The Conspiracy of Life

Meditations on Schelling and His Time

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State University of New York Press

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Art

Aber die Sprache-
Im Gewitter spricht der Gott.
—Hölderlin (fragment)

Therefore do not venture into the metaphysics of the fine arts without being initiated into the [Dionysian] orgies and Eleusinian mysteries.
—Hamann, *Aesthetica in nuce*

Artworks may produce concepts, but they are not themselves produced from concepts nor *are* they concepts. Nishida, echoing Schelling, argued that creativity is truthfully seeing and hearing and touching.

> At this time, the hand becomes one with the eye; the entire becomes the eye, as it were. The world of visual perception that has been perfected in this way is the objective world of art. Sculpture and painting are realities that have been disclosed by the eyes and hands of the artist becoming one. Thus, when the sculptor is sculpting and when the painter is painting, each becomes a process of seeing only. Plotinus states that nature does not create by seeing, but, rather, that nature's seeing is creation. In this way the artist becomes nature itself. If we consider that the visual act itself is the flow of one great *élan vital*, then art is the overflow of the surge of that greater life that cannot flourish completely within the channels of the ordinary eye. (AM, 27)[1]

How can painting having the character of disclosure when it is a creation? Does this not confuse *Finden* and *Erfinden,* discovery and creation? Does this not blur the lines between art (supposedly subjective activity) and science (supposedly objective activity)? Is not objectivity perceiving facts as they are and creativity the elaboration of things from a subjective point of view? How can creativity be the life of Truth, the Good of Truth, so to speak, when it seems predicated on the subjective disregard of the facts?

In a word, the question with which this chapter will grapple is: *How does creativity discover?* And conversely: *How is discovery also a creation?*

Although the artwork is no doubt in some respect just that—a work, a form—that is not the final word. It is not a work born of working. It is a work born of play. In a broad sense Schelling will argue, as we have already seen, that artworks are born from the life of the transcendental imagination. As such, its product, the artwork, is born of the play of the imagination. It is an image not *of* chaos, but *from* chaos. The beginning of the work of art brings one back to the beginning of any beginning.

What, then, is playing at working? Humans produce artworks, but they are not the fundamental *source* of artworks. Their work is the trace of an anterior play. Although artists are humans, the origin of the work of art does not fundamentally lie within the domain of the human. Rather the human is the intermediary between the nonhuman and the newly human. As Deleuze and Guattari argue: "Painters go through a catastrophe, or through a conflagration, and leave the trace of this passage on the canvas, as the leap that leads them from chaos to composition" (WP, 203). In this way one can speak of the artist as "a seer, a becomer" who has "seen something in life that is too great, too unbearable" and who aporetically produces "the mutual embrace of life with what threatens it" (WP, 171). In this sense, not only is the artwork not about working, it is not even just about producing, as if the artist were the subject and the artwork were the result of her or his production. Rather than an accomplishing, it is more of a releasing, an unclotting, a liberating, a freeing of the body from its habits of sensing. "It is always a question of freeing life wherever it is imprisoned, or of tempting it into an uncertain combat" (WP, 171).

Furthermore, even though an artwork can produce concepts, it is itself something like a percept, a mode of sensation. Although a percept does not have to conceive of itself as such (it is minimally the unreflective externalization of spirit), it can. Philosophical art, what Schelling called the "complete work of art," is art about art, percepts that can, in all of their nonuniversalizable particularity, also understand or conceive themselves as such. They reflectively mark the traces of the chaos out of which the percept emerged. Complete works of art are percepts that can reflectively produce concepts about perception. They are works that not only see truthfully, but which can *see seeing itself.* In this way, one might even say that Schelling had anticipated what Barnett Newman was later to call the "new painter" who is no longer obsessed

simply with the formal or "plastic" aspects of art, but with their nonformal (or "plasmic") origins. They are like the so-called primitive painter who "since he was always face-to-face with the mystery of life, was always more concerned with presenting his wonder, his terror before it or the majesty of its forces, rather than with plastic qualities of surface, texture, etc."[2]

For Newman, like Schelling before him, formal or plastic qualities do not express the absolute subject of nature. In this way, Newman, like Schelling and Hölderlin before him, rejected the Greek sculptural and pictorial emphasis on beautiful (Apollonian) form in favor of the Greek literary emphasis on the tragic. Greek tragic literature was to replace the merely formal qualities of neoclassicism. "That is why we as artists can paradoxically reject Grecian form—we do not believe any longer in its beauty—while accepting Greek literature, which by its unequivocal preoccupation with tragedy is still the fountainhead of art."[3]

Schelling, like Hölderlin and, later, Nietzsche, was going to find the form of tragic drama instructive in articulating the complex potencies that comprise an artwork that self-consciously marks its status as an artwork. This is not to say that it is the only form or that it is a superior form in this respect to comedy. Nonetheless tragedy yokes together competing potencies into a higher potency. In 1827, long after his early meditations on tragedy, Schelling summarized the relationship between these forces as follows:

> In the highest work, Poetry united with art—in the highest *Poetic art [Dichtkunst],* tragedy, there appears, in the storms of passions which blindly rage against each other, where for the actors themselves the voice of reason goes silent, and despotism and lawlessness, entangling each other ever more deeply, finally transform themselves into a hideous necessity—in the midst of all these movements there appears the spirit of the poet as the quiet light which alone still shines, as the subject which alone is not submerged, itself unmoving in the most violent movement, as wise Providence which can yet lead the greatest contradictions finally to a satisfactory conclusion. (HMP, 118/128)

Mere creativity is not yet self-conscious and hence not yet tragic. It is the fall of freedom to the creaturely, the birthing movement of the A^1. As such, it does not yet reflect on the freedom that granted it birth. Tragic art is therefore not just the movement of freedom to form, but the marking of form so that it reflects—with love, with *amor fati*—on the indwelling, Dionysian birthing principle that contests form from within form. In this sense, the great Henry Miller was right to insist that

> To paint is to love again. It's only when we look with eyes of love that we see as the painter sees. His is a love, moreover, which is free of

possessiveness. What the painter sees he is duty bound to share. Usually he makes us see and feel what ordinarily we ignore or are immune to. His manner of approaching the world tells us, in effect, that nothing is vile or hideous, nothing is stale, flat and unpalatable unless it be our own power of vision. To see is not merely to look. One must look-see. See into and around. Or as John Marin once put it—"Art must show what goes on in the world."[4]

I

Schelling first seriously took up the question of the artwork in his anonymously published *Philosophical Letters on Dogmatism and Idealism* (1795). The epistolary reflections include an allusion to the text's status as a "symbol for the League of Free Spirits" (PB, 196/341/112).[5] The text, in part, seems to have been an attempt to articulate a philosophy of freedom for the "League of Free Spirits," a group of free thinkers in Stuttgart that formed as a companion society to the one formed by "the most radical students of Fichte in Jena."[6] Art was linked to the question of freedom, including political freedom, but not as the self-expression of the *conatus*.

