

Thought's Indebtedness to Being: From Kant's *Beweisgrund* to Schelling's *Quelle*

Sebastian Gardner

Introduction

Schelling's late attempt to provide the grounds for what he calls a positive philosophy poses well-known difficulties. These come to the fore when we attempt to get into focus the challenge he means to pose to Hegel's system, and to come to a definite decision regarding the argument between Schelling and Hegel – a philosophical opposition which is capable of appearing in very different lights: as ill-formulated on Schelling's part and evidencing a misreading of Hegel, who has already factored in at the outset the point which Schelling presses against him; or alternatively, as a decisive victory for Schelling, though perhaps only because it is based on a consideration so essentially simple that it does not require the heavy machinery he employs. Or yet again, it can seem so vertiginous as to defy resolution. Which may in turn lead us to ask if it is not perhaps merely a local dispute among absolute idealists reducible to a question of preference of vocabulary.

What follows is an attempt to broach this very large issue from a relatively narrow angle. While it may be possible to skip over the textual morass and engage with the central ideas in Schelling's late writings directly, it is also necessary to see how they are refracted in the texts of different periods. Schelling tended not to maintain a single constant perspective on what is constant in his thought, and his variations of perspective are not unmotivated. The discussion that follows is concerned with Schelling's project of laying the basis for a positive philosophy as it is presented in his 'Abhandlung über die Quelle der ewigen Wahrheiten' ('On the Source of the Eternal Truths'; hereafter, *Quelle*), a lecture delivered to the Berlin Academy of the Sciences in 1850. Let me begin by explaining the reason for this choice of text.

I will adopt the standard strategy of attempting to get a better understanding of the German Idealists by going back to Kant and working out how they mean to go beyond him, but I begin the story very far back, with one of Kant's pre-Critical writings, his 1763 *Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund zu einer Demonstration des Daseins Gottes* (*The Only Possible Basis for a Proof of the Existence of God*; hereafter, *Beweisgrund*). The first part of my discussion consists in an attempt to identify what I take to be the

vital and original insight contained in this text which I consider relevant to the late Schelling. It also on my account also anticipates, albeit dimly, Kant's conception of transcendental proof. The insight does not however lend itself easily to plain statement, and it is best brought out in contrast with an alternative reading of the text, which takes Kant at this period to be locked firmly into the framework of early modern rationalism. While the insight which I locate in the *Beweisgrund* is proto-Schellingian, the alternative reading is proto-Hegelian. The issue of how to read the *Beweisgrund* is consequently a kind of rehearsal of the argument of Schelling with Hegel. If my account is accurate, then two gains are made *vis à vis* Schelling: we have a point of entry into Schelling's late thought independent of the terms that he himself employs, and which are constantly shifting; and we have reason to think that Schelling's late philosophy has a deep Kantian root and cannot be understood merely as an abreaction to Hegel or to his own earlier Identity Philosophy. With these aims in mind, I will keep the discussion as unencumbered as possible by holding aside the many other concepts and themes in late Schelling that would otherwise crowd in.

The claim that Schelling's late standpoint is foreshadowed in the *Beweisgrund* is in itself systematic rather than historical. To show that there is also a historical dimension to the relation, though it is not one of actual influence, the second half of my discussion attempts to reconstruct the argument of the *Quelle*, in which the *Beweisgrund* itself makes no explicit appearance but where Schelling's focus is on its direct descendant, the Transcendental Ideal of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Concentrating on this single text of course leaves much hanging and does not allow the *Quelle* to be integrated into a bigger picture of Schelling's late philosophy, but its compendary character allows the basic shape of Schelling's late thought to emerge with particular distinctness, in terms moreover that make especially clear Schelling's respect for the *explananda* of philosophical rationalism and his remoteness from irrationalist ineffabilism. It is also distinguished by its being Schelling's last public statement of his position. This affords the narrative satisfaction of allowing a long arc to be drawn from the first seed of transcendental philosophy to the last word, chronologically speaking, of German Idealism. Since on my interpretation, the point to which the *Quelle* argues that we are led by reflection on the basic intelligibility of the world corresponds to the insight contained in Kant's *Beweisgrund*, while also showing how much more is contained in it than Kant had supposed, to follow the arc is not to merely turn full circle.

Rather, as it has been said, in arriving where we started we come to know the place for the first time.

I Kant's *Beweisgrund*

In the Second and Third Reflections of Section One of the *Beweisgrund*, having rejected the traditional ontological argument,¹ Kant tries to supply what the book's title promises, a (new) proof of God's existence. Kant's God is that of theism, but here at the beginning only God's necessary existence is at issue; other attributes are added later.²

Omri Boehm has provided a helpful reconstruction of Kant's argument:³

B1 Internal possibility (the essence of a thing) depends on formal and material possibility.

B2 Formal possibility (the logical consistency between a concept's predicates) depends on material possibility (the predicates themselves).

B3 Material possibility is grounded in something actually existing.

B4 Necessarily, something is possible.

B5 Necessarily, something exists. [From B3 and B4.]

B6 There is a being that exists necessarily.

B7 There can be only one necessary being.

Boehm maintains that in order to complete this argument Kant relies (tacitly) on the Principle of Sufficient Reason (PSR). The major importance of this, according to Boehm, is that it shows Kant to have put himself under pressure to complete the inexorable movement compelled by the PSR to Spinoza's necessitarian substance monism – making the *Beweisgrund*, with regard to its true import, an exposition and defence of Spinozism. Kant's realization that he had denied the reality of freedom, according to Boehm, played no small part in his development of the Critical philosophy as an antidote to Spinoza.

Given the Spinozistic character of Schelling's reception of Kant's philosophy almost from the moment of his first exposure, Boehm's narrative, which pictures Kant's philosophy as formed in the immediate shadow of Spinoza, holds special interest in the context of Schelling. Boehm is doubtless right to suggest that the *Beweisgrund* sails

uncomfortably close to the wind. Nonetheless, it seems to me that what is most interesting in the work is not Spinozistic.

Appeal is made to the PSR, Boehm argues, at several crucial points in Kant's argument.⁴ I will take in turn those that matter for present purposes, and try to show in each case that Boehm's reconstruction in terms of the PSR does not help Kant, who in any case does not stand in need of the principle.

