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Friedrich Schelling: Soteriological Redemption and Ontological Renewal in the Intellectual Intuition of the Life of Life

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Friedrich Schelling: Soteriological Redemption and Ontological Renewal in the
Intellectual Intuition of the *Life of Life*

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Philosophy

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Abstract

Schelling calls for the restoration of originary revelation by the true philosopher and, for the successful anagogue, the creation of a philosophical-religion; in so summoning man back to his innermost beginnings in the Absolute *prius*, the *life of life*, this paper claims that Schelling revalorizes and retranslates the ancient Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic traditions and Hellenic mystery teachings onto European soil. Accordingly, drawing on correspondences and concordances with and insights from traditionalist philosophy, the German Pietist reform movement and the antique contemplative tradition, this paper reads the Schellingian project as an initiatic mystagogy to intellectual intuition, in which the anagogic traveler descends to the primordial state and in which his shared essence with the *life of life* is revealed.

Schelling tells us that being precedes reflection and, accordingly, the ordinary plane of consciousness, as available in the various discriminations of negative philosophy, cannot attain to *that which is*. In the epistemic collapse of negative philosophy, the anagogic traveler turns to positive philosophy, as vehicled by contemplative *askesis* and orison, wherein discursive thought ultimately yields to the more primordial non-discursive thought in intellectual intuition.

Intellectual intuition, which establishes what it intuits, reveals particular *epopteia* to the anagogic traveler; this *epopteia* is evidenced only *a posteriori* intellectual intuition by the resolute manner in which the anagogic traveler gears back into life. The ancient Hellenic mystery teachings, in keeping with the experiences of contemplatives everywhere, admit of two metaphysical insights to which the uncommon anagogic traveler may attain: the lesser, or illuminative, mysteries and the greater, or unitive, mysteries. In the lesser mysteries, the illuminated anagogic traveler comes to know that the entirety of the terrestrial realm is one – that all is a hierophany of the *life*

of life – and in the greater mysteries, the anagogic adept attains to henosis with the divine, indestructible and ever-generative *life of life* and, in noetic perfection, becomes (consciously in the end) who he already is (unconsciously in the beginning); here, in identification with the *life of life* that births all that is, the anagogic adept co-creates the world and realizes soteriological redemption and ontological renewal.

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Introduction

“A river flows from Eden to water the garden” (Genesis 2:10)
*That river flowing forth is called the world that is coming – coming
 constantly and never ceasing.* This is the delight of the righteous,
 to attain the world that is coming, constantly watering the garden
 and never ceasing”¹

Friedrich Schelling [1775 – 1854], often relegated in the history of philosophy² as a mere precursor either to G.W.F. Hegel or to Martin Heidegger, is now enjoying rediscovery in certain academic circles;³ this paper, in modest measure, hopes to contribute to this nascent Schellingian renaissance by articulating Schelling’s notion of intellectual intuition as access to the *life of life*,⁴

¹ Matt, The Zohar 3:290b (italics added).

² Schelling is derided by many readers of his *oeuvre* as a mercurial thinker; internally inconsistent across his writings and given to redress and desertion of his theoretical models, Schelling presents a notorious hermeneutical challenge to his interpreters [McGrath, P. 2]. And yet, if Emerson rightly states that a foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, the inconsistencies within Schelling’s work, especially given their public character, might be better understood as betraying an uncommonly courageous, authentic and generous mind. One is reminded that Schelling wrote across two philosophical epochs – that of German Transcendental Idealism (Schelling understood German Transcendental Idealism to be a “negative philosophy” which was later to be completed by his “positive philosophy”) and, later, that of the Romantic period; philosophical recognitions, no differently than psychological insights, often can only be claimed from a distance. Schelling’s writings may be seen as emblematic of his philosophical thinking; in their inconsistencies, they witness the very irruptions of life that Schelling proclaims. Schelling, we are reminded, was a thinker “whose philosophy was always underway” [McGrath, P. 2]. Analogously, life, too, is always underway – the old inevitably gives way to the new. “Every kind of life is a succession and concatenation of states” [Schelling, The Ages of the World, P. 43] – and, as this paper wants to claim in part, Schelling was, most deeply, a philosopher of life [Wirth, The Conspiracy of Life, P. 1]. With roots deep in ancient thought, Schelling claims that there is both form and animation to life. Understood in this way, Schelling’s thought, in its inconsistent unfolding, is exemplar of his deeply held philosophical convictions.

³ Schelling, Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Freedom, P. xviii (Gutmann, Trans.); See also, Wirth, Schelling Now: Contemporary Readings, P. 13 and Wirth, The Conspiracy of Life, P. 19. Following philosophy’s abandonment of German Idealism and the demise of German Romanticism, Schelling suffered a corresponding neglect of interest in his writings [see Schelling, Philosophy and Religion, P. xv]. “More recently postmodern have reclaimed Schelling . . . [i]t seems the time for Schelling has finally arrived” [Schelling, Philosophy and Religion, P. xvi].

⁴ The term, *life of life*, is taken from *The Work of Experience: Schelling on Thinking beyond Image and Concept*, a lovely and sensitive reading of Schelling’s thought by Marcia Sa’ Cavalcante Schuback. By her use of this term, *life of life*, Schuback wants to convey “not a concept but an experience, the experience (or intellectual intuition) of the true life” [Wirth, Schelling Now, P. 69]. This paper similarly wants to express the Schellingian notion of *life of life* non-conceptually and ontologically as a living force that underlies, animates and sustains all reality; indeed, to the reading of this paper, the *life of life* is a “river flowing forth . . . coming constantly and never ceasing” [Matt,

that divine,⁵ inexhaustible, ever-generative *fons et origio* of all reality,⁶ and to locate therein the possibility for soteriological redemption⁷ and ontological renewal. Accordingly, this paper reads the Schellingian project to be grounded, in part, on an understanding of the philosophical life as that path of inner transformation and spiritual rebirth in unity with divine principles. This paper understands ontological renewal, occasioned through the spiritual eye of intellectual intuition, as the “regaining of a clear view”⁸ into the underlying nature of reality; said differently, ontological renewal is a restoration within the anagogic wayfarer of the primordial state that is the innermost beginning of all *that which is*. When assimilated to this primordial state, as has been said elsewhere, “. . . you shall know the truth and the truth will make you free.”⁹ In intellectual

The Zohar 3:290b (italics added)]. Given the sympathy between this paper’s reading of the Schellingian Absolute *prius* and its Zoharean epigram, it is worth noting that the term, *life of life*, is common to the teachings of Chabad Chasidism, beginning with the works of its founder, Schneur Zalman of Liadi (1745 – 1813), who, while contemporary to Friedrich Schelling, is unknown to have been familiar to Schelling. “Chassidic teachings refer to the process of creation as *yesh me’ayin* – something out of nothing. But this state of nothingness is not quite as understood by scientists. The term “ayin” actually refers to a level of G-dliness that cannot be apprehended by our intellect or senses, a state that is so far removed from our reality that it is as if it does not exist. However, the state of *Ayin* contains the potential energy that allows the entire world to come into existence” [www.chabadhousemonroe.com].

⁵ By divine is meant the “unbegotten, not the begotten” [Copenhaver, P. 9].

⁶ “The abode of spirit is total reality” [Holy Bible, *Book of Wisdom* 1:7].

⁷ Redemption is understood by this paper as freedom and, accordingly, soteriological freedom is understood as delivery, liberation, from the bindings common to the earthly plane of existence. Schelling, The Grounding of Positive Philosophy, P. 5. Redemption is defined, impart, as “to set free” and “to save from a state of sinfulness and its consequences” [The American Heritage Dictionary, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, MA (P. 1036)]. For insight into the meaning of redemption, we might also turn to fairy tales, which dispense deep psychological wisdom; “[i]n fairytales, redemption refers specifically to a condition where someone has been cursed or bewitched and through certain happenings or events in the story is redeemed” [von Franz, The Psychological Meaning of Redemption Motifs in Fairytales, P. 7]. So, said otherwise, the fairy tale’s protagonist is somehow freed or redeemed from a state of enchantment. In turn, an “enchantment” signifies a state in which one is somehow possessed and thus estranged from one’s true being. Gathering these notions together, this paper understands redemption as the release from a spiritual bondage. Psychologically, bondage may be understood, after all, as a particular category of enchantment. Placing this in historical context, Bruce Matthews makes the claim that Schelling’s positive philosophy sought to counter “the growing force of cultural nihilism [which resulted from the sacrifice of the vitality of the positive in favor of the negative]; a possible future that could only be avoided if philosophy could somehow offer a viable system that promised a new redemptive paradigm” [Schelling, The Grounding of Positive Philosophy, P. 14] within a “positive” philosophy.

⁸ Tolkien, P. 57. Along similar lines, Schelling writes, “any philosopher would be weary of not gaining a much clearer cognition of those same subjects through knowledge and in knowledge than what emerges [for others] from faith and premonition” [Philosophy and Religion, P. 8-9]. This moment of insight is accompanied by joy; Tolkien explains this sudden and particular quality of joy as “a sudden glimpse of the underlying reality of truth” [Tolkien, P. 71].

⁹ Holy Bible, *John* 8:31.

intuition, the anagogic traveler¹⁰ unifies with the undifferentiated *fons et origio*, the transcendent innermost beginning of all that which is, and awakens to a world transformed; in so assimilating to the cosmological natality, the anagogic initiate may be said to participate in the demiurgic activities of the Dionysian *mundus imaginalis* and to co-create the world. As we hear from Schelling:

“From time to time, every physical and moral whole needs, for its preservation, the reduction to its innermost beginning. Human beings keep rejuvenating themselves and become newly blissful through the feeling of unity of their being. It is in precisely this that especially those seeking knowledge continually summon up fresh power.”¹¹

Like many others within the Romantic period,¹² Schelling looks to the ancient world for recovery of authentic being; offering a reading of Schellingian intellectual intuition as *mystogogia* (mystagogy), this paper argues that Schelling seeks to reclaim the sacred Hellenic teachings and mysteries of the ancient Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic spiritual traditions¹³ and to inhabit

¹⁰ So as not to befuddle this paper with theological terminology, this paper refers to one who seeks an encounter with the hidden *that which is* in intellectual intuition as an anagogic traveler or wayfarer; an *anagogue* indicates one who makes “an ascent in the sense of an inner journey back to the ‘paternal harbor’” [Uždavinys, Ascent to Heaven in Islamic and Jewish Mysticism, P. x]. Also, as René Guénon tell us, the “one who is ‘on the way’ toward the center and one who has arrived there, states often described in traditional symbolism as those of the ‘traveler’ and of the ‘sedentary’, the latter also being compared to standing at the summit of a mountain who, without having to move, likewise sees all slopes” [Guenon, Perspectives on Initiation, P. 45]. A traveler may be understood as one who makes a pilgrimage; an initiate or an adept to the mystery religions is one who somehow knows. Accordingly, in the choice of the terminology of “anagogic traveler,” this paper would like to the reader to draw correspondences to and commonalities with the ancient mystery cults in which “philosophers still have the courage and the right to discuss the singularly great themes, the only ones worthy of philosophizing and rising above common knowledge” [Schelling, Philosophy and Religion, P. 7]. After all, “[t]he legends of antiquity name the earliest philosophers as the originators of these mystery cults” [Ibid.].

¹¹ Schelling, The Ages of the World, P. xxxviii.

¹² “Despite the profound differences that exist between the various Romantic philosophies, whether of Fichte, Schelling, Hegel or even Novalis, the same basic tendency, from different perspectives, to identify Nature and Spirit remains constant” [Hadot, P. 273].

¹³ It is far beyond the scope of this paper to explore and substantiate the lineage of the Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic traditions; this has been ably accomplished by others elsewhere and, accordingly, this lineage is taken as well-established by this paper. We may read a summarizing passages from Uždavinys’ Orpheus and the Roots of Platonism: “Although a figure of myth and the preferred name for metaphysical auctoritas in telestic and esoteric

nature¹⁴ with spirit – as he writes, “the subject [*life of life*] going through nature is also God, only not *as God*”;¹⁵ he harkens back with great empathy, power and sensitivity to the original wholeness of original chaos, the *that which is* prior to manifestation, and to nature as the offspring of this divine original chaos. As Schelling is of mythological¹⁶ sensitivities, he understands nature as expressive of the *anima mundi*, the Dionysian or the *mundus imaginalis* of the ancients,¹⁷ as that which, at its most fundamental, reveals a living nomadic force, an *elan vital*, an incomprehensible and *Ungewusst* life force that lies beyond reason’s ken. In the Schellingian project, this is the hylozoist *life of life* within matter, the interpenetration of the manifest things of nature and the hidden spirit; spirit is “this incomprehensible but not

matters, Orpheus nonetheless appears to have been a prophet and mystagogue, presumably the ‘first’ to reveal the meaning of the mysteries and rituals of initiation (teletai). Since Orphism is an ascetic and telestic way of life, W.K.C. Guthrie surmises that Orpheus did not have a new and entirely distinct species of religion to offer, but rather an esoteric modification and reinterpretation of traditional mythologies, a reformation of Dionysiac energy in the direction of Apollonian sanity: ‘Those who found it congenial might take him for their prophet, live the Orphic life and call themselves Orphics’” [Uždaninys, *Orpheus and the Roots of Platonism*, P. 38, quoting W.K.C. Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion*, P. 9]. “According to the ritualized requirement of archetypal *auctoritas*, the early Pythagoreans used to attribute to the prophet Orpheus their own works on the soul’s soteria (salvation), focused on the figure and fate of Persephone, analogous to the Babylonian and Assyrian Ishtar. And Plato allegedly paraphrased Orpheus and the Orphic literature throughout, according to Olympiodorus’ remark: *pantachou gar ho Platon paroidei ta Orpheos*, ‘Plato paraphrases Orpheus everywhere’ (In *Phaed.* 10.3.13). In this respect, Plato simply reshapes and rationalizes the mythical and religious ideas of esoteric Orphism and its Bacchic mysteries of Dionysus. Therefore, Proclus is not so much exaggerating when he claims that Plato received his knowledge of divine matters from Pythagorean and Orphic writings: *et te ton Puthagoreion kai ton Orphikon grammaton* (*Plat. Theol.* 1.5; *In Tim.* III.160.17-161.6)” [*Ibid.*, P. 42].