In the Preface, Schelling drew explicit attention to the question of the text's style. "The author chose the form of letters because he believed that he could present his ideas in this more clearly than any other form" (PB, 156/283/50). The exchange of letters is not an arbitrary ornament to present attractively his ideas. It is somehow intrinsically related to the ideas themselves such that it allows them to be more clearly articulated than other forms (e.g., the expository style of *Vom Ich als Prinzip*). What, then, can the letter form articulate that the expository form cannot articulate as well? Friedrich Schlegel, writing in an *Athenäum* fragment (no. 77) that appeared a little over year after Schelling's *Letters*, claimed that "A dialogue is a chain or garland of fragments. An exchange of letters is a dialogue on a larger scale"(A, 85).[7] If one were to accept this as a description of Schelling's project, the letters are a large-scale dialogue, chaining together fragments—in a *wunderlich* way—that could not otherwise be linked together.[8]

The epistolary form also invites one to question the identity of the addressee. Schelling never offered a name. Franz Gabriel Nauen has suggested that it is Hölderlin.[9] Although this is impossible to establish, it is an interesting suggestion.[10] When this text later reappeared in the first volume of his 1809 edition of his *Collected Works*, Schelling reflected that it was a "lively polemic" against the "moral proof for the existence of God" (PB, 154/49). By this, Schelling presumably meant the Tübingen Kantians who bless themselves and orthodox philosophy under the name of practical reason (M, 119) and who wanted "to construct a new system of dogmatism out of the trophies

of criticism" (PB, 156/283/49). Hölderlin shared a common distaste for such activity. Furthermore, he seems to be addressing someone who, like Hölderlin, embraced tragedy as a mode of presenting freedom.

It is known that Hölderlin and Schelling met several times in 1795 and 1796 and had heated discussions. Hölderlin later wrote to Friedrich Immanuel Niethammer, whose *Philosophisches Journal einer Gesellschaft teutscher Gelehrter* had published Schelling's *Letters* late in 1795, reporting that "Schelling, as you will know, has become a bit rebellious from his first convictions" (December 22, 1795) (M, 137). Later he wrote that he and Schelling "had not always spoken in agreement with each other"[11] but that they had agreed that "new ideas can be presented most clearly in the form of letters" (February 24, 1796) (M, 143). Both were to employ, however short-lived, the epistolary form and both were to turn to Greek tragedy as a technique of presenting the cision. If one were to interpret the "rebellious" to mean Schelling's growing dissatisfaction with the *Vom Ich als Prinzip* essay, then one could read "the new ideas" of the *Letters* and their presentation in letter form, as well as Schelling's subsequent development, as in some way related to his dialogue with Hölderlin. The issue, as is evident already in Schelling's *Letters*, is the proximity of the *intellectual intuition* and *Schwärmerei*. Whether or not these letters were directed at Hölderlin does not obfuscate a shared commitment to the struggle to present within presentation what is not of the order of presentation.

Hölderlin, for his part, had announced to Niethammer that he would attempt to replace practical reason with an "aesthetic sense" in a series of letters that he would name, following Schiller, *New Letters on the Aesthetic Education of the Person* (AE, 143). The first volume of *Hyperion*, Hölderlin's *Briefroman*, would appear in August of the following year (1797). As Hölderlin explained to Niethammer: "In the philosophical letters I want to find the principle that explains the divisions in which we think and exist, but also what makes it possible for the conflict to vanish, i.e., the conflict between subject and object, between ourselves and the world, even between reason and revelation" (M, 143). That principle is the tragic yoking together of the gods (the realm of the Good) and mortals (the realm of the True). In another way, however, the *Letters* mark Schelling's early efforts to present the intuition of freedom not only as an ethical insight but more inclusively as an aesthetic insight. With Hölderlin, he also presented the letters as a mode to present aesthetically what cannot be presented in traditional exposition. As Schelling concluded the *Letters:* "It is a crime to humanity to hide axioms that are generally communicable. But nature herself has posited boundaries to this communicability" (PB, 196/341/112).

For both writers, the Whole can never be wholly presented, and this aporia can only be presented indirectly, for example, as letters or as opposing fragments conjoined by a tertium quid that remains subterranean. Deleuze instructively made the same point about Leibniz and Mallarmé in *The Fold:*

Leibniz and the Baroque: "It is well known that the total book is as much Leibniz's dream as it is Mallarmé's, even though they never stop working in fragments. Our error is in believing that they did not succeed in their wishes: they made this unique Book perfectly, the book of monads, in letters and little circumstantial pieces that could sustain as many dispersions as combinations."[12] Schelling's *Letters,* furthermore, is itself a kind of book of monads, of contradictory directives and forces, of multiple speakers, of infinite tasks and perpetual struggles—all of which reflect obliquely the supreme substance, each in their own windowless way.

Soon after the *Letters,* in the *Ideas Towards a Philosophy of Nature* (1797), Schelling wrote of the "absolute producing itself out of itself" in three discreet forms, each of which are absolute in their own way. Considered "from their formal side, each of the three unities are particulars, for example, that in it the infinite is formed in the finite or vice-versa." From another angle, each unity is absolute (PN II, 64/48). Following Leibniz, Schelling read the relationship between substance and its attributes as the relationship between supreme substance and monads.[13] The supreme substance is a composite of contradictory monads.[14] Schelling continued: "What we have here designated as unities is the same as what others have understood by *ideas* or *monads,* although the true meaning of this concept was itself lost long ago. Each idea is a particular, that, as such, is absolute" (PN II, 64/48). Monads, different in kind, express the absolute each in their own unique way. Each monad expresses the absolute uniquely. Each is a different perspective on the Whole from within the Whole. It would be an error to isolate any perspective from the Whole. Each is a different accent of the Same, that is, of the general economy of Difference.

II

The first letter announces the way of inquiry for the entire text. Responding to his unknown correspondent, and remembering that Schelling had initially published this text anonymously, Schelling began to present in medias res an irresolvable tension in the form of a struggle. "I understand you dear friend! It seems to you greater to struggle against an absolute power and to go under struggling than to secure oneself in advance against all danger through a moral God" (PB, 157/284/50). The author's "dear friend" shared the author's sense of the "perniciousness" of the appropriation of Kant in the Tübingen Stift. The *Letters* protest vigorously against the need for or the possibility of a moral God. The "dear friend" presented a stark contrast between a sovereign power and a power restricted in advance by the moral element of its nature. The latter, as I have shown earlier, can already be found in Leibniz's critique of Spinoza and was later appropriated in various forms during the Pantheism Debate. Mendelssohn appealed to Leibniz in order to redeem Lessing from Spinoza's

ateleological substance, and Herder, even while siding with Spinoza, ends up in position similar to the one attributed to Lessing by Mendelssohn. It seemed that few could bear the thought of an amoral God whose power could not be restricted in advance by a moral nature that expressed its creativity within the beneficent range of a divine plan. For Schelling, the Good transcends any moral account of it. This anxiety before God's freedom, as we have seen, held sway among the Tübingen theologians and had been christened Kantian practical reason. A moral God, that is, a God determined in advance by the law of divine goodness, defended one from the terrifying freedom of a God whose absoluteness cannot be restricted and whose fire consumes all attempts to do so. A sovereign God has, as William Blake also saw, a Satanic unconscious that expresses itself conversely as angelic orders.

