philosophizing with the very nature of the thinker and with the historical accidents of his career. In his early writings, for example, more particularly those making up *Naturphilosophie,* one finds in painful abundance the evidences of hastily acquired knowledge, impatience of the hard labour of minute thought, over-confidence in the force of individual genius, and desire instantaneously to present even in crudest fashion the newest idea that has dawned upon the thinker. Schelling was prematurely thrust into the position of a foremost productive thinker; and when the lengthened period of quiet meditation was at last forced upon him there un­fortunately lay before him a system which achieved what had dimly been involved in his ardent and impetuous desires. It is not possible to acquit Schelling of a certain disingenuousness in regard to the Hegelian philosophy; and if we claim for him perfect disinterestedness of view we must accuse him of deficient insight.

At all stages of his thought he called to his aid the forms of some other system. Thus Fichte, Spinoza, Jakob Boehme and the Mystics, and finally, the great Greek thinkers with their Neoplatonic, Gnostic, and Scholastic commentators, give respectively colouring to particular works. But Schelling did not merely borrow, he had genuine philosophic spirit and no small measure of philosophic insight, and under all the differences of exposition which seem to constitute so many differing systems, there is one and the same philosophic effort and spirit. But what Schelling did want was power to work out his ideas methodically. Hence he could only find expression for himself in forms of this or that earlier philosophy, and hence too the frequent formlessness of his own thought, the tendency to relapse into mere impatient despair of ever finding an adequate vehicle for transmitting thought. It is fair in dealing with Schelling's development to take into account the indications of his own opinion regarding its more significant momenta. In his own view the turning points seem to have been—(1) the transition from Fichte’s method to the more objective conception of nature— the advance, in other words, to *Naturphilosophie* : (2) the definite formulation of that which implicitly, as Schelling claims, was in- volved in the idea of *Naturphilosophie,* viz. the thought of the identical, indifferent, absolute substratum of both nature and spirit, the advance to *Identitätsphilosophie;* (3) the opposition of negative and positive philosophy, an opposition which is the theme of the Berlin lectures, though its germs may be traced back to 1804. Only what falls under the first and second of the divisions so indicated can be said to have discharged a function in developing philosophy; only so much constitutes Schelling’s philosophy proper.

I. *Naturphilosophie.—*The Fichtean method had striven to exhibit the whole structure of reality as the necessary implication of self- consciousness. The fundamental features of knowledge, whether as activity or as sum of apprehended fact, and of conduct had been deduced as elements necessary in the attainment of self-consciousness. Fichtean idealism therefore at once stood out negatively, as abolishing the dogmatic conception of the two real worlds, subject and object, by whose interaction cognition and practice arise, and as amending the critical idea which retained with dangerous caution too many fragments of dogmatism; positively, as insisting on the unity of philosophical interpretation and as supplying a key. to the form or method by which a completed philosophic system might be constructed. But the Fichtean teaching appeared on the one hand to identify too closely the ultimate ground of the universe of rational conception with the finite, individual spirit, and on the other hand to endanger the *reality* of the world of nature by regarding it too much after the fashion of subjective\* idealism, as mere moment, though necessitated, in the existence of the finite thinking mind. It was almost a natural consequence that Fichte never succeeded in amalgamating with his own system the aesthetic view of nature to which the *Kritik of Judgment* had pointed as an essential component in any complete philosophy.

From Fichte’s position Schelling started. From Fichte he derived the ideal of a completed whole of philosophic conception and also the formal method to which for the most part he continued true. The earliest writings tended gradually towards the first important advance. Nature must not be conceived as merely abstract limit to the infinite striving of spirit, as a mere series of necessary thoughts for mind. It must be that and more than that. It must have reality for itself, a reality which stands in no conflict with its ideal character, a reality the inner structure of which is ideal, a reality the root and spring of which is spirit. Nature as the sum of that which is objective, intelligence as the complex of all the activities making up self-consciousness, appear thus as equally real, as alike exhibiting ideal structure, as parallel with one another. The philosophy of nature and transcendental philosophy are the two complementary portions of philosophy as a whole.

Animated with this new conception Schelling made his hurried rush to *Naturphilosophie,* and with the aid of Kant and of frag­mentary knowledge of contemporary scientific movements, threw off in quick succession the *Ideen,* the *Weltseele,* and the *Erster Entwurf. Naturphilosophie* has had scant mercy at the hands of modern science. Schelling had neither the strength of thinking nor the acquired knowledge necessary to hold the balance between the abstract treatment of cosmological notions and the concrete researches of special science. His efforts after a construction of natural reality are bad in themselves, and gave rise to wearisome and useless

physical speculation. Yet it would be unjust to ignore the many brilliant and sometimes valuable thoughts that are scattered through- out the writings on *Naturphilosophie*—thoughts to which Schelling himself is but too frequently untrue. Regarded merelyas a criticism of the notions with which scientific interpretation proceeds, these writings have still importance and might have achieved more had they been untainted by the tendency to hasty, ill-considered, a priori anticipations of nature.

