any ideal ones either. There exists only relative identities of the real and the ideal. When one of the factors embarks upon separate existence, so does its correlated opposite; in fact they can exist only in and with one another. The general result follows that if the absolute enters appearance at all, it must appear as two distinct correlated points, one of which realizes the ideal by means of the real, the other of which realizes the real by means of the ideal. On the universal scale, these correlated relative identities are nature and spirit; on the individual scale, they are body and soul. Thus both orders of phenomena fundamentally belong together and reflect one another, for both nature and spirit display one identical process at work, the inbuilding of opposites, a process whereby totality is achieved whether the starting point be unity or multiplicity. It is this convergent process of the inbuilding of opposites from both directions that maps the absolute onto phenomenal existence and in fact connects apparently diverse regions of being. As we shall see in the sequel, Schelling finds much explanatory power in the complementarity of different orders of phenomena. It is this complementarity that enables him to avoid the phenomenological one-sidedness of Fichte's philosophy of consciousness and the crude materialism of its Enlightenment opponents as well. For intelligence will be seen to be equally founded in the body's capacity to represent its interaction with its environment and in the capacity of thought to detach itself from its immediate objects, representations of bodily states.

Bruno now proceeds to criticize the limitations of Fichte's subjective idealism (4:256–257). Fichte's programme, as Lucian represents it, is to reduce both being and knowing back to the structure of absolute consciousness. And yet he claims that absolute consciousness can be acknowledged as absolute only in and for the limited stance of knowing. This amounts to a reduction of being to knowing. Such a procedure, objects Bruno, abolishes the indifferent equality of being and knowing, and it is precisely this indifference that makes the absolute absolute. Whether Lucian is considering identity in its essence, as indifference, or whether he is talking of that identity's appearance within phenomena, there is no reason to restrict philosophy to an investigation of just one of the complementary orders. Neither the phenomenal order of being nor that of knowing stands on its own; each provides only distorted images of the supreme indifference.

Lucian concedes the argument at this point and moves to a conciliatory stance, though it is indeed doubtful that the philosopher he represents would have done so. There is no being as such, he asserts, only phenomenal being, nor is there any knowing as such, only the appearance of the cognizing self together with its objects inside consciousness. The contrast between being and knowing pertains to consciousness alone; the difference between the real and the ideal obtains solely within consciousness, and thus it has only ideal standing. And that, says Lucian, is precisely the meaning of the term 'idealism.' It signifies not the primacy of the ideal over the real, but the nonultimacy of the ideal-real distinction. Neither one of the two irreducible orders of phenomena is fundamental. Note that Schelling has Lucian state this point of agreement in rather idealistic terms. The rather broad definition of idealism advanced leaves a great deal of room for disagreement on what is fundamental, on what grounds the phenomenal togetherness of knowing and being.

VI. *The Logical Possibility of Separate Existence* [4:257–260]

Lucian asks Bruno to account for the possibility of the finite's departure from the absolute, that is, for the logical possibility of individuals' separate existence and for the ground of the two orders of phenomena as well. Bruno remarks that this question was implicit in Lucian's attempt to postulate absolute identity solely in reference to consciousness. He then clarifies what is to be explained, namely the exclusion of relative or nonabsolute reality from the absolute, or, what is the same, the division of nonabsolute reality into two opposite phenomenal orders. The task can be accomplished, claims Bruno, by a direct deduction of phenomenal reality from the idea itself. No transition from the absolute to the finite realm need be introduced, for the idea itself includes the distinction of the differing phenomenal orders as well as the individuals established by this distinction.

Although the eventual result of Bruno's extended argument is put forth as a 'deduction of consciousness,' the argument is rather loose and consists in an interconnected description of the mechanisms of inorganic nature, of organisms, and finally of consciousness (4:260–288). It is a deduction in the sense that its result, the triadic series of individual phenomena, is indeed implicit in its premise, the absolute idea, which is not only the organic union of all the levels or stages of appearance in general, but the union of all individuals appearing within those phases as well.

Now, for reasons we have stated above, the factual nature of individual existence is beyond explanation, but its logical possibility is subject to investigation and can be seen to reside in the nature of the absolute itself.

Schelling is not consistently clear within the *Bruno* about the difference between explaining factual existence and logical possibility, but at least some of his contemporary critical readers were.[39] J. J. Wagner points to the ambiguous nature of the relation between the absolute and phenomena as the work's central problem:

> As I embarked upon the reading of this work, I was filled with anticipation, not so much as to how the author would cancel the doubleness of reflection, but more so as to how he would reestablish it once again, after it had been abrogated.[40]

On Wagner's understanding, Schelling meets the problem not so much by a deduction of appearances as by a conceptual analysis of identity as indifference, the notion at the foundation of the whole discussion, but which receives precise and emphatic formulation only in the dialogue's closing pages.

> Schelling answers our question, "How does reflection issue from identity? How does the endlessly finite come forth from the eternal?" by establishing identity not as the sheer negation of what is different, but merely as the negation of [active] difference. So indeed, what is different is certainly not negated in the idea; it is merely sublated in its capacity to be opposed [to something else]. Its difference vis-à-vis other differences is preserved, and so too it is preserved for itself. Accordingly, differences are already contained in the thing's indifferent state or in its idea, but they are included as comprising [one] identical substance. They only become different insofar as they separate themselves [from the absolute]. The difficult point of the whole problem is thus the very act whereby something individual breaks away from the state of pure indifference for itself.[41]

Despite the fact that Schelling speaks of a "rule according to which the soul separates itself from the identity of all things" (4:284), Wagner claims no such rule is needed:

> So too our author often says that difference exists only in the perspective of the finite, but that it disappears in the sight of the divinity. Now if the divinity itself is posited in the perspective of differences as their totality (as is the case here), then difference is immediately established with the positing of indifference, and one can furnish no rule or measure that could mediate between the two. So too, one can provide no law for the separation of the finite from God. In the Schellingian idea of indifference one has already incorporated everything that should separate itself according to this so-called law. It is therefore superfluous to ask after such a law—just as it is superfluous, once the concept of a triangle is fixed, to ask for a formula that would permit the deduction of its three angles. The concept of the triangle is itself this deduction.[42]

Alerted by Wagner's judgment that the logical problem of individuation is solved in the idea's indifference or in the absolute's formal aspect, and that the 'deduction' of phenomena is really a conceptual analysis of the idea, let us look to Bruno's argumentation.

He first offers an explanation of the difference between individual things and absolute identity in terms of limitation (4:258). In the absolute idea, the formal aspect of the absolute, the finite and infinite powers subsist in an indistinguishable unity, each one self-sufficient and unlimited. Neither factor can be distinguished from its conceptual opposite because both are unlimited. But finite things are distinguished because they reciprocally limit each other, and this limitation stems from the difference between their essence and their mode of being (or form). The succession of states necessitated by a thing's becoming in time means that the finite thing 'now' is but one aspect of its essence, of all that it can be. In the absolute, however, there is simply no difference between essence and form. Since its form comprehends the infinite and the infinitely finite in harmonious indifference, the absolute's form and essence are themselves indifferent. The absolute eternally is all that it can be.

Bruno then turns to a closer examination of the absolute's form (4:258–259). The absolute idea or its formal aspect is different from its identical essence only because it includes finitude in the first place. Of course it includes the finite as infinite finitude, thus as equal to the intrinsically infinite, and because of this equal inclusion of opposites it is itself indifferent with the absolute's essence. And yet it is because it includes the finite at all that the absolute's form becomes a community of perfect individuals, the locus of ideas. The absolute as form is thus an ideal evolution of individuals; it inchoately contains difference or the organic system of all the differentiated forms of appearance.

Things 'ideally' live a separated existence in ideas, therefore, although they are not yet actually separated and distinguished from one another. The absolute's form is the "womb of the universe," wherein things really exist as determinate relative identities of the infinite and finite powers, while ideally or 'for themselves' they are the difference of these powers. Now actual separated existence, as we have seen, involves each individual establishing its existence as the exclusion of other individuals, past and future. Evidently, in separating itself from the community of all things in the absolute's form, each thing chooses to affirm its ideal individuality instead of the essential interconnection of all things.

Let us pause to analyze this complicated web of concepts. For Schelling, each thing is at bottom but a relative identity of the finite or real power and the infinite or ideal power. As such it has both a real and an ideal dimension, and individuality logically depends on the coexistence but possible divergence of these two dimensions, which Schelling calls being *an sich* and being *für sich*. How every being can possess an ideal or for-itself dimension is not explained in depth, but Schelling clearly implies there is an incipient mental dimension to everything, and that in some sense this dimension is volitional as well as perceptive. Both in this distinction of real and ideal dimensions of all things and in the essence-form dichotomy as well, he presumes that the subject-object split fundamental to all forms of cognition characterizes reality as its most basic level. He also presumes that volitional characteristics such as having a point of view and perspectival self-assessment pertain to the mental or ideal aspect of every individual. At bottom, individual separated existence is something like self-will, a 'decision' to actualize the conceptual contrast of the real and the ideal, consequently a 'decision' to sunder the organic community of things in the absolute idea into the serial quasi independence of things under the conditions of time and of causal determination.[43] If the reader finds this course of thought puzzling and unclear, he is not alone. The problem of providing an adequate account of individuation furnished Schelling the chief impetus for altering and developing identity-philosophy in the years 1802–1806.

Bruno proceeds to explain that all things are ensouled through their subsistence in their ideas; that is, they are in living unity with the concept of all things. And it is this organic interconnection with all things that (1) makes them capable of separate existence, and (2) makes them manifest to some degree the interconnection of all within their very separate existence. For to the extent that a thing is individual and has achieved its own self-identity, it betrays the organic community of all things within the absolute. Phenomena as different as the animal's symbiosis with its environment, the motions of inorganic bodies in the system of universal gravitation, and the openness of all orders of phenomena to human cognition all testify to the mutual interinvolvement of all things.

Bruno concludes that there is a completely general structure common to all finite existence. To be finite means to be a relative identity of the finite and infinite powers and to be their difference as well. As a relative identity, the thing is individual or is its own identity; its self-identity is said to be the "image of the idea." But as a relative difference of the powers, the thing is finite, occupies space and time, and is subject to causal determination. There are both lifeless and living instances of this relative identity and difference, the former being material things, the latter acts of consciousness. What is expressed in the one is the same as what

is expressed in the other. Even the general framework of phenomena exhibits the absolute's indifference, and so nature and consciousness constitute strictly parallel orders of appearances.

VII. *General Structures of the Universe: Individuation and Time* [4:260–263]

In a fairly disconnected set of remarks, Bruno addresses himself to those features of phenomenal individuals that are responsible for identifying their mental and material aspects, that is, the mechanisms for inbuilding difference or establishing indifference out of difference. Now the stars are perfect individual entities, for in their finite state they minimize the divergence between the finite and the infinite by infinitizing the finite. The way they equalize the finite and the infinite aspects of their existence is what makes them imperishable, and it establishes their living and animate character as well, whereby they are said to be immortal gods. But to some degree, every being approximates this perfection inasmuch as it is imbued with time and ensouled by its concept.

Switching to Fichte's idealistic vocabulary of intuition, concept, and idea, Bruno explains that the finite power or intuition is unitary, undifferentiated, passive and receptive of all, when it is confined within the absolute. Intuition becomes determinate—a presentation of a something—only in the particular thing, where it sets itself opposite to thought. Now neither intuition nor thought is intrinsically temporal; each becomes subject to time, and temporalizes the substance of the thing (the image of the idea) too, through their relative division from one another and their subsequent reunification (4:260–261).

Schelling is not very specific in this passage, but given the fact that Fichte interpreted the presentation, the basic unity of thought and intuition, as a wavering that is brought to a stand,[44] perhaps Schelling means that the division and reunification of intuition and thought generate the succession of discrete moments that constitute a thing's time. Time would then be an ongoing identification of the different, the process of inbuilding the finite and the infinite. It would be time that would translate the thing's essence or idea into its limited form of development and make it a relative identity and opposition of the powers. As we shall see, time, self-identity, and consciousness are all manifestations of the infinite power within finite appearances (see 4:265).

Bruno then turns the discussion toward the topic of the phenomenal individual's substance or self-identity (4:262–263). Since the individual is the relative identity and opposition of the finite and infinite powers, and since these powers appear as its physical and psychical aspects respectively,

neither the physical nor the psychical can be real as such. Just as the idea welds the universal and the particular into an identity in the absolute, so there must be something in the individual that "imitates the idea and eternally establishes the universal within the particular and the particular within the universal" (4:262). This is the 'image of the idea,' in itself indifferent, but in relation to difference, an inbuilding force tending to produce indifference. It is the image of the idea that unites the infinite dimension of a thing, its 'soul,' with its finite or bodily dimension. It is the individual's substance, though it appears neither in the psychic nor in the bodily order.

Hence every individual thing exhibits a threefold structure. Its body or finite dimension is responsible for the thing's separated existence, while its soul or conceptual dimension makes continuance in separate existence possible by securing self-identity and individuality. In virtue of the latter, the individual, though self-excluded from absolute identity, is nonetheless its own identity. These two dimensions are united by the image of identity, whose function is to unify and integrate these two and to secure their togetherness. Individuation is primarily a function of the finite positing itself as perfectly finite, which in turn limits the associated infinite dimension to being the concept of but one individual, and subjects the third or idea-like element to a finite and temporal mode of existence as well. The individual thing's existence thus involves all three powers—the finite, the infinite, and the eternal—but all as subject to conditions characteristic of the finite.

VIII. *General Structures of the Universe: Space, Time, and Gravity* [4:263–266]

The same threefold structure of the powers, which will eventually be recognized as the basic pattern of the phenomenal universe, repeated on all levels of being and within all types of entities as well, is now seen to establish the continua which are the framework of all material appearances. Absolute (or empty) space is the perfect indifference of the finite, infinite, and eternal powers as it appears in the form of finitude. It is thus "the eternally resting and unmoved image of eternity" (4:263) or the dispersion of the perfectly internal relations that constitute the absolute's form into the form of externality.

The basic dimension of space is length, and it is the expression of the infinite or conceptual power, for not only is the endlessness of the line a finite analogue of the concept's infinitude, but the postulation of the line at the start of geometry is a pure abstraction, a purely constructive mental activity. Now indifference as such is incapable of being expressed in just

one dimension, and so is imaged only in all three spatial dimensions together. Nonetheless the line is said to establish the relative identity of subject and object, the same identity that appears in individual things as cohesion and self-identity, and within nature as a whole as the affinity of things, of which the phenomenon of magnetism is but a special case.

Breadth, the second dimension of space, is the expression of difference or of the finite power. It is in virtue of the finite power that things are subject to time, for, when related to a determinate finite entity, the concept's essential infinitude is abolished. As the soul of this one individual, the concept becomes merely the idea of this body. In this case both the psychical and the somatic aspects of the individual are finite and stand opposed to the infinitude of the pure concept, and the individual, instead of containing its own time, is ruled by external or 'physical' time. This argument is hardly clear as it stands, but evidently Schelling thinks that the concept or infinite power appears within phenomena as time, "for time is the harmoniously flowing image of infinite thought" (4:265). Where the relative identity of subjectivity and objectivity, externally expressed in the dimension of length, is internally possessed by an individual, it becomes living time itself or self-consciousness.

Though Schelling here establishes the connection between the *concept, time-production,* and an entity's *self-identity* in a very loose and unsatisfactory fashion, nonetheless it is an important and suggestive idea in at least two ways: (1) Although Schelling directly borrows the doctrine of the parallel nature of the psychic and somatic orders from Spinoza, he gives it an idealistic rather than a naturalistic interpretation. Though the mental indeed mirrors the material inasmuch as the soul-concept is the idea of this one body, it is the mental, not the material, that is primary in this relation. The material (that is, discrete, completely determinate intuitions or presentations) exists in succession and is endlessly differentiated. It is the mental dimension that secures the individual's self-identity, connecting the various intuitions or states in a historical, not a substantial manner. Schelling thus provides an idealistic interpretation of Spinoza's mind-body parallelism, one more acceptable to Fichte than Spinoza's own naturalistic interpretation. (2) Though the association of concept, time-production, and self-consciousness seems a synoptic compression of all the epistemological apparatus of Kant's *Critique* into one idea, it is Spinoza's dynamic understanding of a concept (in his terms, 'idea') that permits the association. Only if a concept is an active thinking (of something), an expression of thinking rather than an impression of an object, can it be associated with time-production and the synthetic awareness of consciousness. Given this dynamic sense of Schelling's notion of the concept, one can perhaps see why Hegel, who in early works such as the *System of Ethical Life* employed the vocabulary of intuition, concept, and idea, chose in his mature works to call the self-

developing absolute "the concept" and employed the term "idea" only for its static, unembodied logical side.

Bruno continues his exposition of the continua that link material phenomena by noting that it is the infinite power, whose clearest and definitive expression is self-consciousness, that is responsible for things being extended in space and enduring within time. Extension results from *extending,* time from *enduring;* both are synthetic and systematizing *activities,* despite the fact that their outcome is the framework of external relations between things. Light and gravity, their higher-order correlates, extend the scope of this systematizing activity, while abolishing the externality of things. Thus all the major components of the structure of the physical universe reveal that difference, individuality, and externality are but vanishing moments, not the ultimate character of things. "However much an individual being enlarges the sphere of its existence by departing from the absolute, eternity still holds it fast" (4:258).

Bruno then turns to the third dimension of space, depth, which unites the relative identity of length and the difference of breadth and thus extinguishes their difference. It is the expression of the third and highest power, the identity of the universal and the particular. In individual things, the third power or 'image of the idea' unites the opposed psychic and physical dimensions and secures the individual's self-identity; it is the idea within appearances, or rather *behind* appearances. For finite things exist as individual only in virtue of the opposition of the universal and the particular, i.e. of the concept and the material thing. Hence the individual as a whole is infected by difference and so stands opposed to its unity, which accordingly seems not to exist, but merely to be the hidden ground of existence. Within appearances, only the finite and the infinite power step forth; their unity, which is the sole real element, is a disappearing moment. The nonapparent character of the third and highest power is seen even more clearly in its universal function of binding the things of nature together into a system, namely gravity.

'Gravity' is the name Schelling gives to the activity of assimilating difference into indifference within the system of things as a whole. Gravity is the intrinsically indivisible tendency to identify all individuals and thus abolish their individuality, a uniform striving for identity over against every sort of difference. Among inanimate things, it is the force of mutual attraction we commonly call gravity; in individuals, it is the binding together of body and soul; within conscious individuals, it is the principle of intellection and volition.