Against the anxious Tübingen theologians (and against Kant's interest in rescuing the idea of a moral God), the "dear friend" found it "greater" to struggle against a sovereign God, and although one cannot triumph over sovereignty, the struggle offers the greatness of *decline.* The author responded that this "struggle against the immeasurable is not only the most sublime matter that the person can think, but also in my estimation the principle of all sublimity itself" (PB, 157/284/50). From the second sentence of the first letter, the author announced that his interest in these letters concerned the greatest principle, the principle of all principles, the *Grundsatz aller Grundsätze,* and that this principle involves not resolution and possession, but struggle and demise.

However, it is the character of this struggle that will itself become the struggle of the ten letters. While agreeing with his "true friend," the author asked, "How you would find the power itself, with which the person is opposed to the Absolute and the feeling that accompanies this struggle, explicable in dogmatism? Consistent dogmatism does not concern struggle but subjection. It does not concern the violent but rather the voluntary decline. It concerns the quiet abandon of myself to an absolute object: each thought of revolt and the struggling power of the self in dogmatism comes from a better system" (PB, 157/284/50). The first model of struggle, dogmatism, has a "purely aesthetic side" and draws on Spinoza and the quiet beatitude of the *amor intellectualis dei.* But, as we saw in chapters two and three, it demands the voluntary surrender to an absolute object whose nature governs a closed system of reason. It is only one arm of the struggle that, without the other arm, no longer struggles and resigns itself to the quietude of pure affirmation of an infinite object. "The quiet self-abandon to the immeasurable, the peace in the arms of the world, is what art opposes to the other extreme of every struggle: stoic peace of mind stands in the middle, expecting the struggle or having already ended it" (PB, 157/284/50). Dogmatism is the Spinozistic stoicism that dwells in peaceful resignation to the rule of an absolute object. The stoic is devoted to the "youthful world" only in order to "still their thirst for life. Existence, existence! it calls in them; they would rather fall into

the arms of the world than in the arms of death" (PB, 157/285/50). Dogmatism's infinite resignation to an absolute object drops out of life because it does not raise the question of life at the level of the life of life.

The moral God cannot produce an aesthetic universe. With the moral God the "pure principle of the aesthetic is lost." This happens when "a guardian of the world is necessary in order to hold the world in its boundaries" (PB, 157/285/51). One could say, using Blake's language, that without the abysmal foundation of Satanic freedom, there could be no beauty or sublimity. In the Thomistic tradition, for example, a moral God produces beauty in accordance with form. To find an object beautiful is to take pleasure in its close proximity to its divine idea. In this sense, beauty is the pleasure that one takes in the *integritas* of form. Saint Thomas reflected that "we call mutilated people ugly, for they lack the required proportion of parts to the whole."[15] Mutilated people are ugly because they fall wretchedly short of the end for which they were created, and this gulf between the mutilated body and the divine idea of the body causes the observer disgust and disapprobation. Thomism could never, for example, affirm the spirituality and sublimity of the photography of Joel Peter Whitkin. The same is true for all artifacts, divine or human. "If an artist made a saw out of glass it would be ugly despite the beauty of its appearance, because it could not fulfill its cutting function."[16] A moral God creates a universe in which beauty is equated with function. Beauty and sublimity for a sovereign God express the opposite, namely freedom.

The author contrasted the nonaesthetic cosmos with the "reciprocal approach" in which the "mutual succumbing in struggle" is "the actual principle of beauty." The aesthetics of nature, contrary to Leibniz, Wolff, Mendelssohn, and Herder, are not found in its preorganized harmony. Nature as an aesthetic phenomenon is chiasmic, the crossing over in struggle of two opposing orders that belong together. Beauty and sublimity belong to the struggle of the finite to implicate the infinite and the infinite to explicate the finite. "True art, or moreover, the *theion* [divine] in art, is an inner principle that forms its material from within itself and opposes omnipotently each raw mechanism and each unruly accumulation of material from the outside" (PB, 157/285/51). Like Spinoza's substance in the critical mode, the aesthetic intuition of nature is an intuition of nature as a Whole that is sovereignly self-organizing.

The aesthetics of nature would be something like Zarathustra's dice throw, each a posteriori moment of necessity implicating itself in the chance of the roll. For Zarathustra and Schelling, the aesthetics of nature demanded total affirmation—neither the hemiplegic affirmation of the theoretical realm nor the reduction of aesthetics to human self-interest. Theoretical activity accepts only the clear and distinct evidence and not the once and future mystery of its perpetually withdrawing ground. Hence, Zarathustra proclaimed in "Of Unsullied Knowledge": "Where is beauty? Where I *must want* with all my will; where I want to love and to go under that an image will not remain only

an image. Loving and going under: these belong together since eternity."[17] The beautiful, Zarathustra noted earlier in his address to the Sublime Ones, is not for heroes. "The beautiful is unobtainable to all violent wills." It is for those who have renounced their heroism that approach, "in dreams" the freedom that is "beyond the hero *[der Über-Held]*."[18] The hero exemplifies humanity's interest in perfecting its nature.

Schelling, in his 1807 Munich address, *On the Relationship of the Plastic Arts to Nature,* again took up the question of the relationship of artistic production and nature. Schelling argued that, as with nature, art is "dead" when "you do not bring the spiritual eye to it, which penetrates the exterior and feels the active force in it" (I/7, 295). The spiritual eye, as Hamann had already argued, "senses *[empfindet]*" the sublime ground in its having become a beautiful form. It does not see in the way that the theoretical eye reduces the beautiful to the contours of its appearance. The spiritual eye glimpses in the thing its "creating life" and its "power to exist" (I/7, 294). Hence, "we must go through the form *[über die Form hinausgehen]* in order to gain it back as intelligible, alive, and as truly felt *[empfunden]*" (I/7, 299).

The prepositional phrase *über etwas hinaus,* literally a going through in order to get beyond, is, as we have seen, the intuition of the formless within form. The sensation of sovereign life paradoxically emerges in the mastering of form. "Only through the completion of form can the form be annihilated" (I/7, 305). In this annihilation (what Schelling will later clarify as *Vernichtigen,* emptying) , in this emptying of form, so to speak, one finds "the highest beauty without character" in the sense that the "universe would have no determinate measurement, neither length, nor width, nor depth because it contains all with equal infinity. Or that the art of the creative nature would be formless because it itself is subjected to no form" (I/7, 306). To put it in other words, the spiritual eye feels the soul's grace in the body. The "body is the form and grace is the soul, although not the soul in itself, but the soul of form, that is, the soul of nature *[die Naturseele]*" (I/7, 311).