¹⁴ Schelling’s position, which understands nature as unconscious spirit, is in some contrast to Hegel, who identified the infinite procreation of nature with madness [see, for example, Berthold-Bond, Daniel. *Hegel’s Theory of Madness*. State University of New York Press. Albany, NY (1995) and Mills, Jon. *The Unconscious Abyss: Hegel’s Anticipation of Psychoanalysis*. State University of New York Press. Albany, NY (2002). “It is Hegel who first tries to call a halt to this subordination of reason to the non-rational in his 1830 lectures on madness where he characterizes the unconscious as a primitive stage of the spirit (the moment of immediacy) . . . [m]oments of return to unconscious states are regressions, if not signs of perversity and delusion (genius, inspiration, and artistic creativity not excepted)” [McGrath, *The Dark Ground of Spirit*, P. 18].

¹⁵ Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, P. 133.

¹⁶ Schelling speaks of mythology, which is inclusive of both myth and logos, and not merely myth in his writings in order to tap into this paradoxical identity of the conceptual and the non-conceptual when speaking about the *life of life*. “In this sense, mythology is a Greek expression for a ‘non-thinking’ thinking” [Wirth, *Schelling Now*, Pp. 71]. And, as will later emerge in this paper, *ein nicht denkendes Denken* is precisely the touchstone of the Schellingian primordial state in intellectual intuition.

¹⁷ “To mythical and religious feeling nature becomes one great society, the *society of life*” [Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, P. 83]. And we read from the *Hermetica*, “[G]od’s work is one thing only: to bring all into being – those that are coming to be, those that once come to be, those that shall come to be. This is life, my dearest friend” [Copenhaver, P. 40].

imperceptible being, always ready to overflow and yet always held again, and which alone always grants to all things the full charm, gleam and glint of life.”¹⁸ This is the exuberant testimony of life. To this ancient way of thinking, nature itself (*natura naturans*)¹⁹ is “invisible and hidden from empirical view;”²⁰ indeed, a surviving Heraclitean fragment, in accord with the world’s great mythological traditions, proclaims that “nature likes to hide.”²¹

Traditionalist philosophy²² instructs us that “[i]t is always fitting to reserve a place for the inexpressible, that is to say for what cannot be enclosed in any form and in reality is, metaphysically speaking, the most important thing.”²³ So it is with Schelling;²⁴ he tells that “[t]he mystery of all life is the synthesis of the absolute with limitation.”²⁵ As the *Deus Absconditus* is veiled from direct view, Schelling urges us to reconsider the importance of the inexpressible, of our grounding in the un-ground, of the rule in the unruly and of the origin of the

¹⁸ Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, P. 61.

¹⁹ *Natura naturans* may be understood as creative nature, which is “immediately present whole and undivided in each of its innumerable works, in the smallest to the largest, in the last as in the first” [Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol. II, P. 322]. In comparison, Spinoza identified *natura naturata* as created nature. See Grossman, Neal. *The Spirit of Spinoza: Healing the Mind*. ICRL Press. Princeton, NJ (2014).

²⁰ McGrath, P. 85.

²¹ Hyland, P. 171. Pierre Hadot persuasively reads as “what is born tends to disappear” [Hadot, P. 10]. Hadot’s reading of this aphorism “expresses astonishment before the mystery of metamorphosis and the deep identity of life and death” [Ibid, P. 11].

²² Traditional (or traditionalist) philosophy, known preferably by some as *sofia perennis* or perennialism, has as its principal co-founders, René Guénon, Ananada K. Coomaraswamy and Frithof Schuon; while not a procrustean group, *sofia perennis* may be generally understood to claim a fundamental esoteric harmony among the great religions – namely, that the world’s great religious traditions, while assuredly responding to unique cultural and historical contexts, share a singular metaphysical truth. Jonathan Spear, in his article *On Mystical Experiences as Support for Perennial Philosophy*, associates four theses with perennial philosophy: “(1) the phenomenal world is the manifestation of a transcendental ground; (2) human beings are capable of attaining immediate knowledge of that ground; (3) in addition to their phenomenal egos, human beings possess a transcendental Self which is of the same of like nature with that transcendental ground; and (4) this identification is life’s chief end or purpose” [Ibid., Pp. 319-320]. The reader will note in the pages below that these four Traditionalist theses, which are Orphic in character, motor the Schellingian enterprise. Indeed, it could be profitably argued that Schelling, anticipating the thematic of perennialism, is the original Traditionalist thinker. As will emerge, this paper claims that the Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic traditions and the Hellenic mystery traditions deeply inform the Schellingian project.

²³ Guénon, *The Multiple States of the Being*, P. 2.

²⁴ We read from Schelling, “[w]e nevertheless do not doubt that the philosophers of our time will take offense to the philosophical tenor or old that we have sought to resound. But we also know that these things cannot be profaned, that they must subsist through themselves” [*Philosophy and Religion*, P. 4].

²⁵ Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, P. 36.

all in an irreducible remainder – to Schelling’s understanding, the original fall is the formation of manifest reality itself; writes Schelling “[f]initeness is itself the penalty.”²⁶ As the multiplicity of manifest reality represents a fall from (break), and not a creation of, the absolute simplicity of the *life of life*, the aspiration of an anagogic traveler is to live “‘another life’ where the self is assimilated to Dionysus,”²⁷ absolutely indivisible and prior to (*prius* of) this multiplicity. Schelling is adamant that the *life of life* “is an incomprehensible ground and a *nieaufgehender Rest*, an irreducible remainder that cannot be resolved by [discursive] reason even with the greatest exertion”²⁸ – it is solely to be attained to in a moment of intellectual intuition when discursive reasoning yields to the more primordial intuitive reasoning. As will come to be seen, this paper, most fundamentally, reads Schellingian intellectual intuition as the perfection of reason and, as such, the spiritual axis and, by extension, the noetic certainty, around which the *praxis* and cognitive hierarchy of a true philosopher is ordered; moreover, this paper recommends to the reader’s consideration that Schellingian intellectual intuition and its preparatory theurgy²⁹ is a revalorization and retranslation of traditional initiatic elements within the theurgy of Orphic-Pythagorean and Platonic traditions and the Hellenic mystery teachings and their accompanying contemplative *askesis* and orison into the soil of European philosophy.

Traditionalist philosophy continues to echo in Spinoza,³⁰ Kant and Schelling. Kant, in discriminating the phenomenal world, which may be known, from the things-in-themselves (*an-*

²⁶ Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, P. 48.

²⁷ Uždavinys, *Philosophy & Theurgy in Late Antiquity*, P. 7.

²⁸ Wirth, *The Barbarian Principle*, P. 4.

²⁹ In this paper, theurgy is understood as the spiritual path and methodology of ascent by the anagogic traveler to *henosis* in intellectual intuition.

³⁰ Writes Schelling in great compliment to Spinoza, “[t]he last echoes of the old, true philosophy were heard from Spinoza” [Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, P. 8].

Sich), which cannot be known, justifies belief in that which transcends human experience.³¹ Under the Kantian architecture, reason, although funded by the *a priori* categories, is unable to reach beyond the world of the senses. As a result, any Kantian intuition of God, the Absolute *prius* (or, as known in this paper, the *life of life*), finds itself outside of reason and in the realm of faith.³² Kant never addresses intellectual intuition directly and, accordingly, he leaves unexplored its philosophical possibilities; nonetheless, he does employ a hypothetical intellectual intuition, a “knowing in and with the concrete singular, not mediated by abstract universal concepts,”³³ as a foil to define sensory intuition. For Schelling, as will soon emerge in the telling of this paper, this unmediated³⁴ intellectual intuition becomes the bridge to the divine; Schellingian intellectual intuition is a mode of cognition that permits metaphysical insight of the absolute and that, because consciousness and its object are inseparable in intellectual intuition, establishes what it intuits. Accordingly, contesting the claim of Kantian philosophy that “the boundaries of intelligibility coincide with the bounds of sense,”³⁵ Schelling aspires to develop a science, which he understands, in part, as the application of a logical and practical dialectic (in the reading offered by this paper, the Schellingian higher dialectic is comprised by a theurgic contemplative *askesis* and orison), that connects³⁶ the phenomenal world, the realm of ever-

³¹ Given the rise of secular thought (see, for example, Charles Taylor’s *A Secular Age*, in which he attempts to articulate the pre-ontological structures, both positive and negative, that replaced the traditional notion of divine immanence by a transcendent account of the divine), it might be persuasively argued that Kant, rather than preserving space beyond the reach of the pragmatic followers of Hume for the application of faith, diminished faith by secluding it beyond reason and the interactive capabilities of humankind.

³² “[T]h necessary consequence of it laying claim to a knowledge of God was to rob God of all transcendence and draw him into this logical thinking, into merely a logical concept, into an *idea itself*” [Schelling, *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy*, P. 138].

³³ Schelling, *Bruno*, P. 11.

³⁴ “Unmediated” is descriptive of an intuition unaccompanied by image, sound or other sensual representation.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ The traditional philosophical notion of the law of correspondences holds that “from one order to another all things are linked together and correspond in such a way as to contribute to the universal and total harmony, which, in the multiplicity of manifestation, can be likened to a reflection of the principal unity itself” [Guenon, *The Symbolism of the Cross*, P. 4]. The reader is also asked to remember that antique practice and aim of Egyptian philosophy was “to connect the end to the beginning” [Uždavinys, *Philosophy & Theurgy in Late Antiquity*, P. 21].

becoming theophanies, to the un-manifested and divine *life of life*. Schelling, to the reading propounded by this paper, understands science, while assuredly an expression of the ideal dialectic within the domain of reason, as theurgic practice and preparatory to an encounter with the indivisible divine in intellectual intuition; in turn, reason, as the Protean angelic intellect and, as such, symbolic of “the permanent transformation and continuity of theophanies, immersed in the stream of becoming,”³⁷ is the distinguishing mark of the divine within the human being and, in its perfection, the vehicle for noetic unity with the *life of life*. Most importantly to the purposes of this paper, we will come to see that the highest manifestation of Schellingian reason, and containing *in potentia* “the forms of all the things in the world,”³⁸ is undifferentiated intellectual intuition, wherein the consciousness of the anagogic traveler breaks from the fragmentation of the becoming world to noetic *henosis* with the ontological dimension of the Dionysian monad.

In aspiring to develop a theurgic science that ascends from the least to the greatest³⁹ and, thereby and simultaneously, to reclaim the antique practice of philosophy as the way of homecoming for the anagogic traveler to his true noetic being, Schelling wants to unravel the governing “riddle of the world”⁴⁰ – that is, to answer the mystery of how the phenomenal world comes from the *life of life* of original chaos, or as Heidegger later frames the question, “[w]hy are there beings at all, and why not rather nothing?”⁴¹ As Schelling tells it, because “[u]ltimately, everything happens in vain and there is in every deed, in all the toil and labor of man himself nothing but vanity:

³⁷ Uždavinys, *Philosophy & Theurgy in Late Antiquity*, P. 7.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ “The theurgists established their sacred knowledge after observing that all things were in all things from the sympathy that exists between all phenomena and between them and their invisible causes, and being amazed that they say the lowest things in the highest and the highest in the lowest” [Uzdavinys, *The Golden Chain*, P. 300].

⁴⁰ Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, P. IX.

⁴¹ Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, P. 110.

everything in vain, for vanity is everything that lacks a true purpose [i]t is precisely man that drives me to the final desperate question: Why is there anything at all?”⁴² As this paper, in part, aspires to develop, the Schellingian philosophical project wants to sacralize the cosmos, to consecrate the world with meaningful *being* in order that its hierophanies reveal the absolute center of the *ganz Andere* and that man, who occupies an intermediate position, may reclaim his participation in *being* – otherwise, as has famously been said, life is but “a tale told by an idiot full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.”⁴³ Schellingian intellectual intuition, as the pillar of the world, is the spiritual vehicle that sacralizes the world and establishes order from chaos. As Schelling tells us:

“Aside from the teachings on the Absolute, the true mysteries of philosophy have as their most noble and indeed their sole content the eternal birth of all things and their relationship to God.”⁴⁴

Not unlike the young Dionysus who, in playfully rotating the mirror to catch the sun,⁴⁵ reflects the noetic realm onto the world below, Schelling posits that the phenomenal world arises from the free and productive imagination (*Einbildungskraft*⁴⁶) of the *life of life* (God or, in the Schellingian vernacular and cosmology, the Absolute *prius* – the *that which is* prior to manifest reality’s imposition of the subject-object structure). Accordingly, the world and its contents is

⁴² Schelling, *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy*, Pp. 92 – 93, quoting in part, *Ecclesiastes* 1:2 – 3.

⁴³ www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/56964.

⁴⁴ Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, P. 8.

⁴⁵ Like in the Allegory of the Cave, the sun may be understood to be the Absolute – too dazzling to behold directly by the eye of the mind.

⁴⁶ “The splendid German word, ‘imagination’ (*Einbildungskraft*) actually means the power of mutual informing into unity (*Ineinsbildung*) upon which all creation really is based. It is the power whereby something ideal is simultaneously something real, the soul simultaneously the body, the power of individuation that is the real creative power” [Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, P. 32).

divine play “rooted in the mystery of the immanent divine self-disclosure.”⁴⁷ This implies that cosmic phenomenalization is to be understood for Schelling as the Orphic process of divine artistry and self-realization;⁴⁸ indeed, if all derives from the productive imagination of the Absolute, the “entirety of the cosmos can become a hierophany”⁴⁹ to he who has the eyes to see and ears to hear.⁵⁰ To this way of thinking the univocity of being, in which a “single voice raises the clamor of being,”⁵¹ the manifest many emerges from a centered, if ruthless, free and un-manifest, one.⁵² To Schelling, then, all that is constitutes a hierophany, an eidolon of that Centrum [of the *life of life*] – the dark Ungrund transcendent to our grasp – that is the *fons et origo* of the multiplicity, of “the ten thousand things,”⁵³ that come to present themselves in manifest existence. This dark Centrum is the inexpressible Ungrund, that is, the *life of life*, or, more commonly available in philosophic thought as Spinoza’s *natura naturans* or as the Greek *zoë* – “the progressive natality of nature”⁵⁴ and the continual irruption of life. In his notion of the *life of life*, Schelling might be understood to reassert the ancient meaning of the Greek word, “*phusis*, that is, of productivity and spontaneous blooming,”⁵⁵ which bespeaks of the primal living whole, the “cosmic enigma – the mystery of life that is self-generating and, self-creating.”⁵⁶ So, to Schelling, the *life of life* might be understood as a conflation of the Hellenic *zoë* and *phusis*,⁵⁷ in-exhaustible, dynamic, mutually implicative and ever-generative of the

⁴⁷ Uždavinys, Philosophy & Theurgy in Late Antiquity, P. 2.

⁴⁸ Horn, P. 155.

⁴⁹ Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, P. 12.

⁵⁰ “Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear” [Holy Bible, *Mark* 8:18]?

⁵¹ Wirth, The Barbarian Principle, P. 9.