In all of its forms, gravity remains hidden, a force observable only in what it does. Indeed, the striking feature of all manifestations of the third power—as the union of body and soul, the force that makes natural bodies a system, the synthetic connection of awareness and presentation in

intuition, and the identification of concepts and intuitions in thought—is just this *invisibility.* Time, space, the individual's self-identity and cohesion, the forces that work the plurality of things into nature, the synthetic identity of self-consciousness, reason itself—these are the real structures that make phenomena possible, but they are themselves hidden, or, insofar as they do appear, empty and contentless 'things.' Within appearances, only differences stand forth, never the unifying structure of appearances. And on this fact rests the whole plausibility of Schelling's postulation of a nonphenomenal or absolute dimension where the indifference of things obtains as such.

The absolute is a logical domain, a fact apparent from its abstract definition as "the identity of identity and opposition." Though Schelling often seems tempted to hypostatize the logical and turn it into some metaphysical otherworld, his arguments capitalize on the mysterious nonappearance and nonpresentability of the connective elements which thought demands. For the logical, that which in bringing things to a systematic unity is tantalizingly everywhere and nowhere, is certainly never given, never an element of experience. The force of Schelling's argument is to convince us that Kant and Fichte were mistaken in attempting to locate the logical domain in the workings of the knowing subject and to force the logical to migrate from the territory of the synthetic *a priori* to that of 'the absolute.'

IX. *The Three Powers Generalized* [4:266–267]

Bruno now explicitly distinguishes the three levels of being that display the powers or 'potencies' with utmost generality—the inorganic, the organic, and the rational. The first power, or the inorganic, determines the spatio-temporal existence of phenomenal individuals; the second, or organic power, (equivalent to 'the infinite' or 'the concept') renders them intelligible; but the third, or rational power, is the real and substantial element of things. Thus all the general structures of appearance—space, time, gravity, individual identity, and the unity of consciousness—are images of reason, relatively differentiated forms of reason's pure indifference. Inorganic entities fill space and time because they establish a difference between the universal and the particular, and thus disrupt the purity of reason's fully internal identification of identity and opposition. Animate and sentient beings establish a difference between self-consciousness and sensation; in this case it is the subject-object difference which again disturbs the pure vacuity of reason and generates distinct acts of consciousness.

Schelling neglects to make sufficiently clear in the *Bruno* the notion of the powers or potencies he carefully elaborated in the 1801 *Exposition of*

My System. Each potency (*Potenz*) recapitulates and repeats the basic structure of indifference or the identity of opposites, but in a quantitatively different way. If the third power is indifference itself or a complete quantitative equality of universality and particularity, the other powers repeat the same structure, but with a quantitative imbalance toward one pole or the other. Thus in the second or infinite power, universality or subjectivity predominates over particularity, while in the first power, particularity or objectivity predominates over universality. Since each of the powers expresses the fundamental structure of indifference in merely quantitatively different ways, they are said to be 'powers' by analogy to mathematical powers. When the lowest or finite power, or rather the structure of indifference which underlies its predominant objectivity, is 'potentiated' or raised to the second power (or 'squared'), the opposite factor of universality or subjectivity predominates. And when the basic structure of indifference is raised to the third power (or 'cubed'), indifference itself stands out, without any quantitative imbalance of one pole over the other. While all this pseudomathematical language seems a bit fanciful, Schelling's basic idea is that the three levels—subjectivity, objectivity, and their identity—are (1) repetitions of the same logical pattern, and (2) involved, all of them, in each and every phenomenal thing. "Thus every single thing exhibits the universe, each in its own way" (4:267). The version of Leibniz's monadology that Anselm later presents (see 4:318–321) is meant to expand upon this point. For every phenomenal individual is but a limited point of view for intuiting the absolute, a perspectival interpretation of the totality of things. An individual exists within appearances only to the extent that it is a deficient translation of the organic interrelatedness of things within the absolute idea.

X. *Specific Structures of the Universe: The Heavenly Bodies*

[4:267–279]

Bruno now launches into a lengthy and highly poetic treatment of the most perfect sort of natural beings, the stars and planets. Although the idea of doing celestial mechanics *a priori* doubtless strikes us as humorous—a notable example is the deduction of sunspots (4:276)—it is safe to say that Schelling viewed this section as a literary-historical excursion, a poetic counterpart of his more sober endeavors to systematize the findings of empirical science in a "philosophy of nature."[45] Bruno's discourse combines the ancient view of the stars and their spheres as divinities, moving in perfect circles and driven by intelligence (the heritage of Aristotle, Ptolemy, and Dante), with modern celestial mechanics, as first formulated by Kepler. The section is intended to be a tribute to Kepler, and an anti-Newtonian

polemic as well. Schelling views Kepler as a unique event in the history of ideas, the coincidence of the opposed tendencies of artistic creativity and the spirit of empirical science:

> From this, too, it is apparent why and to what extent there is no genius in science; not indeed that it would be impossible for a scientific problem to be solved by means of genius, but because this same problem whose solution can be found by genius, is also soluble mechanically. Such, for example, is the Newtonian system of gravitation, which could have been a discovery of genius, and in its first discoverer, Kepler, really was so, but could equally also have been a wholly scientific discovery, which it actually became in the hands of Newton.[46]

It is consistent with the *Bruno*'s rather vocal attack upon mechanistic materialism (see 4:305–315) that the general laws of nature be sketched out in the half-occult, half-mathematical manner of Kepler. The many direct citations and echoes of the *Timaeus* to be found within the account reinforce the impression that this treatment of nature is deliberately poetic. Space will not permit more than a mention of its chief points.

The heavenly bodies are the most perfect natural things, since they are directly ensouled by the infinite concept; thus they contain their own time and are self-conscious. They are the first individuals, and as befits the first images of the absolute, they are organic unities, populated with all sorts of individual entities, living genera, so to speak. "In short, they are blessed animals, and compared to man, undying gods" (4:262). Their perfection consists in their being natural beings but at the same time displaying the hallmarks of all levels of being, the inorganic, the organic, and the rational.

The planets are "sensible images of the whole real universe" (4:269). In their motion they imitate the idea and embody its activity, the inbuilding of differences. Any being that is not itself substance exists by fleeing its substantial origin and identity, for motion is the indifference of gravity expressed within difference. Such an imperfect thing flees the center in such a way that the time of its motion equals the square of the distance moved, for time expresses relative identity, while distance expresses difference or finitude. The nonsubstantial thing thus instantiates indifference within its very motion, or the identity of the second power with the square of the first, in that $t = d^2$. If the thing moves towards its center of being, the relation is reversed, and the distance moved equals the square of the time of motion. Thus the motion of imperfect things is governed by the inverse square law.

The planets or perfect beings, however, do not move in straight lines or in trajectories, but in circles. Movement through a circular orbit does not exemplify the inverse square law, but instead exhibits a perfectly

proportional relation between the time and distance moved. Circular motion is thus the perfect movement, assuming that a body moves through a circular course at a constant rate.

But the planets do not in fact traverse circular orbits, nor do they move at a constant velocity. Here is where Kepler's laws come in, the laws which "seem to have been disclosed to us by a divine intelligence" (4:270). The first law states that the planets' orbits are ellipses, one of whose foci is the sun. The two foci that determine a planet's elliptical path represent identity and difference respectively; in virtue of the first, the planet inheres in the absolute, while in virtue of the second, it possesses self-identical individuality. Thus the planets symbolize the togetherness of the absolute order and phenomenal existence: "Things were so arranged that we might recognize identity within difference itself and appreciate the destiny of each of the heavenly bodies, that is, as particular beings to be absolute, and as absolute to be particular things" (4:271). Kepler's second law states that there is an unvarying proportion between the ratio of the time of motion and the distance covered in one arc and that of any other. In other words, though the times and distances covered in different arcs indeed vary, and the velocity of motion as well, there is yet a constant proportion among all arcs of the elliptical orbit, as if the body were moving at a constant rate in a perfectly circular path. "The stars, though they seem to traverse paths that are distorted circles, truly describe circular orbits in full conformity with the idea" (4:272). Indifference is again exemplified within difference itself.

To facilitate the transition from inorganic to organic nature, Bruno offers a general formula for assessing the perfection of individual entities: Things in the visible universe are perfect to the degree that they incorporate time, that is, to the degree that they approach or approximate self-consciousness. Now time is external to inorganic things; their difference can be assimilated into indifference only externally, through the force of gravity. But time is inherent in organic creatures; to be alive is to internally systematize and control different life-functions, to establish an indifferent continuity of life across continuously varying environmental conditions. Inorganic things indeed cohere into a system inasmuch as each one attracts every other, but this is merely passive inclusion into a totality. Organisms, on the other hand, are active systems, and not only within their own bodies but in their symbiosis with their environment. The inorganic system-principle is gravity, while that of the organic world is 'light.' Light is the "eternal idea of all corporeal things" (4:278), the ideal expression of the living unity of things. Now light is external to highly differentiated inorganic beings, just the way time is; dead things are passively incorporated into a system of visibility, just as they are incorporated into the system of

gravity. Organic entities, however, contain their own 'light,' while conscious beings are capable of operating by the 'light of reason.'

XI. *Specific Structures of the Universe: Animal Life* [4:279–281]

The fundamental difference between the things of inorganic nature and living things is their psychic dimension. Bare things are ensouled not by form or the idea, but by the mere concept; this concept, associated as it is with but one individual, is limited to expressing only so much of the universe as the body in question expresses. You might say the psychic dimension of bare things is pure feeling, without discrimination or awareness. The limited concept is merely a reflection of the isolated material body, and thus the thing remains disconnected from others.

The animal, however, contains time and light, both expressions of the second power, and thus to some degree embodies the idea, the living interconnection of all things. The animal in its very being is the interdependence of many different functions and it "contains within its concept the possibility of infinitely many things that lie outside its individual existence" (4:279), whether by way of propagation, motion and interaction, or by way of perception. Animals' actions appear purposive or rationally ordered; this is because in them the idea is the agent or intuitor, but not in a fully self-possessed manner. The idea is the animal's ground of being, thus distinct from it; the organism as such is not the existing idea, the way the rational and self-conscious knower and agent will be.

Both inorganic and organic nature, concludes Bruno, "reveal the mystery hidden away in God—the absolute identity of the infinite, which is the pattern, and the finite, which is the antitype" (4:281). As individually existing identities of correlated mental and material dimensions, all things exhibit the indifferent structure of the absolute idea. Precisely how all things are bodily and yet all are ensouled will unfold in the following section.

XII. *The 'Deduction' of Consciousness* [4:281–290]

Working toward the goal of elaborating the structure of self-consciousness, Bruno first spells out the double nature of the concept functioning as the soul of an individual and its strictly finite duration (4:281). It will be helpful at the start to recall that Schelling does not wish to accord priority to the ideal or the realm of consciousness, as did Fichte, and that, for him, the mental order is just as phenomenal as its material counterpart. Neither minds nor bodies are fundamental or have independent existence.

And since the mental dimension has been identified with the 'infinite concept' that ensouls the individual finite entity, Bruno's first step must be to establish the finitude of the soul.

As the 'soul' of an individual thing, the concept is potentially what the body actually expresses, or it is the possibility of the actual states (of itself and its surrounding environment) that the body expresses. This means (1) that the soul-concept is primarily the representation of bodily states and (2) that it is logically and ontologically prior to bodily states in that it grounds their possibility. The first point is a direct borrowing from Spinoza's psychology, the second an idealistic modification thereof.

The body is an infinite-and-finite sort of thing, a definite individual, yet capable nonetheless of exhibiting the whole universe (presumably by registering any change of state in its ongoing interaction with its environment). The concept that mirrors the body is limited or finitized in that very mirroring; even though it is the infinite concept of soul, it is at the same time the finite concept of this one individual. Thus soul exists in association with one individual in such a way that it is doubled, for it is at once the infinite possibility of cognition qua infinite concept, and the merely limited actuality thereof qua concept of this one body. "If you posit the existence of infinite cognition as the soul of one particular body, then you are positing a double soul, as it were, one soul embracing the [limited] actuality of infinite thought, the other soul its infinite possibility" (4:282).

The foregoing argument is difficult and highly abstract, yet one can see that in the split between the infinite possibility of cognition and its limited actuality, the structure of consciousness has already been articulated. For what is consciousness other than the ongoing synthesis of certain actual cognitions reflecting the state of the body (sensations) with the abstract cognition of universal concepts (categorial concepts, the infinite possibility of experience)? This will become clearer, in due time.

For now, it would be helpful to examine the puzzling notion of a 'double-soul.' It is introduced not only to account for the difference between sensory cognition and conceptual understanding, but to inject the symmetry of indifferential relations into Schelling's account of the psychic. Recall that though the finite appears phenomenally as simple finitude or isolated individuality, it exists in the absolute as the *infinitely finite* (see 4:247–252). In the same way, though the infinite or conceptual order is intrinsically infinite, it appears within the finite as *finitely infinite,* as associated with and ensouling one individual body. Though in general and in the abstract, concept and thing are simply opposed as infinity and finitude, when the one exists in and with the other under the conditions of appearance, each is *infinite-and-finite.* And this coexistence of the same and different furnishes another testimony that only the indifferent togetherness of the two is real

and substantial. The finite and infinite powers are indivisibly united in the idea; within phenomena, however, they are merely relatively and divisibly associated. Hence neither acts of consciousness nor things are fundamentally real or exist independently of each other. "Indeed consciousness has no reality in the sight of the absolute, but, just like everything else that pertains to the image world, consciousness is real for itself and in its own perspective" (4:282).

In a phenomenal individual, therefore, the only real element is the identity of soul and body as it exists in the idea, an identity imperfectly imaged in appearances. Now soul and body exist solely within time, and this existence under the form of duration results from their mutual opposition—the way that physical states and acts of consciousness are distinct phenomenal occurrences, doubly yoked together in that the latter mirror the former, while the former realize the possibilities enunciated in the latter. Now soul is the infinite concept made finite by its association with an individual body. Insofar as it mirrors the states of the body, it is conditioned by duration and only in this manner can it exist as soul. It follows, then, that the soul is just as mortal as the body is. Neither is soul immortal as directly associated with the body, nor is the 'infinite concept of soul' either—soulishness in general, that which is common to all souls, that which is responsible for the abstract universality of thought. For just as the perceptual soul is directly related to and limited by the body, so the cognitive soul is directly related to and limited by the perceptual soul.

From this complicated description emerges Schelling's picture of the finite and merely phenomenal character of consciousness. The infinite concept in fact exists only as *sensation,* the empty infinitude of *abstract concepts,* and their thoroughly discursive synthesis in the *unity of consciousness.* Whereas Fichte would absolutize the domain of thought, Schelling insists that the infinite concept exists merely as the psychic dimension of this finite individual, inside a temporal process wherein one determinate concept is determined by a prior concept, and that one in turn determined by a prior one, and so on without end.

Bruno concludes his long exposition by noting that the opposition of the perceptual and the cognitive souls mirrors the opposition of soul and body as such. Since the infinite and finite powers are both variations on the fundamental theme of indifference, one can translate realistic talk of phenomenal individuals as soul-body composites into idealistic talk of the identity and opposition of sensations and concepts in the unity of consciousness. Though such a formula for conceptual mapping is hardly likely to dissolve all of Fichte's mistrust of a Spinozistic realism, it at least facilitates the transition from discussion of the phenomena of nature to those of consciousness. The deduction of consciousness which follows

(4:285–290) is really the discrimination of a fundamental opposition in the unitary act of consciousness. For the subject-object contrast is but a variation on the theme announced in the treatment of inorganic and organic nature, the relative identity and opposition of the finite and infinite powers (see 4:260).

Bruno and Lucian now join forces to clarify the double nature of soul. The opposition of the finite and the infinite aspects of soul, united only in the eternal idea, can express the soul-body opposition. Now the finite soul, which they term 'objective existing cognition,' stands to the infinite soul or 'the infinite concept of cognition' as actuality stands to possibility. Objective cognition, therefore, or the finite concept that mirrors the states of the body, is endlessly determined, sensation following upon sensation in the exact order that bodily state follows upon bodily state. The concept of cognition, on the other hand, the infinite concept which establishes the possibility of all of the determinate states of objective cognition, is complete, self-identical, and unchanging. The finite soul or objective cognition is thus the heterogeneous series of sensations, while infinite soul is the abstract identity of the concept as such. The double nature of the soul thus turns out to be the identity of thought and intuition, the formula Lucian previously advanced as his candidate for the first principle of philosophy. Bruno notes, now that this identity has turned out to be nothing more than a formula for the structure of consciousness, that the formula is strictly regional and lacks the generality requisite for the first principle of all philosophy.

Bruno then turns the discussion to the unity of consciousness (4:288ff.). Objective cognition (or sensory intuition) is finite insofar as it has the body as its object, but as related to the concept of cognition (or thought), it is infinite as well as finite. Now the concept of cognition is intrinsically infinite. Hence the unity of consciousness is an identity of two infinites—a knowing that unitarily comprehends two distinct knowings, one sensory, the other conceptual, one fully determinate, the other completely abstract and empty. The dynamic identification of these two different sorts of cognition is consciousness itself, or selfhood. Bruno employs the suggestive phrase "the infinite's coming to itself" to describe the process whereby objective cognition is transformed and infinitized, or transcends its finite condition of being merely the representation of a bodily state by being associated with the concept as such. Selfhood or self-consciousness is, therefore, the transformation of images of physical states into an active cognition, an emergence of a 'self' from the process of integrating sensations under concepts.

Schelling's account strongly suggests that the unity of consciousness, Fichte's I = I, is an emergent synthesis and not some logically prior pure act whereby cognition is first made possible. Sensations are first, then

integration of sensations under concepts, then self-awareness. Implicit in this analysis of cognition is the view that the self is phenomenal and not fundamental, as Fichte would have it. No priority can be claimed for self-awareness over sensation. Both are strictly matters of appearance.

Bruno does not call attention to these implications, however, and allows Lucian to append the classical Fichtean description of the self to his account (4:289). The self, says Lucian, is the act of self-constitution, so that its being is its own deed. As the process of infinite thought's self-objectification, it is the identity of subject and object. This self-objectification is in fact the generation of appearances, for phenomenal things exist only in and through the discursive synthesis of sensations and concepts called the 'self.'