(i) Boehm claims that the PSR is required first in order to establish the *dependence of possibility on actual being*, i.e., B3. Something must actually exist, otherwise 'the fact that something is possible will not be ultimately explained', contrary to the PSR.⁵

The requirement that modal facts supervene on existents seems however a principle separate and independent from the PSR. If the PSR is stated in standard form, as the requirement that nothing be (thought to be) the case without (its being thought that there is) sufficient reason for its being the case, i.e., simply as requiring whatever truths, knowable or unknowable, would answer 'why?' questions or explain states of affairs, then it does not *of itself* tell us what ontological status, if any, is to be assigned to whatever qualifies as a sufficient reason.⁶ And if the PSR in its raw unelaborated form does not tell us what is required to qualify as a *Grund*, then (a) its application to possibility does not tell us whether or not *Gründe* have their sufficient reason in the *existence* of any being, and (b) wherever our knowledge that the material component of possibility is (and must be) *given as existing* might come from, it cannot be from the PSR alone. If so, then the groundedness of possibility in actual being, B3, is logically presupposed by any ontologically significant employment of the PSR, not derived from it. To object that making the PSR ontologically neutral in this manner destroys its philosophical significance would be to beg the question, for what is at issue is precisely whether or not philosophical significance demands ontological commitment.⁷

(ii) Second, regarding the *necessity that something be possible*, B4, Boehm reconstructs Kant's argument as follows: (1) the PSR requires that modal claims be fully explained; (2) absolute impossibility, if it were a modal fact, could not be explained; whence (3) the impossibility of absolute impossibility, i.e., B4.⁸

It is not clear however that something of the order of absolute impossibility can properly be required to submit itself for explanation or subjected to the PSR. Can a proposition which defines the limiting framework of modality can be taken as asserting a state of affairs?⁹ But even if it is granted that absolute impossibility would constitute

an *explanandum* demanding application of the PSR, it could satisfy the principle in a direct reflexive manner: if absolute impossibility obtained, then the pure modal fact *that nothing is possible* would sufficiently explain *why nothing is possible*. To resume the earlier point: If the notion of absolute impossibility is in some way absolutely repugnant, then the proper conclusion to draw may be simply that we are face to face here with the sheer ineliminability of possibility, in parallel with that of the truth of a formal contradiction.¹⁰ If so, then the ineliminability of possibility cannot be regarded as an *explanandum* to which the PSR may be applied, any more than it can be applied, presumably, to the necessity that there be sufficient reason for all that is really, extra-logically, the case.¹¹ To object that this would make the ineliminability of possibility a brute fact of the very sort that the PSR precludes, would overshoot the mark, since if the putative ineliminability of possibility counts as a brute fact, then so too must the putative fact of the necessity of the conformity of all things to the PSR, in which case the PSR must be declared contradictory and self-refuting.

Kant's own presentation of the case for B4, as I understand it, suffices as it stands.¹² His claim is that thinking manifests immediately the reality of possibility in a way similar to that in which, according to Descartes, it manifests the reality of a thinker, that is, without any inference from one existent to another. And if the reality of possibility is testified directly by our thinking, then no principle of thought, such as the PSR, is needed in order to rule out absolute impossibility. Kant's claim in B4 is therefore not that it is inconsistent to say that absolutely nothing is possible,¹³ rather absolute impossibility is excluded *before* we get to the point of being able to determine relations of logical (in)compatibility. The non-inferential immediacy of this being-presented-with-possibility, note, immunizes it against the objection that the contingency of the thinker's own existence makes the reality of possibility conditional: thought does not need to, and could not come to, first know of its own contingent existence, or occurrence, in order to then, as a further matter, become acquainted with the reality of possibility. The order is the opposite.

(iii) The PSR is required next according to Boehm in order to move from B5, the necessity that something should exist, to B6, the existence of *something that exists necessarily*.¹⁴

Again it seems doubtful that the PSR is required. It follows already, from the earlier conclusion that possibility enjoys non-contingent reality, that whatever being makes possibility possible (B5) must be considered, by virtue of its occupying that role,

to exist necessarily (B6). Possibility-grounding actual being cannot be thought to exist non-necessarily, for if it existed contingently, then it would be possible to *remove* it in thought, to think it away, which would be for thought to negate its own possibility. If the being which subvenes possibility is irremovable – if its non-existence is *unthinkable* – then it must be thought to exist necessarily.

The inference is open to challenge in so far as it involves a movement from a necessity pertaining to thought, to a necessity pertaining to what thought identifies as its ground, but it is neither obviously valid nor obviously invalid, and I suggest that it must remain in this condition of undecidedness for as long as our general understanding of the relation between these two species of necessity, which can be neither collapsed into one another nor absolutely dissociated, remains incomplete. We will return to this later.

These non-PSR reconstructions of Kant's inferences may be challenged, but they are not non-starters, and they agree with the text, in so far as the ('only possible') argument for God is clearly supposed to be contained in the analysis of possibility with which the Second Reflection begins. As I read Kant, he means to argue directly from (1) the account of possibility as having necessarily a material as well as a formal component, which must be given to thought, and given as existing, and from (2) the necessity of possibility which is implied immediately by mere thinking, to (3) the existence of a Necessary Being; where the new principle driving his proof operates along the dimension, not of relations between thoughts or elements within them, as do the PSR and the Principle of Non-Contradiction, but of (compatibility with and grounding of) the possibility of (its being true that) anything is being thought, or that thinking *can* take place, *at all*.¹⁵

Now this construal of the argument of Section One of the *Beweisgrund* will ring loud bells, since its fulcrum lies in consideration of what makes determinate thinking possible, where this refers to a type of grounding which is neither logical in the narrow sense (formal logic establishes only 'formal possibility') nor a matter of worldly causality – and exactly this is also of course the linchpin of what the Critical Kant calls transcendental proof, which operates on the basis of sheer possibility (now that of *Erfahrung*) and issues in synthetic *a priori* propositions. At a finer level of detail there is a parallel to be drawn between the impossibility of thinking away the material conditions for thought asserted in the *Beweisgrund*, and the irremovability and consequent necessity of space and time asserted in their metaphysical expositions in the Transcendental Aesthetic of the first *Critique*. What is most striking in the *Beweisgrund*

is the relative obliqueness of the necessity in thought that Kant wants to put to work: Kant's idea is not that we cannot think away our own existence or that of our thoughts – there is no necessity in the existence of either of those *objects* – but that we cannot think away *the situation of thinking's being possible*.¹⁶ This pure structure of thinkability is internal to thought and imposes itself on us with a distinctive type of necessity, which in the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant will try to account for immanently, but which in the *Beweisgrund* is taken to reveal the immediate anchoring of thought in reality, as no mere consideration of the agreement of concepts can do, and yet in a way which involves none of the mediation required for *a posteriori* cognition. This profoundly original element does not come to light when the text is read through Spinoza's eyes.