The soul is not the heretofore concealed *quidditas* or the essence of a thing (then soul = form), but the deformation of all form, the formless origin of form. The soul is the excess of the form within the form, its animistic life complicating its status as a form. "The soul in the person therefore is not the principle of individuality but that through which one is lifted beyond all selfhood and through which one becomes capable of sacrifice of oneself, of selfless love, and, what is the highest, of contemplation and knowledge of the essence of things and with this, of art" (I/7, 312). Without soul, without "great and general enthusiasm, there are only sects" (I/7, 327). It is critical to note here that artistic production does not seek to dominate others with the form of its vision. Rather it is the production of a space in which the liberating force of freedom appears. It is not the neurotic and public expansion of the *conatus'* fixations. believe

In the *Letters,* the artwork, like nature itself, holds together the formless soul of nature with what Schelling named the "symbol" (PB, 196/341/112), the form that reflectively presents the now restricted freedom indwelling in the artwork. Aesthetic creation in which the artist forms an image out of freedom (a rule out of the unruly) parallels the "living" creativity of nature itself. Schelling later made this quite clear in the lecture course on the *Philosophy of Art.* "I construe therefore in the philosophy of art not art as art, not as something *particular.* Rather I construe *the universe in the form of art* and the philosophy of art is *the science of the All in the form or potency of art*" (I/5, 368).

The universe, construed from the perspective of the creative potency that produces the artwork, is a self-generating work of art whose generativity is both inexhaustible and differential. It is inexhaustible in the sense that the world is spontaneous, and this spontaneity is not restricted by something greater within or without itself. Freedom, as pure possibility, cannot be restricted by actuality within itself because the latter, as a specific expression of possibility, is derivative of and inferior to it. Particular expressions of power cannot substantially determine power itself. Nonetheless, this plenum of indwelling power admits of no direct access and can only be found in its expressions. Its inexhaustibility is expressed through the life of concrete figures. But when the artwork or the intuition of nature fixates on itself as an object and fetishizes itself by referring only to itself, as happens, for example, in the demand for a moral God, the struggle breaks down and the circulation between the two contradictory orders clogs. "When neither the struggle nor the unification can happen in us, we lose at the same time the inner principle [the aesthetic] and the intellectual intuition of the world through which the momentary unification of both contradictory principle originates in us" (PB, 157/285/51).

The author and his interlocutor agreed that the moral God incapacitates the aesthetic intuition. The author, however, insists on taking a further step. Not only does the moral God disallow the sublime, it remains, like Spinoza's *vana religio,* empty. It is an anthropomorphic projection in which the imagination confuses its own images with freedom. "It contains nothing at all. It is as empty as every other anthropomorphic image—because in *principle* they are all the same." They want God, but resort to "theoretical reason," which is "too weak to conceive of a God." Given this paucity of means, they resort, as did the Tübingen theologians, to a "practical belief" derived from a "practical need." With this deus ex machina, the traditional business of theology can survive the scare that the loss of dogmatic philosophy threatened. The magic wand of "theology" provides one with what one needs. "I therefore need the idea of a moral God in order to rescue my morality, and because I assume a God only in order to rescue my morality, this God must hence be a *moral* one" (PB, 158/286/52). On a similar note, in an allusion to Kant and the Kantians, Nietzsche had later warned that "no one would so easily hold a doctrine for true *[für wahr halten]* simply because it made them happy or virtuous, except

perhaps for the charming 'idealists.'"[19] Without the presupposition of a moral God, then, Schelling attempted to think dangerously. As Nietzsche contended, "Something may be true even if it were at the same time harmful and dangerous to the highest degree."[20]

Rather than lament the death of the moral God, Schelling wanted to bury it. But this leaves the work of articulating a universe imbued with the sovereign amorality of the Good, and it is here that the figure of Spinoza again resurfaced. In the fifth letter, Schelling asked "Why Spinoza would have put forth his philosophy in a system *of ethics?*" (PB, 171/305/73). Furthermore, Spinoza's system, as a system of reality within which one could live and flourish, "must reach reality, but not through a theoretical faculty but through a practical one, not through a knowing but through a productive, realizing one, not through knowledge but through action" (PB, 171/305/73). The imperative of the *Ethics* is not: Subsume the world under the laws of the understanding! Since the sublime is always other than its integument in Being, the author in the seventh letter read this command as "Annihilate yourself through absolute causality, or: Comport yourself in *absolute* passivity towards the absolute!" (PB, 179/316/85). Spinoza abandoned his self, returning it to the indwelling power within the universe. "*His* I should not be his property. It should belong to the infinite reality" (PB, 178/315/84). Spinoza, out of an affirmation or love of the infinite indwelling in the finite, returns the gratuitous gift of the finite to the fires of its ground.

This command presents an aporia. Even though Spinoza's ethic is not derived from dogmatism, it is, in its most radical form, a kind of dogmatism in so far as the absolute, as freedom, is construed as an object "through the objectified intellectual intuition" (PB, 182/321/90). In order to return oneself to Moira, the dispenser of fate, even in the radical act of self-annihilation, one must be able to conceive Moira. In this sense, Schelling admitted that the imperative is intertwined with the universalistic assumption of Spinoza's philosophy: that his philosophy is *the* philosophy—that a monad can somehow frame adequately the whole of which it is an oblique reflection. "Spinoza interpreted in accordance with *his* system" (PB, 178/315/84). Since, according to Spinoza's view, there was no historically and spatially differential transit between the finite and the infinite, the heterogeneity of the finite was due exclusively to "the limitations of the finite. Everything existing should only be modifications of the same infinite: therefore there should be no transit, no conflict, but there should take place only the *demand* that the finite *strive* to become identical and to go under into the infinite" (PB, 178/315/84).

On the one hand, since there is no direct access to the freedom indwelling within Moira, since her fires burn always beyond her cooled and now mild masks, every symbol of freedom, even those that hold their own adequacy in question, are entangled in an unavoidable form of dogmatism. Affirmation cannot entirely transcend its *über etwas hinaus* structure. On the other hand,

the "moral principle" has allowed one to stand in the "the central point of every possible *Schwärmerei*" (PB, 179/316/85). *Schwärmerei,* for Schelling, is the meeting point of "the most holy thoughts of antiquity and the deformity of human madness" (PB, 179/316–17/85). It is the "return to the Godhead, the originary source of all existence, unity with the absolute, annihilation of the self" (PB, 179/317/85). Its holiness derives from an ethical insight into the madness circulating within Being. Its madness derives from the belief that one has possessed this madness and that the brute facts of the heterogeneous orders of finitude dissolve into the night when all cows are black and all monads reflect the same thing in the same way.

The "dear friend" wondered about this destructive *Schwärmerei,* asking how the "cheerful spirit of a Spinoza could bear such a destructive and annihilating principle?" (PB, 179/317/86). How could Spinoza claim to have conceived God? Schelling responded that this was only possible through self-delusion. It was a delusion, "natural and unavoidable," derived from intuiting one's self. Self-intuition produced a necessary deception. Spinoza, a mortal, had remarked after all that "we feel and experience that we are eternal" (V, 23, scholium). This self-intuition *[Selbstanschauung],* this withdrawal into interiority, "this mysterious and wondrous faculty to withdraw out of the vicissitudes of time and into our Innermost, out of everything that would come from without and into the naked self where one can intuit under the form of Immutability the eternal in us" (PB, 180/318/87).