Bruno accepts these claims, yet subtly alters them by insisting that consciousness is not only the objectification of the infinite concept, but betrays the presence of the first and third powers as well. The concept is but the possibility of the manifold states of objective cognition, which serially actualize the abstract but universal possibility of the concept. And their necessary togetherness, the unity of consciousness, betrays the work of the third power, the phenomenal image of the eternal idea. Since the three powers together constitute the structure of consciousness and are found in all things as well, Bruno and Lucian can come to agreement on idealism as a methodological stance: "We can, therefore, comprehend the laws and conditions for finite things without having to extend our investigation beyond the question of the nature of knowing" (4:290).

The claim that knowing can by itself furnish the laws and conditions for the existence of things is a refinement of Kant's dictum, "The conditions of the *possibility of experience* in general are likewise conditions of the *possibility of the objects of experience*."[47] The agreement achieved is tenuous, though. Schelling can claim allegiance to idealism as a methodology because the structure of consciousness sufficiently exhibits the three powers, the conceptual tools for establishing a complete ontology. But Fichte would still want to emphasize subjectivity over objectivity and to ground objectivity in the self's original and founding activity. To prevent recourse to this sort of subjective idealism, Bruno reminds Lucian that it is neither self-awareness as such nor sensation that constitutes knowing, but only their dynamic identity. Further investigations of the elements of cognition will reveal the presence of the three powers inside the apparently simple elements of thought and intuition.

XIII. *The Domain of Knowledge* [4:290–297]

The basic claim of Schelling's philosophy of identity is that there exists nothing that is purely ideal and nothing purely real. Everything that we

distinguish in phenomena is but an instance of indifference or subject-object identity, relatively differentiated from others by whether it exists under the finite power (as do bodies) or under the infinite power (as do minds). Thus no body lacks an infinite or mental dimension of some sort, nor are conscious minds ever found apart from organic bodies. The same hierarchy of potentiated instances of indifference manifests itself within the domain of knowing itself, where intuition and thought turn out to be not isolated, heterogeneous elements, but repetitions, on a more minute scale, of the subject-object identity that constitutes consciousness itself.

The investigation of the moment of *intuition* inside knowing (4:290–293) makes evident that intuition is not sheer finitude or difference, but is itself a structure that involves all three powers. Since in general there can be no strictly finite entity, there cannot be a purely finite moment in knowing. Bruno remarks that Lucian was correct in associating intuition with finitude, but not so in identifying the two, for intuition is really the coexistence of all three powers under the general preponderance of the finite. Intuition is the togetherness of sensation and awareness. Sensation is its finite factor; that is, it is a direct representation of a state of the body. The awareness of the sensory representation is the infinite factor, while their necessary togetherness, the intuiting agent or that which senses, is the eternal or rational factor. Only when all three aspects hang together as a whole do we have a case of intuition, an act of consciousness that is a presentation of a something.

Bruno notes that what is real in the unitary complex of intuition is the third element, the unity of consciousness. The remaining factors may indeed be analytically distinguished as sensation and awareness, sensing and what is sensed. However they do not exist independently or outside of the unity of consciousness; only within this unity can they step forth as opposite moments. A similar analysis applies to the intuited object. Since it can appear only within consciousness, and since it holds its status of objectivity only in and through the unity of consciousness, it is not a purely real entity, but one that is at once real and ideal. An intuition is, therefore, an intuition of a concept in an instance of being. And since the concept and the sensed something that falls under the concept have no standing other than as moments of the unitary act of intuition, Bruno is able to advance the paradoxical claim, "You never intuit anything other than concepts" (4:292). If that sounds shockingly Platonic, he stresses again that the only thing real in the act of intuition is the self that intuits, reason existing under the finite power. And reason, in all of its potentiated forms, is nothing other than the activity of inbuilding differences into one another; it is the dynamic identification of the universal and the particular which in each and every moment has indifference as its product.

Hence intuition as such is pure indifference; its object is space as such, the absolute space of geometry. Intuition as such is quite different from intuition of a particular thing or state of a thing, for the lucidity and transparency of pure geometrical relations becomes opaque and space becomes filled when the perfect indifference of the three spatial dimensions is shattered and reestablished in a purely contingent manner. Now what occassions the filling of space, and the subsequent subjection of reason to the merely finite function of intuition, is the basic condition of individual or separate existence, namely the immediate relation of the infinite concept to the finite individual thing.

Bruno notes that it is intuition operating in this subordinate capacity that Lucian previously opposed to thought. But intuition as such is not opposed to thought; in its structure and function, intuition is pure reason itself, whose differently potentiated form appears as thought. Intuition and thought turn out to have the same structure, then, and it is only as differently indexed forms of reason that the two can be identified within the unity of consciousness. Conversely, it is only within the unity of consciousness, the phenomenal correlate of pure reason, that the sensory presence of a something and the thinking of that something by means of a universal concept can be distinguished. In matters of epistemology at least, a contemporary critic's complaint rings true: "Schelling is reproached with almost always being in suspense between idealism, realism, and even materialism."[48]

Bruno now turns to the investigation of *thought,* which itself falls into three moments—the concept, judgment, and syllogism (4:293–297). His depiction of the interinvolvement of the three powers in the domain of the concept furnishes an interesting anticipation of the mature Hegel's *Logic,* despite his eventual judgment that logic pertains to the domain of phenomena and thus will not provide any ladder to the absolute.

Existing under the form of finitude, the knowing we call intuition is limited to the presentation of a succession of mutually exclusive states. "In each moment, only a portion of the entire universe falls within the scope of intuition" (4:293). Existing under the second power, however, the unitary complex of factors that constitutes the act of intuition becomes directly related to the infinite concept; thus it is transformed from being the intuition of a single something into an infinite capacity for intuition, or a thinking. And thinking itself again involves three distinct functions, corresponding to the three levels or powers. "The infinite that is posited as infinite we call 'the concept,' while the finite subsumed under the infinite generates the judgment, just as the eternal posited as infinite generates the syllogism" (4:293–294). All three of these forms of thought are infinite, completely general and valid for all objects and for all time. As will appear later, the infinity of the conceptual order corresponds to its emptiness (see

4:299–300). For the functions of thought stand in need of acts of intuition for phenomenal knowing to arise. Thought, though infinite, is limited by its abstract generality, and cannot attain to reason's real function, the integration of the universal and the particular.

Bruno then proceeds to a deduction of the pure concepts, or what Kant had called the 'categories of the understanding' (4:294–296). The modal concepts of possibility, actuality, and necessity stand in no need of deduction; Kant himself had hinted they were not exactly categories, but metacategories of a sort.[49] They are already adequately displayed in the component factors of intuition, namely sensation (actuality), awareness (possibility), and the union of the two (necessity). In addition, the modal concepts specify the various forms of thought: The concept is the possibility of intuitions (of such and such a type), a judgment is the determination of their actuality, while the syllogism establishes the necessity of intuitions in conformity with its conceptual connections.

Evidently, Schelling considers the modal concepts to be something more than concepts or categories. While the latter are mere logical functions necessary for the conceptual grasp of what intuition presents, actuality, possibility, and necessity seem to be part of the 'deep structure' of reality itseslf. They seem to express the three powers in their interrelations. For the infinite power is related to the finite as possibility is related to actuality, and just as necessity is the identity of possibility and actuality, so the eternal or rational power is the identity of the finite and the infinite. And within each triad of pure concepts, which are determined by the interpenetration of the powers, the members stand related as do possibility, actuality, and necessity within the triad of modal concepts.

The categories of quantity result from the expression of the three powers under the preponderance of the second or infinite potency. This potency is responsible for the generation of time, and so the possibility, actuality, and necessity of time furnish the pure concepts of *unity, plurality,* and *totality*. The categories of quality are the three powers indexed to the first or finite power. This power is responsible for the generation of space, and so the possibility, actuality, and necessity of space furnish the pure concepts of *reality, boundary* (or negation), and *determination*. Both of these triads equally exhibit the fundamental concepts of reason—identity, opposition, and the identity of identity and opposition—and in fact these triads seem to be different from the latter only because of the distortion introduced by 'reflection.' While a clearer definition of 'reflection' must await the following section, it is clear that the primitive phenomenal forms of space and time are what distort the pure rational concepts and transform them into quantitative and qualititative ones.

The categories of relation arise when the three potencies are indexed to the third or eternal power. Since the finite and the infinite potencies are already united in the eternal, relational pairs arise rather than single concepts, with the first related to the second as possibility is to actuality. Now the third or eternal power is reason. Reflected in the second power, it establishes the pure concepts of *substance and accident,* but in the first power, *cause and effect*. "Finally, the eternal expresses itself as necessity in the concept of a universal *reciprocal determination* of things. This concept is the highest sort of totality that can be recognized within the domain of reflection" (4:296).

Some brief comments on the nature of the judgment and the syllogism are appended, but here again the emphasis is on the function of the potencies, on how these structural variants of indifference permeate all the territories of phenomena and establish isomorphic relations between them all. When Lucian expostulates, "How admirable are the workings of the understanding" (4:297), the stage is set for Bruno to introduce the Kantian distinction between reason and the understanding, and to unfold his very un-Kantian argument that philosophy cannot be content to stay at the level of understanding and merely formulate the logic of experience, but must proceed beyond reflection to the proper totality of reason.

XIV. *Reason and Reflection* [4:297–310]

In the "Difference" essay of 1801, Hegel had coined the term 'reflection' for the attitude of the analytic understanding which seeks to simplify any complex, organic reality by reducing it to fixed moments completely external to one another. Its real-life result is an estranged culture, wherein human life perceives itself to be fragmented and doubled. Within the culture of reflection, the living identity of the 'rational animal' is sundered and compartmentalized, treated, for instance, as the territory of physics on the one hand and of morals on the other, or the domain of physiology on the one hand and of psychology on the other, each separate discipline or perspective upon human life laying claim to sole and exclusive competence.

Schelling adopts both his colleague's notion of reflection and of the culture of self-estrangement, and uses the conclusion of Bruno's discourse to underscore the main themes of the "Difference" essay. This is more than a show of solidarity with his colleague, for Schelling had sent Hegel's essay to Fichte with a disclaimer that he had no hand in it; at the same time, he had promised the *Bruno* as a vehicle for reconciling his views and Fichte's. Up to this point in the dialogue, Schelling has fairly represented both the style and substance of Fichte's philosophy, and he has exercised a great deal of ingenuity in translating his Spinozistic realism into terms more acceptable to Fichte. Now he turns sharply critical, attacking Fichte as no better than a materialist. What better polemical weapon could be

found lying at hand than the arguments already enunciated in Hegel's *Difference,* that offensive document that announced to the world an irremediable breach in the ranks of critical philosophy. Then, too, Hegel's themes needed restatement; Fichte, among others, had not heard them, as a letter of J. J. Wagner written late in 1802 attests:

> Recently a traveler from Copenhagen, D. Oersted, sought me out. He had come from Berlin, where he had heard a private lecture-course by Fichte. Fichte stands stubbornly by his *Wissenschaftslehre,* as ever. He claimed Schelling never understood him, and that he had no need to read Hegel's *Differenz.*[50]

Bruno undertakes to distinguish reason and reflection (4:297–302), for unless a philosopher recognizes what pertains to reflection and what does not, he will never understand "those laws that are in God and that determine how things behave within appearances" (4:297). Reflection is what divides the phenomenal and the absolute; it is the source of the apparent mutual externality of individuals, and of their separated existence as well. The world of appearances originates in reflection, for it is not the realm of the finite as such, but only a fragmentary reflection of the finite as it subsists within the idea.

But the possibility of reflection is established in the idea itself, "for alongside the intelligible things, the true and substantial universe also includes the idea of the sort of being that was destined to perceive the universe through sensible images" (4:298). Reflection is thus an idiosyncratic way of seeing the universal light of nature, a seeing which involves not the intuition of ideas in their organic wholeness, but which depends on images and accordingly intuits things under the forms of externality, space and time, and so must think them discursively as well.

There is a certain vagueness in Schelling's concept of reflection, though it is not surprising, given the difficulties he encounters in explaining individuation or separate existence against the background of claims such as, "Absolutely, in the perspective of divine nature, nothing is external, either to itself or to that identity whence it derives its perfection" (4:298). At the core of the concept of reflection is the conviction Schelling shares with Kant that the human intellect is ektypal, not archetypal, and that it is thoroughly discursive. For, within the framework of idealistic epistemology which insists that objects exist and are determined only in and through consciousness, that they are utterly nothing outside of consciousness, not even sensory intuition immediately 'delivers' its object. Intuition, thought, consciousness itself all proceed by sundering and synthesizing, by differentiating and reidentifying in a progressive, that is to say, discursive and time-bound manner (see 4:288–293). The fact that all the elements of consciousness turn out, upon philosophical analysis, to be different

complexes of the three potencies shows that there is nothing simple, nothing merely given, in the whole mode of cognition that Kant termed 'the understanding.' Reflection is thus the diametrical opposite of intellectual intuition of the idea, the disappearance of its simplicity and immediacy, and its replacement by various forms of temporal connection and cognitive synthesis.

One of the curious features of Schelling's thought throughout the period of identity-philosophy (1801–1806) is that he seemed to forget the simple truth, vividly grasped in the 1800 *System of Transcendental Idealism,* that one can approach 'the idea' only discursively, and that intellectual intuition itself can only be discussed discursively or adumbrated symbolically in the artist's creativity.[51] As early as 1801, Hegel makes reflection a certain limited function of reason, not its simple opposite; being both a deficient mode of cognition and a legitimate function of reason as well, reflection can function on a philosophical level as a bridge between the discursive and divisive work of the understanding and the negative work of reason itself. Schelling does not follow Hegel on this point, and his abstract opposition of reason and reflection, in effect a posited simple dichotomy of the absolute and the world of appearances, is philosophically unsatisfactory. A metaphysics that ultimately postulates an invisible and empty otherworld is inevitably suspect.

Bruno returns to the syllogism as an example of the poverty of reflection. The syllogism is indeed the rational identification of the three powers, but in a merely formal manner. Now reason permeates all modes of cognition: in intuition, it is the intuiting agent; in thought, it is what thinks. Yet in the syllogism reason appears as nothing but an artificial differentiation and reunification of the powers, accomplished in and for the sake of the analytic understanding. The logic of reflection resolves the organic totality of the absolute into eternally fixed moments, producing, on the formal side, the distinction of categorical, hypothetical, and disjunctive patterns of reasoning, and on the material side, the distinction of the concepts of soul, world, and God. "The understanding pictures these three moments as all separate and sundered from one another, which is the greatest possible disintegration of what is simply one within the absolute" (4:300). Anyone who hopes to fashion philosophy from the materials of logic is simply mistaken, says Bruno, for logic is merely a science of the understanding.

Reason and understanding can be definitively distinguished by the way they view the two orders of phenomenal reality. The understanding attempts to absolutize one of the two, that is, to locate the idea or identity of thought and being either within phenomenal being or phenomenal knowing. In its one-sided approach, it attempts to explain the union of concept and thing, which constitutes the individual, through the concepts of cause and

effect. There results a simple idealism, or a simple realism, one just as false as the other. Both philosophies of reflection commit the same errors: (1) absolutizing one phenomenal order, (2) reducing one order to the other, and (3) employing the empirically valid schema of causality to establish the metaphysical connection between the supposedly primary and the supposedly derivative orders. "Such a procedure puts one the greatest distance from the truth. For, in the individual being, thing and concept are not united through the connection of cause and effect. They are united through the absolute, and, truly considered, they are but different aspects of one and the same individual thing" (4:302).

Reason's operation, however, is guided by the logic of indifference. Reason views the finite and the infinite orders as equally derivative, as co-primary expressions of the absolute within appearance. Instead of absolutizing either thought or being, it recognizes the idea, the identity of thought and being, within phenomenal things. Reason is able to intuit the ultimate metaphysical nondifference of thought and being, for it is itself the highest image of the absolute's indifference; that is, it is exactly the same sort of cognitive activity that establishes the absolute's form. It is indifferent with the self-knowing absolute idea, that which simultaneously establishes the difference between thought and being and secures their complete indifference. Reason is thus the absolute's self-knowledge, or to speak less anthropomorphically, its self-expression: "None of its images display the absolute in its perfect indifference, except the one wherein everything attains to the same identity of thought and being that exists in the absolute, namely reason. It is reason alone that knows everything divine, for in knowing itself, it establishes its native indifference as the matter and form of all things." (4:301).

Bruno then turns to direct criticism of Fichte's idealism and attacks the basic feature of the *Science of Knowledge,* its endeavor to eliminate the concept of being and replace it with that of activity (4:302–306). Language can but badly translate the insight of reason, he claims, for language is the tool of the understanding and dependent on images. It is therefore equally appropriate and inappropriate to try to characterize the absolute either as absolute being or as absolute knowing. "But the farthest removed from the true idea of the absolute are those philosophers who try to define the nature of the absolute as activity, in order to avoid speaking of it in terms of being" (4:303).

Activity, argues Bruno, is not a fundamental type of phenomenon, as are being and knowing. Just as there are finite and infinite forms of knowing, namely intuition and thought, so too there are finite and infinite forms of being, namely passive being and activity. Activity is thus the absolute identity reflected in the infinite dimension of things, and so it is the correlate of consciousness, while the passivity and receptivity of natural

things is the absolute's expression in the finite dimension. Neither action nor passion can exist as such within the absolute, nor indeed can either member of the more inclusive contrast, knowing and being.

That the contrast between passivity and activity, the natural and the divine, the real and the ideal, has no ultimate truth is attested even by the nature of individual things, for they cannot be adequately understood through just one member of the contrast. This is plainly shown in those individuals that manifest the idea's indifference, for, within the order of nature, organisms exhibit an approximate coincidence of being and activity, just as the work of art does within the realm of spirit. For an animal is a thing that is what it is by reason of its functions and activity, and the artwork is a thing produced through conscious activity which preserves that activity in a state of rest. Bruno intimates that it is just this faulty urge to separate and abstractly contrast being and activity that tempts one into conceiving the natural world as pure passivity and the conscious realm as pure activity. To follow this urge is to break the one principle of things apart into two supposedly independent and opposed principles, one natural, the other spiritual. This represents an artificial and alienating division of the world into opposed domains, supposedly independent of each other. But the absolute is the one *natural and divine* principle of all things, as the dialogue's subtitle suggests.