The notion that the *Beweisgrund* is genuinely distinguished from early modern rationalism with regard to its method is testified by Jacobi's ecstatic reception of the work recounted in his *David Hume* (1787),¹⁷ and its inspiration of the seminal ideas sketched by Herder in his 'Versuch über das Sein' (1763).¹⁸ That Kant would have had a very strong interest in uncovering a new *a priori* epistemic source independent of the PSR (and of the Principles of Identity and Non-Contradiction) also coheres with the misgivings about Wolff's use of the PSR that he had expressed in the *New Elucidation* (1755),¹⁹ and with the fact that, L. W. Beck tell us, the notion that possibility presupposes actuality 'had become almost a commonplace' by 1763.²⁰ It would be puzzling if Kant intended the *Beweisgrund* to do no more than merely redeploy a received idea.²¹ If on the other hand the *Beweisgrund* embodies a radical insight at a foundational level – with justification, in so far as we can see it to contain the seed of the transcendental turn – then the work's (considerable) ambition is explained.

The argumentative shortfall of the *Beweisgrund*, on the view I am offering, reflects no simple fallacy in Kant's reasoning but derives from uncertainty at the root of the argument, concerning what exactly it means for thought to recognize that there is something which it must conceive as having absolute but not logically necessary existence. It is reasonable to conjecture that Kant's dawning awareness of this limitation, which makes the argument of the *Beweisgrund* inconclusive – but does not mean that it is based on an outright mistake – added impetus to his formation of the Critical concept of a transcendental ground.

Boehm has another set of reasons for reading the *Beweisgrund* as Spinozistic, independent from the argument just discussed but also, it will transpire, significant for our understanding of the late Schelling.

Kant's affirmation of the absolute priority of being over possibility, and his attribution of necessary existence to being, raise acutely the question of what possibility *is*, of how it gets into the picture, seemingly in addition to being and its determinations; which lays the ground for the Spinozist to argue that we should deny it any such reality. Boehm suggests that this is how the *Beweisgrund* must be read,²² but the evidence of the text is that, whether or not his position can ultimately be defended against Spinoza's challenge, Kant's intention is to endorse the ontological model of Wolff, Baumgarten, and contemporaries such as Lambert and Mendelssohn, according to which a layer of *Realitäten*, or essences, is interposed between God and contingent existents, giving rise to the realm of possibility.²³ Kant distinguishes two ways in which possibility may be grounded:

The data of all possibility must be found in the necessary being *either as determinations of it, or as consequences* which are given through the necessary being as the ultimate real ground [Da die Data zu aller Möglichkeiten in ihm anzutreffen sein müssen, *entweder als Bestimmungen desselben, oder als Folgen*, die durch ihn als den ersten Realgrund gegeben sind.]²⁴

Though aware that the type of relation exemplified by 'consequences', *Folgen*, is less transparent than the simple inherence of 'determinations', *Bestimmungen*,²⁵ what Kant wants is some kind of supervenience, which will permit slack in the relation of possibilities to their ground.²⁶ As Kant argues the point: Provision must be made for 'real opposition' in what we find to be the case – e.g., opposing forces in a physical body, or the sensation of pain – and also for negations and defects – e.g., lack of the power of thought – for these are among the things whose possibility the Necessary Being must provide for. This can be done only if we avoid taking such items as indices of, i.e. as licensing inference to, either (a) 'logical contradictions', or (b) 'real opposition or positive conflict among its determinations'. The former would entail which contradictory predicates within the ground of possibility, and the latter would signal defectiveness in the Necessary Being.²⁷ What follows according to Kant is that (i) *not all* 'possible reality' is included among the determinations of the Necessary Being – certain realities do *not* exist in the Necessary Being *as* determinations thereof ('so können sie nicht insgesamt als Prädicate in ihm sein'); and (ii) certain negative states of affairs or defects 'depend upon' and are 'grounded in' the Necessary Being, with

respect to 'what is real in them', yet are not predicable of it.²⁸ The key notion therefore is that these other realities are given *through* the Necessary Being ('weil sie doch alle durch ihn gegeben sind'), and as such *belong* to it in some either direct or indirect sense, but are not given as *in* it in the manner of its properties.²⁹

Now it is certainly true that Kant offers in the *Beweisgrund* no positive theory of how possibility can non-reducibly supervene on being, so with respect to this requirement his account is at best incomplete. In the course of Kant's development, metaphysical issues of this sort are overtaken, and when we re-encounter the *Gedankengang* of the Second and Third Reflections in the Transcendental Ideal of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, we find its cogency maintained, while its conclusion has been stripped of ontological significance: Kant's claim is now that we are led from determinate thought of objects to the *mere idea* of an *ens realissimum*, just as we are led from experience in general to the idea of a transcendently free cause. This radical result has been achieved through, and it makes sense only in terms of, Kant's construction of an entirely new theory of thought, being, and possibility, in which sense experience has assumed the role of furnishing the *Data zu aller Möglichkeit* needed by thought; an account which we might interpret as sustaining the claim that the material component of thought must be *given to thought*, but as denying that it must be given *as existing*. It would not be much of an exaggeration to describe Schelling's philosophical development as an extended attempt to work out what is right and what is wrong in this innovation of Kant's.

II Schelling's *Quelle*

Officially Kant's *Beweisgrund* and Schelling's *Quelle* address different questions and pursue different tasks. The former seeks to prove the existence of God. The latter asks what constitutes the source of eternal or necessary truths. They also contrast with respect to their opening assumptions. Kant officially assumes nothing but logical necessity. As will be seen, Schelling assumes explicitly our knowledge of non-logical necessary truths. Their respective topics nonetheless bear closely on one another, for the *Beweisgrund* takes up a position on the grounding of necessary truths, and the *Quelle* returns an answer, if only implicitly, to the question of whether and how God's existence can be proved. What is important for present purposes, however, is something else, namely the shared use of reflection on modal notions to compel ontological

commitment. This forms the crux of the argument in both texts and allows us to understand Schelling's 1850 lecture as a critical *reprise* of Kant's attempt in 1763 to overhaul the traditional ontological argument.³⁰

Since the text is dense and not well studied,³¹ I will begin by sketching the course of the discussion in the *Quelle*, before proceeding to spell out its connection with the *Beweisgrund*.

In asking what constitutes the source of eternal or necessary truths, Schelling makes clear that he assumes such truths to concern necessities in things, not in our cognition alone: we are occupied not with 'what may be possible *for us*', but rather with 'what is possible *in itself* [*das an sich Mögliche*]'.³² One basis for Schelling's assumption is indicated later in the *Quelle* – the only alternative is a nominalism which leaves the world of contingent things 'opaque to reason and in active opposition to the concept'³³ – but behind it also lies his whole case, made in the 1790s, for transforming Kant's subjectivistic theory of empirical judgement into a realist *Naturphilosophie*. Schelling's choice of term, *Quelle*, suggests in addition that the origin we are seeking may perhaps reveal itself not to be a *Grund* in the sense of the PSR. In other words, it may prove to be neither a *ratio cognoscendi* nor a *ratio essendi*.