⁵² We might read something similar from Plato: “[w]hen Homer speaks of *Oceanus*, source of gods, and mother *Tethys*, he means that all things are the offspring of a flowering stream of change” [Plato, *Theaetetus*, 857:e].

⁵³ A Chinese expression that indicates the indefinite multitude of all things and forms in manifest existence.

⁵⁴ Wirth, The Barbarian Principle, P. 8.

⁵⁵ Hadot, P. 274.

⁵⁶ Otto, Walter, P. 136.

⁵⁷ “What animates the world is *anima*, Latin for soul and breath (corresponding to the Greek *psyche*); and if man’s soul is his breath then the world’s soul is God’s breath (*ruach elohim* in Hebrew), the wind, in fact, the breath of life, *pneuma biou*. According to Professor Conford (From Religion to Philosophy, 1951, P. 189), the absolutely

innumerable things, that underlies reality; indeed, to this profoundly hylozoist and ontologically hierarchical thought, the primordial principle is not only most alive – it alone is truly alive.⁵⁸

In its introductory paragraphs, this paper sought to evoke in the reader’s mind the ancient awareness of the presence of a living god that imbues all being – that living god encountered by the sages⁵⁹ of old and by contemplative anagogues within every epoch. Schelling maintains that modern man has largely forgotten his origin in the living divine presence and, as a result, he no longer knows who he is and where he is going; absent theurgic devotion to the divine center, Schelling tells us that “all is vanity”⁶⁰ and without purpose. So Schelling summons modern man to remember his innermost holy beginnings, to recollect himself from fragmented multiplicity and, by availing himself of the grace of intellectual intuition, to assimilate to indivisible Dionysus; it is solely in intellectual intuition, Schelling proclaims, in accordance with Orphico-Pythagorean, Platonic and mystery traditions, that man may find soteriological redemption and ontological renewal – in short, it is only in intellectual intuition that the anagogic wayfarer may be reborn in “the non-discursive anagogic foundation for discursive reasoning itself.”⁶¹

Accordingly, Schelling wants foremost to disclose, to recover and to reestablish a philosophical-religion that educes the divine; under this notion, discursive philosophy is *mystagogy*⁶² and, as such, preparatory to the contemplative theurgy, which consists of the *askesis*, hieratic *praxis* and

important Greek word *phusis* = Nature (akin to *phusao* = to blow and *phuo* = to grow or generate) was originally understood as the almost liquid energy that animates all things – much like Polynesian *mana*” [Young, P. 312].

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, P. 120.

⁵⁹ Schelling notes that “Moses was deemed worthy of a vision of that highest vitality, of that inner consuming yet always again reviving (and in this respect not consuming) fire that is the nature of the Godhead” [Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, P. 53].

⁶⁰ *Holy Bible, Ecclesiastes* 1:2.

⁶¹ Uždavinys, *Philosophy & Theurgy in Late Antiquity*, P. 255.

⁶² *Mystagogy* means “going deeper into the mysteries” [www.stisidore-yubacity.org/faqmystagogy] or “to lead through the mysteries” [www.bustedhalo.com/ministry-resources/what-is-mystagogy]. To this paper’s understanding and use, *mystagogy* refers to an initiatic journey into the mysteries.

orison necessary to assimilate to (*henosis*) the divine Dionysus in positive philosophy and attain to its particular *epopteia*; in his initiatic journey, the anagogic wayfarer seeks transformation into the unseen breath⁶³ of the living god – the *that which is* and that which animates and ever-generates life anew. Indeed, Schelling claims that those without a deep recognition of and reverence for this living spirit have no key to unlock the true secrets of philosophy; in his words, “many are thyrsus-bearers but few are mystics.”⁶⁴ For Schelling, philosophy is, most fundamentally, a spiritual⁶⁵ enterprise and, as such, the true philosopher must be funded by Dionysus – “the self-lacerating madness [which] is still now what is innermost in all things;”⁶⁶ indeed, the true philosopher, whose soul shares simultaneity with the *life of life*, is “bound by this innermost witness and cannot hold anything for true without the agreement of this witness.”⁶⁷ Accordingly, the *life of life*, the *that which is* as the divine spark and fire, is most primordial and most alive in the human soul and in the cosmos, respectively; it is both the enlivening spirit and the guarantor of authenticity within the isomorphic Schellingian enterprise.

This paper labors throughout to express and emphasize that *life of life* is living spirit and, as such, the *fons et origo* of all that is; using the imagery of a literary device, the Schellingian *life of life* might be likened to a participle,⁶⁸ in the poetic words of this paper’s epigraph, the *life of life*, “that creative source of all that is, is called the world that is *coming – coming constantly and*

⁶³ “Thus what moves the visible world-body, indeed pushes it around, is the invisible world-soul, which is wind, which is *pneuma*, which is divinity, which is God” [Young, P. xxi].

⁶⁴ Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, P. 4 [quoting Plato, *Phaedo*, 69:d]. By drawing correspondence between a true philosopher and *Bacchus*, it has been claimed by Damascius that Plato unites the hieratic practices of worship of the gods and dialectical discourse [see, for example, *The Greek Commentaries on Plato’s Phaedo*, vol. II: *Damascius*, P. 104 and Uzdavinys, *Philosophy & Theurgy in Late Antiquity*].

⁶⁵ Indeed, Schelling makes the startling assertion that “where there is no madness, there is also certainly no proper, active, living intellect” [Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, P. 103].

⁶⁶ Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, P. 103.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, P. xxxvi.

⁶⁸ A participle is a somewhat amphibious literary device, part adjective and part verb; it is understood as a noun that betrays action. Similarly, the *Life of life* is an absolute identity of all negations and negations of negations and, as such, is more primordial than any opposition between subject and object.

*never ceasing.*⁶⁹ Accordingly, in imagining the *life of life* as a participle, this paper, like the author(s) of the Zohar, struggles to articulate the notion that the divine *life of life* can neither be objectified nor restricted to movement and, as such, subject to the strictures of time and space – indeed, the *life of life* is the pure and absolute subject, beyond the grasp of contraries and, as the *that which is*, primordial to all manifest reality that is; the *life of life* is the dark un-ground, transcendent to comprehension and elusive to the ordinary plane of consciousness, that gives rise to and sustains all that is. It will emerge in this paper that while the anagogic wayfarer may be present to the divine *life of life* in intellectual intuition, that encounter itself is ineffable – the greater cannot, after all, be possessed by the lesser. As read by this paper, Schelling wants above all to disclose this pre-conceptual and pre-categorical *life of life* of *that which is* in intellectual intuition. Just as the living God has been perceived by those anagogic travelers of uncommon courage and subtle intellects throughout the ages, so does Schelling wants to attain to an originary revelation of being as non-being and to make it historically available *a posteriori* to the ordinary plane of consciousness in order to connect the hidden greater to the manifested lesser in answer the riddle of the world. As a guide for his work, Schelling somewhat self-consciously asks:

“And is the philosopher able to turn back to the simplicity of history, like the divine Plato, who, for the entire series of his works is thoroughly dialectical, but who, *at the pinnacle and final point of transfiguration in all of them, becomes historical?*”⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Matt, The Zohar, 3:290b [italics added].

⁷⁰ Schelling, The Ages of the World, P. xxxix [italics added].

This Schellingian passage foreshadows the trajectory of this paper and discloses the ultimate aspirations within the Schelling's philosophical inquiry – the “pinnacle and final point of transfiguration” within the Schellingian *mystagogy* is the liminal and historical moment of intellectual intuition when the anagogic traveler affirmatively encounters *that which is* and attains to the lesser and greater mysteries – firstly, illumination that all is one in the terrestrial plane and, later, noetic perfection in unification with the supreme principle. To the argument presented by this paper and as Schelling above alludes, noetic perfection within intellectual intuition is the highest aspiration of the true philosopher; in intellectual intuition, the anagogic initiate may attain to noetic *henosis* and its particular *epopteia*, which, as a mystical union and knowing, “is both the highest stage of initiation and the goal of Platonic contemplative philosophy.”⁷¹ This paper, in accordance with the Schellingian reading of the Platonic tradition and in congruence with the sensibilities and teachings of mystical traditions everywhere, reads intellectual intuition as the spiritual *axis mundi* and, as such, the point of ontological and epistemological intersection between the heavens and the earth. To the reading of this paper, the accessibility of historical revelation, in which the gifted anagogic traveler might avail himself for soteriological redemption and ontological renewal, is also the crux and support for the Schellingian aspiration of a philosophical-religion; indeed, this paper takes seriously (and literally) Schelling's ambition for the development of a philosophical-religion. Schelling, writing in his final work, Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology, describes what a philosophical-religion might look like:

“The philosophical-religion actually can only be religion if it had in itself the factors of the actual religion, factors as they are in the natural and revealed

⁷¹ Uždavinys, Philosophy & Theurgy in Late Antiquity, P. 10.

religions, and had it no less than the natural and revealed religions have them: only in the manner in which it contained these factors would it have its difference from them – and furthermore this difference could not be other than that the principles that in the one are effective without being understood would be understood and comprehended in this one.”⁷²

Given that the articulation of elements common to natural and revealed religions is his philosophical touchstone for a philosophical-religion, this paper understands and portrays Schelling as a proto-traditionalist and, as such, the intellectual predecessor to the philosophical lineage of *sophia perennis*. Moreover, given that Schelling claims that his aspirational philosophical-religion must continue to maintain the pre-existing structures of natural and revealed religions, this paper takes its insistence on reading theurgic and hieratic practices into the Schellingian project as properly placed and philosophically justified. As will shortly emerge in the telling of this paper, Schelling “evoke[s] an ancient sense of religion – so ancient that it must be excavated from its oblivion in human history”⁷³ in order to point the way forward for a philosophical-religion that, vehicled by the anagogic transport of Schellingian intellectual intuition, is proximate to and drinks deeply from the creative and living source of all that is.

Conventional Schellingian interpretations claim that “being or the Absolute is resistant to knowledge because it is the prior condition of the subject-object structure.”⁷⁴ In this claim, this paper chimes with conventional scholarship. After all, “it is not because there is thinking that

⁷² Schelling, *Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*, P. 174.

⁷³ Wirth, *Schelling and the Future of God*, P. 2.

⁷⁴ “[I]n Neoplatonism, the direct encounter with Nous and with ineffable henadic principles transcends one’s senses and imagination, since the One (*to hen*) is beyond all image, form and being” [Uždavinys, *Ascent to Heaven in Islamic and Jewish Mysticism*, P. 38].

there is being, but rather, because there is being, there is thinking;”⁷⁵ accordingly, symbolic thought, as layered over living existence by productive imagination, is ever unable to provide a full accounting of life, is ever “out-of-joint,” is ever uncanny,⁷⁶ and, in Heideggerian language, ever places one in an *unheimlich* state *vis-à-vis* primordial being. Of similar sensibility, a Russian poet tells us, “[a] thought, once uttered, is untrue;”⁷⁷ that is, analytic expression, in contrast to synthetic thought, is inherently unable to possess and is, indeed, somehow estranged from the richness, depth and breadth of the living experience. So far so good. However, conventional scholarship then tends to make the further claim that Schelling relies on a mystical intellectual intuition as a bridge that somehow permits special internal knowledge of the Absolute *prius*.⁷⁸ Here, this paper departs from conventional scholarship.

Undermining conventional readings of Schelling, this paper suggests to the reader’s consideration that, while a direct and unmediated experience of the divine is available to Schellingian intellectual intuition, intellectual intuition does not provide privileged access into the *whatness* of the *life of life*; rather, intellectual intuition is a metaphysical insight into the *thatness* of the Absolute – a visionary glimpse of the primordial *that which is*. The essence of the *life of life* is transcendent to human cognition because it is more primordial than and serves as foundation for the subject-object structure of ordinary consciousness; consequently, this paper

⁷⁵ Bowie, P. 14.

⁷⁶ Belonging to “the realm of the frightening, of what evokes fear and dread” [Freud, P. 123], Freud notes that the German word, *unheimlich*, is equivalent to the English, uncanny or eerie, “but which etymologically corresponds to ‘unhomely’ [Ibid., P. 124]. In Arabic and Hebrew the ‘uncanny’ merges with the ‘demonic’ and the ‘gruesome’ [Ibid., P. 125]. Interestingly, Freud draws some correspondence to the Coptic, “A revealer of secrets or the man to whom secrets are revealed” [Ibid., P. 126]. For a wonderful account of the uncanny within the philosophy of Martin Heidegger, please see Katherine Withy’s *Heidegger: On Being Uncanny*.

⁷⁷ Tyutchev, Fyodor Ivanovich. *Silentium*. [www.poemhunter.com/poem/silentium].

⁷⁸ States Heinrich Heine, with some exasperation, “Schelling leaves the philosophical route and seeks by a kind of mystical intuition to arrive at the contemplation of the absolute itself; he seeks to contemplate it in its central point, in its essence, where it is neither thought nor extension, neither subject nor object, neither mind nor matter, but . . . I know not what!” [Wirth, *The Conspiracy of Life*, P. 106]. It must be noted, however, that recent scholarship is beginning to shift this conventional reading of Schellingian intellectual intuition.

argues that Schellingian intellectual intuition restricts its insight into the *thatness* of the Absolute – namely, that the Absolute, “which is simple by definition and for which no other expression is available to us than that of absoluteness,”⁷⁹ *just is* and is, indeed, confirmed to be in its simple manifestation. Moreover, this paper further claims that intellectual intuition is the sole vehicle that makes available instances of metaphysical insight into the *thatness* of the *life of life* that *just is*, hidden beyond the planes of ordinary consciousness. Indeed, Schelling claims that this intellectual intuition of *thatness*, of *that* being which *just is* beyond the world of becoming, is a liminal encounter with “primal chaos itself;”⁸⁰ thus, in attaining to the *life of life* in intellectual intuition, the anagogic traveler encounters what Schelling imagines as the ceaseless annular rotation and *fons et origio* of reality, that presides over, gives rise to and sustains the ever-dynamic becoming world that, as a system of open natality, is “capable of integrating unpredictable development.”⁸¹

This paper claims that Schelling asserts intellectual intuition as an instance of *metanoia* – a sudden and transformative metaphysical insight that, because the *Augenblick* of intellectual intuition⁸² gives rise to a profound conviction of knowing within the illuminated anagogic initiate, reveals man as perfected in *henosis* with the supra-human noetic realm; this particular *epopteia* and its accompanying convictions, claims Schelling, represent passing datums of

⁷⁹ Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, P. 18.

⁸⁰ Schelling, *Philosophy of Art*, P. 88. “The inner essence of the absolute, that in which all resides as one and one as all, is primal chaos itself” [*Ibid.*].