Bruno proceeds to broaden his criticism of Fichtean idealism into an indictment of Enlightenment culture (4:305–310). The mentality of reflection is expressed on a grand scale in the conflict between French materialism and German idealism, and on the smaller scale in Kant's ambivalence about natural necessity and human freedom, the ambivalence that tempted Fichte into thinking away being for the sake of moral activity. Reflection thus interprets the world on the basis of a self-induced double vision. For it abstractly opposes the natural world, wherein states of passive being establish the possibility of activity, to the spiritual world, wherein actions establish secure and stable structures of social life. But phenomena such as the planetary motions and the self-regulating character of organic being show that nature is not dead or devoid of purpose. And phenomena such as artistic creativity, the moral order, and the historical life of social institutions equally show that the spiritual world is not spontaneity without structure, and that the rule-regulated character of conscious activity is not sheer freedom, but rational necessity as well.

The divisive mentality of reflection insists, nonetheless, on segregating the natural and the divine, and thereby it systematically misapprehends them both. God and nature are viewed as external to one another, nature being governed by the iron necessity of mechanism, while the divine is exalted beyond any contact with the world, banished from the earth, so to speak. The practical consequences show up in Enlightenment France,

where the theoretical materialism of the intellectuals finds its counterpart in the lawlessness of the masses in rebellion, who quickly transform a revolution undertaken in the name of equality into the vengeful bloodbath of the Reign of Terror. But the absolute comprehends both necessity and freedom in such a way that the one-sided shapes they take on inside appearance disappear, namely, mechanism, on the one hand, and arbitrary choice, on the other. The only analogue within our experience for such a union of freedom and necessity is the feeling of destiny, an inchoate apprehension of some final nondifference between the results of causal determination and those of conscious purposiveness.

Bruno abruptly breaks off his long discourse, dismissing the question of what form systematic philosophy should take on as an irrelevant detail. Anselm intervenes, stating that the evolution of the form of philosophy is indeed an important matter. He then launches an attack on the contemporary state of philosophy, comments quite continuous with Bruno's attack on Fichtean idealism and the cultural situation which evoked it. Anselm's chief point in fact restates the conviction Hegel voiced in the "Difference" essay, namely, that a self-estranged culture is the precondition for the emergence of philosophy in its perfect shape. "As long as it [philosophy] lacks enduring form and shape, it will not escape corruption. Though perhaps the least perfect forms or systems of philosophy have perished and the noble matter once bound to them has been set free, it must still be alloyed with what is base, be sublimated, and finally be made wholly unrecognizable [before it can reach its true shape]. For philosophy is forever challenged to assume more enduring and less changeable shapes" (4:308).

Anselm proceeds to describe the need for establishing a meaningful history of philosophy, suggesting that only a perennial philosophy will satisfy that need. It is a common assumption, he says, that a philosophy is an idiosyncratic point of view, and that a philosophy should be original. But such an assumption makes a mockery of the one reality in which all philosophers stand. And the estate of philosophy is discredited as long as philosophies are perceived to be like comets, "transitory apparitions of fiery vapors" (4:308). Just as superstitious awe over the appearance of a comet is cured when one learns that comets are every bit as subject to the laws of celestial mechanics as the planets are, so too the ignorant adulation that greets each 'new' philosophy would be dispelled if one could see an ordered progression or pattern of elaboration that connects various philosophic doctrines. Schelling is here laying the foundation for the sort of historiography that Hegel will perfect with polemical zeal, and that, tempered by the objectivity of Hegel's pupils Michelet and Erdmann, will become the basis of our present history of philosophy.

Anselm vitriolically describes the contemporary state of philosophy as a sort of hysterical paralysis, induced by "fear of reason" (4:308). Both Kantianism and Fichte's subjective idealism are limited by their tendency to think in terms of polar oppositions and by their inability to conceive metaphysical relations on anything other than a causal model. He then proposes they close the discussion with an overview of the four chief shapes that systematic philosophy has taken on over the span of history—materialism, spiritualism, realism, and idealism. Not surprisingly, each turns out to be a version of identity-philosophy. This historical 'proof' that identity-philosophy is the common thread connecting all these diverse metaphysics suggests the possibility of an absolute philosophy, "the possibility of a philosophy without any oppositions, philosophy pure and simple" (4:323). However, the interpretation of the four positions that unfolds is anything but objective; few materialists or realists would recognize their philosophies in Schelling's formulation. Happily, the author uses the occasion for other purposes as well, a summary of the identity-philosophy and a clarification of difficult issues such as the status of the idea and the phenomenal individual, as well as a final demarcation of his position vis-à-vis Fichte.

XV. *Identity-Philosophy as the Perennial Philosophy*

[4:310–329]

Alexander begins this coda to the dialogue proper by recounting the decline and fall of the teachings of materialism (4:310–316). What he advances as 'materialism' is really the naturalism that Giordano Bruno put forward in his dialogues *On the Cause, the Principle, and the One*. Thus the genuine doctrine of the *Bruno*'s namesake is at least introduced into its contents, and a rich notion of matter as "itself the identity of the divine and natural principle, and thus absolutely simple, unchangeable, and eternal" (4:310) is advanced against the claims of modern mechanistic materialism.

As Alexander explains it, matter is itself the indifferent unity of all things. Now things are differentiated by their form (or mode of being), for though their essence or possibility is infinite, their actual mode of existence is finite. "Finite things as such are at each and every moment all that they can be at that moment, but not all that they could be according to their essence" (4:312). The difference between essence and existence in things generates time, the endless progressive approximation of the finite to the intrinsically infinite. The positing of time is thus the differentiation of indifferent matter, the transition from the absolute to the articulated totality of appearances we call the universe.

The first form or 'form of forms' is identical with matter, identical in the sense that, being all forms and being identical to no one specific form, it is as indifferent or nonspecific as is primitive matter itself. This form of forms comprehends both the psychic and the bodily dimensions of things, both of them equally being species of matter. But primitive matter, the unity of things, is not to be equated with vulgar matter, the bodily dimension of things. "Of course the point where matter and form are perfectly identical, where soul and body are themselves indistinguishable within form, is located above and beyond all appearances" (4:313). It is this hidden point of identity that makes the universe one eternal organism, not subject to change, motion, or any process of transformation.

Though the proliferation of terminology hardly contributes to clarity, it is clear enough that Schelling takes Bruno's 'matter' and 'form of forms' as equivalent to the 'essence' and the 'form' of the absolute (the latter is equivalent to 'the idea,' or more precisely 'the idea of all ideas'). The absolute's form indifferently contains the ideas of all things, not by being any one of them, but by being all of them nonspecifically. The absolute's form or mode of expression, then, is something like an ideal elaboration of specific differences, but one so inclusive that different specific ideas do not competitively exclude one another. The individual's form or mode of existence is, by contrast, an exclusive determination of specificity, one that forces the translation of the thing's unitary essence into the fragmentary reality of the present momentary state.

There is much that is obscure in the foregoing explanation, enough to occasion the question of whether the very project of thinking the absolute is self-contradictory. And the obscurity resides in Schelling's pivotal notion of the absolute's form. For little philosophical acumen is needed to apprehend the externality inherent in the very structures that connect phenomena, namely space, time, and causality. And logic can indeed tempt us to enter on the path to monism and to encounter at its end a quite Parmenidean absolute identity, the 'essence' of the absolute. But it is the connecting link that is problematic, the notion of the form of the absolute, wherein identity and difference interplay, wherein differences are indeed established but somehow remain mere conceptual differences. The origins of this notion are obscure as well. Schelling is too much of a Spinozist in his identity-philosophy phase to speak plainly of a divine mind or to refer back to Christological speculation in theology. Perhaps one can best elucidate this curious doctrine by viewing it as a metaphysical descendant of Aristotle's analysis of knowledge:

> Now, summing up what has been said about the soul, let us say again that the soul is in a way all existing things, for existing things are either objects of perception, or objects of thought, and knowledge is in a way the object of knowledge and perception the objects of perception.[52]

There are certainly perplexities enough in Aristotle's account. Schelling's concept of the absolute's form seems to excel in perplexity, inasmuch as it omits the modest Aristotelian "in a way."

Alexander then employs Giordano Bruno's exotic version of hylomorphism to sketch the history of materialism. Originally 'matter' meant the living identity of all things, but the idea was eventually corrupted. Plato understood matter to be no more than the bare substrate of natural things, opening the door to the later identification of matter with 'body,' and its subsequent reduction to the concept of inorganic body. And once the idea of life was eliminated from that of matter, a debased hylomorphism arose which viewed matter as purely passive and external, and form as an eternally fixed difference impressed on the yielding material stuff from without. The notion of a living totality of nature was thus reduced to that of an empty space, a neutral background for various and sundry unrelated particulars. "The general conception finally prevailed that the living totality of the universe is like a receptacle or chamber, in which things are placed in such a way that they do not participate in one another, nor live in community with each other, nor interact with each other" (4:315). The epitome of the progress of modern materialism, whose outcome is none other than the "death of matter," is the reductionistic programme of modern biology, the attempt to explain the organic solely in terms of the inorganic. The procedure, says Alexander, makes the barbarian idolator or the primitive totem-worshiper seem in possession of superior philosophical and religious sensibilities.

Anselm employs his sketch of 'intellectualism' or Leibnizean monadology (4:316–321) to clarify the status of the idea as the identity of concept and thing, and to relativize the mind-matter dualism which was apparent in Bruno's discourse. He returns once more to the language of Platonic image metaphysics, but employs it in such a way that the distinction between exemplar and image falls apart. There is really only one exemplar, God or substance, and it pervades all derivative unities. There is much terminological slippage within this discussion; Schelling's attempt to map his identity-philosophy onto Leibniz's metaphysics is not without confusion.

There is a threefold hierarchy of being, claims Anselm: (1) the archetypal world or the absolute idea; (2) derivative unities or 'monads,' finite individuals existing at the levels of organism and of self-consciousness; and (3) the world of appearances, which arises because the monads are a finite and merely organic expression of the idea.

Ideas can be called archetypes, but they are the most perfect sort of archetypes, ones that do not abstractly stand over against their copies, but

instead combine both exemplary and image aspects in themselves. Anselm calls the exemplary aspect of an idea the foretype or determining element, the image aspect the antitype or determinable element. Since these aspects are identified in the idea, any image of an idea, any derivative unity, will possess both psychic and somatic dimensions, and within the psychic, it will have both determinable and determining modes of consciousness, namely, thought and will. Now since the idea is a pure identity of exemplar and image, of determination and determinability, it is impossible to strictly separate the two aspects in any derivative unity or monad. A monad's body, therefore, will not be pure determinability, nor will its soul be pure activity or exclusively determinative. As tied to an individual body, the monad's soul will be a determinable determining, that is, a consciousness that is aware of itself and acts only insofar as it also passively represents the states of its body.

Anselm's definition of an archetypal idea as the identity of exemplar and copy is paradoxical, at least if the terms are understood Platonically. Schelling here wants to emphasize the difference between a concept, which abstractly stands over against the particulars it signifies, and an idea or living union of concept and thing. Now the concept possesses empty infinitude; it purchases generality at the cost of abstractness. Only the concrete generality of the idea can serve to connect the order of representation and the order of physical being, for the idea alone is a representation that is what it expresses or a reality that is and is what it is by thinking itself. It is clear that the concept 'horse' is but an auditory-visual image which has content in relation to thinking actual and possible horses; it suffices as a higher-order representation of many actual and possible horses because it concretely represents none. All this seems familiar and factual. But a horse-idea would be quite another critter, a self-thinking horse! The notion is ludicrous, except as a part of a more comprehensive reality, a scheme of ideas within a self-thinking and self-founding mind.

It does not make sense, therefore, to speak of ideas except in the context of the one idea, the idea of all ideas. For if there is such an exotic entity as a self-establishing thought, and if we need to posit such an entity to metaphysically connect the phenomenal orders of thought and being, surely there can be but one such thing. And this, says Schelling, is indeed the case: "Only insofar as the monads' representations are imperfect, limited, and confused do they picture the universe as outside of God, and related to God merely as its ground. But insofar as their representations are adequate, they represent the universe as existing in God. God is thus the idea of all ideas, the cognition of all acts of cognition, the light of all lights" (4:320).

Turning then to the third or lowest realm in the hierarchy of being, Anselm says that the world of appearances arises because the idea, the

power active in all acts of cognition, is distorted by the contrast of determining activity and passive determinability in the monad. Operating in this distorted manner, the idea is limited to representing states of the body within time. It no longer represents itself to itself as substance, but instead perceives substance as the ground of being, equally present in itself and in other entities beyond itself. Thus the monad's thinking becomes an indistinct imaging, a representation of what is real in other things. In this way the world of appearances arises for each and every monad, each of which is a world unto itself. Since each monad is, at bottom, the absolute idea or the one substance, the causally unrelated monads form one world, their representations all private, but harmonized. God, the absolute substance, permeates them all, just as space embraces all the bodies that fill it.

At this point Lucian and Bruno take over the discussion and establish the nondifference of realism and idealism as general philosophical alternatives (4:321–326). Realism and idealism cannot be distinguished either in their aim or their object, argues Lucian, for both positions strive to attain knowledge of the absolute. They must therefore take different approaches to knowledge of the absolute, realism focusing on the absolute's essence, idealism on its form. It is the indifference of the absolute's form and essence, the fact that one and the same absolute is in one respect the 'neither . . . nor . . .' of all opposites and the other the 'both . . . and . . .' of all opposites, which makes realism and idealism equally valid endeavors and in fact opens the path to absolute philosophy, one that transcends all partial stances and that silences all sectarian disputes.

Bruno notes that though one can call the absolute's form 'absolute knowing,' this knowing is the infinite identity of the real and the ideal, and so both includes and cancels the opposition of thought and being. Neither thought as such nor being as such can be directly ascribed to form or absolute knowing. Absolute knowing is a knowing only in the sense that it is an ideal elaboration of the absolute's strict identity, an indifferent expression of its essential reality in the one idea of all ideas. In the absolute idea, there is no knower that stands over against what is known, as there is in phenomenal consciousness, and what is known is in no way distinct from absolute knowing.

One can also call the absolute's form 'absolute selfhood,' but one encounters the same limitations on the applicability of the term as obtained for 'knowing.' Since there is no duality nor opposition in the idea, neither thought, being, nor even their identity in self-consciousness can be literally predicated of it. For thought and being are first established as independent and opposite when knowing is related to appearances; in that context, too, only a relative identity (and difference) of thought and being stands forth, even in the case of self-consciousness. The self is indeed an identity of

thought and being, but a thoroughly contingent and synthetic identity. In the idea or 'absolute selfhood,' however, the identity of thought and being is necessary and indivisible; 'selfhood' is general in this case, not located in one particular point of view by reason of connection with an individual body. In relative selfhood or self-consciousness, the self exists as the consciousness of phenomenal objects or appearances, and only within this context do selfhood and objectivity come to the fore and distinguish themselves as the opposite poles of experience. But within absolute selfhood, attained only in intellectual intuition of the idea, there is no self, no discursive knowing, no distinction of objects, and, above all, utterly no distinction of subject and object.

Bruno and Lucian agree that an idealism that is confined to the standpoint of philosophical reflection on the absolute idea will be congruent with a realism that reflects on the absolute's identical essence. The former will not be subjectivistic, nor the latter objectivistic or naturalistic. But both positions will be 'idealistic' in the sense that they equally deny the claims of naive realism, which takes the sensible world to be something in and of itself. Each position will have to admit that the phenomenal order of things and that of consciousness are equally primary, and that the two in their togetherness constitute appearances. Idealism thus becomes a philosophical tactic, an attempt to analogically expand the structure of empirical consciousness into a description of the metaphysical fundamentals. Like any other attempt to think analogically, idealism must conclude with a 'negative theology.' The absolute may indeed be viewed as an 'absolute knowing' for heuristic purposes, but idealism must finally confess that in the absolute there is no literal knowing and no literal knower.

But Schelling does not ultimately believe that Fichte is capable of the requisite methodological caution to use idealism as a partial approach to absolute philosophy. He is suspicious that Fichte's proposed, but unpublished, reworking of the *Science of Knowledge* will simply absolutize the stance of empirical self-consciousness. Bruno accordingly concludes the discussion with a final critique of subjective idealism, the philosophy of empirical self-consciousness (4:326–329). For a philosophy that limits itself to the standpoint of consciousness, absolute identity appears to be beyond the reach of knowledge. This position in fact becomes explicitly antitheoretical; it allows absolute identity to confront the subjectivity of empirical consciousness as something independent and objective only in the ethical command. Hence, "for ethical activity, absolute identity assumes the guises of the command and the infinite ethical task, while for thought, it takes the shape of faith, the end of all speculation" (4:326).

Lucian embraces this outline of Fichte's idealism with enthusiasm, but Bruno wryly points out that, since this position does nothing other than perfectly exhibit the structure of ordinary consciousness, it is not philosophy

at all. An idealism of this sort, one that simply removes the absolute from the scope of theoretical philosophy and places it within the narrow confines of ethics, is far from a philosophical grasp of the idea. And in its willful ignorance of the activity and divinity of nature, it coincides with mechanistic materialism. "This philosophy considers nature dead, the bare object and material for an action which does not spring from nature itself and which is located beyond nature" (4:327). This idealism will inevitably conflict with realism, for it has lost sight of the absolute and contents itself with the limited study of empirical consciousness and ethics.

But idealism need not be such a limited stance, claims Bruno. An idealism that grasped what is essentially ideal, that is, the idea rather than self-consciousness, would set itself beyond all opposition to realism. For the idea, or absolute knowing (as Fichte would call it), is but one aspect of the absolute, and though it expresses the absolute's identical essence by translating its sheer identity into a systematic web of ideas, it is perfectly indifferent with that identity. Bruno now makes clear his central thought, that the absolute's double nature is the highest instance of the logic of indifference. For it is the indifference of sheer identity and the idea's systematic elaboration of identity within difference that makes the absolute the identity of thought and being.

> To come to know this indifference within the absolute—that character whereby idea is substance, the absolutely real, whereby form is also essential reality, and reality is form, each one inseparable from the other, whereby form and reality are not just perfectly similar likenesses of one another, but directly are one another—this is to discover the absolute center of gravity. To know this is to uncover the original metal of truth, as it were, the prime ingredient in the alloys of all individual truths, without which none of them would be true. (4:328)

Indifference is thus the principle of all philosophy, and the logic of indifference provides a clue to its methodology as well. For philosophy cannot be satisfied to observe and describe various phenomena without seeking to locate their ground of unity, nor can it be content with abstract conceptual unities unless it sees within them a self-specifying activity which establishes these differences. Philosophy's business is to simultaneously unpack indifference into difference and inbuild difference into indifference. Indifference in fact supplies a 'Jacob's ladder' to the absolute, as Bruno suggests in the allegorical concluding passage. "And as we move up and down this spiritual ladder, freely and without constraint, now descending and beholding the identity of the divine and natural principle dissolved, now ascending and resolving everything again into the one, we shall see nature within God and God within nature" (4:329).