Mathematical truth (and the conformity thereto of objects in nature) provides according to Schelling a paradigm, but forms only a sub-class, of necessary truths, which he takes to include also natural necessities.³⁴ To ask for the source of eternal truths is thus also, Schelling explains, to ask for the source of essences in general, and to ask what makes contingently existing things possible in so far as they are determined by those essences – we are concerned with the possibility of the existence of, e.g., a particular plant *qua* its being a *plant*.³⁵ At stake, therefore, is the possibility of the world in all of its known intelligibility. Also at issue, consequently, is Kant's Critical *explanandum*, viz. the possibility of objective knowledge, though the function of human knowing is precluded from itself being the source that we are seeking. Whether accounting for the world's possibility in respect of the necessities which inhere in it leaves more to be said, and if so what that might be, is not discussed at the beginning of the *Quelle*, though it is of course where Schelling is headed.

Having made clear the great scope of the question, Schelling immediately states what appears to be, from where we stand in the history of philosophy, its uniquely correct answer: namely that given in Kant's concept of reason's idea of a highest being, the 'completely determinate concept [*Inbegriff*] of all possibilities' or *ens realissimum* of

the Ideal of Pure Reason.³⁶ Having stated Kant's theory, Schelling leaves it as it stands, as if it required no elaboration beyond a reminder that this entity also doubles as the intuitive intellect of the Third *Critique*.³⁷ That it does indeed demand further interpretation will emerge shortly. What Schelling tells us initially is just that it is the only possible answer as long as certain assumptions remain in place: 'This is the path of every pure or merely rational science [*der Weg aller reinen oder bloßen Vernunftwissenschaft*].'³⁸ It will transpire that Kant's answer is defective or at any rate incomplete, which means that those assumptions too must be overturned, and because Schelling's intention is not to merely leave a skeptical vacuum, it will also need to be explained what should be put in their place. In order to complete all of this, Schelling argues from the history of philosophy in the manner characteristic of his late works: critical reading of the historical sequence reveals concurrently the internal logic of its development and its final *aporia*, while also supplying the momentum that carries us forward to its resolution.

The first part of the text consists in a discussion of medieval and early modern accounts of necessary truth. The particular difficulty encountered here is that of explaining the relation of God to necessary truths. It may be wondered why, history aside, the question of the source of necessary truth should be taken up in a theological context, or if history must be our guide, then why we should not begin with the ancients. Obvious considerations are that God's existence is traditionally reckoned among the eternal truths, if not their very foundation, and that at a minimum it may be expected of an account of the source of necessary truth that it will be prove to be compatible with God's existence. Schelling's reason for taking theological reflection to provide the right starting point becomes clear as the historical discussion unfolds. Kant's Ideal of Pure Reason gives us the concept, if nothing more, of God, and although Kant himself holds that nothing *secures for us* its ontological significance, the Ideal is supposedly at least 'problematic', i.e., capable (in some non-epistemic sense) of having ontological significance. If we accept the Ideal as supplying the correct concept of the source of necessary truth, a question may therefore legitimately be raised concerning how (A) the Ideal *qua* playing its assigned role in our *Wissenschaft*, relates to (B) the Ideal *qua* actually existent. That the latter notion is coherent becomes clear when we reflect that God is conceived of as, if existent, then as existing with maximal actuality.³⁹ It needs therefore to be shown that these two 'aspects' of the Ideal – the Ideal as the totality-cum-

ground of necessary truth, and as God, as Schelling puts matters – can be seamlessly related in thought.

Once the simple assumption has been added that will and understanding belong to the structure of the Ideal, or must be involved in the derivation of the world from it,⁴⁰ we find ourselves in the context of early modern discussion of the issue. The problem here is well known. Schelling's distillation is as follows. Dependence on God's will (Descartes' claim) yields absurdity, for whatever results from a will can only be something *actual*, which would make mathematics *a posteriori*, in virtue of its then being dependent on *experience* of the relevant actuals. In any case Descartes' account must be faulty because (Schelling cites Bayle) the eternal truths which define God's own essence cannot themselves derive from his will.⁴¹ Independence from God's will through their relocation in the divine understanding (Leibniz's proposal) encounters the following problem. It must then be asked how divine understanding *relates* to (*verhält sich zu*) the eternal truths. If this understanding *determines* what is necessary from-and-out-of itself (*bestimmt von sich aus*), without being bound to anything, then it is divine will once again, but if it *discovers* the necessities (*findet sie vor, entdeckt sie*) as something distinct from itself and 'as already being there' (*als schon da seyende*), then something prior to divine understanding is presupposed.⁴²

From this point we move, surprisingly quickly, to a position recognizable as Hegel's.⁴³ What divine *Verstand* presupposes must have a different character from that of a divine faculty (*Facultät*), if an infinite regress is to be avoided. This can only mean that it must be 'itself the Universal', 'independent of everything individual, indeed even opposed to this'.⁴⁴ In other words, it must be eternal Reason, *ewige Vernunft*, whose laws divine understanding cannot overstep. And having come this far, a further move is inevitable: postulating two independent and mutually underivable beings, God and Reason, violates the *wissenschaftlich* demand for a single principle, and is also unnecessary, for we may 'affirm that God himself is nothing other than this eternal Reason'.⁴⁵ Schelling emphasizes that this reduction, far from coming out of the blue, had become all but fully explicit in the 'theological rationalism' of Wolff before receiving recent expression in 'the system in which Reason is all', i.e., Hegel's.⁴⁶

Now it may be wondered how this leaves us in relation to Kant, who appears to have been skipped over in Schelling's rehearsal of the historical sequence, oddly so in view of Schelling's initial hailing of his Ideal of Pure Reason. The answer is that, on the one hand, the claim of Kant's Ideal to provide the definitive formulation of the source of

necessary truths has been vindicated, as Schelling makes plain when he tells us that God has been reconceived as 'the stuff [*Stoff*], the material of all possibilities [*Materie zu allen Möglichkeiten*]'.⁴⁷ At the same time, one integral element of it has been eliminated, for this totality is no longer to be conceived as a (completely determinate) *individual*: rather it is universality through and through. What has emerged is that the two 'aspects' of the Ideal of Pure Reason are at odds with one another; we have learnt that there was an ambiguity in Kant's conception at the outset, which the post-Kantian development has brought into the open.

That this is so becomes clear, Schelling argues, when we ask about the 'real relationship' of (A) the Ideal *qua* Reason, to (B) the Ideal *qua* God, as opposed to their 'purely logical' relationship.⁴⁸ What entitles Schelling to treat these two relations as genuinely distinct is precisely the fact that, as has been seen, Kant's Ideal does not survive intact when it is translated, as *Wissenschaft* requires it to be, into the system in which 'Reason is all'. Posing this question allows Schelling to finally present his positive philosophy,⁴⁹ the transition to which is marked by his introduction of a new conceptual idiom.