Schelling located in the act of self-reflection an antinomic conjunction of phenomenal and noumenal orders. The phenomenal I finds itself also on the threshold of its noumenality. The 'I am I' is always, as Fichte had also clearly seen, a delusion because the ego-predicate is already the result of the subject's free judgment. I am always more than whatever I construe myself to be. My ideality, a fissure in my phenomenality (or reality), is an aesthetic or ethical intuition of my inexhaustibility in a concept or an image. 'I am I' denotes a fissure conjoined by the copula. I, as an inexhaustible ideality, am I, as a phenomenal reality. Contrary to Descartes' first principle, the thinking subject cannot orient itself to itself by coinciding with itself as its own object. The aesthetic intuition is not a return to a lost purity, nor can it orient itself to its own ground. This is the fanatical delusion of *Schwärmerei,* that is, dogmatism at its self-annihilating purest. Dogmatism would take the nothing as an object of thought for a thinking subject. It is rather a rediscovery of thinking's tragic stain, its inheritance of a crime that rationality, by its very nature, has always already committed. "Only a *restricted* reality is an actuality for us" (PB, 184/324/94).

In this sense, Spinoza's deception is his awareness that I, as an attribute, necessarily ensconced in finite modes, am also eternal, as an expression of freedom. This "am" does not, as Spinoza's language implies, demarcate a harmony between finite orders and infinite orders. The I *am* I also expresses a struggle. If I wholly affirm God, then I must utterly discount myself. If I wholly affirm myself, then I discount God. Yet when I allegedly melt into the divine center, I do not vanish. I am still somehow myself, albeit a self aporetically in the center. "Hardly could a mystic think of himself as annihilated had he not always again thought of his own self as the substrate of the annihilation. This necessity always still to think of oneself helped all *Schwärmer* and it also helped Spinoza. When he intuited himself as *submerged,* he still intuited himself. He could not think of himself as *annihilated* without at the same time thinking of himself as existing" (PB, 181/319–20/89).

In a footnote to this discussion, Schelling argued that although "we can never be rid of our own I," this is due not to our exclusive status as determinate beings, but to "the absolute freedom of our essence." The power of this freedom is such that "the *I* in us is not a *thing* nor a *matter* that is capable of being objectively determined." Yet, in a way, I *am* nothing. *I have the being of nothing.* Hence, I am not utterly nothing nor am I just myself. This contradictory self-expression of the I, such that there is always a "necessity to rescue the I from every objective determination and yet always still to think of *oneself,*" can also be thought through "two contradictory although very common experiences" involving the idea of death and nonbeing. We sometimes associate "pleasant feelings" with these ideas, and we sometimes associate just the opposite. The association of pleasure with the idea of nihility and death presupposes that we will somehow continue to be without having being. We must presuppose ourselves as somehow still continuing to be—albeit in nonbeing. I would have the being of death, even though death is that which does not allow me to possess it or anything else.

This contradiction is also the source of my anxiety before death. Schelling remarked that Lawrence Sterne's quip that "I'd be a fool to fear you, death! As long as *I am, you* are *not,* and when *you are, I* am *not!*" would only make sense if I could think nonbeing adequately. This expresses the *hubris* of all *Schwärmer* who implicitly imagine that they have both themselves and death. "But I worry that I will still be when I am no more." My nihility is the source of my hope and my anxiety precisely because I think of it as *my* nihility. Hamlet's paralysis, "to be or not to be," expresses the aporia of my freedom. If I die, I may escape my miserable life, but I may still be as nothing. Freedom is always intuited by and through a determined self. It is my expansion into the absolute or it is my dissolution: "I will gladly not exist, only I want not to feel my non-being." Or, as Schelling recounted the Kantian Baggesen's "witty" commentary on Sterne's claim: "I fear only the lack of an expression of existence" (PB, 181–82/320/89–90).

The dogmatic Spinoza, the Spinoza that would claim to have understood death, the Spinoza that does not feel that "I am eternal" but rather fuses with eternity itself, seems at odds with the practice of his own text. Despite the equation of beatitude with the absolute passivity to an immutable order of Being, there is the "enthusiastic" Spinoza who intuited the substantial freedom

indwelling within all modal structures. Quoting the final proposition of the *Ethics,* Schelling remarked that "beatitude is not the reward of virtue but virtue itself!" (V, 42). Perhaps it was not so much that Spinoza's I lost itself in the absolute, but that his "enthusiasm *[Begeisterung]*" came from thinking that "his personality *expanded*" into the absolute. At this point, a figure of Spinoza emerges, complete with its necessary deception, that expresses the irresolvable struggle between the finite and the infinite. On the one hand, Spinoza has dared construe an objective thought of Being in its self-annihilating purity. Absolute stoicism would return the ~I back to the unrestricted and formless fires of the I, uniting it with limitless activity. Yet Spinoza is also somehow still Spinoza.

Hence, such complete stoicism is never possible. "We awaken out of the intellectual intuition as out of the state of death. We awaken through reflection, that is, through the forced return to ourselves" (PB, 185/125/94). If Bataille is right that we want as much as death as possible while remaining alive, then so long as we live, we have always deceived ourselves and cheated death.[21] We seek the supposed Golden Age from which our very being is a Fall. By virtue of being, we have been cast out of the absolute, left with scant intuitions of a beatific Golden Age that is unencumbered by the obstacles of language and things. The impossible recovery of this Golden Age is now the dream of all *Schwärmer* and dreamers, the "cabalists, the Brahmins, the Chinese philosophers, and the modern mystics" who reify the absolute into an objectless object (PB, 185–86/326/95–96).

The author, however, reminds his "dear friend" of Lessing's perhaps scandalous confession that "with the idea of an eternal Being is associated a representation *[Vorstellung]* of an eternal boredom which would give him anxiety and pain." Or, Lessing's other blasphemy: "I would not want beatitude for anything in the world" (PB, 186/326/96). Boredom results from the nostalgic return to the Golden Age in which the adventure is over and freedom succumbs altogether to its limits.

The ninth letter begins with the author responding to his "true friend's" puzzlement over the difference between dogmatism and idealism. How does criticism avoid the *Schwärmerei* of dogmatism? It would merely be another kind of dogmatism if "it attempts to represent the ultimate goal as attainable" (PB, 186/327/96). "If an activity that is no longer restricted by objects and that is fully absolute is not accompanied by consciousness; and if unlimited activity is identical with absolute rest; and if the highest moment of Being is right on the border of not-Being, then criticism goes the way of self-annihilation just as much as dogmatism does" (PB, 186/327/96–97). This would be the night when all cows are black and "*my* reality disappears into eternity" (PB, 186/327/97).

However, criticism and dogmatism move toward the same goal, the absolute, from opposite directions. Dogmatism seeks to dissolve the subject into an absolute object, and idealism seeks to dissolve the object (~I) into an absolute subject (I). The dogmatist, being happy, acts morally. The idealist acts morally in order to find happiness. They move towards a goal that allows itself, as does death itself, to be thought in contradictory directions.