This philosophy . . . should have acknowledged that it is a science wherein there is no mention of existence *or of what* actually exists, *or of knowledge in this sense either. It treated only the relations its object takes on in mere thought.*

F. W. J. SCHELLING[53]

The Significance of the Philosophy of Identity

SCHELLING HAD THE OPPORTUNITY, which many twentieth century philosophers would account good fortune, to outlive his philosophical positions. In fact he did so several times over, becoming, like Leibniz whom he greatly admired, a philosophers' philosopher, influencing great minds such as Marcel, Heidegger, Tillich, and Habermas, but lacking an audience within the general culture.[54] In 1827 Schelling said of the so-called system of identity, the projected system of which the *Bruno* is but a sketch, "On the one hand, it seems almost impossible that this system is false, but on the other hand, one will sense something in it that prevents one from declaring that it is the ultimate truth. He will recognize that it is true within certain limits, but not unconditionally and absolutely true."[55] Let us turn to the task of evaluating the success of this ambitious piece of metaphysics, while leaving the last word to its sternest critic, Schelling himself.

Recalling that the *Bruno* was penned as a vehicle for discussion between its author and Fichte, let us first address the question whether the dialogue advances any grounds for reconciling their conflicting positions. It is quite plain that it does not, and that the conviction that their differences were

irreconcilable hardened in Schelling's mind even as he wrote. The argument makes clear that the only position Schelling and Fichte can share is phenomenalism, the belief that appearances are not what is fundamentally real. Schelling is unequivocal about his belief in the ultimate duality, equiprimordiality, and irreducibility of material and mental phenomena. His claim that the *Science of Knowledge* would reduce the material to the mental dimension is correct. There simply can be no agreement between a subjective idealism that would think away all being or materiality, including nature, and a methodological idealism that wants to preserve the difference of nature and spirit by interpreting them as equally well-founded orders of phenomena. Basic to the two philosophers' long-standing dispute is Schelling's insistence, not only that nature cannot be thought away, but that it is the very foundation for spirit or the realm of consciousness. Fichte had tried to fashion a self-contained philosophy of spirit with but two branches, epistemology and ethics. Schelling's more comprehensive and naturalistic vision of philosophy is well expressed in these remarks on the 'identity-philosophy' made in 1827:

> Thus it follows, from the foregoing determination, that the initial moments of the infinite's positing itself (or since the life of the subject consists in this self-positing, the initial moments of this life) are moments of nature. From this it follows, too, that this philosophy is in nature from its first moves, or that it starts from nature—naturally not in order to remain there, but to later surpass it in ever ascending steps, to emerge from it and become spirit, to elevate itself into an authentically spiritual world. In its beginning, therefore, this philosophy could be called nature-philosophy, but nature-philosophy was only the first part or foundation of the whole [system]. . . . At the start, it was difficult to find a name for this system, since it included the very opposition of all earlier systems within itself, as cancelled. It could in fact be called neither materialism nor spiritualism, neither realism nor idealism. One could have called it 'real-idealism,' inasmuch as within it, idealism itself was based on a realism and developed out of a realism. Only once, in the preface, thus the exoteric part, of my first presentation of this system, did I call it the 'System of Absolute Identity.' I meant that therein was asserted no one-sided real being nor one-sided ideal being, but that only one ultimate subject was to be conceived in that which Fichte called 'the real' and in that which we have become accustomed to call 'the ideal.'[56]

It is plain, then, that no rapprochement with Fichte is possible. The *Bruno* is to be read as the velvet-gloved counterpart of the obviously polemical attacks Hegel unleased in the "Difference" essay and in *Faith and Knowledge.*

Perhaps it was with some insight that contemporaries referred to Hegel as Schelling's henchman.[57]

Let us now consider the kind of metaphysics advanced in the *Bruno.* As we have seen, Schelling is quite vocal in his opposition to Kant, and quite daring in his attempt to steer Criticism away from epistemology and back to metaphysics. But the fact remains that Kant had set forth clear arguments that spelled the end of metaphysics, at least as a speculative, if not as a descriptive enterprise. Schelling's metaphysics is highly speculative, however, and the question naturally arises: How could anyone attempt to philosophize in this manner *after Kant?* The answer is very much obscured by Schelling's decision to turn back to the history of philosophy and present himself as Plato risen from the grave—a decision quite consonant with his flashy, arrogant personality. Nonetheless, the answer is simple: Schelling does *Kantian metaphysics.*

When Kant pronounced that "all metaphysicians are therefore solemnly and legally suspended from their occupations,"[58] he advanced two general lines of argument: (1) Metaphysics commonly takes categorial concepts meaningful in the context of experience and attempts to apply them beyond the bounds of sense. It errs in that it fails to realize that categorial concepts have no cognitive content; they are but logical functions which interrelate items of experience. Thus talk of substance, causality or a reciprocally determining community of things is meaningless if applied to what is behind or beyond experience. The metaphysician commits the fallacy of misplaced concreteness in his assumption that categories have some positive epistemic content. Hence, to ask after a 'cause of the world' is equivalent to asking whether the rules of chess move one space at a time on the board like pawns or along the diagonal like a bishop. (2) In fixing its sight upon supposed hyper-experiential objects such as the enduring soul, the cosmos as such, and the deity, metaphysics postulates totalities of experience which are not subject to any possible truth-test within experience. Such 'ideas of reason' involve an illegitimate advance from the experience of a finite chain of conditioned entities to a supposed totality of conditions. The ideas of immortal soul and of a personal deity involve the fallacy of reification as well, for 'soul' hypostatizes the empirical stream of consciousness, and 'God' hypostatizes the logical notion of the aggregate of all positive predicates or qualities.

Not only is Schelling keenly aware of Kant's arguments; he is convinced of their truth as well. Careful analysis of the *Bruno*'s argument shows that he indeed follows the limitations on speculation they propose, and that he avoids both sorts of fallacies through his logic of indifference. It is his genius (though some may think it a perverse sort of genuis) to have hit upon an *a priori* logical idea which is *nowhere* exhibited in experience, namely indifference or the identity of opposites. Within Schelling's theory,

indifference functions both as a connective that links various phenomenal and nonphenomenal domains and as an explanatory device; Schelling need have no recourse to substance-accident or cause-effect relations except when he is talking of the serial interconnection of phenomena within time. As we have seen in detail, indifference explains and unites all the disparate regions of being—mind and matter, soul and body, intuition and concept within consciousness, nature and spirit as the universal orders of appearance, the absolute's form and phenomenal existence, and finally the absolute's form and its identical essence. It is clearly an elegant system, though perhaps a purely formal one, that can establish all these connections with one principle. Thus Schelling is able to avoid causal explanation except in its appropriate context, where one world-state is seen to be determined by another or one intuition determined by its predecessor. He is aware, as well, that questions such as, "Does the absolute cause appearances?" or "What is the cause of separated existence?" are metaphysical in Kant's sense and thus unanswerable, though he clearly shows some uneasiness about not being able to pose and answer the latter question.

Now Kant's first specific objection to metaphysics was that it lifted portions of the logic of experience and employed them out of context. The causal relationship, for instance, is exemplified in any experienced sequence of events where prior members condition or influence subsequent ones; it would therefore be illegitimate to ascribe causality to the unconditonal. But indifference or the essential identity of opposites is never clearly and unequivocally exemplified within experience at all. The prime candidate for an experienced instance of indifference would seem to be the correlation between the psychic and somatic aspects of some sensation, but it fails to exhibit indifference the way causally related events exhibit causality. Causality is the only categorial schema available for conceiving the connection of conditioning and conditioned events. The togetherness of psychic and somatic events, however, may be conceived in several ways, for example, (1) either by means of the categories of substance and accident, which leaves open several possible interpretations, namely (a) that both aspects are attributes of a common substance, (b) that the bodily aspect is substantial, while the psychic inheres in it as a quality, and (c) that the psychic aspect is substantial and the somatic accidental, or (2) by means of the logic of indifference. Then too, it is always arguable that psychic and somatic states are simply different. At any rate, if they are indifferently related, this is not *shown* by experience; it is a conclusion attained by pure thought alone, a metaphysical interpretation of the facts that experience furnishes. Schelling cannot, then, be accused of extrapolating a concept which is part of the logic of experience into a pure idea. Indifference may indeed be a pure idea, but since it contradicts the whole logic of experience, the claim can credibly be advanced that it is a genuine idea of reason, not a misplaced

concept of reflection. Schelling thus manages to evade the first of Kant's general objections to speculative metaphysics.

Kant's second objection to metaphysics claimed that the ideas of reason are inherently dialectical in that they advance from the experience of conditioned entities such as personal self-consciousness, nature, and the logical ideal of totality to the unconditional posited as a totality of conditions, namely soul, world, and deity. Schelling's metaphysics escapes the fallacies of hypostatizing self-consciousness or the lawlike order of nature by steadfastly maintaining that both orders are strictly phenomenal. There is no nature-in-itself and no enduring or immortal soul. Neither knowing nor being can be attributed to the absolute, nor can either acting according to freedom or acting in conformity with causal mechanism.

But what of the deity, or the absolute, as Schelling calls it? Kant's criticism of conventional philosophical theism claimed that the idea of God illegitimately (1) represented the unconditioned as a totality of conditions, and (2) hypostatized all the positive items that an exhaustive table of contrasting predicates would exhibit. On the first score, the bipolar nature of Schelling's absolute seems to evade the objection, for the absolute is a strictly identical essence on the one hand, and the totality of all differences held together in the absolute idea on the other. The form-essence distinction, itself the highest instance of indifference and the ontological foundation for all other instances, seems to keep the unconditioned on one side, and the totality of conditions on the other. One cannot deny, however, that Schelling frankly portrays the absolute's form or the absolute idea as a totality of conditions. A Kantian would be justified in asking precisely how we can jump from the conditioned nature of experience to the idea of a totality thereof.

On the second score, Schelling escapes the charge that conventional theism is arbitrary and illogical in describing the deity in terms of positive predicates alone, for Schelling conceives the absolute's form as the totality of all differences, that is, of all contrasting qualities and attributes, positive and negative, held together in an indifferent unity. Theism conceives deity as infinite, perfect, and external to a finite, imperfect world, while Schelling's absolute idea is the indifference of the infinite and the finite, and the coexistence of what we term 'perfect' and 'imperfect' as well. But here again, the Kantian may object that it is precisely the ascent from the fragmentary and successive nature of experience to the idea of a totality that is objectionable.

It is evident, at least, that Schelling carefully considered Kant's objections, even if, in attempting to conform to their letter, he sought to evade their spirit, and that he was consciously working toward the invention of a Kantian-style metaphysics. Consideration of the predominance of speculation on time in the *Bruno,* and of the Kantian manner of that speculation,

reinforces this impression. Time is the primitive form of appearance as such. It is what accounts for phenomena being phenomenal, for the durational rather than the eternal form of things' existence, and for the discursive nature of the understanding. Time is made virtually synonymous with individual existence, for the individual separates itself from the eternal community of all things in the absolute precisely by fashioning its own time. And yet time functions as a bridge connecting things' existence in their ideas with separate existence, for it is the expression of the infinite or conceptual dimension, it is responsible for the self-identity, coherence, and cohesion of things, and, in the highest instance, time is itself the stream of consciousness. Now it might be argued that this account of time is fundamentally incoherent, yet the attempt to make external or objective time the framework of finite phenomenal existence and yet make internal time the framework of the discursive synthesis of self-consciousness betokens a vigorous attempt on Schelling's part to bring unity and coherence to the Kantian account of mind.

In all the foregoing discussion of Schelling's attempt to formulate a style of metaphysics immune to Kant's critique, we returned again and again to the concept of indifference. We must now try to measure the validity of this central, enigmatic idea. We have already noted that it formulates a logical connection never exhibited in experience, namely the essential identity of properties that appear to be direct opposites. Only the connected opposites pertain to experience, never their hidden connection. Hence there is a curious invisibility that pertains to every instance of indifference. Within nature, gravity and light are systematizing forces, not things. They never come to appearance; instead, things appear within the systematic framework that they, and space and time as well, provide. Within consciousness, the unity that binds sensation and awareness into the one act of intuition never appears or presents itself as a distinct something, nor does selfhood or the unity of consciousness that connects the moments of thought and intuition. Within the self-conscious organism, body and the stream of consciousness indeed appear, but their indifferent union remains in the background and never presents itself as the substantial element it supposedly is. And the same occurs within the whole scheme of things; the finite and the infinite stand forth in appearance, but never the eternal. Experience exhibits both knowing and being in their distinctness, but never their indifferent or absolute union.

What are we to make of this invisibility of the indifferent? Clearly, it implies the invisibility, and ultimately the ineffability, of the absolute. A metaphysical foundation of appearances that is invisible and ineffable bears both positive and negative philosophical results. Positively, it is true that, if experience never provides a clear instance of an indifferent relation, one is 'safe' from Kantian attacks in characterizing the absolute solely in terms

of this nonexperiential form of connection. But on the negative side, the possibility of *arguing* to the absolute is simply cut off, whether by analogical extrapolation from experience or by deductive proof. The absolute must remain a *postulated* otherside of the world of experience, quite beyond the truth-test of experience, and incapable of characterization by any quality or attribute which pertains to experience.

In the last analysis, the only thing that can be said of the absolute is that its nature is indifferent, or unitary and bipolar at the same time. Indifference is a purely logical entity; it involves no quality, mental or physical, for it is only a relation between some set of contrasting qualities.

The question then arises, 'What sort of logical function is indifference?' Is it a connective or a relation, a primitive connective or a derived logical function? It could be interpreted as a relation, but since it essentially involves the connection of opposites, it seems best to view it as complex logical function based on conjunction. As a logical function that simultaneously affirms and denies any and all opposed predicates, it is fundamentally a reversal of the logic of experience. If we denote two contrasting predicates by the functions Fx and Gx, we can represent their indifferent subsistence in the absolute by

$$\sim (Fx \vee Gx) \,\&\, (Fx \,\&\, Gx).$$

Using f(x) and g(x) to represent any and all opposed predicates, the nature of the absolute can be schematically depicted as

$$\sim (f(x) \vee g(x)) \,\&\, (f(x) \,\&\, g(x)),$$

where the left-hand string indicates the absolute's identical essence, the 'neither . . . nor . . .' of all opposed qualities, and the right-hand side the developed system of differences coexisting in the absolute idea.

Now the fact that we can represent the absolute in simple symbol strings indicates that Schelling's metaphysics of indifference is purely formalistic. And the fact that ordinary logic forces us to read these strings as simple contradictions suggests that the logic of indifference is parasitic upon the logic of experience, just one member of the vast domain of contradictions. Nothing is materially contradictory about $\sim (f(x) \vee g(x))$ as such; negative theology frequently has resort to such expressions. But $(f(x) \,\&\, g(x))$ certainly is a contradiction if g(x) is the denial of f(x), as is the conjunction of the two strings. Now the fact that any and every contradiction applies to the absolute certainly does supply Schelling with a defense against the charge of illicitly borrowing from experience. But that the absolute can only be described in logical terms, and even then

only in terms of ordinary logic stood on its head, shows it to be a thin construct indeed.

Here we encounter the chief difficulty with Schelling's identity-philosophy, not that it is a formalism, but that it is an empty formalism, not that it approaches characterizing the *ens realisimum* logically rather than analogically, but that no suitable interpretation can be given to its formulae. Schelling attempts to mediate the opposition of abstract identity and sheer difference, and that of the interrelatedness of phenomena comprehended under scientific laws and their reciprocal exclusion in space and time. He is indeed ingenious in discovering the interrelatedness of things and in suggesting that an ultimate internality grounds all things. He is deficient as a metaphysician, however, in letting the contrast between the internal and the external remain a simple opposition. Schelling simply leaves the sheer identity of the absolute's essence something other than the inclusive difference of the idea; he leaves the absolute the mere unexplained otherside of the phenomenal world, which he correctly views as governed by exclusion and externality. Hegel will ultimately prove himself the more astute thinker by (1) seeing that the ultimate categorial contrast of internality and externality (or selfhood and otherness) must itself be philosophically explained, (2) that explanation of the internal-external relation must ultimately be in terms of one of the relata, and (3) that *thinking,* a rather garden-variety cultural activity, provides the paradigm case of the internal comprehending, or "outflanking," the external.

Though Schelling is ingenious enough to get around Kant's objections, or at least their "fine print," and to point out the path toward a logical metaphysics, he is not sufficiently abstract a thinker to see that his new path leads towards a metaphysics of relations, wherein individuals, either "in idea" or "within appearances," become purely derivative entities. Nor does he possess the foresight to realize that such a project which reduces all entities to complexes of relations and explains all relations through formal, not material, properties, might turn out to be an elegant, though strictly uninterpretable, formal construct.