The *logical* relationship of (A) to (B) is merely one of potentiality to actuality. Their *real* relationship must be represented thus:

That which comprehends all possibility, as itself merely possible [i.e. (A)], will be incapable of self-being [*selbst-Seyns*] and only be able to be in the mode of relating itself as mere material to another [i.e. (B)], which is its being and over against which it appears as that which is not through itself [*nur auf die Weise seyn können, daß es sich als bloße Materie eines andern verhält, das ihm das Seyn ist, und gegen das es als das selbst nicht Seyende erscheint*].⁵⁰

The real relation can therefore be cast in terms of identity or of subject-and-predicate: God *is* the Self-Being (*das selbst-Seyende*) of the *Inbegriff* of possibility, and he is the subject of which 'universal being' and 'all essences' must be predicated. But we can do so only on two strict conditions: First, that it is understood that '*he himself*' is not this totality': in *himself*, as the absolute individual (*das absolute Einzelwesen*), there is in him no '*whatness* [*kein Was*]', for he is the pure '*thatness* [*das reine Daß*] – *actus purus*'.⁵¹ And second, we must recognize being as having priority: God-*qua*-(B) is what causes God-*qua*-(A) to have *being*.⁵² As regards the 'why' question which this raises –

by virtue of what necessity does the *Daß* of God acquire its *Was*? – this is 'the final limit', 'that *beyond which one cannot pass*', and it constitutes God's freedom.⁵³ All that can be said is that, if God had no *Was*, if he were not at least a pre-determinate *Etwas*, then it would not be a truth that God *is*.⁵⁴ In this last respect, the ground-consequent relation is reversed: God-*qua*-(B) is *alethically* dependent on God-*qua*-(A).

In other texts, Schelling breaks down the copula by describing the same structure in terms of becoming. Represented thus, the relationship is again not linear but rather asymmetrically bi-directional: (A) becomes (B), and, by means of a different and subordinate mode of becoming, (B) becomes (A). The two modes of becoming are asymmetrically dependent on one another, like (A) and (B) themselves. Alternatively the structure may be represented mereologically: (A) and (B) produce a whole, and this whole which can also be regarded as having produced (A) and (B) as its parts or as having produced itself out of them, again by means of a different and subordinate mode of production.

These different ways of representing God's structure – either in terms of identity, or of becoming, or of mereology – are equally legitimate. The *Quelle* confines itself to the first because it is all that is required to address the specific problem that Schelling has in view in this text, the solution to which, he explains, consists in a oneness (*Eins-seyns*) or unity (*Einheit*) of thought and being, a necessity that 'whatever *Is* must also have a relation to the *concept*'.⁵⁵ This thesis of course recalls Hegel, and Schelling's own Identity Philosophy, but the formula has changed, and Schelling no longer glosses it as an *Identität*, since it has been found to turn on the asymmetry just described.⁵⁶ It nonetheless does the job of making intelligible the coordinate *Daß* and *Was* of the world, completing the task that Hegel had set himself, without the same nihilistic upshot.

The problem which Kant left unsolved in the *Beweisgrund*, of relating *Realitäten* to necessary being and accounting for the supervenience of possibility on being, has been solved in the *Quelle* through a reconception of what God (what Kant called 'necessary being') *is*. God may truly be said to exist necessarily, but not to consist *only* in necessary existence: God also exists *freely*, and without this freedom to exist, could not exist with necessity.⁵⁷

It is tempting to describe what Schelling is offering here, and more pronouncedly in other late texts, which discriminate between *Sein*, *das Seyende*, *das Überseyende*, *Seinkönnen*, etc., as a doctrine of multiple modes of being, but it needs to

be borne in mind that, on Schelling's account, these modes can be understood only (i) through and alongside one another, and (ii) as exemplified in one primordial case. Hence it seems better to say that the central thrust of Schelling's new conceptual figures is instead to complexify the (unitary) concept of being, in a revisionary way that shows it to have a shape which can be grasped only in terms of Schelling's model of differentiated moments, articulated on an axis which can be brought under no determinate concept, but which demands an interfoliation of logical and temporal vocabularies.⁵⁸ These novel conceptual figures are not self-justified, or available to philosophical reflection *ab initio*, rather we have been *forced* to construct and employ them, by the need to conceive God and the source of necessary truth in a way which avoids the otherwise inevitable reduction of All to Reason, and thence to Nothing.

Further clarifying Schelling's ontological revision would demand much more than can be supplied here, but one brief suggestion can be made as to how it may be viewed. Kant's concept of the intuitive intellect, which as noted earlier Schelling regards as intimately related to Kant's Ideal of Pure Reason, comes to be formulated by asking what cognition would be, if the finitude which defines (and constrains) human cognition were subtracted from it. We arrive thereby at an *inversion* of our own mode of cognition. Thus we form the concept of an intellect that begins with wholes and advances to cognition of parts, and so on. But it remains, on Kant's account, cognition which has for its (divine) subject the *form of judgement*, articulated in terms of subject and predicate. At any rate, for Kant it is only in the form of a total compression of intuition and concept that our representation of the intuitive intellect has any significance. Schelling's ontological innovation may be regarded as taking the further step of *inverting judgement*: we attempt to express a mode of cognition from which the form of judgement too has been abstracted. This further and strange-sounding step cannot be dismissed as a step too far, for again we have been *forced* to make it, in order to make sense of Kant's own highest Idea.⁵⁹ And what we encounter, having taken it, is according to Schelling not cognition as distinct from being, but the being to which it is indebted.

Putting Schelling's idea in this way recalls the insight contained, I argued, in Kant's *Beweisgrund*. So let me now spell out the relation of the two texts.

Both give expression to dissatisfaction with philosophical rationalism and some sympathy with empiricism: the *Beweisgrund* reflects Kant's appreciation of Crusius' objections to the Leibniz-Wolffian philosophy and of Newtonianism, while Schelling

has Hegel in his sights and had in his historical texts of the 1830s repeatedly gone over the opposition of empiricism and rationalism. But they proceed to opposite conclusions, since if Schelling is right, then the insight with the aid of which Kant attempted to make a running repair to rationalist metaphysics in fact points towards their final overcoming.

Schelling's view of Kant may be reconstructed as follows. Kant was right in the *Beweisgrund* to move from thought to being, but wrong to suppose that the being to which thought must move can be conceptualized simply as 'necessarily existing being'. In challenging this move – understood as an inference – the Critical Kant was justified, though wrong in turn to conclude that the only move that thought can make is to a mere *idea*. To that extent Kant's later ontological deflation of the *Beweisgrund*'s argument is in error.