⁸¹ Schelling, *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy*, P. 66-67. Accordingly, this paper argues that primordial freedom, which carries all creations *in potentia*, is the fiery hearth of the world. As Heraclitus instructs us, “[t]his ordered universe (*cosmos*), which is the same for all, was not created by any one of the gods or of mankind, but it was ever and is and shall be ever-living Fire, kindled in measure and quenched in measure” [Hyland, P. 163]. As will later become evident in this paper’s telling, this Heraclitean fragment is in deep accord with the Schellingian cosmology.

⁸² As will emerge in this paper, Schelling claims intellectual intuition is an a priori science because it transports one to a location prior to the subject – object structure of consciousness.

consciousness *a posteriori* to the instance of intellectual intuition that, because of its certainty, moves toward experience in resolute historical action, grounds positive being in non-being and answers the Schellingian riddle of the world. As implied by this correspondence to *metanoia*, Schellingian intellectual intuition will be seen to emerge only in a sudden liminal encounter when ordinary consciousness collapses, *aporia* (chaos) emerges and the desire (*eros*) for epistemic closure urges the anagogic traveler forward to an encounter with *that which is*. Specifically, to the reading proffered by this paper, Schelling claims that intellectual intuition may be motivated by the collapse of negative philosophy, which Schelling conflates with the ordinary plane of conscious;⁸³ indeed, thought and the ordinary plane of being are, for Schelling, one and the same – after all, absent the vehicle of symbolic thought, being is available only to intuited immediacy. For insight into Schelling’s claim, we might remember that the governing schema of authentic initiatory rites requires that the *liminal personae* descend to a primordial state of nothingness⁸⁴ . . . before he can “raise [him]self to the superior states;”⁸⁵ likewise, this paper wants to recommend to the reader’s consideration that the Schellingian philosophical system, in inverse replication of cosmological progression, demands of the initiate an Orphic reversion to the “originary state.”⁸⁶ Paralleling traditional initiatory archetypes, the Schellingian initiate is awoken to and, ultimately transforms into, his *non-human* innermost beginnings in

⁸³ “[F]or manifestation itself, taken all together, is no more than a totality of symbolic expressions” [Insights into Islamic Esoterism & Taoism]. This is not to suggest that only the collapse of negative philosophy either necessarily or only occasions an encounter with positive philosophy – the positive may arise *sui generis*. As Schelling states it, “[f]or the positive can begin purely of itself with even the simple words: I want that which is above being, that which is not merely being, but rather what is more than this, the Lord of Being” [Schelling, The Grounding of Positive Philosophy, P. 154].

⁸⁴ “Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial. As such, their ambiguous and indeterminate attributes are expressed by a rich variety of symbols in the many societies that ritualize social and cultural transitions. Thus, liminality is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon” [Turner, The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure, P. 95].

⁸⁵ Guénon, The Esoterism of Dante, P.33.

⁸⁶ Schelling, Philosophy & Religion, P. 15. “[T]he initiatic process reproduces in all its phases the cosmological process itself” [Guenon, Insights into Islamic Esoterism & Taoism, P. 7].

intellectual intuition. Indeed, the tell-tale characteristic of traditionalist philosophy is the ecstatic overture to an inhuman divine; as Guénon tells us, “initiation must have a ‘non-human’ origin for without this it can never attain to its final end, which extends beyond the domain of individual possibilities.”⁸⁷ As we are told elsewhere, “[w]here the beginning is, the end will be.”⁸⁸

Accordingly, to this view, Schelling, in unity with German Pietist thematics and the strictures of contemplative orison, approaches his philosophical project as *mystagogy*; to this reading, negative (inductive) philosophy and its epistemic collapse is necessary to occasion the anagogic traveler’s liminal “pathlessness” and his later heroic initiatic passage to the historical center of positive philosophy – the undifferentiated *life of life* that *just is*. Indeed, we shall see that Schelling makes the surprising claim that, in its collapse, negative philosophy contains an inherent demand for the anagogic traveler to turn toward a positive philosophy that stands in *ekstasis*⁸⁹ to thought in order to secure epistemic completion. Just “[a]s the example of Socrates makes clear, consciousness of our ignorance is essential to the maieutic⁹⁰ that facilitates the birth of wisdom *from a center outside our subjectivity*”⁹¹ – that spiritual center is, for Schelling, the primeval *life of life* to which the anagogic wayfarer assimilates in intellectual intuition.

The following passage, quoted at length from Schelling’s Philosophy and Religion, reveals the Schellingian *mystagogy* as replicative of contemplative *askesis* and orison and betrays its origin

⁸⁷ Guénon, Perspectives on Initiation, P. 52. “[S]ince not to take into account the ‘non-human’ element is strictly to misunderstand the very essence of tradition, without which there is nothing left worthy to bear this name” [Ibid., P. 41]. And as directly meaningful to this paper’s reading of Schelling, “all religion in the true sense of the word has a ‘non-human’ origin and is organized so as to preserve the deposit of an equally ‘non-human’ element which it retains from its origin” [Ibid., 50].

⁸⁸ Meyer, P. 31.

⁸⁹ “[T]o be in *ekstasis* was to stand outside oneself (or as we would say, to be ‘beside oneself’), hence to be more or less out of one’s mind (or body), which is to say out of control, destination unknown” [Young, P. 186].

⁹⁰ The notion of a maieutic is associated with the Socratic elenchus. “*Maieutic* comes from “maieutikos,” the Greek word for ‘of midwifery’” [www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/maieutic].

⁹¹ Wirth, Schelling Now: Contemporary Readings, P. 17 (italics in the original).

in the Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic traditions; more specifically, this paper hopes to recommend to the reader's consideration that the initiatic path, as disclosed in traditional philosophy, deeply informs the Schellingian initiatic ascetic, his understanding of the *kairological* moment of intellectual intuition and its accompanying metaphysical realizations that may be occasioned by an anagogic traveler of uncommon qualities. We read from Schelling:

“The only instrument befitting a subject such as the Absolute is a kind of cognition that is not added to the soul through instruction, teaching, etc., but is its true and eternal substance. For as the essence of God consists of absolute, solely unmediated reality, so the nature of the soul consists in cognition that is one with the real, ergo with God; hence it is also the intention of philosophy in relation to man not to add anything but to remove from him, as thoroughly as possible, the accidentals that the body, the world of appearances and the sensate life have added and bring him back to the originary state [*Ursprungliche*]. Furthermore, all instruction in philosophy that precedes this cognition can only be negative; it shows the nullity of all finite opposites and leads the soul indirectly to the perception of the infinite. Once there, it is no longer in need of those makeshift devices [*Behelfe*] of negative description of absoluteness and sets itself free from them.”⁹²

In this passage, which frames the architecture of this paper, the reader will begin to recognize the outlines of the Schellingian philosophical project – the transportation of the anagogic traveler, mortified of pretense and accidentals, beyond the nullity of negative (or “lower” analytical dialectic) philosophy to an encounter with positive (historical or “higher” synthetic dialectic) philosophy, that is, to a living encounter with the immanent *life of life*, the *that which is*, in intellectual intuition. As we shall see, Schelling claims that intellectual intuition, incommunicable because of its inward realization, immediacy and occasion on another ontological plane, is only confirmed in a historical datum of consciousness *a posteriori*; indeed,

⁹² Schelling, Philosophy & Religion, P. 15.

mirroring the “absolute breaking away”⁹³ of the finite world from the *life of life*, the sacred passage from ordinary sensual reality to supra-sensible intellectual intuition demands an ontological break from the profane world. As recounted by anagogic travelers everywhere, this ontological break is realized by the traveler only after an event of intellectual intuition; after all, if the anagogic traveler was aware of his passage to the more primordial (higher) ontological state, he would be able to map out and communicate the way to others. However, the anagogic initiate is limited to reporting where he has been; the spiritual road taken cannot be shown to another. If accepting of his own cross, each is tasked to journey alone. Visibly marked only to the spiritual (purified) eye, each traveler, through self-immolation and orison, must find his way alone to divine simplicity – as traditionalist doctrine everywhere tells us, like may only be known by like.

In keeping with this passage from Philosophy and Religion, this paper concentrates the greater portion of its attention on an examination of Schellingian intellectual intuition and its location, meaning and purpose within the Schellingian enterprise. The narrative, however, is complex; along the way, certain Jungian and existential threads, Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic traditions and Hellenic mystery teachings must be interwoven with the narrative in order for this paper to more broadly disclose intellectual intuition and to draw meaningful soteriological and ontological conclusions. Taking traditionalist philosophy as an interpretive key to unlock and inform Schellingian thought, this paper’s governing conceit, as the reader will notice throughout, is that *sofia perennis* is largely synonymous with and explicative of the Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic traditions and Hellenic mystery teachings; accordingly, this paper employs traditionalist philosophy to help provide context and to inform its textual understanding and

⁹³ Ibid., P. 29.

presentation of the Schellingian project. It is acknowledged that traditionalist doctrine, as any human endeavor, is not of procrustean form but admits of differing strains; however, in order to preserve a coherent hermeneutic viewpoint, this paper employs the thought of René Guénon as exemplar of *sophis perennis*. Moreover, instrumental to its account of intellectual intuition as the initiatic apogee within the Schellingian project, this paper broadly traces the heroic ascent of consciousness in ontogenetic terms as isomorphically, if inversely, repetitive of the cosmic sundering of Absolute being – as the Hermetic code tells us, the earth below is in replication of the heavens above.⁹⁴ S.J. McGrath⁹⁵ correctly notes that Schelling anticipates “the birth of the hero in analytical psychology: a being that begins in unconscious unity with the system that produces and initially sustains it, achieves personal consciousness, individuality, and finite freedom by disassociating from that system and establishing a conscious relationship to it.”⁹⁶ As this paper hopes to later persuade the reader, the anagogic traveler on the initiatic path, far from expressing a mystical passivity, is, in fact, “the source of [his] initiative toward ‘realization’”⁹⁷ through the ascetic disciplines required for his profound interior work. Indeed, prior to the emergence of *aporia* (chaos) in the collapse of negative philosophy and subsequent illumination by *fiat lux*,⁹⁸ the higher ontic possibilities within the anagogic traveler exist only as inchoate possibility, as undifferentiated and chaotic *materia prima*; once awakened to his task by the

⁹⁴ Copenhaver, P. 17. To this traditional way of thinking, there exists a correspondence between the microcosm and the macrocosm; this paper likewise suggests that the phases of initiation correspond to the cosmogonic process [see Guénon, *Perspectives on Initiation*, P. 26].

⁹⁵ S. J. McGrath, in *The Dark Ground of the Spirit*, reads Schelling, with great affection and nuance, as an early surveyor of the unconscious.

⁹⁶ McGrath, P. 6. Indeed, Schelling instructs us that “[n]ecessity and freedom are related as the unconscious and the conscious” [Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, P. 30]. McGrath notes that “[p]rototypes for three of the major models of the unconscious in the twentieth Century, the Freudian bio-personal unconscious, the Jungian collective unconscious, and the Lacanian semiotic unconscious, can be traced back to Schelling [McGrath, P. 1].

⁹⁷ Guénon, *Perspectives on Initiation*, P. 11.

⁹⁸ “Let there be light” [www.dictionary.com/browse/fiat-lux]. “As for the man who is within Adam, the spiritual man . . . I do not know his special name . . . his common name is light.’ Jackson, *Zosimus*, P. 50, points out that *phōs*, the common Attic word for light, is a contraction of *phaos*, the Homeric form, and that *phōs* in Homer is a term for ‘man’” [Copenhaver, P. 109].

epistemic collapse of negative philosophy (that is, his ordinary way of understanding and engaging in the world), the anagogic traveler must attend to the difficult, disciplined and time-consuming interior work of recollection and detachment in his purifying *askesis* in order to have occasion to participate in divine simplicity – after all, the ancients tells us, “like is understood by like”⁹⁹ which expresses the notion that only those who attain to the image of the divine may assimilate to the divine. “It is not divine nature or substance, but the devouring ferocity of purity that a person is able to approach only with an equal purity. Since all Being goes up in it as if in flames, it is necessarily unapproachable to anyone still embroiled in Being.”¹⁰⁰ To the argument of this paper, the anagogic traveler, to attain true soteriological redemption and ontological renewal, must ultimately transcend the ordinary plane of consciousness and attain to the simple *life of life*, the primordial origin of all *that which is*, in intellectual intuition. And, as will ultimately emerge in the narrative of this paper, the telling initiatic mark within Schellingian intellectual intuition is decidedly not the restoration of the undifferentiated “Edenic state”¹⁰¹ of some lost golden age; rather, it is, ultimately, the attainment to the greater mystery of a supra-human state in which the anagogic traveler, realizing noetic perfection in *henosis* with the supreme principle, participates in the eternal creation of the world. Here, within the Schellingian *mystagogy*, its *askesis* and ascent to intellectual intuition, the Orphic traditionalist, that Jungian, the initiatic and the existential threads to his enterprise are mutually implicative. In his identification of the contrasting ontological moods of *Angst* (anxiety) and *Gelassenheit* (letting be), instrumental to the German mystical tradition, we will notice transports that either discourage or encourage, respectively, the putative anagogic traveler’s reversion to the *life of life* within the Schellingian *mystagogy*. As will emerge in this paper’s account, *Angst* and

⁹⁹ Copenhaver, P. 41.

¹⁰⁰ Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, P. 25.

¹⁰¹ Guénon, *The Esoterism of Dante*, P. 33.

Gelassenheit mark the two divergent paths of human life – the former, responsive to the demands of the individual conatus, leads to the periphery and the latter, bespeaking of a purified anagogue, leads to the primordial center – the *life of life*.

As will also emerge in this paper's telling, the dislocation of the anagogic traveler from his ordinary ontological plane, initially, by way of the mechanics of the Schellingian *askesis* and, eventually and most profoundly, in intellectual intuition, occasions his ontological and epistemological transformation. To this paper's telling, man is most authentically himself, most alive, when he detaches from the accidentals of the self and, in intellectual intuition, attains to the undifferentiated *thatness* of the archetypal *life of life* that originates and sustains all life; once here, man may lay claim to the lesser and greater mysteries and inherit of the world.¹⁰² The Schellingian intuition of the *life of life* may occasion the metaphysical insights of the eternal, inexhaustible natality of universal life, which is simultaneously everywhere and nowhere and is given to intuit the primordial unity immanent to multiplicity. Indeed, when the ontological planes of freedom and necessity converge in intellectual intuition, the *liminal personae*, attaining to *henosis* and its particular *epopteia*, finds soteriological redemption and ontological renewal in noetic identification with the supreme principle – at that moment, in accord with the ancient notion of *anamnesis* and the teachings of the sacred mysteries, we might just say that the illuminated anagogic traveler becomes who he already is.