Dogmatism is a distilled form of stoicism in which one moves from freedom to necessity by relinquishing subjective differences and attempting to affirm passively an absolute necessity. However, as Schelling suggested with Spinoza, the *amor intellectualis dei* is always the love of *my* eternity and anxiety before *my* dissolution. Hence the stoic, a metaphysician who strives for an abstraction free from all sensuality, "became a physicist because his abstraction from all sensuality could only happen gradually in time" (PB, 188/329/99). The spinozistic-stoic physicist must contend with the perpetual *regressus* of the *über etwas hinaus* structure. Idealism, on the other hand, is a distilled form of Epicureanism in which one proceeds from the opposite direction. Epicures do not strive for independence from the world but rather throw themselves into the arms of the world (PB, 188/329/99). The epicure attempts to satisfy the demand of freedom by satisfying all sensuous needs through consuming as much of life as possible. Once is never enough. There are always new places to go, new people to meet, new hats to wear, new lovers to seduce, and new languages to learn. But the radical physicality of the epicures led them to become "metaphysicians because their task, the successive satisfaction of all needs to achieve beatitude, was infinite." Such desire is insatiable, although it is predicated on the deception that if one consumes voraciously, eventually one will have enough. Yet there are always more needs to satisfy in this *progressus ad infinitum.* However, unlike dogmatism, criticism never "sets up the final goal as realized (in an object) or as realizable (in any single point of time)." Criticism addresses a goal that is nowhere in particular and deferred as always still to come. As such, "criticism must consider the final goal only as the object of an *infinite* task" (PB, 189/331/102). The work of criticism is never done. It remains perennially underway. If the goal "becomes an object of knowledge," it "stops being an object of freedom." When this transpires, "philosophy is surrendered to the terrors of *Schwärmerei*" (PB, 189/331–32/102). Criticism and dogmatism differ not in object but in "approach to it" (PB, 190/332/103).[22]

Spinoza and beatific dogmatists fit the mold of the stoic-metaphysician-physicist. Fichte and the idealists in general fit the mold of the epicurean physicist-metaphysician. Taken together, they express the opposing and aporetic directions of the Whole. "Absolute freedom and absolute necessity are identical" (PB, 189/330–31/101). This is not to say that they are *einerlei,* that is, that they belong to the same kind or are the same things. They are aporetic potencies of the Same (the A^3), that is, of Difference. Belonging together, one can say that they are not just two or, as Schelling later put it, that they are "indifferent."

In the tenth and final letter, the struggle between freedom and necessity as an expression of this indifference emerges in the figure of a tragic, Promethean Spinoza. No longer only stoically passive to the manifestation of

divine causality in an absolute object, the tragic hero affirms freedom also by "struggling against" freedom "and thus to go under" (PB, 192/336/106). Not only does the author agree with his friend that one expresses one's freedom by struggling against "an objective power," but he also agrees that the representation of this contradiction "long disappeared from the light of reason, must be preserved as a possibility for art—for the highest in art" (PB, 192/336/106). Art, in this case Greek tragedy, can present a contradiction that would otherwise offend modern reason. "It has often been asked how Greek reason could tolerate the contradictions of their tragedy. A mortal, determined by grim fate *[Verhängnis]* to be a criminal and, struggling against this fate, is horribly punished for a crime that was a work of fate" (PB, 192/336/106). What makes this bearable? The reason is found "in the fight of human freedom with the power of the objective world in which the mortal, because this power is a superior power or a *fatum,* necessarily succumbs yet still must be punished for succumbing because he did not succumb *without a struggle*" (PB, 192/336/106). Not only did Oedipus, for example, succumb to a greater power; Oedipus was punished for having struggled against the superior power that eventually overwhelmed him. "That the criminal, who succumbed to the superior power of fate, was still punished was recognition of human freedom. It was the *honor* due to freedom" (PB, 193/336/107). In Oedipus, one finds the circulation of both stoic physics and epicurean metaphysics. Each monad, stoic annihilation and epicurean desire, reflects sublime indifference in its own contradictory way. "It was a *great* thought to bear the punishment for an unavoidable crime and through the loss of one's freedom precisely to prove this freedom and to go under with an explanation of free will" (PB, 193/337/107).

III

The *Letters* set out to present a "symbol" of freedom and they end with a Promethean monad that expresses the coupling of freedom and necessity. A symbol of freedom, that is, the presentation of that which is not of the order of presentation, involves a form that ironically and indirectly evokes its opposite, freedom.[23] The symbol is the contradictory presence of an absence. As such, its presence is an hypocrisy. In a phrase from the 1802–1803 *Philosophy of Art,* Schelling remarked that the symbol "in its finitude simulates the infinite *[in seiner Endlichkeit die Unendlichkeit heuchelt]*" (§65, V, 462). *Heucheln* denotes hypocrisy, feigning, and simulation. The infinite can only present itself through a kind of forgery. Symbols are noble lies, the ineluctable mendacity of divine poetry.

Still, the question remains: How does Schelling move from Kant's subjective idealism, which views the freedom of nature as a projection of human freedom, to a philosophy of nature and a philosophy of art in which subjectivity is

the freedom indwelling in the necessity of nature and the artwork? For Schelling, the productivity of the artist parallels the free productivity of nature. By productivity, what Schelling named ποίησις and *Poesie,* Schelling does not mean the pursuit of a particular craft. Poetry is an expression of freedom and, as such, cannot be practiced, learned, enacted upon demand, or said to have possessed its goal in advance. It is the "unconscious" in production which "can only be innately born through the free grace of nature" (TI, 289/223–24).

Nature is the living and "breathing" progression of ποίησις, freedom's free restriction of itself as well as the implication of necessity in the progression of freedom. In like fashion, artistic activity is the free play of genius that participates in the production of art within the life of the cosmic poem. Ποίησις, both cosmic and artistic, is production but not in the sense of constructing something complex out of simpler elements. It is production ex nihilo in the sense of producing even simple things out of no thing. Hence, the "fundamental character of the artwork is an unconscious infinity" (TI, 290/225) and therefore the artwork is the hypocritical appearance of sovereign playfulness. Schelling was clear about this in the *System of Transcendental Idealism:*

> This immutably Identical [subject expressed as object or freedom expressed as necessity], which no consciousness can reach and which only emanates back out of the product, is for the producer precisely what destiny is for the actor, that is, a dark, unknown power that brings the complete or the objective to the patchwork of freedom. Like each power, which through our free action and without our knowing realizes unimagined goals against our will, is called destiny, so is the Incomprehensible, which brings the objective to consciousness without the assistance of freedom and to a certain degree opposed to it and in which what eternally flies from itself is united in this production, designated by the obscure concept of *genius.* (TI, 286–87/222)

Schelling established a parallel relationship between the playing out of destiny for the actor and the play of genius for the producer of works. Destiny is the living manifestation of freedom in the world of the actor. Genius is the translation of freedom ("what eternally flees from itself") into a product. Both relationships, Prometheus' appeal to the sublime mysteries of Moira as well as the artist's production of form ex nihilo, are relationships to the "dark unknown power" immanent in even the coldest destinies. The conspiracy of life is a complicated poem that is writing itself. The artist, in creating, becomes, without so choosing, a daimonic vehicle of production. The tragic hero is, like all beings, destined and, as such, expresses the freedom indwelling in such a destiny. The artist is enthused or inspired, and the product of this genius is the necessary product of this relationship with the divine.[24] Such inspiration indicates a coming together with a dark ground

from which one had already been separated, and hence the artist in creating brings together what in nature is already together.[25]