We reserve the critical last word to Schelling himself, for he eventually became quite aware of the difference between a logical formalism and a philosophy that can claim to capture existence. In his *Lectures on Recent Philosophy,* given in Munich in 1827, Schelling offers a balanced evaluation of his identity-philosophy, though one slightly tinged by the tendency to conflate Hegel's system, characterized by dynamism, with his essentially static early system:

> (1) One cannot reject the system because of its compass or territory, for it encompassed everything knowable, everything that can in any way become an object of knowledge, without excluding anything. . . . (2) As to its method, it was formulated to exclude any influence by the subjectivity of the philosopher. It was the object of philosophical inquiry itself that supplied the system's content, that successively determined itself according to an immanent principle, a thought progressively specified according to its own inner law. . . . Besides, when one considers how the authority of all natural modes of thought was undermined by Fichte's subjective idealism, how consciousness, dismembered by the earlier absolute opposition of nature and spirit no less than the crass materialism and sensualism, . . . felt itself injured and insulted, then one will understand why this system was initially greeted with a joy that no previous system ever provoked, nor any later one will again provoke. Nor nowadays one does not realize how much one had to *struggle* for what today has become the common good, and in Germany almost an article of faith shared by all high-minded and sensitive men—I mean the conviction that that which *knows* in us is the same as that which *is known.*[59]

Schelling proceeds to discuss the crucial limitation of this philosophy, that it failed to recognize that it was mere thought:

> Now how did it come to pass that this philosophy, in the form in which it first exercised an almost universal attraction, was yet a short time later seen to be limited in its influence, and showed a repelling pole which was little noticed at first? It was not because of the attacks it received from many quarters. . . . It was rather a misunderstanding about itself, a situation wherein the system gave itself out for something (or, as one used to say, let itself be taken for something) that it was not, something that according to its original thought it ought not be. . . . An eternal event is no event. Accordingly, the whole representation of this process [of the absolute subject's development] and this movement was itself illusory. None of it really happened. Everything occurred in mere thought. This philosophy should have realized this; in doing so, it would have set itself beyond all contradiction, but, at the same time, it would have surrendered its claim to objectivity. . . . It should have *recognized* itself to be *pure negative* philosophy. In this way, it would have left a space free for a philosophy beyond itself, for a positive philosophy which considers *existence,* and not given itself out as absolute philosophy, a philosophy which leaves nothing beyond its compass.[60]

I was amazed to see you mention in your letter that you had not received the latest fascicle of Schelling's [Critical Journal]. *You should have had it by then. If only that damned Hegel wrote better!—I often have trouble understanding him. Because of the wretched diction, I am certain that Hegel, and not Schelling, penned this piece [against you.]*

FRIEDRICH JACOBI[61]

Schelling and Hegel

WHILE SCHELLING'S AND HEGEL'S contemporaries were left to wonder which of the two had wielded the hatchet in the unsigned articles of the *Critical Journal,* scholars have been left the more difficult task of analysing the relationship between the two thinkers in the brief years of their collaboration, and that of assessing the difficult question of one's influence upon the other. Some scholars are of the opinion that the collaboration was a business-like and distant affair, lacking any deep cordiality or friendship.[62] Others see a very close working relationship between the two philosophers in Jena and speak of a marked mutual influence of one upon the other.[63] Most scholarship acknowledges the similarities between the themes of the *Bruno* and Hegel's *Difference* and *Faith and Knowledge,* but there is some speculation that Schelling's break with Fichte may have been occasioned more by Hegel than by Schelling himself.[64] But since the *Bruno* displays both conciliatory attempts at dialogue with Fichte and bitter polemics against his positions, and since their dispute had been long simmering—a marginal note in Fichte's copy of Schelling's 1801 *Exposition* reads, "Polyphemus without eyes"[65]—the safest and least speculative course of judgment would be to simply state that the three

relevant works, as early statements of a new alliance and indications of a new path for philosophy, present a common front.

One can indeed point out Hegelian influences in the *Bruno* and essays Schelling wrote later in 1802,[66] but one must also acknowledge the continuing influence of Schelling's style of thought on Hegel throughout the years of his stay in Jena. Perhaps it is the critic closest to the scene that renders the best judgment on the Schelling-Hegel collaboration. Rosenkranz states that in his years at Jena, Schelling sought to lay out the critical and general foundations of absolute philosophy, while Hegel went to work on developing philosophy as a *cycle* of sciences.[67] He also notes that in his 1805–06 lectures on the history of philosophy, the crucial phase of Hegel's development in which he first elaborated his notion of dialectical methodology, Hegel warmly acknowledged his debts to Schelling, while criticizing the logic of indifference as an inappropriately quantitative approach to philosophy.[68]

The most important item to note in discussing Hegel's influence upon the *Bruno* is that in the early months of their collaboration, Schelling came to share Hegel's praxis-oriented vision of the task of philosophy. Pöggeler notes that Hegel's philosophic concern in the Jena years was the same as the youthful ideal of his seminary days—to secure the union of the divine and the human, of the finite and the infinite, and to overcome the ruling cultural division, the abstract opposition of nature and spirit.[69] Though his own concern with aesthetics from 1800 onwards and his friendship with Goethe may have nudged him toward the same position, the *Bruno* exhibits what is for Schelling an unusual awareness of the responsibilities of the philosopher toward his society. As eloquently as Hegel's "Difference" essay, it voices the hope that a philosophy which recognizes and respects both the material and the spiritual can serve as a propaedeutic to a cultural revolution that will cure the estrangement ruling human life.

There are important Hegelian terminological influences on the *Bruno,* as we have seen. The clumsy language of 'qualitative indifference' and 'quantitative difference' is put aside, and Hegel's description of the absolute as "the identity of identity and opposition" is adopted as the canonical expression for indifference. Schelling also adopts the Hegelian term 'reflection' as a synonym for Kant's 'understanding,' and speaks, as Hegel does, of the 'doubling' or 'self-estrangement' that rules the contemporary culture. Finally, in a note to the discussion of the movements of the heavenly bodies, he praises Hegel's dissertation on the orbits of the planets, though without specifically mentioning him by name. A further sign of Hegel's influences appears in Schelling's 1803 *Lectures on Academic Studies,* where he calls for the development of a "science of form," a "positive scepticism," dialectic—a task which Schelling himself never undertook.[70]

Hegel himself worked within the scheme of Schelling's philosophical concepts throughout his stay in Jena, albeit never quite comfortably, and certainly never gracefully. The 1802–03 manuscript, *The System of Ethical Life,* opens with the sentence, "Knowledge of the Idea of the absolute ethical order depends entirely on the establishment of perfect adequacy between intuition and concept, because the Idea itself is nothing other than the identity of the two."[71] The analysis of the social order in terms of the Schellingian triad, intuition, concept, and idea, is barely intelligible even if the reader is familiar with the *Bruno,* and Hegel proceeds throughout the piece to use the terminology of 'intuition,' 'concept,' and judgmental 'subsumption' in novel, if not bizarre, ways. The 1803–04 *First Philosophy of Spirit* depends on the following definition of spirit in terms of indifference or the identity of opposites: "The concept of Spirit as thus determined is *Consciousness,* the concept of the union of the simple with infinity; but in the spirit it exists for itself; or as the genuine infinity; the *opposed* [moment] in the [genuine] infinity in consciousness is this *absolute simplicity of both* [singularity and the infinite]."[72] The notion of 'infinity' displayed in this passage involves the perfect, immediate, and antithetical joining of opposites.[73] Thus the passage says that consciousness is the identity of identity and opposition, while spirit is that living identity doubled or united to its abstract counterparts.

The most interesting example of Hegel's dependence on Schellingian concepts and modes of thought, and of his increasing dissatisfaction with them as well, is found in the *Jena Logic, Metaphysics, and Philosophy of Nature* (1804–05). While the mediation of the judgment and the syllogism indeed provides part of the overall pattern of development in this difficult work, it is the 'infinite judgment' or direct joining of opposites that furnishes the predominant mode of logical transition, an obviously Schellingian method.[74] And in many sections of the manuscript where one expects to see mediation emphasized, it is either underplayed or entirely absent. Thus judgment fails to stabilize and fully realize the determinate concept; the middle term receives scant attention in the treatment of the syllogism, and the section on reciprocal determination includes a surprising critique of the poverty of the notions of mediation and transition:

> To the extent that this reciprocal determination is not a liveliness, to that extent it is not what it truly puts itself forth as being, namely an infinite mediation of transitions, a rational cognition. For cognition is precisely cognition only as infinite, in the situation of absolute opposition. As the other-being of spirit, nature possesses infinity only in this superficial manner of mediations within itself. Inasmuch as nature is this simple unity of opposites, it fails to represent this opposition as being inherently infinite, but represents it in a bare,

> superficial manner, as being simple, a division, a determinacy in which the 'more' or 'less' of the production, and the predominance of one or the other of the opposites obtains. Cognition must absolutely tear apart this simplicity and exhibit the extremes pure and simple, and thus cancel them as qualitatively opposed. . . . What is essential to the idea does not come into consideration here, the relationship of determinate moments as a relation. It is considered only an appearance of determinacies, which exist here the way they do in all forms of mediated transition, and which are differentiated only by the 'more' or 'less' of one or the other [opposites].[75]

Hegel suggests in this passage that mediation or transition is an inferior or superficial form of connection when compared with the infinite judgment, the direct union of opposites. Only when the 'infinity' of absolute and immediate opposition comes to the fore will mediation be absolute cognition. Mediation is seen to be the inferior or natural form of rationally identifying opposites because it is fundamentally quantitative; the interaction of entities in nature proceeds by degree. But rational cognition is the identification of absolute, that is, qualitative, opposites. Indeed this seems a Schellingian pattern of thought.

But if this 1804–05 manuscript shows that Hegel has not yet arrived at his mature understanding of dialectical methodology, with its emphasis on mediation and its model of the 'rational syllogism' wherein every term mediates every other, it clearly shows Hegel's discontent with Schelling's early understanding of indifference as 'quantitative indifference,' especially as presented in the 1801 *Exposition of My System*. Quantitative relations, thinks Hegel, are not really relations, for they involve no real opposition. Real relations accomplish the identification of qualitative opposites. Passages such as the following discussion of quantitative difference show that Hegel was in search of some absolutely negative power that he could call the absolute, and that he could no longer be satisfied with Schelling's construct of the absolute, wherein the developed difference of the absolute's idea is in stark contrast to an utterly identical, undeveloped absolute essence:

> But for that reason it might appear as if the correct way to express the nature of difference either in relation to the absolute or in itself would be in this form of a merely quantitative difference, as an external difference that never affected the absolute's essence itself. Inasmuch as the absolute essence is such that in it difference is simply cancelled, the illusion must be avoided that difference itself subsists outside it, that the cancellation of difference precedes it, that it is merely the cancelled state of difference—and not at the same time its existence and the cancellation of the opposition [as well]. In general, opposition is qualitative, and since nothing exists outside the absolute, it is itself absolute, and only because it is absolute does it cancel itself. In its rest as the cancelled state of opposition, the absolute is at the same time the activity of opposition's existence or the cancellation of the absolute opposition. The absolute existence of the opposites, if one wants to interpret the existence of opposites as itself the absolute essence, does not turn the absolute into an external, indifferent subsistence of its moments. Rather the absolute essence is precisely that wherein an external indifferent co-subsistence is cancelled, because the absolute is nothing quantitative or external.[76]

It is clear that at this stage Hegel rejects Schelling's way of expressing the absolute's identity as indifference, the nondifferent inclusion of quantitative opposites which actively exclude one another in phenomenal being. He poses the demand that an identity of opposites be an identity for itself, and that this identity actively sublate the opposition of its terms. Note, however, that there is no mention in this passage of mediating opposites or of some progressive, synthetic unification of them. In the *Jena Logic* Hegel battles to replace Schelling's vision of the absolute as static indifference with one of an immediate union of opposites. At the same time, he struggles to replace the notion that all differences in some sense ontologically reduce to a merely quantitative preponderance of subjectivity over objectivity or vice versa with the more lively notion that determinateness is real or qualitative on every level. These two endeavors give the long, twisted dialectic of the manuscript what cogency it has, at one and the same time to preserve the qualitative or for-itself status of the determinate on each and every level it appears and to lead opposed determinacies to an identity that is not merely a result, but which is truly substantial and independent. Schelling's system, reflected in Hegel's eyes in 1804, seems a blurred image of the truth, for Schelling variously seems to sacrifice the determinate and for-itself character of being encountered in experience to a determinate absolute, or to sacrifice the determinate qualitative richness of the absolute to the realities encountered in experience under the form of externality. Hegel will have both.

It is in the 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit* that Hegel first achieves independence from Schelling's concepts and, to a certain extent, his vocabulary. Though the Jena writings of 1802–1805 display an ingenuity and an independence of mind, notably in their focus on metaphysical and social/ethical topics and in their developmental or dialectical style of exposition, Hegel remained an essentially Schellingian thinker. To the movement of philosophical exposition corresponds no movement of the content being expounded; transitions are all alike, an immediate slide from one antithetical opposite to its counterpart; whether Hegel talks of their unity as 'identity' or 'infinity' or 'relation,' the static Schellingian union

of opposites suppresses all vitality. Hegel had not yet succeeded in formulating an alternative to the logic of indifference.

All that is changed with the *Phenomenology,* a vast, flowing and polymorphous work bursting with novel insights, bewildering terminology, dialectical somersaults, but, above all, with energy. The work was meant to be the history of consciousness's education into the absolute stance, but its writing was, I suspect, the philosopher's education into his own stance as well. Its overall philosophical achievement, realized with minimum consistency in its various parts, is a preliminary statement of a new method for systematic philosophy, a method that will achieve the realization of that goal of conceptual comprehension or 'idea' which Schelling's system had merely announced. It is convenient to apply the simple appellation 'dialectic' to this method, but difficult to pin down or formalize its elements and procedures. For this new method rejects the Cartesian idea of atomic simplicity in favor of holistic complexity, rejects the propositional form of truth for an elaborate, discursive style of description which Hegel termed 'syllogistic,' and everywhere prefers to sink itself in the detailed and the specific instead of ascending to the commanding terrain of the abstract and the general.

Hegel announces his grasp on the new dialectical method in the *Phenomenology*'s Preface, but it is important to realize that the Preface was written after the bulk of the voluminous work, not prior to it. In a sense, Hegel had to immerse himself in the whole tortured history of consciousness in order to ascend to clarity on his procedure in the Preface. For the work, I have said, is a vast flux of energy, forever transforming itself, taking on new shapes and discarding the old. Yet it is not pure flux; it is process and it has an end-state or result. Hegel could only come to clarity about his method and at the same time attain to a final judgment on Schelling, the pronouncement namely that "everything turns on grasping and expressing the True, not only as *Substance* but equally as *Subject,*" because in the course of the *Phenomenology* itself, subject or self becomes substance. But more of this anon.

Traces of the influence of the *Bruno,* both positive and negative, abound in the *Phenomenology*. It might seem surprising that Hegel is still reacting to a document published four years earlier, but even in the period of collaboration with Schelling, Hegel was a co-laborer, not a follower. Since Schelling left Jena early in 1803, it is not surprising that Hegel takes the works of 1802, *Bruno* and *Further Expositions of My System,* as typical of Schelling's philosophy. A similar lag in historical awareness is evident in Hegel's "Difference" essay, where his picture of Schelling's system is more often drawn from the 1800 *System of Transcendental Idealism* than from the more recent *Exposition of My System.*

For the limited purpose of seeing Schelling's influence, positive and negative, on the *Phenomenology,* we can confine our attention to the latter's Introduction, a passage that has the clarity and generality of the Preface, but without its polemics. From the first words, Hegel resolves to disregard the uneasiness about human cognition which characterizes most modern philosophy and thus to evade the whole lot of Kantian epistemological quandaries that are commonly taken to be the necessary starting point for philosophy. Fear of error ranks as fear of truth when the subject is human cognition, so Hegel resolves to take up the stance of natural consciousness from the very first. The first question for philosophy is not whether human cognition is an adequate medium for reaching the absolute, for cognition is no medium for viewing anything; it is consciousness itself. "For it is not the refraction of the ray, but the ray itself whereby the truth reaches us, that is cognition; and if this were removed, all that would be indicated would be a pure direction or a blank space."[77] Kant's mistake was to ask after some fundamental presupposition for adequate knowledge, one unchanging and unchangeable criterion. Conformity to possible experience was his candidate for the criterion, and one which radically altered the territory of what was to count as valid knowledge. But in Hegel's eyes, Kant neglected to make clear that our knowing and our comparison of our knowing to the supposed criterion are both moments *inside* our knowing, or rather, he neglected to pose the crucial question, 'What or whose is the reason that would attempt a critique of pure reason?'[78] Since knowing is comparing, and applying the criterion is an ordinary case of knowing, either the quest for the criterion is futile, hopelessly infested as we are with subjectivity, or, the alternative Hegel seizes upon, the criterion is simply consciousness itself comparing itself with itself in the course of experience. Hegel puts it this way:

> Now, if we inquire into the truth of knowledge, it seems that we are asking what knowledge is *in itself.* Yet in this inquiry knowledge is *our* object, something that exists *for us.* . . . What we asserted to be its essence would be not so much its truth but rather just our knowledge of it. The essence or criterion would lie within ourself, and that which was to be compared with it and about which a decision would be reached through this comparison would not necessarily have to recognize the validity of such a standard.
>
> But the dissociation, or this semblance of dissociation and presupposition, is overcome by the nature of the object we are investigating. Consciousness provides its criterion from within itself, so that the investigation becomes a comparison of consciousness with itself; for the distinction made above falls within it.[79]

Now what experience reveals is not an already achieved certainty, but a great diversity of states of consciousness, each apparently certain and adequate when it comes on the scene, but ultimately seen to be flawed and deficient in certain definite respects. Experience must teach itself what it can trust, or rather, it must itself become experienced in the ways of the world, and come to trust nothing that it has not tested. The course of experience thus forms a highway of doubt and despair on which the innocence of initial certainties must inevitably perish, but whose positive meaning is a mature and worldly recognition of untruth as untruth. Experience is trial by error, we might say, frustrating in its individual moments, but of positive general significance if it serves as a process of education. In the *Phenomenology,* the experience of natural consciousness is both the experience of untruth and the education into what is to rank as philosophic truth; the criterion is established by maturation. Here is how Hegel depicts the end-point of the process:

> The experience of itself which consciousness goes through can, in accordance with its concept, comprehend nothing less than the entire system consciousness. . . . Thus the moments of the whole are *patterns of consciousness.* In pressing forward to its true existence, consciousness will arrive at a point at which it gets rid of its semblance of being burdened with something alien, with what is only for it, and some sort of 'other,' at a point where appearance becomes identical with essence . . . And finally, when consciousness itself grasps this its own essence, it will signify the nature of absolute knowledge itself.[80]

In these brief remarks, we can begin to discern the shape of Hegel's mature thought, and can appreciate the differences between the *Phenomenology* and the sort of identity-philosophy the *Bruno* advances. Hegel's Introduction puts forth three fundamental claims, each of which must be explored at some length. (1) The first claim is that there is no sense to the criterion quest that has dominated modern philosophy since Descartes. It is not that there is no criterion for distinguishing truth from falsity; there is no one absolute standard. Now when a philosopher makes doubt into a method or attempts to haul reason to court to justify itself and subsequently manufactures one single and absolute criterion for truth—whether it be indubitability, adequacy of idea, direct acquaintance with the given, or conformity to possible experience—he is simply abstracting from the normal process of trusting, doubting, testing and setting provisional standards that experience necessitates. Setting the standard is not something that can be done once and for all. A philosopher cannot replace the richness of life with one argument, or with a book full of them. What an adequate philosophy can do is to distill the learning which a person, his culture, his community's history has accumulated, but abstraction can never be the dominant technique in such a process, for it provides no index for achieving a balance between appropriate generality and appropriate discrimination and detail. Just such a balance is what I take to be the goal of Hegel's philosophic endeavor and, forgetting for a moment the grandness of its final claims, its greatest virtue seems to be the modesty and integrity of its procedure.