¹⁰² “We shall be with all the world”[Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces, P. 25].

As will emerge in this paper's telling, Schellingian thought begins and ends in freedom; the innermost beginning is disclosed as the apogee within intellectual intuition¹⁰³ – one is revealed in this moment to have become what one already is. As Schelling himself confirms “[t]he whole of knowledge has no status itself by its own power, and there is nothing but that which is real through Freedom. The beginning and the end of all philosophy is – freedom.”¹⁰⁴ As we will see, this movement of the spirit, identical with Schelling's “riddle of the world,” in which the illuminated mind regains a clear view of the source and unconditioned origin of all things, carries an ontological shift as its consequence – a transformation¹⁰⁵ of the anagogic traveler causes the world itself to appear as if transformed; one might say that “[t]he world becomes alive only to the person who awakens herself to it.”¹⁰⁶ “Ontologically, [Schelling] conceives of ‘being’ as an ongoing process of creative development, which, as a continuous creation, entails the continued emergence of new forms of being” – understood this way, the *life of life*, as the source, plenitude and exuberance of an ever-overcoming world, is coequal with freedom. As St. Paul might tell us, “in Him [the *life of life*] we live and move and have our being;”¹⁰⁷ Each of us, as poured from the same essence as the *life of life* is conceived in and oriented toward freedom. Accordingly, each of us must be held equal to the dignity of his existential condition; for to attain to ontological renewal and soteriological redemption in intellectual intuition, each is called to “free oneself

¹⁰³ “‘I am the Alpha and Omega,’ says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty” [Holy Bible, Revelation 1:7 – 8].

¹⁰⁴ Schelling, Philosophical Inquiry into the Nature of Freedom, P. xxviii.

¹⁰⁵ Etymologically, transformation indicates a passage beyond form from a modified state to an unmodified state [see Guénon, The Multiple States of the Being, P. 22].

¹⁰⁶ Bettelheim, P. 234. And the contrary must also be true; if a person is insensitive to the world, the world ceases to exist for her [Bettelheim, P. 236].

¹⁰⁷ Holy Bible, Acts 17:28.

from oneself.”¹⁰⁸ And as ancient tradition tells us, “many are called, but few are chosen”¹⁰⁹ – few are chosen precisely because each initiate must chose himself.¹¹⁰

In order to provide a context for understanding Schelling’s notion of intellectual intuition, to recognize and to locate the primacy of intellectual intuition within Schellingian thought and to define and amplify the elements of Schellingian intellectual intuition for the reader, the broad structure of this paper comprises four separate but mutually implicative sections; broadly conceived, the first section proposes that the German Pietist reform movement, within which a young Schelling spent his formative years in theosophically inclined Swabia, is the pre-ontological backdrop and provides substantial grist for his later emphasis of intellectual intuition within his philosophical enterprise. This paper recommends to the reader’s consideration that the Pietist reform movement in general and, more specifically, the Bohemian and Oetignerian *Zentralerkenntnis*, is the immediate, if pre-ontological, forefather to Schelling’s notion of intellectual intuition. In support of this point of view, this paper will call to the reader’s attention certain elements within Pietist theology that are either later replicated within or bear intimate resemblance to themes in Schellingian thought. Yet, in proposing the underlying importance of the Pietist reform movement to Schelling’s thought, this paper intends neither to derogate the prominence and influence of Schelling’s deep mythological interests nor his study of ancient philosophical and theurgical practices; rather, underlying this paper’s modest claim that Schelling’s upbringing within and deep familial intimacy with the leadership, scholarship and

¹⁰⁸ Bowie, P. 180. For Schelling, “the truth of being is a continual movement beyond itself. If this were not so we would remain within a system of necessity” [Bowie, P. 179].

¹⁰⁹ Holy Bible. *Matthew* 22:14.

¹¹⁰ “But most people are frightened of precisely by this abyssal freedom in the same way that they are frightened by the necessity to be utterly one thing or another. And where they see a flash of freedom, they turn away from it as if from an utterly injurious flash of lightening and they feel prostrated by freedom as an appearance that comes from the ineffable, from eternal freedom, from where there is no ground whatsoever” [Schelling, The Ages of the World, P. 78].

practice of the Pietist reform movement are the pre-ontological context for understanding Schelling's conception and central placement of intellectual intuition within his philosophical project, is the stronger claim, which will be implicitly pursued throughout this paper, that the Schellingian project is a revalorization and reestablishment of the ancient Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic traditions and of the ancient mystery teachings. In the second section, this paper presents a general reading of Schelling's philosophical project; in particular, this section introduces a cosmological account of the *life of life* so that the reader is afforded sufficient opportunity to later locate and recognize the central importance of Schellingian intellectual intuition within his broader project. Just as the isomorphism¹¹¹ of man underlies the traditional outlook, so too does it imbue Schelling's thinking – the cosmogonic process is repeated in the ontological dimension within the arc of individual life. This paper then pivots in the third section to exam Schellingian intellectual intuition and its proximate philosophical beginnings in the thinking of Kant, Hume and J. G. Fichte. Having attuned the reader's ear to shared elements within Pietism and Schellingian intellectual intuition, correspondences to the Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic spiritual traditions and, more specially to the purposes of this paper, to the antique tradition of contemplative *askesis* and orison are drawn in order to help inform and amplify Schellingian intellectual intuition; in part, this paper claims that Schelling presents a revalorization within his philosophical project of traditional initiatic elements found within the antique tradition of contemplative *askesis* and orison, which this paper takes as exemplar of the Orphic tradition; indeed, this paper reads Schelling to claim philosophical *praxis* as *mystagogy* and as preparatory to the moment of existential death in intellectual intuition. Outlining the

¹¹¹ “The question of the origin of the world is inextricably interwoven with the question of the origin of man’ [Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, P. 8]. Because the human being can only entertain those things that fall within his field of vision, “[i]t is therefore understandable that stories which are supposed to describe the origin of the real world are completely intertwined and mixed-up with factors which we would rather call stories of the preconscious processes about the origin of the human consciousness” [von Franz, *Creation Myths*, P. 11].

Schellingian *mystagogy*, this paper will make the rather surprising claim that, for Schelling, negative philosophy and its formal epistemological collapse is a preparatory step in the Schellingian maieutic insofar as it may occasion *aporia* and, for the heroic anagogic traveler, profound hieratic actions; drawing on the precepts of traditionalist philosophy to amplify the path of Schellingian theurgy, it will emerge that the *askesis* necessary to purify the anagogic traveler for intellectual intuition of the primordial state requires him to recapitulate the entirety of the human condition; this recapitulation requires, in turn, a renunciation of manifest form by the anagogic traveler; indeed, initiatic practice holds that whoever “fails to free himself from reason at the required moment remains a prisoner of form”¹¹² and remains confined to the human dimension. In the fourth section, this paper concludes by gesturing to the profound *epopteia* that illuminates the adept in *henosis* with the *life of life*. Only those who free themselves from the “torment of thinking”¹¹³ attain to the primordial state of intellectual intuition; here, the celestial mysteries may reveal themselves – the anagogic traveler to intellectual intuition attains to the lesser mystery that all is one and, accordingly, to the metaphysical realization that the entirety of the cosmos is a hierophany of the *life of life*. From this primordial state, an anagogic traveler of uncommon qualities may ascend to the greater mysteries of the celestial realm – the higher *epopteia* in which the illuminated initiate identifies with the supra-human *life of life* as *zoë* and *phusis*, the *fons et origio* of all that was, is and will be – here, the illuminated adept attains to noetic perfection in Orphic assimilation with the supreme principle, is delivered of his earthly bindings and participates as co-creator of all that is. So it is that in intellectual intuition the adept, transformed into pure spirit and in noetic unity with the divine, is said to become who he already is.

¹¹² Guénon, Perspectives on Initiation, P. 209.

¹¹³ Schelling, On the History of Modern Philosophy, P. 167.

A quick housekeeping note: from time to time, this paper will draw correspondences to and concordances with mythology, religious tradition, other philosophical systems and works of literature. These correspondences and concordances are not intended to be read as authoritative appeals and definitive of the Schellingian project *per se*; rather, given that Schellingian intellectual intuition operates in that *thin space* between the conceptual and the non-conceptual and is elusive to rigid academic discrimination, it is hoped that the correspondences and concordances to other human expressions of liminality and to understandings and contexts for disclosing and understanding liminal encounters with the numinous will add richness, depth and interpretative meaning to this paper's presentation of Schelling's notion of intellectual intuition.

As has been delightfully said elsewhere, “[t]here are few men who are privileged to travel abroad a little, others must be content with travelers’ tales.”¹¹⁴ This travelers’ tale begins before the beginning.

Section 1: German Pietist Pre-ontology

Bruce Matthews, in his unconventional reading of Schelling's Organic Form of Philosophy: Life as a Schema of Freedom, sets out a lucid account of certain early German Pietist and theosophical influences on Schelling's thinking – and this paper augments Matthew's narrative with ancillary material in order that the existential commitments of the anagogic traveler within

¹¹⁴ Tolkien, P. 67. See also Huston, P. 49, who writes, “[m]ystics endowed with the ‘eye of the heart,’ can intuit this celestial expanse; others must rely on reports or inferences.”

the Schellingian project becomes more alive to the reader. For the purposes of this paper, drawing out German Pietist strands from the pre-ontological background of Schelling's childhood and precocious academic maturation hopes, in general, to provide insight into his later thought and, more specifically, to begin to frame for the reader's understanding the central place that intellectual intuition holds in the Schellingian project; to the reading of this paper, the moment of intellectual intuition, which deeply parallels Pietist unmediated encounters with the divine in *Zentralerkenntnis* is the spiritual axis around which the entirety of the Schellingian project rotates. This paper begins to inform its analysis by drawing correspondences to Pietist thought and to the broader contemplative tradition – the existential and theological commitments of these traditions place unmediated encounters with the living God at their spiritual center. What emerges, this paper suggests, is that the Schellingian themes surrounding intellectual intuition resonate with Pietist and contemplative voices and traditions. As the Schellingian account of the Absolute *prius*, the *life of life*, is read by this paper in onto-theistic terms, it is recalled that the themes of living and direct, unmediated encounters with the numinous were deeply and profoundly part of the German Pietist movement into which Schelling was born. What emerges in this paper's examination of German Pietist thought is a call for the devout to make a profound inner breakthrough, to renounce ordinary planes of understandings of human flourishing and to abandon the accidents of the self in favor of a profound reorientation around a new Centrum – a direct and unmediated encounter with the divine, the Boehemian and Oetingerian *Zentralerkenntnis*, through which the anagogic pilgrim may attain to divine life and become "similar to the whole."¹¹⁵ As will soon become apparent, these same Orphic themes echo deeply and broadly within Schelling's philosophical project.

¹¹⁵ Matthews, P. 46 [quoting Oetinger, Friedrich. *Samtliche Schriften*, Metzinger, Franz (1972)].

Schelling's father, J.F. Schelling, was a pastor with deep Pietist roots who succeeded the esteemed F.C. Oetinger as the *Pralat* (prelate) in Murrhardt, Germany. In fact, on both the maternal and paternal sides of the Schelling family, there were long clerical lineages. As such, "[t]he culture Schelling was raised in strove to integrate the most disciplined of intellectual activities with the invigorating experience of the numinous."¹¹⁶ Accordingly, insofar as the young Schelling, descendent of two Pietist clerical lineages, surely was steeped in and either participated in or, as is more likely given that this paper neither claims nor is aware that Schelling himself experienced an occasion of intellectual intuition, was intimately connected to those who participated in unmediated encounters with the divine, this paper's speculation that the Pietist movement provides pre-ontological support and sensibilities for Schelling's intellectual intuition seems sure-footed. From its very beginning, the Pietist movement opposed Lutheran orthodoxy with calls for "personal renewal, individual growth in holiness, and religious experience."¹¹⁷ Indeed, "the basic premises of all practically directed reform groups in seventeenth-century Protestantism found expression in a single treatise issued in 1675; that treatise, the *Pia Desideria: or Heartfelt Desires for a God-pleasing Improvement of the true Protestant Church*, was penned by Philip Jakob Spener in partial response to a perceived decline of Christianity in Germany. The *Pia Desideria*, was written within an eschatological context; accordingly, it called for a regeneration of both the church and the individual. As Ernest Stoeffler tells us:

"Unlike his Orthodox opponents, Spener focused more on the subjective appropriation of the believer's redemption than on God's objective saving act in history in the incarnation. The pattern by which the grace of the Holy Spirit in the redemption is applied to the individual believer had been worked out during the

¹¹⁶ Matthews, P. 44.

¹¹⁷ Erb, P. 3.

seventeenth century and was known as the *ordo salutis* (order of salvation). *The believer is elected (electio), called (vocatio), illumined (illuminatio), united mystically with Christ (unicomystica), renovated (renovatio), and preserved to the end (conervatio) to be glorified with the Son (glorificatio).* Not only did Spener place emphasis on the *ordo* in general, but he accented illumination (directing attention away from the illumination of theological knowledge to direct, inner, psychological illumination in the believer) and conversion and renovation or sanctification.”¹¹⁸

The *Pia Desideria*'s principles formed part of the Pietist campaign for reform of the Lutheran church and, significantly for our historical purposes, promoted the direct and unmediated communion with God; to the Pietist view, the natural world permits access to divine presence “to those who have eyes to see . . . and ears to hear.”¹¹⁹ In Spener's account, “the determinative characteristics of faith are precisely the vitality and freedom afforded by the unmediated experience of the numinous,”¹²⁰ which characteristics were enfeebled by the then church's prevailing fixation with doctrinal purity. Interestingly, August Francke, who harbored somewhat of a mystical orientation and who defended Spener, “emphasized the experience of a new birth (*Wiedergeburt*), and his own experience in coming to this new birth led him to give special attention to the radical shift indicated by it.”¹²¹ Clothing this moment of ontological renewal in mystical language, Francke indicated that being reborn is experienced as a *Durchbruch* (a breakthrough)¹²² to another plane of consciousness.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, P. 6 [italics added].

¹¹⁹ *Holy Bible, Ezekiel 12:2.*

¹²⁰ Matthews, P. 43.

¹²¹ Erb, P. 9.