Schelling expanded upon this in the *Philosophy of Art* lecture course. There are two monads or *Einheiten* held together in the work of art. The first "expresses itself" as "sublimity, that is, the imagination *[Einbildung]* of the infinite into the finite" (§65, I/5, 461). The sublime is the transition or explication or expression of supreme substance as a monad.[26] The monad is not the sublime itself but a "symbol" of the sublime:

> In the Great as such there is nothing infinite at all, only in it as reflection of true infinity. The intuition of the sublime then emerges when the sensuous intuition of the greatness of the sensuous object is found to be out of proportion and now the true infinite becomes evident for which this merely sensuous infinite becomes a symbol. The sublime is in this respect a subjugation of the finite whose infinity *lies* because of the true sublime. (§65, I/5, 462)

The sublime symbol is an always mendacious [*sie lügt* and *sie heuchelt*] and never adequate proxy of an ideal that will never arrive. It is only "glimpsed" through the "mirror" of that which Schelling, following Schiller, called its "relative greatness" (§65, I/5, 462). Furthermore, as both Dieter Jähnig and Jean-François Courtine rightly concur, Schelling located a sublime monadology not, as did Kant in the third *Critique,* in human subjectivity, and not in an allegedly objective *Naturphilosophie,* but in the imagination of human Being itself.[27]

For Schelling, the sublime took the formless form of what Hesiod in the opening lines of the *Theogony* named Chaos, the yawning gap. "Chaos is the fundamental intuition of the sublime because we interpret the mass that is too big for sensuous intuition like the sum of blind forces that are too powerful for our physical power. They are only in the intuition of chaos and only in this respect become for us a symbol of the infinite" (§65, I/5, 465). Chaos, furthermore, is not "the mere negation of form but formlessness in the highest and absolute form and vice versa: the highest and absolute form in formlessness" (§65, I/5, 465). This absolute form, this mendacious presence of unrestricted possibility, this "unboundedness," is inconceivable and, as such, an "aesthetic intuition" (§65, I/5, 466).

Tragedy is an affirmation of the holding together of the real and the ideal in the self-organizing movement of Being. The tragic figure is the lover of chaos who capitulates to nature, the real or the dogmatic, yet "remains simultaneously victorious in her inner nature":

> Necessity appears rather in an immediate struggle with the will itself and combats it on its own ground. Aeschylus's Prometheus does not suffer merely because of *external* pain, but rather much more deeply in his inner feeling of injustice and oppression; his suffering does not express itself as subjection, since it is not fate but rather the tyranny of the new ruler of the gods that causes this suffering. It expresses itself rather as defiance, as rebellion; freedom *triumphs* over necessity precisely because in this feeling of his own *personal* suffering nonetheless only the *universal* rebellion against the unbearable dominion of Jupiter motivates him. Prometheus is the archetype of the greatest human inner character, and thereby also the true archetype of tragedy. (I/5, 708/261)[28]

The presentation of tragedy as a way of unifying what is already unified in nature also brings Schelling into proximity with Hölderlin. As the latter sympathetically maintained in *Über den Unterschied der Dichtarten* (1799), the tragic poem is "according to its basic tone *idealistic,*" a caesura of the speculative, and, as such, it "must rest on an intellectual intuition which can be nothing other than this unity with everything that lives. It cannot be felt by the restricted disposition *[vom dem beschränkteren Gemüte]* that in its highest endeavors can only have a premonition of it. It can only be known by spirit" (IV, 277). Oedipus' fall derives from his faith in reason and his initial lack of intellectual intuition.

In suffering the contradiction of tragic presentation, one glimpses the incomprehensible ground of action. In his "Remarks on *Oedipus*" (1803), Hölderlin argued that "in the most extreme limits of suffering there is nothing more than the conditions of time and space" (V, 220). Hölderlin shared Schelling and Hamann's metacritique of Kant, in which the pure forms of intuition obscure their own transcendental conditions and thereby obscure the conspiracy of time and space. Beyond the pure forms, "God is present in the figure of death."

Both Schelling and Hölderlin seem to have been in accord about the triadic presentation of subject and object, that is, that they are never resolved into a logical identity[29] but are held together in the disequilibrium of the conspiracy. Hölderlin presented tragedy as the tertium quid by which God and the person are held together as infinitely sundered. "The presentation of the tragic is especially based on the enormous *[das Ungeheure],* on how God and the person mate and on how the innermost of the person and the power of nature become one without limit in wrath. It conceives itself as a becoming one without limit by purifying itself through separation without limit" (V, 219–20).[30] Although when left to itself it risks impoverishing the person, the unbridgeable separation between God and the person is also a prophylactic. It protects one from a direct experience of the monstrosity *(das Ungeheure)* that is the ground of life. The German *Ungeheuere,* the uncanny, the monstrous, the unfamiliar, is in the privative form, although the positive stem, *das Geheure,* is no longer in use. According to the Kluge, *das Geheure* comes from the Middle

High German *gehiure,* gentle or comfortable, which itself originally denoted "belonging to the same settlement." Hence, one might infer that the *Ungeheure* has no home of its own and belongs nowhere and hence errantly roams. It is the utopian coming of Dionysus, that monstrous caesura of the speculative. As in the seventh strophe of *Wein und Brot,* the poets follow "like the Wine God's holy priests which wander from land to land in holy night."

In the *Philosophy of Mythology* lectures, Schelling made a similar point about the *das Unheimliche* and its relationship to the emergence of the Homeric world. Not only does *unheimlich* denote the "uncanny" in the sense of what is not at home and hence what is unfamiliar and unsettling, it also speaks of the coming forth of what in itself should have remained concealed.

> The pure sky that hovers over Homeric poetry was first able to extend over Greece after the dark and darkening power of that uncanny *[unheimliches]* principle (for one calls "uncanny" all that which should have remained in secret *[im Geheimnis],* in concealment and latency, but which has nonetheless stepped forward). That œther which forms a dome over the Homeric world was first able to spread itself out after the power of that uncanny principle, which dominated in earlier religions, was precipitated down in the Mystery. (II/12, 649)[31]

The Strange is the origin of the Familiar and what has no home is the origin of every home.

In the turn to the tragic work of art as a symbol of nature, Schelling and Hölderlin also presaged Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* (1871).[32] Already in the Berlin lectures on the *Philosophie der Offenbarung* Schelling spoke of "the secret of true poetry," that holding together of sublime silence and beautiful articulation, as being "simultaneously drunk and sober. This is what distinguishes Apollonian enthusiasm from Dionysian" (II/14, 25). Nietzsche's text, by his own account, wore the *"perpetuum vestigium,"* the perpetual vestige, of "a union of the Apollonian and the Dionysian" (BT, 53). Although Nietzsche spoke of this "union" as an *Aufhebung,* it was not the resolution of this contrary forces in a higher synthesis but rather a "duplicity *[Duplizität],*" a "continuing struggle" with "only periodic, intervening reconciliation," an "open discord," and a "monstrous antithesis *[ungeheurer Gegensatz]*" and a "pairing" (BT, 33). Apollo and Dionysus were "two artistic impulses woven into each other" (BT, 81).