(2) Hegel's second claim is that experience as a whole provides the philosopher his subject matter, and that it contains not just a range of objective contents, but the knowing agent's dispositions toward and activities upon the former. As knowers we continually encounter opinion, ideology and superstition as well as truths that will stand the test of criticism and communal acceptance. As agents we find ourselves pulled by self-interest, convention, chimerical notions of piety and sentimentality as well as by genuine moral interest. Experience, taken not as bare occupancy of a span of personal consciousness, but as a process of learning what is true and what ought to be done, is a process of sorting out options, and a process of self-transformation or self-purification as well. And the process is not a strictly individual affair. At every stage, the improvement of our knowledge and the rectification of our society depends on the struggles of others, and on the collective lapses and achievements handed down to us by our history. No one of us leads a life so rich, so varied, and so tortured as the consciousness whose life and history the *Phenomenology* represents, but it might be said that what Hegel depicts is the history of our collective consciousness. And it is from our achieved, corrected, collective rationality, seen as the experience of life in all its dimensions, that an 'absolute' or 'scientific' stance is to be achieved, if it is to be attained at all.

(3) The third fundamental feature of the *Phenomenology*'s stance is Hegel's belief, for reasons some of which are substantial and some of which are articles of faith, that conscious experience is not only self-correcting but self-perfecting. It is one thing to believe, as all educators, parents and moralists implicitly do, that truth can emerge from a process of testing half-truths, but it is something quite different to maintain that it must necessarily result from this process. Here we encounter Hegel's enigmatic metaphysical and psychological concept of *negativity,* the postulate that the self is the sort of thing that becomes itself only by dispersing itself into otherness and returning to itself by negating that otherness. The self is at every moment the identity of the for-itself and the in-itself, of appearance and essential being, but in experience, at least initially, the self apprehends itself as the antithesis of the former to the latter. As experience develops and transforms its initial attitude of self-certainty, the self sees its life as a progressive loss of everything individualistic and subjective; it sees its very life dissolved into an objective world confronting it and sees

its endeavors limited by the conditions of that world. Yet the more it apprehends itself as lost in the world it experiences, the richer that world becomes and the more vigorous the self's contribution to it, not qua individual indeed, but qua universal subject—the knower in science, the agent in morality, the laborer in the economic sphere, the citizen in the polity.

These are striking psychological observations, to be sure, but when Hegel fuses them together into a 'principle of perfection,' when he maps the dynamics of self and world onto an abstract scheme of logical 'movement' governed by an ultimate *telos,* the self is seen to be necessarily self-universalizing and to have for its end-state the absolute identity of subjectivity and objectivity. The destiny of the self is to be the harmonization of appearance and reality, the achievement of the absolute stance. To be sure, Hegel limits this grand claim to 'World-Spirit' or what I have called collective consciousness; an individual consciousness can approximate this final state only partially, depending on the richness or poverty of its world. Nonetheless, many today who agree with Hegel that our rationality is achieved communally and historically fear that it is headed for a denouement considerably less tidy in its logic and more fiery in its appearance than Hegel anticipated.

What in the end accounts for Hegel's optimistic teleology, for his belief that the negativity of the self is infinite, that experience is the certain path to the universal stance of 'science' or absolute knowledge? The clue is to be found, I think, in the many Christological metaphors scattered throughout the *Phenomenology;* it is not just literary cuteness nor a self-aggrandizing attitude on the part of the author that moves Hegel to consistently compare the self's career with the *via dolorosa.* It is the Christian myth of death and resurrection that imparts the *telos* to Hegel's self, for just as the Gospels depict Jesus becoming the Christ through the abolition and ultimate annihilation of his individual will, so self-consciousness attains to universality to the degree it undergoes the loss of its 'mineness.' Only if there is some sense, and Hegel would insist on logical or 'conceptual' sense, in the story of new life obtained by suffering and submission to death can the history of self-consciousness attain to the absolute stance, and what counts as truth for arbitrary individuals be refined into philosophical science. Spirit must evidently perish upon the crossbeams of historical contingency and rational necessity before it can live again, one, whole and of sound mind. Hegel puts it this way at the book's conclusion:

> The *goal,* Absolute Knowing, or Spirit that knows itself as Spirit, has for its path the recollection of the Spirits as they are in themselves and as they accomplish the organization of their realm. Their preservation, regarded from the side of their free existence appearing in the form of contingency, is History; but regarded from the side of their [philosophically] comprehended organization, it is the Science of Knowing in the sphere of appearance: the two together, comprehended History, form alike the inwardizing and the Calvary of absolute Spirit, the actuality, truth, and certainty of his throne, without which he would be lifeless and alone.[81]

Difficult as it is to obtain any succinct characterization of the *Phenomenology,* we have had to discuss at length the three crucial points Hegel advances in the Introduction: (1) There is no one abstract criterion for adequate knowledge. (2) Experience furnishes the philosopher his initial content, both the structure of consciousness itself and the wealth of 'forms of life' which are the raw material for systematic philosophy. (3) Negativity lends a teleological structure to selfhood and thus opens up access to an absolute or completely universal stance. It is time we look back to the *Bruno* and see how the *Phenomenology* represents an advance beyond Schelling's philosophy of identity, or at least a liberation for Hegel from the obvious drawbacks of Schelling's concepts.

The *Phenomenology*'s success on the first score is obvious, for Hegel wrests the richness of the life-world from the reductive doubt of epistemologists and makes it the proper content of systematic philosophy, making any flight to an otherworldly absolute, whether its content be logical or substantive, irrelevant. Just as Schelling's real quarrel lay not with Fichte himself, but with Kant, so Hegel contests Schelling's metaphysics not by direct dispute, but by going back to Kant. He may well have been moved to do so by observing at close quarters the very limited success Schelling had in attempting to refute Kant on Kantian grounds.

Recall that Schelling wanted to ground systematic philosophy in a metaphysics that was Kantian in tenor but which strictly observed Kant's injunction against employing categorial concepts outside the context of experience and his injunction against hypostatizing logical or psychological states into pure ideas. Schelling was thus forced to postulate an absolute beyond the phenomenal world, disconnected from finite cognition, and as his only evidence to point to certain nonapparent correlations (or 'indifference points') which obtain between opposite orders and aspects of phenomena. The metaphysics of indifference is, accordingly, otherworldly in its direction, weak in evidence, and wholly bound up with a dubious attempt to reify logical connections. And, as the *Bruno* clearly shows, Schelling is forced into these less than happy positions *because he is still Kantian.* Succumbing to the temptation to play the criterion-game with Kant, Schelling rejects as the standard of certitude not only the deliverances of the senses, but conceptual cognition as well. The eternal, the postulated realm of the idea, is the only thing left as the touchstone of truth, but it is accessible only

through 'intellectual intuition,' insight so holistic it transcends the subject-object divide and thus escapes notice in any possible state of ordinary consciousness.

In contrast, Hegel's initial move in the *Phenomenology* is both simple and brilliant, namely, to refuse to play the criterion-game, to refuse to let philosophy be encumbered at the start with epistemological problems that, at that stage, are both premature and inappropriately abstract. Hegel decides to focus his description on how experiential consciousness actually learns to discriminate relative truths from partial and dubious information as it is educated into full grip upon its rationality. The basis for systematic philosophy is thus constructed in familiar territory and with familiar tools. The *Phenomenology,* read as an attempt to evoke fundamental logical features of the world from the study of experience, is far from otherworldly. Hegel's absolute would indeed be empty and alone (as is Schelling's) if it were not bound up with the disorderly array of riches, both of content and of psychic states, which experience offers.

On the second score too, it is obvious that Hegel makes an advance upon Schelling's identity-philosophy. Other than to intone sonorous but improbable Platonic generalities about the organic interrelatedness of everything in the absolute, the actual work of Schelling's philosophy is to systematize reality as we know it, abolish the apparent heterogeneity of mind and matter, nature and spirit, and to correlate the various orders and aspects into a coherent account of the whole. But Schelling's sole tool is the indifference relation, and to reduce the differences of various apparently independent orders of phenomena to a calculus of identity and difference is to strip phenomena of their individual qualitative textures, to impose a single quantitative grid upon a rich and multiform universe. A certain systematization is achieved by the imposition of the scheme of the potencies, but it is an abstract and formalistic one; it issues not in a vivid picture of the universe, but in a flat table of contents. Hegel was keenly aware of his former colleague's shortcoming in this respect, as this passage from the Preface testifies:

> The instrument of this monotonous formalism is no more difficult to handle than a painter's palette having only two colours, say red and green, the one for colouring the surface when a historical scene is wanted, the other for landscapes. It would be hard to decide which is greater in all this, the casual ease with which everything in heaven and on earth is coated with this broth of colour, or the conceit regarding the excellence of this universal recipe; each supports the other. What results from this method of labelling all that is in heaven and earth with the few determinations of the general schema, and pigeonholing everything in this way, is nothing less than a 'report clear as noonday' on the universe as an organism, viz. a synoptic table like a skeleton with scraps of paper stuck all over it, or like the rows of closed and labelled boxes in a grocer's stall. . . . This monochromatic character of the schema and its lifeless determinations, this absolute identity, and the transition from one to the other, are all equally products of the lifeless Understanding and external cognition.[82]

We shall later have occasion to comment on the tone of these and similar remarks. For now, we must note that things stand quite otherwise with the author of the *Phenomenology,* whose conceptual palette is almost as broad as his canvas. To pursue Hegel's metaphor a bit further, to turn one's mind from the *Bruno*'s version of absolute philosophy to the *Phenomenology*'s is like turning one's gaze in a gallery from a Mondrian to a Seurat, both purporting to be portraits of the same subject, the former an exercise in pure geometry, with representation all but effaced and color muted, the latter a sheer explosion of minute packets of experience, a multitude of colored points which only gradually, and with much effort, organize themselves into a meaningful pattern. Hegel himself conceded that in writing the *Phenomenology* he got lost in details—presumably details of historical epochs and literary works such as *Antigone* and *Don Quixote* which he took to illustrate stages in the life of spirit—and failed to make clear the organization of the whole. He further confessed that to achieve clarity on this matter would have cost him more time and effort than he could muster.[83] Perhaps Hegel was too modest, however, for despite its unexpungeable obscurities, the *Phenomenology* does embody what its author was fond of calling "the work of the concept." To a considerable degree, Hegel's work of maturation lives up to the 'conceptual' standard announced in its Preface:

> The formal Understanding leaves it to others to add this principal feature [specificity]. Instead of entering into the immanent content of the thing, it is forever surveying the whole and standing above the particular existence of which it is speaking, i.e. it does not see it at all. Scientific cognition, on the contrary, demands surrender to the life of the object, or, what amounts to the same thing, confronting and expressing its inner necessity. Thus, absorbed in its object, scientific cognition forgets about that general survey, which is merely the reflection of the cognitive process away from the content and back into itself. Yet, immersed in the material, and advancing with its movement, scientific cognition does come back to itself, but not before its filling or content is taken back into itself. . . . Through this process the simple, self-surveying whole itself emerges from the wealth in which its reflection seemed to be lost.[84]

It is obvious that Hegel means the contrast between formal understanding and scientific cognition to be read as a contrast between Schelling's method and his own.

On the third score, however, Hegel's claim that the teleological structure of self-consciousness provides a standpoint for absolute philosophy, it seems that Hegel stands on ground no firmer than Schelling does with his mysterious, uninspectable intellectual intuition. Now Hegel's picture of self-consciousness is multilayered. Much of it is drawn from indisputably brilliant insights into the psychology of the ego and into the dialectics of appropriation and self-surrender inside key human experiences, deplorably termed 'peak moments' by some today; it is the wealth of such insights that made thinkers such as Sartre disciples of the *Phenomenology*. But these insights are wedded to a picture of consciousness inherited from Fichte and Schelling; Fichte produced a theoretical construct of the self as an oscilating energy system, a field of energy both self-limiting and self-transcending, whose ultimate result is the relative stability of appearances, and Schelling translated this construct from pure epistemology to the terrain of social and historical phenomena for the first time in the 1800 *System of Transcendental Idealism*. But to fully understand what is unique in Hegel's picture of self-consciousness, namely the equation of selfhood and negativity, and to come to believe with Hegel that self-negation equals self-perfection and thus furnishes a ladder to the absolute, one must finally come to the foot of the Cross. There, either through the eyes of a naive faith which takes stories to be truths, or through the more 'Königsbergian' eyes of nineteenth and twentieth century liberal theologians who tend to see in the Faith a repository of more general metaphysical and psychological truths, one must try to intuit what Hegel did, the paradigm of *rational existence* in the corpse of a defeated prophet!

What is the philosopher to make of this today? Minds as eminent and diverse as Aristotle and Whitehead, Peirce and Plato have seen no intrinsic reason for the disparity of the viewpoints of religion, philosophy, and science. St. Paul, however, found by experience that the Cross was a folly to the Greeks and a stumbling block to the Jews, and our philosophy has been predominantly Greek in tone.[85] Paul's listeners in Athens may well have had a hard time deciding between their city's ancient wisdom and the folly of the Crucified, but it is striking that in a way, living in a secularized world, Hegel presents his readers the same difficult choice, precisely in the name of wisdom. We can at any rate relish the irony that Marx's vision of the triumph of the proletariat, the class that is no class and so is destined to overcome all fixity of social and economic interests, leads ultimately back to Golgotha and to what there is to be seen through the eyes of faith.[86]

Space will not permit a discussion of all those passages of the *Phenomenology* where Hegel is either substantially or polemically critical of Schelling's identity-philosophy.[87] What is of more interest is the harshly polemical tone of the whole of the Preface. Though Hegel there achieves a clear presentation of his method in outline, it is hardly comparable to the carefully delineated and soberly argued overview of his dialectical method which comprises the first eighty-three paragraphs of the *Encyclopaedia*. In the Preface, Hegel chooses to use the philosophy of identity as his foil, and he adumbrates piecemeal what he means by 'scientific cognition' through a relatively disorganized series of sharp-eyed and sharp-tongued criticisms of Schelling. In its own way, the Preface is brilliant and entertaining; it contains the clearest sentences ever penned by Hegel, and as satire it ranks alongside some of the deliverances of Mencken and Twain. But it is undeniably rude and ill mannered as well, especially when viewed against the background of the personal relations between the two philosophers.

Hegel and Schelling had communicated infrequently, but cordially, since Schelling left Jena in 1803. Hegel broke off the correspondence late in 1804, but after the completion of the *Phenomenology*, breaking a silence of some two and one-half years, Hegel resumed contact with Schelling in January of 1807. The pen that seemed to etch the Preface on copper with acid is deferential and cordial; Hegel evidently looks to Schelling for a warm reception of his long-delayed philosophy:

> I had hoped to send you something of my work, since last Easter in fact, and this too is to blame for prolonging my silence. But I finally see the end of the printing process approaching and this Easter I will be able to send you the first part, voluminous enough, to be sure, for a beginning. I shall be especially interested to see if you do not object to my thoughts and my manner of expression.[88]

Early in 1807, two sets of friendly letters are exchanged. On 1 May, 1807, Hegel again mentions his work; his tone is friendly, candid, and personal:

> My book is finally finished, but the same wretched confusion that dominated the whole editorial and printing process, and even the book's composition in parts, besets even the distribution of exemplars to my friends. For this reason, you as yet have no copy from me in your hands, but I hope to soon bring it to pass that you have one. I am curious to see what you will say about the idea of the first part, which is really the introduction [to the system]—for as yet I have not gone beyond the task of introducing [the system] and gotten into the thick of it.[89]

After commenting on the faults of various sections, Hegel continues:

> In the Preface you will not find that I have concerned myself overmuch with the stale gossip that your formulas are so much nonsense and which degrades your science to an empty formalism. Otherwise, I hardly need to say that if you approve some aspects of the whole work, this will mean more to me than if others are pleased or displeased with the whole of it. To the same degree, I know of no one I would rather have introduce this book to the public or to furnish a judgment on it to me personally.
>
> Farewell. Greet the Niethammers for me, who I hope have happily arrived at your place, and especially Madame Schelling.[90]

It is difficult to imagine a culture in which it would be proper to ask someone you had vilified in a book to furnish its first review! Or did Hegel not intend the remarks in the Preface to point to Schelling? He was obviously aware they could be read that way.

Schelling's reply, after he had received the *Phenomenology,* is much delayed; its tone is a bit cold and injured, at least at first:

> You have not had a letter from me for a long time. In your last one you spoke of your book. When I received it, I wanted to read it before I wrote you again. But the many duties and distractions of this summer left me neither the time nor the peace of mind requisite for the study of such a work. So as yet I have read only the Preface. Inasmuch as you yourself mentioned the polemical part of it, decent self-respect forbids me to think so little of myself as to judge that this polemic refers to me. It may therefore only pertain to those who abuse my ideas and to the gossips, as you said in your letter to me, although this distinction is not made in the book itself. You can easily imagine how happy I would be to get this matter cleared up. Where we might really have different convictions or points of view could be clearly and briefly discovered and resolved between us without any shame, for all these points are capable of reconciliation, with one exception. I admit that as yet I do not comprehend the sense in which you oppose 'concept' to intuition. By concept you can mean nothing other than what you and I have called 'idea,' whose nature it precisely is to have one aspect whereby it is concept and another whereby it is intuition. . . .
>
> Farewell; write to me soon again and continue to think of me as your sincere friend.[91]

Hegel never answered the letter, nor its request for a clarification on the polemical comments of the Preface, and so an awkward moment between the two philosophers widened into a breach. Schelling and Hegel never

communicated again, except for an unexpected afternoon of pleasant conversation that followed on a chance meeting at a resort spa, late in Hegel's life. The bitter remarks on Schelling's philosophy in the *Phenomenology*'s Preface, the cordial letters between the two in the course of 1807, the dignified but injured tone of Schelling's reaction to the Preface, Hegel's failure to reply—all these add up to a mystery. What is clear is that the cycle of events that had occasioned the *Bruno* had happened once again. Philosophy marched on, over the bones of broken friendships; Plato, at least, would be saddened at the sight.[92]

Notes

1. Johann Michael Salier to Konrad Schmid, December 1803, SPIEGEL, 117.

2. Fichte to Schelling, 31 May 1801, BRIEFE 2, 341.

3. Schelling's writings during this period may generally be divided into works expounding Fichte's transcendental idealism and works exploring the new direction of a transcendental philosophy of nature. In the first class are:

On the Possibility of a Form of All Philosophy (1794)
On the Self as the Principle of Philosophy (1795)
Philosophical Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism (1795)
New Deduction of Natural Right (1796)
Essays Expounding the Idealism of the Science of Knowledge (1796)
System of Transcendental Idealism (1800)

In the second class are:

Ideas Toward a Philosophy of Nature (1797)
The World-Soul (1798)
First Outline of a System of Nature-Philosophy (1799)
The Concept of Speculative Physics (1799)
General Deduction of Dynamic Processes (1800)
The True Concept of Philosophy of Nature (1801)

In 1801 Schelling signaled the new and systematic direction of his thought with the first presentation of identity-philosophy, *Exposition of My System of Philosophy*.