¹²² *Ibid.*

The Pietist shift of orientation from mediated structures to unmediated experience¹²³ of the divine entailed a shift in epistemological framework to correspond to the ontological shift; in this paper's discussion of intellectual intuition, it will become evident that Schelling's project resonates with these mystical Pietist themes. In the Pietist's reformed orientation and likewise for Schelling, the truth of discursive reasoning is dependent on a more primordial conviction. For the Pietists, "[t]he yardstick for measuring truth thus begins beyond the reach of reason in the bedrock certainty of lived experience"¹²⁴ – a mystical encounter with the divine in *Zentralerkenntnis*. When accessing truth in an originary (unmediated) experience of the numinous, one taps into the immanent transcendence of the divine; indeed, German Pietist thought holds that one taps directly into the living God; similarly, the Schellingian project identifies an instance of intellectual intuition as a privileged and unmediated access to the numinous *life of life*, the *fons et origio* of all that is. Friedrich Christoph Oetinger, a theosophical Pietist philosopher, taught that "the human body is directed toward his perfection in the creation of a new spiritual body and, moreover, that the dynamic movement in man is not reason or being, but 'life;'"¹²⁵ these same sensitivities and receptivities to the hidden numinous deeply inform and shape Schellingian thought. Indeed, to the Pietist way of thinking, "in the *sensus communis* [with the surrounding world], one is opened to knowledge of the universe and the Scripture by the Holy Spirit. At the root of man, beyond the division of subject and object, there is a unified Centrum where one can contact wisdom and truth."¹²⁶ Like the Pietists, Schelling lays claim to

¹²³ As Pietist, Nicholas Ludwig, Count von Zinzendorf writes, "[r]eligion can be grasped, without the conclusions of reason . . . [r]eligion must be a matter which is able to be grasped through experience alone without any concepts" [Erb, P. 291] and, additionally, "[u]nderstanding arising out of concepts changes with the time, education and other circumstances. Understanding arrived at from experience is not subject to these changes; such understanding becomes better with time and circumstance" [Ibid.] and "[t]he experience of a thing cannot be cast aside by the conclusions of reason" [Ibid., P. 292].

¹²⁴ Matthews, P. 43.

¹²⁵ Erb, P. 19.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

history as divine and continuing revelation and, consequently, the historical world about us is a hierophany of the Absolute; those of subtle and sensitive spirit, awoken to the movements of the hidden divine in the *visibilia* of the world¹²⁷ and disciplined of character, may make ontological passage to the undifferentiated Centrum, the divine *life of life* – access that is available to the anagogic traveler only by trespassing the boundaries of discursive reason in intellectual intuition. As such, Schelling lays claim to a deep strain of Pietist thought; that is, to invert the true order of things and to privilege discursive reasoning over an unmediated experience of the numinous “is to engage in a pathology that emasculates life”¹²⁸ and estranges man from that which is most truly alive – the *life of life*.

As has hopefully become apparent, the Pietist system chimes loudly within Schellingian thought; the birth of wisdom, redemption and ontological renewal in both Pietist and Schellingian thought is the awakening of the innermost divine – and the culmination and centering point of this ontological repositioning is precisely the metaphysical death of the self that precedes and makes available an unmediated encounter with the divine. Building on this Pietist backdrop to Schellingian thought, this paper later suggests to the reader’s consideration that Schelling finds intellectual heft and experiential support within the antique contemplative tradition, inclusive of neo-Platonist thought and particular acolytes of the theosophical school, and identifies the undifferentiated *thatness* available in a passing moment of intellectual intuition as the divine *life of life*. As Matthews notes, in common with the onto-theistic reading of Schelling of this paper, “the only real freedom is a freedom that participates in the absolute freedom of the divine.

¹²⁷ As Schelling writes, “[w]hat we call nature is a poem whose marvelous and mysterious writing remains undecipherable for us. Yet if we could solve this enigma, we would discover therein the Odyssey of the Spirit, which, the victim of a remarkable illusion, flees itself even as it seeks itself, for it only appears through the World like meaning through words” [Hadot, P. 274, quoting System of Transcendental Idealism].

¹²⁸ Matthews, P. 43.

Remove the divine and the chance of real freedom disappears with it.”¹²⁹ Within this system, if Schelling were unable to identify a vehicle to transport the anagogic traveler vertically to the divine, humankind would be consigned to lives of pretense and estrangement – longing for, but never attaining to, wholeness. Bespeaking of the profound religiosity within Pietist thought, we note that “[t]he liberation of man that Hahn calls for occurs through a process of divinization; a process initiated by the divine logos and actualized in life as a process of knowing.”¹³⁰ In common with Hahn’s call for divinization, and as will emerge in this paper’s reading of the Schellingian project, Schelling wants to reclaim and revalorize for mankind the Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic traditions and, in accordance with the deep truths within the ancient lesser and greater mystery teachings, to bind man to the world in *unio mundus* and to the supreme principle in *unio mysterium* – it is in the primordial state of intellectual intuition that the anagogic traveler attains to illuminative and unitive *epopteia*.

Records indicate that Schelling was familiar with the written works of Oetinger;¹³¹ Oetinger, an ordained Lutheran pastor with strong Pietist inclinations, held deep theosophical commitments, studied alchemy during his pastoral stay at Waldorf near Tübingen and, by all accounts, was an intellectual acolyte of both Jacob Bohme and, for a time, Emanuel Swedenborg.¹³² As we briefly examine certain of Oetinger’s philosophical commitments, additional parallels to Schelling’s

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, P. 59.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ In 1802, Schelling wrote his father requesting “some of the most select philo-theosophical writings of Oetinger” [Matthews, P. 46].

¹³² www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich_Christoph_Oetinger. Importantly to note, however, this paper’s presentation of a correspondence between Schellingian intellectual intuition and certain theosophical thinkers in the contemplative tradition does not lead to an ancillary claim that Schelling is a theosophical mystic. Indeed, as we shall see, Schelling strenuously denies identification as a mystic. See Horn, Friedmann. *Schelling and Swedenborg: Mysticism and German Idealism*. George Dole, Trans. Swedenborg Foundation. West Chester, PA (1997) for a wonderful study of Swedenborg’s influence on Schelling.

thinking will emerge. For Oetinger, the world might be best appreciated as a theodicy; he writes:

“Finally everything that in manifest ways has appears to stand opposed to universal law (*allgemeine Recht*) will fade away; the different forms of government will be done away with. . . so then will each on in their place become similar to the whole, so that God is everything in all (*alles in allem*).”¹³³

Here, Oetinger posits that in the Second Coming, rather than God becoming man, the divine will realize itself in nature. “Oetinger alludes to this when he writes of each individual becoming ‘similar to the whole’: the completion of God’s revelation in creation is the condition in which the perfect symmetry is established between the part and the whole.”¹³⁴ As will emerge in the reading asserted by this paper, redemption and ontological renewal in the Schellingian project ultimately ask that the individual, within the indifference of intellectual intuition, becomes “similar to the whole.”

Oetinger sought, above all, to account for a living God that is “everything in all;” to this end, Oetinger decried the use of formal logic, believing that it “will never account for the dialectically developing struggle of forces that generate nature, since logic only serves to measure and define dead things and relations.”¹³⁵ Instead, Oetinger utilized “a genetic modality of knowing that, since it paralleled the genetic development of nature, could also provide a direct and unmediated knowledge of the actuality of our world.”¹³⁶ Oetinger turned to Jacob Boehme’s

¹³³ Matthews, P. 46 [quoting Oetinger, Friedrich. *Samtliche Schriften*, Metzinger, Franz (1972)].

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, P. 47.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, P. 47-48.

Zentralerkenntnis, that modality of knowing reality without images and without imagination, as the archetypal modality that permits one to know directly, “lacking the mediation of any discursive ratio or the use of images.”¹³⁷ Akin to a moment of grace as metaphorically envisioned in the descent of the Holy Ghost, an instance of *Zentralerkenntnis* cannot be willed *per se*, but may arrive unannounced as divine gift in response to the anagogic traveler’s intentional *Gelassenheit*. Moreover, confirming its absolute truth and certainty, “Oetinger [following, in part, Platonic tradition] construed this non-discursive modality of knowing as affecting the individual in his *entirety*.”¹³⁸ As Matthews notes, “[i]t was this *Zentralerkenntnis* that provided the epistemological power and expanse of Oetinger’s system of thought, the goal of which was to structure all the various branches of knowledge to see ‘All in each thing and each thing in the All.’”¹³⁹

In part, this paper wants to make the case that Schelling seems to have absorbed the Pietist affirmation of a living *hylozoist* reality interpenetrated by world and spirit that prevailed within the Pietist pre-ontology of his formative years; interestingly, and in tangential support of the arguments of this paper, Friedemann Horn, who wrote of the affiliation between Schelling and the “Swedish seer,”¹⁴⁰ Arthur Swedenborg, claims that “[o]nly on the assumption that Schelling stood in the mystical-theosophical tradition of his Swabian homeland can we understand the fact that he seems to have felt no epistemological difficulties in his encounter with Swedenborg.”¹⁴¹ Indeed, Horn’s study maintains that “Schelling was a firm believer in communication with the

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, P. 48.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ Horn, P. vii.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, P. 3.

spiritual world.”¹⁴² While not intending to discount the academic influence of Fichte, Spinoza and others on his notion of intellectual intuition, this paper wants to suggest to the reader’s consideration that the mystical-theosophical *milieu* of German Pietism, which shaped the aspirations and the realities of Schelling’s childhood, made Schelling receptive to the consideration of spiritual influences and ecstatic instances of supra-human dimensions in his enterprise. In accord with this account, this paper suggests to the reader’s consideration that the Boehmean and Oetingerian¹⁴³ *Zentralerkenntnis* is the immediate, if pre-ontological, support and forefather to Schelling’s notion of intellectual intuition. Indeed, with the hope of making the Schellingian project come alive in the pages that follow and with the intention to bring sympathy and depth to the Schellingian project, the reader is urged to hear the echoes of these Pietist voices and their claims of a *Durchbruch* to unmediated numinous encounters beyond the opposition of subject and object in this paper’s later reading of Schellingian intellectual intuition.

Section 2: Schelling’s Philosophical Project and the Cosmic *Life of Life*

In its introductory paragraphs, this paper sought to evoke Schelling’s notion of the *life of life* through correspondence to ancient thought and mythological symbolism and, further, to suggest to the reader’s consideration that the milieu of German Pietism in the theosophically inclined Swabia of Schelling’s youth provides a necessary, if not sufficient, pre-ontological context and *Weltanschauung* to midwife the birth of Schelling’s later philosophical enterprise.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, P. x.

¹⁴³ “By way of Oetinger, the stream of Swedenborgian ideas leads to Oetinger’s great spiritual heirs, to Schelling and Hegel” [Horn, P. 9].

This section of the paper hopes to establish Schelling's claims that the *life of life* is a primordial state of indifference and absolute identity, and, secondarily, that the phenomenalization of ordinary reality is, as a moiety of the whole, ontologically out-of-joint and, consequently, imparts a nostalgic melancholy,¹⁴⁴ which provides much of the work for the anagogic traveler's reversion to the natality of the *life of life* and its ontological and epistemological transformations. So this paper attends now to what Zizek recognizes as the noumenal in-itself beyond phenomena¹⁴⁵ and which Schelling identifies as the Absolute *prius*, as that which vivifies being, and what this paper calls the *life of life*.

While this paper does not intend to tarry with or delve too deeply into Schelling's cosmological description of the Absolute *prius*, his cosmological account of the paradoxical *life of life* must be attended to long enough to ensure this paper's later claims about intellectual intuition gain traction with the reader. Within Schelling's Orphic and isomorphic¹⁴⁶ system, humankind is poured from the same essence as the *life of life*; that is, insofar as Schelling claims the highest "reason" within the human soul is beyond all distinction and particularization, it is identical with the undifferentiated *life of life*.¹⁴⁷ In this manner, "Schelling, therefore, identifies the human soul as the 'bond' between the two opposites, body and spirit,"¹⁴⁸ accordingly, the traditional triad of earth-man-spirit is foundational to and replicated within the Schellingian project. Schelling tells

¹⁴⁴ "For all creation yearns for God" [Boehme, P. 102].

¹⁴⁵ This paper does not read Zizek's interpretation to contrast a noumenal realm beyond phenomenal world as a heaven may exist beyond the earth; rather, the noumenal is immanent to, as both source to and supporter of, the phenomenal world in a way that language is unable to express.

¹⁴⁶ As Horn writes, "[t]he relationship between spirit and nature is like that between type and archetype. As is well known, Swedenborg refers to this situation, familiar to all mystical nature-philosophy as *correspondence*. . . [t]here is no doubt that Schelling had a thorough knowledge of Swedenborg's doctrine of correspondences" [Horn, Pp. 74-75].

¹⁴⁷ "I understand it as meaning that what would live eternally would be just that innermost being, my own self that was neither body nor spirit, but which was the uniting consciousness of both; that is, it was the soul that would live eternally" [Schelling, *Clara: or, On Nature's Connection to the Spirit World*, P. 36].

¹⁴⁸ Horn, P. 92.

us that “[t]he mystery of all life is the synthesis of the absolute with limitation.”¹⁴⁹ To Žizek’s way of reading Schelling, “the problem of the beginning is the problem of ‘phenomenalization’ . . . the problem is not how to attain the noumenal in-itself beyond phenomena; the true problem is now and why does this In-itself split from itself at all.”¹⁵⁰ Later, of course, this paper is occupied with precisely the inverse of the phenomenological movement in the Schellingian conception of intellectual intuition – the anagogic traveler’s reversion to the indifference of this primordial beginning. Oriented, to his own account, by the sacred mystery teachings, Schelling wants to reconnect those elusive points of liminal contact between the manifest world and the realm of the hidden and most primitive *Deus Absconditus* in order to solve the riddle¹⁵¹ of the world – as will emerge, these points of liminal contact are vehicled by the human soul in intellectual intuition. As this paper labors variously throughout its pages to establish, the pillar of the Schellingian project is intellectual intuition for it is there, and only there, that the “Absolute come[s] alive”¹⁵² and is made immediately accessible to human cognition. And as will emerge, “only by surrendering its selfness and returning to its ideal oneness will [the soul of the anagogic traveler] once again arrive at intuiting the divine and producing absoluteness.”¹⁵³ Recalling the mutual dependency between ancient philosophy and hieratic practice, Schelling, to the ultimate reading of this paper, is revealed as the great philosopher of religiosity;¹⁵⁴ implying special intimacies between mortals and gods, religiosity refers to an awakened inner receptivity

¹⁴⁹ Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, P. 36.

¹⁵⁰ Žizek, P. 14.

¹⁵¹ “The question of the beginning is also the question ‘Whence?’ It is the original and fateful question to which cosmology and the creation myths have ever tried to give new and different answers. This original question about the origin of the world is at the same time the question about the origin of man, the origin of consciousness and of the ego; it is the fateful question ‘Where did I come from?’ that faces every human being as soon as he arrives upon the threshold of self-consciousness” [Neumann, P. 7].