Nature, as having reality for itself, forms one completed whole. Its manifoldness is not then to be taken as excluding its fundamental unity; the divisions which our ordinary perception and thought introduce into it have not absolute validity, but are to be interpreted as the outcome of the single formative energy or complex of forces which is the inner aspect, the soul of nature This we are in a position to apprehend and constructively to exhibit to ourselves in the successive forms which its development assumes, for it is the same spirit, though unconscious, of which we become aware in self- consciousness. It is the realization of spirit. Nor is the variety of its forms imposed upon it from without ; there is neither external teleology in nature, nor mechanism in the narrower sense. Nature is a whole and forms itself; within its range we are to look for no other than natural explanations. The function of *Naturphilosophie* is to exhibit the ideal as springing from the real, not to deduce the real from the ideal. The incessant change which experience brings before us, taken in conjunction with the thought of unity in productive force of nature, leads to the all-important conception of the duality, the polar opposition through which nature expresses itself in its varied products. The dynamical series of stages in nature, the forms in which the ideal structure of nature is realized, are matter, as the equilibrium of the fundamental expansive and con­tractive forces; light, with its subordinate processes—magnetism, electricity, and chemical action; organism, with its component phases of reproduction, irritability and sensibility.@@1

Just as nature exhibits to us the series of dynamical stages of processes by which spirit struggles towards consciousness of itself, so the world of intelligence and practice, the world of mind, exhibits the series of stages through which self-consciousness with its inevit­able oppositions and reconciliations develops in its ideal form. The theoretical side of inner nature in its successive grades from sensation to the highest form of spirit, the abstracting reason which emphasizes the difference of subjective and objective, leaves an unsolved problem which receives satisfaction only in the practical, the individualizing activity. The practical, again, taken in con­junction with the theoretical, forces on the question of the recon- ciliation between the free conscious organization of thought and the apparently necessitated and unconscious mechanism of the objective world. In the notion of a teleological connexion and in that which for spirit is its subjective expression, viz. art and genius, the sub­jective and objective find their point of union.

2. Nature and spirit, *Naturphilosophie* and *Transcendentalphilosophie,* thus stand as two relatively complete, but complementary parts of the whole. It was impossible for Schelling, the animating principle of whose thought was ever the reconciliation of differences, not to take and to take speedily the step towards the conception of the uniting basis of which nature and spirit are manifestations, forms, or consequences. For this common basis, however, he did not succeed at first in finding any other than the merely negative expression of indifference. The identity, the absolute, which underlay all difference, all the relative, is to be characterized simply as n*eutrum,* as absolute undifferentiated self-equivalence. It lay in the very nature of this thought that Spinoza should now offer himself to Schelling as the thinker whose form of presentation came nearest to his new problem. The *Darstellung meines Systems,* and the more expanded and more careful treatment contained in the lectures on *System der gesammten Philosophie und der Naturphilosophie insbeson­dere* given in Würzburg, 1804 (published in the *Sämmtliche Werke,* vol. vi. pp. 131-576), are thoroughly Spinozistic in form, and to a large extent in substance. They are not without value, indeed, as extended commentary on Spinoza. With all his efforts, Schelling does not succeed in bringing his conceptions of nature and spirit into any vital connexion with the primal identity, the absolute indifference of reason. No true solution could be achieved by resort to the mere absence of distinguishing, differencing feature. The absolute was left with no other function than that of removing all the differences on which thought turns. The criticisms of Fichte, and more particularly of Hegel (in the “ Vorrede ” to the *Phäno­menologie des Geistes),* point to the fatal defect in the conception of the absolute as mere featureless identity.

3. Along two distinct lines Schelling is to be found in all his later writings striving to amend the conception, to which he re­mained true, of absolute reason as the ultimate ground of reality. It was necessary, in the first place, to give to this absolute a *char­acter,* to make of it something more than empty sameness; it was necessary, in the second place, to clear up in some way the relation in which the actuality or apparent actuality of nature and spirit

@@@1 The briefest and best account in Schelling himself of *Natur­philosophie* is that contained in the *Einleitung zu dem Ersten Entwurf (S.W.* iii.). A full and lucid statement of *Naturphilosophie* is that given by K. Fischer in his *Gesch. d. n. Phil.,* vi. 433-692.