The further implication of what Schelling argues in the *Quelle* is that the *Beweisgrund* does not avoid commitment to Spinozism, because the slack that Kant there assumes, between the unique necessary being and the *Realitäten* which supposedly supervene on it, cannot be sustained. Nor does the Critical philosophy avoid the necessitarian implications of Spinoza's system, for once the concept of the Ideal of Pure Reason has been formulated – unless it is checked by a reconsideration of the project of *Vernunftwissenschaft* of the sort that Schelling's late philosophy aims to supply – it will inevitably resolved itself into the contingency-denying, and ontologically nihilistic, system of Hegel.⁶⁰ What the Critical Kant relies on in order to block Spinozism is his doctrine of the transcendental ideality of time, its being a 'mere form of sensible intuition', which according to Kant allows worldly things to constitute their own order of mere 'appearance', insulated from the top-down necessity of Spinoza's monism.⁶¹ That this strategy of self-limiting *Wissenschaft* does not work, however, for a number of reasons having to do with the untenability of transcendental idealism as explicated in the Transcendental Aesthetic, is a motivating premise of post-Kantian idealism. What in fact is needed in order to avoid Spinozism is a conception of being as having the structure and complexity adumbrated above; only on this basis can the existence of necessary truths be reconciled with the contingency of actual things.

Schelling's recognition of how close Kant nonetheless came to seeing the need for a positive philosophy is reflected in his strikingly equivocal assessment of Kant in the *Quelle*: on the one hand Schelling affirms that, with his concept of the Ideal of Pure Reason, Kant did arrive at (and even mastered) the standpoint which Schelling has set forth; on the other hand, he did so 'just barely', and 'did not progress beyond it'.⁶²

Now what Schelling might have added is that behind the Ideal lies the *Beweisgrund*, which contains embryonically Schelling's own insight that the being to which thought must move is *unvordenklich*, in so far as Kant there recognized an ontological necessity within thought more primitive than the PSR. The insight of the *Beweisgrund* is, that reflection on the possibility of thought takes us to a point where we, so to speak, *pass over* into transcendental reality: If I am to think – and I *do* think! –, then there must be possibility, and in order for there to be possibility, there must be *being* which pre-dates thought, possibility, and the PSR. The necessary priority of being over thought which manifests itself at this point is absolute in the sense that it does not allow for a distinction to be drawn between the necessity of thinking it to be the case – where modality attaches to the *thinking* of the content – and the necessity of its being the case – where modality belongs to *what is exhibited* in the content of thought. The PSR is thereby shown to be, in a newly disclosed sense, non-necessary, though it is also, on the condition of being so understood, absolutely valid. In Schelling's new idiom, the *Beweisgrund* exposes the Fact of the World at the root of thought. In this way Schelling's late philosophy can be viewed as a return to an idea which Kant had glimpsed but left behind, an extended meditation on the insight that led Kant to believe that he had opened a new door for rationalism and put the ultimately desired object of human reason within its grasp.

Some final remarks on the opposition of Schelling and Hegel with which I began. Viewed externally, it appears to consist in the assertion by each of one side of an antithesis over the other. Yet internally each represents their own standpoint as free from the one-sidedness exhibited by their opponent. We might ask how this can be. The pattern is broadly familiar from other contexts in the history of philosophy where opposing positions seem to become mutually and symmetrically incommunicable, but in Schelling and Hegel it assumes a maximally abstract and philosophically comprehensive form; which may lead us to wonder whether the opposition is not somehow ill-conceived.⁶³

I think it can be said how Schelling at least wishes to answer the question, and why he thinks the dispute is not empty but all-decisive. The insight on which Schelling's late philosophy expands, and which my reading of the *Quelle* in light of the *Beweisgrund* has tried to put into focus, is that there is a constitutive two-sidedness in the Situation of Thinking, which presents us immediately both with possibility, supplying the aether of thought, and with being, without which thought would be

nothing for itself. From the Situation itself it cannot be determined directly, however, which of the two has priority.⁶⁴ This is what allows it to be supposed that pure reason has its own absolute content, *vernunftwissenschaftlich* elaboration of which can encompass all possible reality, inclusive of itself. The truth, however, which needs to be grasped via the history of philosophy – specifically, through recognition of the emptiness that results from the endeavour to extract all reality from pure reason – is that thought is indebted to being for its own possibility. That this is not plain to view *ab initio* is due not to any constraint of discursive reflection,⁶⁵ but is a consequence of the fact that philosophical reflection lies at the end of a *real* process which begins with God and in the course of which God's structure has been inverted: God *came to think* his own being, while we, as God's derivatives, exist from the beginning *through* God's thinking. The job of philosophical *Wissenschaft* is to reverse this inversion; which allows it to be understood why Schelling should describe positive philosophy as *philosophische Religion*,⁶⁶ a title which Hegel's system could never merit.

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Notes

¹ Kant, *Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund zu einer Demonstration des Daseins Gottes / The Only Possible Basis for a Proof of the Existence of God* (1763), in *Theoretical Philosophy 1755–1770*, trans. and ed. David Walford (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 2:72–73 [117–118]. All references to Kant are first to the Akademieausgabe, followed in square brackets by page references to the CUP translation.

² In the Fourth Reflection of Section One, where Kant argues that the Necessary Being must have properties of understanding and will, and in Section Two, which re-argues this claim on an *a posteriori* basis.

³ Omri Boehm, *Kant's Critique of Spinoza* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 20–21. A fuller discussion of Boehm's Spinozistic interpretation of the *Beweisgrund* is contained in my review in *Virtual Critique*, December 2016, <https://virtualcritique.wordpress.com>.

⁴ See Boehm, *Kant's Critique of Spinoza*, 16, 21–29.

⁵ Boehm, *Kant's Critique of Spinoza*, 25 (later reiterated, 28).

⁶ Andrew Chignell, in 'Kant, Modality and the Most Real Being', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 91 (2), 2009, 157–192, draws the distinction between the original and unelaborated PSR and its ontologically significant version (158). Chignell leaves undecided the question of whether Kant was ever committed to the former (158 n2).

⁷ What has just been described, it is worth noting, corresponds exactly to the position advanced by Schopenhauer in *The Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason* (1813/1847).

⁸ Boehm, *Kant's Critique of Spinoza*, 26–27.

⁹ Boehm, *Kant's Critique of Spinoza*, 26.

¹⁰ It may be felt, again, that what has just been proposed misses the whole point of the PSR, *viz.*, its requirement that truths have *truth-makers*. But, again, the question is precisely: Why cannot a fact such as 'the absolute necessity of possibility' qualify as a truth-maker? That the pre-Critical Kant was entirely capable of detaching the PSR from ontological commitment is testified by his Crusius-influenced discussion of Wolff in the *New Elucidation*, Proposition IV of which explores the ambiguities in the concept of ground, while Proposition V reduces grounds *in general* to the mere connection of

subject and predicate in a true judgement, and Proposition VI marks off grounds of *existence* as forming a special sub-class.