¹⁵² Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, P. 16.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, P. 33.

¹⁵⁴ “The sacred is equivalent to *power*, and, in the last analysis, to *reality*. The sacred is saturated with being. Sacred power means reality and at the same time enduringness and efficacy . . . [t]hus it is easy to understand that religious man deeply desires *to be*, to participate in *reality*, to be saturated with power” [Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, Pp. 12-13].

to the divine and not to the performance of religious practice¹⁵⁵ - the esoteric in contrast to the exoteric. As such, religiosity is available only to those who cultivate the ears to hear and the eyes to see.¹⁵⁶ Elsewhere, the hieratic virtues of religiosity are described as the Platonic “golden cord” which binds¹⁵⁷ men and gods. Religiosity, bespeaking of a binding between the human soul and the non-human divine, accordingly carries with it an implication of *ekstasis* to thought, traditionally expressed by verticality, “the vector of mystery and reverence that takes us beyond ourselves”¹⁵⁸ and, as such, is akin to, and perhaps the greatest expression of, philosophical wonder.¹⁵⁹ Within the thematics of this paper and the Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic traditions that underlie Schellingian thought, we note that the theurgic practices of religiosity calls the anagogic wayfarer back to that non-human “innermost beginning” which is most primordial within him and from which he is poured – the *life of life*. To Schelling’s way of thinking, the higher the status that a thing holds, the deeper – the more primordial – must its grounding [*Begundung*] be¹⁶⁰ – the primordial and divine *life of life* is the “innermost beginning” of all that is.

Given man’s intermediate position between the manifested and unmanifested realms, an understanding of the cosmic dimension of the *life of life* must be first established in this paper

¹⁵⁵ “Proper religion relinquishes the public and withdraws into the sacred darkness of secrecy” [Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, P. 51].

¹⁵⁶ *Holy Bible*, *Mark* 4:9. See also *Mark* 8:18, “Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear?”

¹⁵⁷ Etymologically speaking, the word, ‘religiosity,’ is understood to refer the quality of the bond between humans; “popular etymology among the later ancients (*Servius*, *Lactantius*, Augustine) and the interpretation of many modern writers connects it with *religare* “to bind fast” (*see rely*), via notion of “place an obligation on,” or “bond between humans and gods.” In that case, the re- would be an intensive” [*see* <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=religion>].

¹⁵⁸ Steinbock, P. 13.

¹⁵⁹ “The greatest wonder, for the ancient Egyptian initiate ‘like unto the dead’, is to ‘find the gods dancing before your gaze, the Ennead bidding you welcome,’ when ‘your hand will be taken by Ra himself’ among the crew of his barque, and ‘when they see you, making your appearance as a god’ at the side of Ra, so ‘that you may see the god, and the god see you’” [Uždavinys. *Philosophy & Theurgy in Late Antiquity*, P. 30].

¹⁶⁰ Schelling, *Historical-critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*, P. 8.

because, in the reversionary transport of intellectual intuition, Schelling claims that the anagogic traveler intuits and ultimately unifies with the undifferentiated and primordial *life of life* in intellectual intuition and, unifying the earthly and heavenly realms, attains to a particular *epopteia*. We take note of the Schellingian definition of the *life of life* as the original and indifferent *Ungrund* from which comes all that is:

“There must be a being *before* all ground and before all that exists, thus generally before any duality – how can we call it anything other than the original ground or the non-ground (*Ungrund*)? Since it precedes all opposites, these cannot be distinguishable in it nor can they be present in any way. Therefore, it cannot be described as the identity of opposites; it can only be described as the absolute indifference (*Indifferenz*) of both.”¹⁶¹

Accordingly, insofar as the Schellingian project envisions the cosmic “innermost beginning” as the absolute indifference of (primordial simultaneity of) nature and the world of spirit in the *life of life*, then in the Orphic sweep of his thought, the Schellingian *telos* must be a reversion to non-differentiation by restoration of the primordial state. Accordingly, just as for mystics of a metaphysical temperament everywhere, the clue to the Schellingian project lies in his vision of the nature of its “innermost beginning” in the *life of life*; indeed, as Underhill instructs us, “from this Centre all else branches out, and to this all else must conform.”¹⁶²

In Philosophy and Religion, Schelling declares that he wants to re-sound the “philosophical tenor of old”¹⁶³ and to reclaim on behalf of philosophy the ancient sacred teachings of “the eternal

¹⁶¹ Schelling, Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom, P. 68.

¹⁶² Underhill, Ruysbroeck, (unpaginated).

¹⁶³ Schelling, Philosophy and Religion, P. 4.

birth of all things and their relationship to god.”¹⁶⁴ So making known his attention to the ancient mysteries, Schelling notes that “[t]he true mysteries of philosophy have as their sole content the eternal birth of all things and their relationship to god”¹⁶⁵ and, for Schelling, these true mysteries are always mythopoeically proximate to the divine Dionysus. As the mythopoeic qualities of Dionysus will be explored throughout this paper, it is presently sufficient to note that, in the Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic traditions, Dionysus, as he who was one, was scattered and recollected, is metaphor for the vitiating power from which all comes to be and to which all is later reabsorbed (and, unsurprisingly, it will later emerge that Dionysus is the Orphic metaphor for the anagogic traveler and his profound interior work of contemplative *askesis* and orison). Expressive of the Dionysaic *life of life*, we read the following except from Origins of the Sacred:

“[B]odies that embrace and comingle with endless potency but neither bind nor loose, that bind and loose yet do neither, are seeking to represent, in ritual time and space, our oldest sense of the sacred power that lies behind and issues in the world of intelligible appearance. It is what the mystic Spinoza would call the sacred realm of *Natura Naturans* (Nature Nurturing), which generates and dissolves individual existences in the profane realm of *Natura Naturata* (Nature Nurtured), and what Nietzsche would identify among the archaic Greeks as the Dionysaic realm that both generates and dissolves the coherent structures of Apollo.”¹⁶⁶

Indeed, in hewing closely to his founding Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic sensibilities, Schelling notes that “[t]he ultimate goal of the universe and its history is nothing other than the complete reconciliation with and re-absorption into the Absolute.”¹⁶⁷ In sympathy with the mythopoeic minds of archaic man, Schelling writes, “the ancients did not speak in vain of a

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., P. 8.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Young, P. 189.

¹⁶⁷ Schelling, Philosophy and Religion, P. 31.

divine and holy madness [and this] self-lacerating madness is still now what is innermost in all things;”¹⁶⁸ accordingly, this paper begins by gathering in mythological understandings – beginning with Hesiod. Reminiscent of what this paper takes as Schellingian *mystagogy*, Hesiod, in the *Theogony*, “announces his intention to look through and behind the Olympian order of the present . . . in order to glimpse the origins of the process.”¹⁶⁹ Hesiod holds¹⁷⁰ that “before everything there was chaos; etymologically this [word, “chaos”] means the expanse, that which still stands open to everything, that which is unfilled.”¹⁷¹ Similarly, “the etymology of *chaos* leads to the verb that *gapes open*.”¹⁷² As original chaos, God is “the super actual, beyond that which has being, therefore a sublimity beyond Being and Not-Being.”¹⁷³ In this sense, original chaos is “*that from which everything becomes*;”¹⁷⁴ and, as such, is neither the earth nor the heavens “but rather the primordial substance of all becoming, the as-yet unformed foundation of everything that will emerge into being in the future.”¹⁷⁵ In his interpretation, Bussanich notes

¹⁶⁸ Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, Pp. 102-103.

¹⁶⁹ Bussanich, P. 212. The reader will note that, similarly to the announced intentions of Hesiod, this paper claims Schelling wants to “look through and behind” the existing order to things to “glimpse the origins of the process” in intellectual intuition.

¹⁷⁰ “First there was Chaos and night and dark abyss and the second *Tartarus* but earth and air and heaven did not yet exist. In the immense clefts of Erebus – that is, the deeper abyss – night with her dark wings gave birth to a wind egg. From it sprang in the course of time the God *Eros*, the one who arouses desire and who has golden wings on his back. He is similar to a whirlwind” [von Franz, *Creation Myths*, P. 228].

¹⁷¹ Schelling, *Historical-critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*, P. 30.

¹⁷² Young, P. 210.

¹⁷³ Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, P. 27.

¹⁷⁴ Schelling, *Historical-critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*, P. 30.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.* Evidencing the Dionysian sensibility that underlies Schellingian thought, we quote Schelling at length: “We see in nature, in the process of its free unfolding, becoming, in proportion to its approach to spirit, every more, so to speak, frenzied. No doubt, all things of nature are found in an insensate state. But we see those creatures that belong to the time of the last struggle between cision and unification, consciousness and unconsciousness, and that immediately precede humanity among the creatures of nature, walking about in a state similar to drunkenness. Panthers or tigers do not pull the carriage of Dionysus in vain. For this wild frenzy of inspiration in which nature found itself when it was in view of the being was celebrated in the nature worship of prescient ancient peoples by the drunken festivals of Bacchic orgies. Furthermore, that inner self-laceration of nature, that wheel of initial birth spinning about itself as if mad, and the terrible forces of the annular drive operating within this wheel, are depicted in other frightful splendors of the primeval customs of polytheistic worship by acts of self-flaying rage. One such act was auto-castration (which was done in order to express either the unbearable quality of the oppressive force or is cessation as a procreative potency). There was also the carrying about of the dismembered parts of a lacerated God, or the insensate, raving dances, or the shocking procession of the mother of all gods on the carriage with iron wheels, accompanied by the din of a coarse music that is partly deafening and partly lacerating. For nothing is more

that, given that Hesiod's mythopoeic mind identifies chaos as the undifferentiated source from which cosmic manifestation begins, "[c]haos represents the limits of the cosmic process, beyond which mythical representation cannot go."¹⁷⁶ Accordingly, as it symbolizes the liminal threshold of understanding, Bussanich states that "entrance into chaos signifies nonexistence, reemergence existence."¹⁷⁷ In the Schellingian project, the *Life of life*, as the Absolute *prius*, bearing poetic identity to the mad god, Dionysius, and eternally supporting and sustaining of reality, is the *prima materia* of all that was, is and will be; Schelling tells us:

"It refers to the general proposition of philosophy concerning the essential and inner identity of all things and all that we are able to discern and distinguish in general. *There is actually and essentially only one essence, one absolute reality, and this essence, as absolute, is indivisible such that it cannot change over into other essences by means of division or separation. Since it is indivisible, diversity among things is only possible to the extent that this indivisible whole is posited under various determinations.*"¹⁷⁸

To Schelling's spiritual eye, absolute reality is composed of one essence: the supra-actual *life of life*; "[t]he absolute in and of itself offers no multiplicity or variety whatsoever, and to that extent it is for the understanding an absolute, bottomless emptiness."¹⁷⁹ In his analysis of the numinous, Rudolf Otto discards any moral significance that attaches to the word, 'holy,' as of

similar to that inner madness than music, which, through the incessant eccentric relinquishing and re-attracting of tones, most clearly imitates that primordial movement. Music itself is a turning wheel that, going out from a single point, always, through all excesses, spins back again to the beginning" [Schelling, *Ages of the World*, P. 103].

¹⁷⁶ Bussanich, P. 214. Similarly, this paper argues that Schelling understands intellectual intuition, the primordial state, as a revision to undifferentiated noetic chaos.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, P. 217. As this paper is interested in intellectual intuition, it is noted that individual "existence" is extinguished when the anagogic traveler enters the primordial state (the "chaos" of intellectual intuition) and individual "existence" reasserts upon the anagogic traveler's reemergence from intellectual intuition.

¹⁷⁸ Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, P. 14 [italics added].

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, P. 36. With similar sensitivities to the reality it seeks to symbolize, traditional philosophy asserts that metaphysical infinity has "absolutely no limits whatsoever," [Guenon, *The Multiple States of the Being*, P. 7] is unconditioned and undetermined, and that which contains all. "The zenith of being is Being Unlimited. Being relieved of all confines and conditionings" [Huston, *Forgotten Truth*, P. 25].

later addition;¹⁸⁰ in its origin, the “‘holy,’ or at least the equivalent words in Greek, Latin, in Semitic and other ancient languages denoted first and foremost *only* overplus;”¹⁸¹ importantly to our purposes, Otto identifies the holy as “pre-eminently a living force within the Semitic religions.”¹⁸² Schelling’s notion of the *life of life*, which is available only to those awoken of spirit, bears resemblance to Otto’s notion of the “holy” – both refer to the numinous, ever-fecund, extravagant living force transcendent to human conceptualization and more primordial than ethical schematizations. Challenging to conceive as it lies beyond oppositional thought, the Schellingian *life of life* carries philosophical equivalence to the traditional notion of the infinite.¹⁸³ The infinite is “absolutely unconditioned and undetermined.”¹⁸⁴ To this traditionalist view, any determination acts, as a matter of logical necessity, to limit that which is determined in so far as it excludes something from itself. In accord with logical requirements, a negation of a negation is understood as an affirmation; accordingly, “in reality, the negation of all limits is equivalent to total and absolute affirmation.”¹⁸⁵ Similarly, Schelling holds that the *life of life* is “absolute, infinite reality”¹⁸⁶ and, as such, “*is* by virtue of its own idea;”¹⁸⁷ with this understanding in hand, we might say, if clothing the *life of life* in theological language, that “God is an infinite affirmation of himself”¹⁸⁸ and, as infinitely unconstrained and infinitely self-determining – absolutely free. Writes Schelling:

¹⁸⁰ Otto, Rudolf, P. 5. Otto further notes that the Hebrew *qadosh*, the Greek *ayios*, the Latin *sanctus* and *sacer* “all mean beyond all question something quite other than ‘the good’” [*Ibid.*, P. 6].

¹⁸¹ Otto, Rudolf, P. 5 [italics in the original].

¹⁸² Otto, P. 6.

¹⁸³ To the Pythagoreans, the *apeiron* is the unlimited and infinitely divisible; the *apeiron* and the *peras* “constitute the primal archetypal duality subservient to the ineffable One” [Uzdavinys, *The Golden Chain*, P. 290].

¹⁸⁴ Guénon, *The Multiple States of the Being*, P. 9.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, P. 23.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, P. 24.