On the one hand, Dionysus, the "womb of all" and the "*Übermaß* [enormity] of nature," can be met only as already withdrawn behind one of its innumerable guises. An unprotected encounter with the naked Dionysus, shed of its "protective" clothing or "healing" clothing, is madness or death. On the other hand, Apollonian representation or "art" clothes one in a protective garb from the "pathological effect" while at the same time insuring that "life is possible and worthy of living" (BT, 35). The Apollonian veil protects one getting

too close to the blind madness that Heidegger once attributed to Hölderlin: "*Die übergroße Helle hat den Dichter in das Dunkel gestoßen.* The enormous brightness thrust the poet into the dark."[33] Just as the "dark colored flecks" protect the eyes from the sun *(die übergroße Helle),* the veil of beauty acts as the "sparkling flecks for the healing of eyes injured by horrible night" (BT, 67). Therefore the "metaphysical joy in the tragic is a translation of the instinctive, unconscious Dionysian wisdom into the language of images" (BT, 104).[34] Yet tragedy is much more than a prophylactic. It extends itself to the sublimity of destiny. As Derrida argued, "To think the closure of representation is to think the tragic: not as the representation of fate, but as the fate of representation. Its gratuitous and baseless necessity."[35]

IV

Alles, was tief ist, liebt die Maske.
Everything profound loves masks.
—Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*[36]

Schelling, as a "living counterpart" to Spinoza, discovered Spinoza's "ethical" insistence upon the ideality of bodies:

> However, nobody as yet has determined the limits of the body's capabilities: that is, nobody as yet has learned from experience what the body can and cannot do, without being determined by mind, solely from the laws of its nature in so far as it is considered as corporeal. For nobody as yet knows the structure of the body so accurately as to explain all of its functions, not to mention in the animal world we find much that far surpasses human sagacity, and that sleepwalkers do many things in their sleep that they would not dare when awake;—clear evidence that the body, solely from the laws of its own nature, can do many things at which its mind is amazed. (III, 2, scholium)[37]

Schelling discovered Spinoza's ideality of bodies, although Schelling knew that the ideality of bodies extends to all of the bodies of nature, to all corporeal expressions of the world anima. Nature, the infinite complication of bodies, expresses an animistic soul that cannot be subsumed by the intellect. Schelling, along with Goethe and Spinoza, inaugurated one of the first radically articulated deep and corporeal ecologies of Western modernity. Nature, as an endlessly creative expression that results from the yoking together of God and Being, *naturans* and *naturata,* marks a third, nature as the self-organizing, demiurgic imagination.[38] Schelling outlined such an ecology in his 1797 *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur (Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature)* as follows:

> The real side of this eternal act is revealed in nature; Nature in itself, or eternal nature, is spirit born into the objective, the essence of God introduced into form, so that only *in Him* does this introduction immediately conceive the other unity. Phenomenal nature, on the other hand, is the imagination *[Einbildung]* of essence in form appearing as such or in particularity, and hence is eternal nature, so far as it takes on for itself a body, and so presents itself through itself as particular form. Nature, in so far as it appears as nature, that is, this *particular* unity, is therefore as such already *outside* of the absolute, not nature as the absolute act of knowledge itself *(Natura naturans)*, but Nature as the mere body or symbol thereof *(Natura naturata)*. (PN II, 67/50)

Philosophy will not satisfy itself with a mere reflection upon nature as if nature were an object facing the inquiring subject and, as such, for the thinker to master through scientific research and reflection. Schelling denigrated such reflection as a "spiritual sickness" (PN II, 13/11) in which nature is negated through determination. The freedom immanent within Nature is "immeasurable," calling us even "to pray to the veiled goddess."

For Schelling, the ground of nature resists all objectification. Thinking can no more master the ideality of nature than a particular constellation or Apollonian form of energy can be said to be formless Dionysian energy per se. Nature is "contradiction" that philosophy, if left to ratiocination, cannot tolerate and that only art can present *[darstellen]*. In the *System of Transcendental Idealism*, Schelling was quite explicit about the necessarily artistic character of the presentation and the aesthetic character of its founding intuition:

> If the aesthetic intuition *[ästhetische Anschauung]* is only the transcendental become objective, then it is self evident that Art is at the same time the single true and eternal *Organon* and document, which always and continuously verifies anew what philosophy cannot present externally, namely the Unconscious in acting and producing and its originary identity with consciousness. Art for this reason is the highest to the philosopher because it opens to him the most holy in which what is sundered in nature and history, and what in life and action, just as in thinking, must fly apart, burns as an eternal and originary unity in a flame. (TI, 299/231–32)

Schelling called for a new mythology in which the sciences are never completed, but rather "flow back" like "individual streams into the general ocean of *poesy*" (TI, 300/232), giving themselves over to no final determination, but exalting in the mystery of their ceaseless capacity to produce. The "return of science to poesy" (TI, 300/232), is the affirmation of the mystery of productivity in life's carnival of infinitely variegated masks. Artworks are like monads, reflecting the enigma of their origin, but in concrete, historical, and intimate ways. If one loses the singularity of the work, if one shields oneself from its sensations with abstract heuristics, then one is oblivious to the artwork's whisper of infinity. If one allows that infinity to roar so loud that it obliterates the artwork, then it can no longer whisper in its own, nonsubstitutable way. This is also the importance of Schelling's philosophical reflections on individual artworks. As Guy Davenport argues, "The arrogance of insisting that a work of art means what you think it means is a mistake that closes off curiosity, perception, the adventure of discovery."[39] Artworks are the possibility of radical new beginnings emerging from outside the range of any idea.

In this sense, the philosophy of art is at the same time the art of philosophy, the intertwining, born of wonder and love, of reflection and creation as well as concepts and percepts. This is not to say that philosophy merely reflects and that art merely creates. An artful philosophy—a philosophy full of aesthetic intuition (and therefore a nonreactionary philosophy)—also creates new concepts. Philosophical art—the complete work of art—reflects and marks the ground of creation in its singularly local way. An artful philosophy finds new ways to conceive heretofore unconceived percepts. A complete work of art, on the other hand, furnishes new percepts that nonetheless can mark their status as percepts. If one is not somehow already an artist, then one can not philosophize any more so than an artist can create without first being philosophical and in love with the wisdom that one will never formally possess.

Art and philosophy dance together and belong together without at the same time being *einerlei*, of the same kind. Otherwise, the painter would simply illustrate concepts and the philosopher would simply create without reflection. It is much harder to think that in reflection one also creates and that in creation one also reflects. It is harder still to think that in the work of art, both creative and reflective, one finds a way of loving all things and that in this moment, in the space that opens up between world and earth, bodies and soul, science and poesy, articulation and pregnant silence, Henry Miller was right to insist that "nothing is stale, flat and unpalatable unless it be our own power of vision."