¹¹ Matters may be more complicated in so far as, arguably, reflexive applications of the PSR ('There is sufficient reason for the necessity of the PSR') do result in distinct, further modal truths, not mere restatements of the principle. But even granting this baroque ontology, it makes no difference to the point at hand, which is simply that, if the PSR can loop back on itself in a self-vindicatory manner, then so too can 'Necessarily there is possibility.'

¹² More precisely, we could not be thinking in any sense that allows our thoughts to be *candidates for truth*: we could be 'thinking' only in the sense of executing purely formal, merely syntactic operations. In other words, Kant's argument requires that our thinking be *truth-directed* (though not that any of our thoughts be true).

¹³ As Boehm suggests, *Kant's Critique of Spinoza*, 26.

¹⁴ Boehm, *Kant's Critique of Spinoza*, 26.

¹⁵ It is of high relevance that even the necessary falsity of a contradiction (hence formal possibility too) is resolved by Kant into the exact same root: 'If we now consider for a moment why that which contradicts itself should be absolutely nothing and impossible, I find that through the cancellation [*Aufhebung*] of the law of contradiction, the ultimate logical ground of all that can be thought, all possibility vanishes, and there is nothing left to think [*nichts dabei mehr zu denken sei*]' (*Beweisgrund*, 2:82 [127]). Kant sets formal and material possibility in parallel and identifies the requirement that there be something *zu Denken* as the crux of both.

¹⁶ Elucidation of these claims, and support for them, can be found in Kant's discussion of the concept of existence in Section One, where he asserts both (i) its unanalysability, and also (ii) its equivalence with the concept of 'absolute position' or 'absolute positing' (*Beweisgrund*, 2:70–76 [116–121]). 'Positing', which Kant does not differentiate from 'position' ('Der Begriff der Position oder Setzung', *Beweisgrund*, 2:73 [119]; see translator's note *h*), implies something over and above logical form. It is of importance that, while Kant's differentiation of absolute from relative positing may suffice for his criticism of the traditional ontological argument, Kant leaves himself poised between two alternatives: (a) the strong metaphysical view that existence *consists in* nothing but occupation of absolute position; and (b) the weaker view that occupation of absolute position is merely the *marker* or criterion of satisfaction of the concept of existence. (a)

is suggested by, e.g., 'Whether God exists, that is to say, whether God is posited absolutely or exists, [...]', *Beweisgrund*, 2:74 [119], and since it ties existence logically to thought (for 'position' denotes a role within the content of thought, and 'positing' implies an act of thinking), it coheres with Kant's attempt to pass on a necessity from thought to its ground. But (b) is not ruled out, and coheres with the *Beweisgrund*'s concern with 'real' possibility and its aim to tap a pre-predicative source of necessity. The issue will arise again in Schelling's *Quelle*, the implication of which is that Kant in the *Beweisgrund* does not recognize this ambiguity, which must however, according to Schelling, be resolved in favour of (b).

¹⁷ F. H. Jacobi, *The Main Philosophical Writings and the Novel 'Allwill'*, trans. and ed. G. di Giovanni (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 284–285.

¹⁸ The proto-transcendental character of the *Beweisgrund* is noted in Ernst Cassirer, *Kant's Life and Thought*, trans. James Haden (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 65.

¹⁹ It is to be noted that at the end of the work, Kant distances himself from reliance on the PSR and also, significantly, endorses it only *qua* causal principle proceeding from an existentially committed premise (*New Elucidation*, in Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy 1775–1770*, 2:157–159 [197–198]).

²⁰ L. W. Beck, *Early German Philosophy: Kant and His Predecessors* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1969), 409–410.

²¹ Or, for that matter, to merely repeat what he had said in Proposition VII of the *New Elucidation*. If we compare the two texts, the methodological advance is quite clear: the earlier text describes its proof as 'based on essence' and as concerned with 'the possibility itself of things' (*New Elucidation*, 1:395 [16]), not with the provision of data of thought.

²² Boehm, *Kant's Critique of Spinoza*, 30–38.

²³ Extension is one example of a *Realität* (*Beweisgrund*, 2:80–81 [125]). The concept, which had figured previously in the *New Elucidation*, 1:395–396 [16–17], is employed throughout the work.

²⁴ *Beweisgrund*, 2:85 [129–130] (my italics). Again, later we read: 'all reality is, *in one way or another* [*auf eine oder andere Art*], embraced by the ultimate real ground' (2:87 [131–132]; my italics).

²⁵ *Beweisgrund*, 2:80 [125].

²⁶ Immediately after the passage quoted above, Kant spends two pages explaining that what does *not* follow from his earlier argument is the Spinozistic reduction: 'But this is *not* to be understood to mean that all possible reality is included among its determinations [so ist dieses *nicht* so zu verstehen, daß all mögliche Realität zu seinen Bestimmungen gehöre]. This is a conceptual confusion [eine Vermengung der Begriffe]' (*Beweisgrund*, 2:85 [130]; my italics).

²⁷ *Beweisgrund*, 2:86 [130].

²⁸ *Beweisgrund*, 2:86–87 [130–131].

²⁹ Understanding and will, by contrast, are true (*wahre*) realities (*Beweisgrund*, 2:87 [132]), and not *Folgen* but *Bestimmungen* of the Necessary Ground (*Beweisgrund*, 2:89 [133]).

³⁰ A passing remark indicates that Schelling knew, and esteemed, the *Beweisgrund*: see SW I 460.

³¹ Commentary on late Schelling tends to give it only passing mention, though it drew early attention: see Hubert Beckers, *Historisch-kritische Erläuterungen zu Schelling's Abhandlungen über die Quelle der ewigen Wahrheiten und Kant's Ideal der reinen Vernunft* (Munich: Verlag der Akademie, 1858). Beckers refers to its relation, noted by C. H. Weiße, to Kant's *Beweisgrund*, 14–15. In 1872 Kuno Fischer recognized in the *Quelle* a fragment of the (negative) rational philosophy which Schelling died before completing and which he allowed to be described as his 'metaphysics', as opposed to the philosophical religion that composes the positive philosophy properly speaking (*Schellings Leben, Werke und Lehre*, 4th edn. (Heidelberg: Winters, 1923), 257–258).

³² SW XI 576 [57]. References are first to Schelling, 'Abhandlung über die Quelle der ewigen Wahrheiten', in *Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. K. F. A. Schelling (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1856–61), Vol. XI, 573–590, and then (in square brackets) to the translation by Edward A. Beach, 'On the Source of the Eternal Truths', *The Owl of Minerva* 22 (1), 1990, 55–67, from which quotations are taken.

³³ SW XI 584 [63].

³⁴ SW XI 576 [57].