4. Schelling to Fichte, 10 March 1801, BRIEFE 2, 354.

5. Ibid., 355.

6. For an account of the abortive project, see Fuhrmans' note in BRIEFE 2, 229–231.

7. In 1804 Schelling prefaced his lectures entitled *The Complete System of Philosophy* with a 'Propaedeutic' on the history of philosophy. In 1805 Fichte authored *Characteristics of the Present Age,* a study which situated the nineteenth century in a succession of five world-historical epochs. Also in 1805, Hegel began lecturing on the history of philosophy while he was at work on the *Phenomenology of Spirit;* during this period he was finally able to break free from Schelling's logic of indifference and formulate his mature concept of dialectical methodology.

8. *Munich Lectures on the History of Philosophy,* WERKE 10:121–122.

9. A paraphrase of *Timaeus* 68E–69A, which Schelling quotes in explanation of the *Bruno*'s subtitle.

10. Johann Jacob Wagner to Andreas Adam, 6 January 1803, SPIEGEL, 108–109. In full the letter reads,

> I can well believe that M. did not understand the *Bruno* either. I am more than a bit flattered to be one of the two or three in Germany who is roughly qualified to judge the work. Perhaps it is my intimate knowledge of Plato which helps me, to no small extent, to understand this second Plato. *Bruno* is really the authentic Platonism of modern philosophy. I am actually at work on a review of this masterpiece, one that is worthy of it.

See pp. 38–39 for excerpts from Wagner's review.

11. K. Chr. Fr. Kraus to his father, 6 March 1802, SPIEGEL, 93.

12. Friedrich Schlegel to August Wilhelm Schlegel, Paris, 16 September 1802, SPIEGEL, 99.

13. Dated 16 March 1802, SPIEGEL, 91.

14. SPIEGEL, 99–100.

15. See *De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis,* section 10, in *Kant Werke* 5 (Darmstadt, 1958), 40–43.

16. WERKE 7:146. Compare Hegel's remarks on the instinct of reason in PHENOMENOLOGY, pars. 257–258.

17. CRITIQUE, A 313/B 370.

18. Ibid., A 327–328/B 384.

19. *Wissenschaft der Logik,* Teil 2, (Meiner, Hamburg, 1966) 407–409. My translation. In 1807, however, Hegel is highly critical of Schelling's use of the term:

> Those who came after him [Anaxagoras] grasped the nature of existence more definitely as *Eidos* or *Idea,* determinate Universality, Species or Kind. It might seem as if the term *Species* or *Kind* is too commonplace, too inadequate, for Ideas such as the Beautiful, the Holy, and the Eternal that are currently in fashion. But nowadays an expression which exactly designates a concept is often spurned in favor of one which, if only because of its foreign extraction, shrouds the concept in a fog, and hence sounds more edifying. (PHENOMENOLOGY, par. 54; translation altered)

20. *Critique of Judgment,* section 77, tr. J. H. Bernard (Hafner, New York, 1974) 256–257.

21. Spinoza defines eternity as follows: "By eternity I understand existence itself, so far as it is conceived necessarily to follow from the definition alone of the eternal thing." ETHICS 1, def. 8.

22. Compare Bradley's suggestive remark: "Nothing in the whole and in the end can be external and everything less than the Universe is an abstraction from the whole, an abstraction more or less empty, and the more empty, the less self-dependent." Cited in Harold H. Oliver, *A Relational Metaphysic* (Nijhoff, The Hague, 1981) 104. Oliver provides a brief history of post-Leibnizean philosophies of relation on 101–151, but omits mention of Schelling or of Hegel.

23. See *World as Will and Representation,* Book 1, sections 3–5.

24. WERKE 4:387.

25. Achim von Arnim to Clemens Brentano, 18 November 1802, SPIEGEL, 103.

26. See below, 4:267–279. All references enclosed in parentheses or brackets in this section are to the *Bruno;* they are cited according to the pagination of WERKE 4, which is indicated within brackets in the translation. See the "Synopsis of Contents" for the correlation between WERKE 4 and the present translation.

27. Schelling's term *Indifferenz* might be translated more clearly as 'nondifference,' but since Schelling meant the term to stand out as a foreign borrowing, I have typically rendered it as 'indifference.' The term carries no psychological connotations; Schelling uses it synonymously with *Gleichgewicht,* balance or equilibrium, but not with *Gleichgültigkeit,* apathy or lack of concern. For Schelling there is but one case of strict identity or monolithic self-identity and that is the absolute's essence. Every other case of identity, for example the identity of the absolute's form and essence, or that of soul and body, is a case of indifference. Indifference is the ultimate nondifference or togetherness of irreducibly different aspects of one and the same thing. The relation between object and mirror image or that of the two sides of a coin provides the simplest example of indifference.

28. Johann Jacob Wagner, "Ueber Schellings Bruno," *Kleine Schriften* 1 (Ulm, 1839) 363.

29. *The Complete System of Philosophy,* 1804, WERKE 6:137.

30. Ibid., WERKE 6:143.

31. See below 4:312 and note 99, p. 256ff.

32. Harold H. Joachim, *The Nature of Truth* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1906), 48–49.

33. See CRITIQUE A 71–73/B 97–98.

34. Consult DIFFERENCE, 180 and 185.

35. SYSTEM, 136.

36. In 1794, Fichte had described intuition as follows:

> The mind lingers in this conflict and wavers between the two [opposites]—wavers between the requirement [of synthesizing them] and the impossibility of carrying it out. And in this condition, but only therein, it lays hold of both at once, or what comes to the same thing, makes them such that they can simultaneously be grasped and held firm; in touching them and being repulsed, and touching them again, it gives them, in *relation to itself,* a certain content and a certain extension (which will reveal itself in due course as a manifold in time and space). This condition is called the state of *intuition.* (SCIENCE, 201, interpolations mine)

37. Schelling criticizes Spinoza for making thought and extension the immediate attributes of God or nature (see 4:323–324). His own statements, here and elsewhere in the *Bruno,* suggest that thought and material reality can only be attributed to the absolute's form or the absolute idea *analogically,* as an extension of the strictly coordinated but different mental and material orders of phenomena. Neither thinking as such nor materiality can be ascribed to the absolute itself.

38. Compare Hegel's description of the spurious infinite in the *Encyclopaedia:*

> But such a progression to infinity is not the real infinite. That consists in being at home with itself in the other, or, if enunciated as a process, in coming to itself in its other. Much depends on rightly apprehending the notion of infinity, and not stopping short at the wrong infinity of endless progression. When time and space, for example, are spoken of as infinite, it is in the first place the infinite progression on which our thoughts fasten. We say, Now, This time, and then we keep continually going forwards and backwards beyond this limit. The case is the same with space. (*The Logic of Hegel,* Wallace trans. [Oxford, 1968], 175)

39. In the *Bruno* Schelling generally does not distinguish the logical possibility of separated existence and its actuality. His statement that "each thing takes from the absolute its own proper life and ideally goes over into a separated existence" (4:258) is typical. But from late 1802 through 1804, he sharply distinguished the two, expressing the finite's actual separation as a "fall" from the absolute, as in the following passage:

> In short, there is no gradual transition from the absolute to the actual. The origin of the sensible world is thinkable only as a breaking away from the absolute through a leap. . . . The absolute is uniquely real. In contrast to it, finite things are not real, so their origin cannot consist in a *communication* of reality to them or to their substrate, . . . but only in a *distancing,* in a *fall* from the absolute. (WERKE 6:38)

40. Johann Jacob Wagner, "Ueber Schellings Bruno," *Kleine Schriften* 1 (Ulm, 1839) 363.

41. Ibid., 364.

42. Ibid., 365.

43. In his 1809 *Essay on Human Freedom* Schelling makes the volitonal perspective central to his whole concept of being. "In the final and highest instance there is no other Being than Will. Will is primordial Being, and all predicates apply to it alone—groundlessness, eternity, independence of time, self-affirmation. All philosophy strives only to find this highest expression." *Of Human Freedom,* tr. J. Gutmann (Open Court, Chicago, 1936), 24. In the same essay in which Schelling ties together the ideas of creation, divine revelation, and the human attainment of the moral stance, it is the creature's *self-will,* the creation of good and evil, which effects the definitive separation of the natural and the spiritual. "Just this inner necessity is itself freedom, man's being is essentially *his own deed.*" Op. cit., 63.

44. Consult the "Deduction of Presentation," section III, SCIENCE, 206–208.

45. For a general account of Schelling's philosophy of nature in the years 1797–1806, consult J. Esposito, *Schelling's Idealism and Philosophy of Nature* (Bucknell University Press, Lewisburg, 1977), 47–124.

46. SYSTEM, 227–228.

47. CRITIQUE A 158/B 197.

48. G. Schweighauser, "On the Present State of Philosophy in Germany," *The Monthly Magazine* (London) Vol. 18, no. 2, 1804.

49. In the *First Critique* Kant merely remarks that the modality of judgments does not affect their content: "The modality of judgments is a quite peculiar function. Its distinguishing characteristic is that it contributes nothing to the content of the judgment . . . but concerns only the value of the copula in relation to thought in general." CRITIQUE A 74/B 99. But in the *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* he succinctly observes, "As modality in a judgment is not a distinct predicate, so by the modal concepts a determination is not superadded to things." Carus/Ellington trans. (Hackett, Indianapolis, 1977), 325n.

50. Johann Jacob Wagner to Andreas Adam, 17 December 1802, SPIEGEL, 198.

51. See SYSTEM, 217–222, 229–232.

52. *De anima* 431^{b}20–23, trans. D. W. Hamlyn (Oxford, 1968).

53. *Munich Lectures on the History of Philosophy,* 1827, WERKE 10:125.

54. Consult Gabriel Marcel, *Coleridge et Schelling* (Paris, Aubier-Montaigne, 1971); Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking,* tr. Wieck and Gray (Harper & Row, New York, 1968) and *Schellings Abhandlung über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit* (Tübingen, 1971); Paul Tillich, *Mysticism and Guilt-Consciousness in Schelling's Philosophical Development,* tr. V. Nuovo (Bucknell University Press, Lewisburg, 1974) and *The Construction of the History of Religion in Schelling's Positive Philosophy,* tr. Nuovo (Bucknell, Lewisburg, 1974); and

Jürgen Habermas, *Das Absolute und die Geschichte: von der Zweispältigkeit in Schellings Denken,* dissertation, Bonn, 1954.

55. WERKE 10:119–120.

56. WERKE 10:106–107.

57. In a letter to Brinkman of 26 November 1803, Schleiermacher writes: Due to the youthful enthusiasm of the authors, I too have been unable to find any difference between these [polemical] discussions. The slavery on both sides seems equally distasteful to me. One only sees how Schelling adorns himself with a Hegel, A. W. Schlegel with a Bernhardi, Jacobi with a Köppen. Really, all desire fades to capture such a slave or to become entangled with one. (SPIEGEL, 128)

58. *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics,* Ak. 278, tr. Ellington/Carus (Hackett, Indianapolis, 1977).

59. WERKE 10:120–121.

60. WERKE 10:123–125.

61. Jacobi to Reinhold, 10 August 1802, SPIEGEL, 97.

62. See Xavier Tilliette, "Hegel et Schelling à Jena," *Revue de metaphysique et de morale,* 73 (1968), 149–166.

63. Consult Klaus Düsing, "Spekulation und Refelxion: Zur Zusammenarbeit Schellings und Hegels in Jena," *Hegel-Studien,* 5 (1969), 113–114.

64. See Düsing, 117; Tilliette, 162; and Reinhard Lauth, *Die Entstehung von Schellings Identitätsphilosophie in der Auseinandersetzung mit Fichte's Wissenschaftslehre* (Alber, Freiburg/Munich, 1975) 193.

65. Lauth, 160.

66. Hermann Schmitz, *Hegel als Denker der Individualität* (Meisenheim, 1957), 119.

67. Karl Rosenkranz, *Hegels Leben* (Darmstadt, 1963), 159.

68. Ibid., 201.

69. Otto Pöggeler, "Hegels Jenaer Systemkonzeption," in *Hegels Idee einer Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Alber, Freiburg/Munich, 1973), 119.

70. See WERKE 5:267, 269.

71. G. W. F. Hegel, *System of Ethical Life* and *First Philosophy of Spirit,* tr. H. S. Harris (State University of New York Press, Albany, 1979), 99–100.

72. Ibid., 206.

73. See the treatment of infinity in the Jena *Logik, Metaphysik und Naturphilosophie* and in *Faith and Knowledge,* 112–114. Also consult Hermann Schmitz, *Hegel als Denker der Individualität* (Meisenheim, 1957) 104–125.

74. See Schmitz, 119. The notions of infinity as immediate and absolute antithesis and of the infinite or self-cancelling judgment as the appearance of the rational in propositional form continue to play an important role in Hegel's mature thought, but in the *Phenomenology* these are viewed as but tokens of a more fundamental process, negativity or self-supersession as such. See PHENOMENOLOGY, pars. 162, 344.

75. G. W. F. Hegel, *Jenenser Logik, Metaphysik und Naturphilosophie,* ed. G. Lasson (Meiner, Hamburg, 1967), 69.

76. Ibid., 12–13.

77. PHENOMENOLOGY, par. 73.

78. I am indebted to Prof. John E. Smith for the latter formulation.

79. PHENOMENOLOGY, pars. 83, 84.

80. PHENOMENOLOGY, par. 89.

81. PHENOMENOLOGY, par. 808.

82. PHENOMENOLOGY, par. 51.

83. Hegel to Schelling, 1 May 1807, in BRIEFE 3, 431–432.

84. PHENOMENOLOGY, par. 53.

85. See 1 Corinthians 1:18–23.

86. In a fragment penned in 1844, Marx describes the proletariat as "this poverty conscious of its own spiritual and physical poverty, this dehumanization which is conscious of itself as a dehumanization and hence abolishes itself." In the same note he makes clear that the revolutionary programme is soteriological in character: "When the proletariat wins victory, it by no means becomes the absolute side of society, for it wins victory only by abolishing itself and its opposite. Both the proletariat itself and its conditioning opposite—private property—disappear with the victory of the proletariat." *Marx-Engels Reader,* 2nd edition, ed. R.C. Tucker (Norton, New York, 1978), 134.

87. The following paragraphs of the *Phenomenology* are implicitly or directly critical of Schelling's concepts and methods. In some passages, Hegel may well have Kant and Fichte in mind as well, for his treatment of historical matters is fluid, to say the least, and he names no names.

Paragraphs 73–76 and 84–87 of the Introduction criticize the mentality Anselm represents within the *Bruno,* one which, motivated by an abstract scepticism, rejects all empirical truths as untruths and posits an absolute truth beyond experience.

Though the chapter "Force and the Understanding" seems primarily to be a critique of Kant and Fichte, along with Newton, paragraphs 149–150, 155, and 157 may have Schelling in view as well. Throughout this chapter Hegel employs concepts similar to Schelling's 'indifference' and 'essence'-'form' distinction.

The first part of the chapter "Observing Reason" is devoted to an explicit critique of Schelling's philosophy of nature, to his analysis of organism in particular, and to his attempt to make the organism a model of the idea (the last especially visible in *Bruno*). Paragraphs 242–269 seem to positively develop a Schellingian analysis of animate life, while paragraphs 270–300 ruthlessly critique the sort of reason that seeks static laws instead of fluid interrelations. Among the most notable comments: Organism does provide an image of the universe, but as a process, not as a thing (277). Hegel contrasts the living, fluid nature of the concept, which is the dissolution of all law-like structure, and the inert indifference of law, which merely universalizes simple differences (279–280). The quantitative nature of 'indifference' or of any attempt to formalize laws for nature is frequently criticized (271, 280, 286, 290). Schelling's phrase "potentiate" is called bad Latin (282). And finally, the whole effort of observing reason (= Schelling's philosophy) is said to consist of nothing but clever remarks, "a genial approach to the Concept" (297).

Paragraphs 803–804 of the final chapter, "Absolute Knowing," are a summary criticism of identity-philosophy. Hegel objects specifically to the exclusion of process or "conceptual time" from the identity of thought and being, and to Schelling's sharp dichotomy between reason and reflection.

Finally, the Preface as a whole has Schelling in view on almost every page, but explicit and significant criticisms of Schelling are voiced in paragraphs 15–21, 24, 31, 40, 46–48, and 50–54. The philosophically important objections are: Identity-philosophy is a shapeless repetition of one and the same idea (15). Philosophy must effect an analysis of terms such as subject and object, God and nature, not just skate between them (31). Schelling's method of potencies is arbitrary, repetitious, and based on shallow analogies between incomparable phenomena (51–53). Charity counsels me to silence on other passages in the Preface, well-known and acerbic in tone.

The Notes to the Translation document passages where the *Phenomenology* positively echoes or employs Schelling's ideas and terminology.

88. Hegel to Schelling, 3 January 1807, BRIEFE 3, 394.

89. Hegel to Schelling, 1 May 1807, BRIEFE 3, 431.

90. Ibid., 432.

91. Schelling to Hegel, 3 November 1807, BRIEFE 3, 471–472.

92. Many more passages in the *Phenomenology* than the polemics of the Preface are directed toward a criticism of Schelling, though his name is never mentioned. Obviously, I believe that most of the Preface has Schelling for its direct target, not overzealous 'disciples' like Wagner and Oken, as some scholars have maintained. Though it was not foreign to Hegel's practice to fire large shells at small targets, for example, the criticism of Reinhold and Bardili in *Faith and Knowledge,* it is virtually inconceivable that in a polemical preface to what Hegel called "the first part," "the introduction to my work," he would waste ammunition on disciples and second-rate imitators. The Preface is, in whole and in part, a direct comparison between the method worked out in the writing

of the *Phenomenology* and Schelling's philosophy of identity, as Hegel knew it. Since some of the Preface's leading themes, for example, that truth is both substance and subject, emerge late in the work itself, in this case in the chapter on religion, I suspect that Hegel was emboldened to take on the reigning philosophy of the day only because of the certainty he had achieved in writing the bulk of the work, certainty about the precise structure and method of systematic philosophy.