³⁵ SW XI 575 [57]. Schelling in fact switches at several points from talk of necessary truths to talk of 'possibilities'. These are therefore, in the *Beweisgrund*, 'essence-relative'.

³⁶ SW XI 576 [57].

³⁷ Which the idea of such a totality or highest being allows us to conceive our *Wissenschaft* as mirroring: philosophical reflection would accordingly consist in 'a thinking activity that leads them [possibilities] out of their potentiality and lets them become *actual* in thought [in Gedanken wirklich werden läßt]' (SW XI 576 [57]). This thinking activity is what Schelling in his Identity Philosophy had called *Konstruktion*.

³⁸ SW XI 576 [57].

³⁹ God is 'pure actuality [*reine Wirklichkeit*], Actuality in which there is nothing of potentiality', SW XI, 585 [63].

⁴⁰ An addition which Schelling justifies indirectly, through critical consideration of the Scholastics' attempts to make do without it, SW XI 577–578 [58].

⁴¹ SW XI 577–582 [58–61].

⁴² SW XI 582 [62]. Schelling suggests that the step which will come next is implicit in Leibniz, who described God as a *unitary* source of existence and essence, and who ought to have concluded that necessary truths have their source in an indistinction of divine will and divine understanding – in Schelling's language, in an 'Indifference of all possibilities' (SW XI 582, 585, 589 [61, 63, 66]).

⁴³ And not Spinoza's, which according to Schelling does not allow for the distinction of (A) and (B) (SW XI 275–276, 280).

⁴⁴ SW XI 583 [62].

⁴⁵ SW XI 583 [62].

⁴⁶ SW XI 583–584 [62].

⁴⁷ SW XI 584 [63].

⁴⁸ SW XI 585 [63].

⁴⁹ SW XI 585–590 [63–66].

⁵⁰ SW XI 585 [63].

⁵¹ SW XI 586 [64].

⁵² SW XI 587 [65].

⁵³ SW XI 587 [65]. It is '*actus purus*', which precedes, and cannot consist in, any volition (*Wollen*).

⁵⁴ SW XI 587 [65]. As Schelling puts it elsewhere, sub-propositionally, God would not be that which the Existent *is* (*ist was das Seyende ist*), or would not *be* 'the existing being' (*das Seyende-seyn*) (SW XI 273–274).

⁵⁵ SW XI 587 [65].

⁵⁶ Another way of expressing Schelling's claim would be to say that there is indeed an identity of thought and being but that it is not *bare* identity, for it has a specific internal *shape*, and that the error of *reinrationalen Philosophie* consists in its one-sided misassimilation to the specific, shape-precluding form of *Identität* which is exclusive to thought.

⁵⁷ SW XI 589 [66]: God as (A) 'remains free' in respect of (B). In the *Beweisgrund* Kant refers to 'divine choice' (2:131 [171]), but he clearly entertains no divine freedom of the sort asserted by Schelling: in an earlier, very Leibnizian pre-Critical work, 'Attempt at Some Reflections on Optimism' (1759), in *Theoretical Philosophy 1755–1770*, 2:34 [75–76], Kant had argued that it is meaningless to suppose that God's freedom allowed anything but the best possible world to be chosen, given God's perfection. Schelling's disputes not God's perfection but its immediate *necessity* (from which it does not follow that God could have chosen a worse world).

⁵⁸ Markus Gabriel refers aptly to Schelling as offering 'a theory of logical time', in 'Schellings Antwort auf die Grundfrage der Metaphysik in der *Urfassung der Philosophie der Offenbarung*', in *Warum ist überhaupt etwas und nicht vielmehr nichts?*, ed. Rico Hauswald, Jens Lemanski and Daniel Schubbe (Leipzig: Meiner, 2013), 159–188.

⁵⁹ A contrast may be drawn here with Schelling's early *Formschrift* (1794) and *Ichschrift* (1795), in which the motivation for affirming the absolute is related closely to the demands of systematicity.

⁶⁰ See also SW XI 287–288.

⁶¹ See *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), in Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, trans. and ed. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 5:100–102 [220–222]. Kant's motive is of course human freedom: Kant argues that we can lay claim to real authorship of our actions only if we suppose the temporal realm to be excluded from the scope of divine determination. The transcendental ideality of time is thus what grants us the ontological separateness, the scope to posit *Ought* independently from *Is*, denied by Spinoza, and which, Kant agrees with Spinoza, would be unthinkable in a realm of things in themselves, which we are obliged to conceive as deriving from and fully determined by a single original being. Comparing Kant and Schelling on this point, see my 'The Metaphysics of Human Freedom: From Kant's Transcendental Idealism to

Schelling's *Freiheitsschrift*', *British Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 25 (1), 2017, 133–156.

⁶² SW XI 585 [64]. Schelling also discusses Kant's Ideal in Vorlesung 12 of his *Philosophische Einleitung in die Philosophie der Mythologie oder Darstellung der reinrationalen Philosophie* (1847), for which Vorlesung 11 historically sets the scene (SW XI 255–294; see esp. 273–276 and 282–287). Schelling maintains that Kant conceived the Ideal as an existent individual, but our *knowledge* thereof as only a *hypothesis*, to be defended merely as *advantageous*, and that he was content to do because his concerns were limited to accounting for the mere *representability* of things (SW XI 285–287). Whence Kant's further limitation: the Ideal exists as an individual only for and in consequence of our representation; it is merely *unser Werk* (SW XI 286–287). Hence Kant's ultimate failure: there is a more determinate content to be got (*ein bestimmterer Inhalt zu gewinnen ist*) from the Ideal than Kant realizes (SW XI 292). Helpful accounts of Schelling's interpretation of Kant's Ideal are Wolfram Högerebe, *Prädikation und Genesis. Metaphysik als Fundamentalheuristik im Ausgang von Schellings 'Weltalter'* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1989), §§11–12, 59–71, and Markus Gabriel, *Der Mensch im Mythos* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006), §5, 104–115.

⁶³ The argument Fichte stages between the idealist and the dogmatist has something of the same character, but allows itself to be fixed doctrinally: each maintains a different view of the nature of mind, freedom, and so on. The peculiarity of the Schelling-Hegel disagreement lies in its having no similar determinate ramifications.

⁶⁴ On this point Schelling crucially departs from Jacobi. Earlier formulations in Schelling's late period show his appreciation of the original undecidability: see *Grundlegung der positiven Philosophie. Münchner Vorlesung WS 1832/33 und SS 1833*, ed. Horst Fuhrmans (Torino: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1972), where Schelling treats the Fact of the World in a two-sided manner, as both (i) the fact that there is Something rather than Nothing, and as (ii) the Fact of Experience (in general).

⁶⁵ Compare Novalis' (Fichtean) idea of an *ordo inversus* attributable to the function of reflection.

⁶⁶ SW XI 255.