“God is comprehends himself as infinitely affirming (since he is the affirmation of himself) and as infinitely affirmed for the same reason. Furthermore, since it is one and the same thing that both affirms and is affirmed, he accordingly comprehends himself also as indifference.”¹⁸⁹

It follows from this that the *life of life* is, if taken in an absolute sense, unlimited and without parts. We might add, synonymously, to this notion of the *life of life* as infinite, the traditionalist notion of infinite possibility; to perennialist thought, “a limitation of total possibility is properly speaking an impossibility, since to limit it one would have to conceive it, and what is outside of the possible can be nothing but the impossible.”¹⁹⁰ And yet, an impossibility is nothing and, as a nothing, is incapable to limiting anything; thus, universal possibility is, like the notion of the infinite, unlimited. Along these lines, Schelling tells us that “[a]ll possibilities are realities of God”¹⁹¹ and, yet, as will become evident, while the *life of life* contains all possibilities, these possibilities are, as yet, virtual and undifferentiated in the divine *prima materia* from which comes all that is. The *life of life*, as infinite and of unlimited possibility, is an undifferentiated inchoate whole that holds all possibilities *in potentia*. For this reason, it is said that God, because of its primordial and absolutely undifferentiated nature, is decidedly not a multiplicity;¹⁹² rather, God is absolute simplicity. We again read from Schelling:

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ Guénon, *The Multiple States of the Being*, P. 11.

¹⁹¹ Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, P. 24.

¹⁹² A helpful passage for our understanding of the *life of life* is the following: “Before Aristotle, Parmenides (Diels fr. 8 preserved by Simplicius) had set forth in the clearest possible terms the doctrine that ‘that which is’, and being Now, is other than things that only seem to be and since they come into being and pass away, cannot be said to *be*. This indivisible, omnipresent and altogether present One is unoriginated and indestructible; it is complete, unmovable, and endless. Nor was it ever, nor *will* it be for Now it *is*, all at once, a continuous One . . . It is all alike . . . without beginning or end, since coming into being and passing away are excluded and far away from it, and true belief rejects them” [Coomaraswamy, P. 63 (italics in original)].

“God is a totality that is not a multiplicity but rather absolute simplicity. God is a unity that itself is not conditioned in contrast to multiplicity; that is, he is not singular in the numerical sense. Neither is he simply the One, but is rather absolute unity itself, not everything, but rather absolute allness itself, and is both of these immediately as one.”¹⁹³

Traditional thought everywhere has sought to capture the paradoxical form-formless aspects of the primordial energy.

“[I]ndian terminology would call these two aspects of the one the *nirguna Brahman* (being without form) and the *saguna Brahman* (being with form). The *nirguna Brahman* is transcendent and absolute; it is (as Heraclitus said in his related doctrine) not attached to anything. The *saguna Brahman* is the formed aspect of being – the teeming universe as opposed to the stillness of eternity. What Aristotle complained of in Xenophanes’ thought is that the formed and the formless being were declared to be one. God was declared to be both total inaction and changelessness and at the same time the changing world of ‘seeming’. Yājñavalkya wrestled with this primeval thought in the *Bṛhadaranyaka Upanisad* by combining the contradictory ‘great sayings’ ‘*neti neti*’ ‘Not this; Not that,’ and ‘Yes, this; Yes, that.’”¹⁹⁴

Schelling writes, “if one could remove [the different determinations] and view the pure essence, as it were, completely exposed, the same essence would truly be found in each,”¹⁹⁵ said otherwise, if an anagogic traveler, through theurgic application of *askesis* and orison, could detach himself from his accidentals, the *life of life* would be revealed. As the reader notices, Schelling makes the phenomenal world porous to the anagogic traveler in intellectual intuition; as will be seen, the *kairiological* reversion to the *life of life* is available if and when the anagogic traveler detaches from his accidental determinations in noetic ascent. Not accessible in the

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ McEvillery, P. 51.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, P. 14.

ordinary plane of reality, the *life of life*, mythopoeically imagined as the Dionysian *zoé* and *phusis*, is more primordial than being itself and is the primal stuff from which manifest reality is composed.

In the Schelling's Orphic cosmology, will is the "Being" of the *life of life* and, as such, both the originary state from which and final state to which all life strives. As Schelling writes, "[i]n the final and highest judgment, there is no other Being than will. Will is primal Being to which alone all predicates of Being apply: groundlessness, eternality, independence from time, self-affirmation. All of philosophy strives only to find this highest expression."¹⁹⁶ Consistently with the Schellingian conception of an indifferent annular drive, the *life of life* may also be approached as a particular conception of will – namely, as a will that wills nothing but holds all in primordial equilibrium. The *life of life* may be understood as the *Deus Absconditus*, inexpressible and incomprehensible and, accordingly, the *life of life* is, from the perspective of ordinary reality, nothing. Schelling tells us that the *life of life* "certainly is nothing, but in the way that pure freedom is nothing. It is like the will that wills nothing, that desires no object, for which all things are equal and is therefore moved by none of them."¹⁹⁷ Far Eastern tradition represents this place of perfect equilibrium as the center of the cosmic wheel, "[t]his center directs all things by its 'actionless activity' (*wei wu-wei*), which . . . has been expressed by Lao Tzu as follows: 'The Principle is always actionless, yet everything is done by it.'"¹⁹⁸ Drawing this line of thought further along, Schelling claims that this will that wills nothing and, from the perspective of ordinary consciousness, is nothing is, simultaneously and in fact, everything; it is

¹⁹⁶ Schelling, Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Freedom, P. 21.

¹⁹⁷ Schelling, The Ages of the World, P. 24.

¹⁹⁸ Guénon, The Symbolism of the Cross, P. 42.

nothing because it wants nothing¹⁹⁹ and “[i]t is everything because only from it as eternal freedom comes all force and because it has all things under it, rules everything, and is ruled by nothing.”²⁰⁰ Most primordially, then, the Absolute *prius* is pure, unmanifested spirit for only spirit may enter everything and yet be nothing. Analogously, then, the *life of life* is nothing from the vantage of ordinary reality in so far as it abides in, morphs into and animates everything yet transcends ordinary apprehension. As Schelling states in encapsulation, “[w]e have expressed the Highest elsewhere as pure equivalence (indifference) that is nothing yet everything.”²⁰¹

Again, we hear from Schelling:

“It [the *life of life*] is nothing, just like the pure happiness that does not know itself, like the composed bliss that is entirely self-fulfilled and thinks of nothing, like the calm interiority that does not look after itself and does not become aware of its not Being. It is the highest simplicity, not so much God itself, but the Godhead, which is hence, above God, in the way that some of the ancients already spoke of a Super-Godhead (*Ubergottheit*).”²⁰²

In accord with this paper’s claims, Zizek reads “[t]his ‘nothing’ which precedes Ground is the ‘absolute indifference’ *qua* the abyss of pure freedom which is not yet the predicate-property of some Subject, but, rather, designates a pure impersonal willing, which wills nothing.”²⁰³ Indeed, in the ultimate telling of this paper, man, to find redemption and ontological renewal, must attain reversion to this nothingness, this primordial *life of life* – to this will that wills nothing – in intellectual intuition. “Everything only rests when it has found proper being, its support and

¹⁹⁹ Similar to the beatitude, “[b]lessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” [Holy Bible, *Matthew* 5:3], which, for the purposes of this paper, may be taken to mean that those who are detached (poor) from desire (spirit) are positioned to receive the kingdom of heaven in mystical vision.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, P. 25.

²⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁰³ Zizek, P. 14.

continuance, in the will that wills nothing. In the greatest restlessness of life, in the most violent movement of all forces, the proper goal is always the will that wills nothing.”²⁰⁴ So, foreshadowing of our way, it is to this “will that will nothing” that the anagogic traveler seeks reversion in intellectual intuition.

In contrast to the static Aristotelian unmoved mover,²⁰⁵ which is posited as the formal cause to which all things tend, Schelling claims to introduce a philosophy that discloses how the phenomenal world is generated from the divine “nothing.” The un-manifested absolute *All* of the *life of life* freely elects to posit itself under various determinations in order to compose our manifest world of “the ten thousand things.” Profoundly expressive of the ancient *animus mundi*, the *life of life* is not a concept to which we might logically aspire to contain; rather, Absolute *prius* is *that which is* – the *that which is* most truly alive and primordial, it is perceptible but beyond our ken. This irrational barbaric principle, “by dint of which God is He Himself as He Himself, the unique one, cut off from everything else,”²⁰⁶ resists thinking. Drawing on ancient thought, Schelling posits *personality*, by which he means *living essence*, to the *life of life*; in his thinking, the “barbaric principal . . . is the eternal force of God.”²⁰⁷ Indeed, Schelling claims that the very hiddenness of the *life of life* argues for its metaphysical preeminence. After all, goes his reasoning, in the first existence, there must be a principle that resists revelation, for only such a principle can become the ground of revelation.”²⁰⁸

²⁰⁴ Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, P. 24 – 25.

²⁰⁵ From the vantage of formal cause, the Aristotelian unmoved mover is distinct from Schelling’s *life of life*, which Schelling positions as the *fons et origio* of all that is. However, seen from another perspective, the Aristotelian unmoved mover is a similar attempt to describe the incomprehensible Absolute *prius*; similar to the unmoved mover, which is an expression of the immutable center of all things, the *life of life* is envisioned to contain an identity of motion and rest, an exhalation and an inhalation, a willing and a not willing, and a yes and a no.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, P. 107.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

*“It is necessary to acknowledge this as the personality of God, as the being in itself and for itself of God. Already in ancient philosophy, personality is explained as the ultimate act or the ultimate potency by which an intelligent being exists in an incommunicable fashion. This is the principle that, instead of confusing God with the creature, as was believed, eternally divides God from the creature. Everything can be communicated to the creature except for one thing. The creature cannot have the immortal ground of life in itself. The creature cannot be of and through itself.”*²⁰⁹

In accord with ancient sensibilities that identify two equally archaic principles that govern in simultaneity, Schelling posits similar personality to the *life of life*; it is composed of a centrifugal force and a centripetal force or, said otherwise, an expansive (Yes) potency and a contracting (No) potency or, as most anciently understood, as an exhalation and an inhalation of breath. “[T]herefore, two principles are already in what is necessary of God: the outpouring, outstretching, self-giving being, and an equivalently eternal force of selfhood, of retreat into itself, of Being in itself. That being and this force are both already God itself, without God’s assistance.”²¹⁰ In accordance with his characterization of the *life of life* as an indifferent “will that wills nothing,” Schelling presupposes that these two forces are equal in stature and primacy within the Absolute *prius*. Indeed, the perfectly balanced union of the two principles is realized only in the supra-actual primordial state.²¹¹

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, P. 6. Arguably, the forces of contraction and expansion may be perceived in the psychic processes of the self; for instance, the Jungian notion of *abaissement du niveau mental*, which implies a weakening of consciousness as psychological energy is drawn away by the unconsciousness, is “[o]ften observed just before creative work or during those incubation periods when the *unconscious* prepares a new stage of growth” [www.terrapsych/jungsdefs.com]. Accordingly, psychic expansion follows, and is dependent upon, an earlier psychic contraction.

²¹¹ Guénon, *The Symbol of the Cross*, P. 137. “The perfect equilibrium constitutes (or reconstitutes) the primordial Androgyne” [*Ibid.*, P. 59].

“But the original equivalence (equipollence) between both of them now appears between them. Since each, by nature, is equally originary and equally essential, each also has the same claim to be that which has being. Both hold their own weight and neither yields to the other.”²¹²

Schelling envisions primordial reality as continuous annular motion. Between the two primal forces, one elevates itself over the other only, in turn, to be equally opposed by the other; a unity²¹³ of force is then re-established only for the same process of elevation and opposition to be reinitiated – a spontaneous, continual and indifferent circulatory motion. These notions of contraction and expansion may be likened to the notions of rest, procession and reversion common to the great religious traditions.²¹⁴ However and importantly, the *life of life* should not be imagined as divided among these three aspects of the two primordial principles; rather, Schelling instructs us that the Dionysian *life of life* is undivided and whole – it is absolutely simple:

“But precisely because the Godhead is whole and undivided, the eternal Yes and the Eternal No, the Godhead is again neither one nor the other, but the unity of both. This is not an actual Trinity of separately located principles, but here the Godhead is the One, and precisely because it *is* as the One, it is both the No and the Yes and the unity of both.”²¹⁵

²¹² Ibid., P. 9.

²¹³ “But in equally eternal manner, God is the third term or the unity of the Yes and the No” [Schelling, The Ages of the World, P. 11].

²¹⁴ “In late Neoplatonic thought, both procession (*proodos*) and reversion (*epistrophe*) are required before actuality (*energia*) is achieved, because the cyclic process of rest in the higher principle, procession (“descent”) from it, and reversion (“ascent”) to it, is the structural model which governs all activity within manifested reality, be it noetic, psychic or physical” [Uždavinys, Ascent to Heaven in Islamic and Jewish Mysticism, P. 1].

²¹⁵ Schelling, The Ages of the World, P. 74.

Accordingly, simultaneously a whole and its parts, simultaneously an inhalation and an exhalation and the identity of both, the primordial nature of the *life of life* cannot be contained by the inherently oppositional structure of human language or thought. We read from Schelling:

“In the circle out of which everything becomes, it is no contradiction that that through which the One is generated may itself be begotten by it. Here there is no first and last because all things mutually presuppose each other, no thing is another thing and yet no thing is not without another thing. God has in himself an inner ground of his existence that in this respect precedes him in existence; but, precisely in this way, God is again the *prius* [*before what is*] of the ground in so far as the ground, even a such, could not exist if God did not exist *actu*.”²¹⁶

As eternal freedom, the Godhead can only be understood as a mutually implicative simultaneity – the *life of life* is simultaneously the No, the Yes and the identity of both; after all, Schelling argues, if either the No or the Yes predominated, then “it would have to assume Being in one way or another, either affirming or negating it.”²¹⁷ So understood, the Godhead is free precisely because it is equally indifferent to both Yes and No – nothing encourages or discourages the Godhead from “silently preserver[ing] in that balance between attraction and repulsion.”²¹⁸ Accordingly, “if the Godhead assumed Being and actively revealed itself through Being . . . then the decision could only have come from the highest freedom.”²¹⁹ Thus claims Schelling that manifest reality emerges from the free *actus* of the *life of life*.

²¹⁶ Schelling, Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Freedom, P. 28 (italics in original).

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

Schelling tells us, “[i]t is clear that first nature [the Absolute *prius*] was since all eternity and hence, equiprimordially a movement circulating²²⁰ within itself, and that this is its true, living concept.”²²¹ While challenging to visualize, the mutually implicative circulation within the unmanifested *life of life* occurs in simultaneity in an eternal present,²²² *that which is* excludes succession for it is only in the manifested world, subject to the strictures of time and space, that relationships are arranged successively. Wirth notes that “the system of freedom, the ceaseless circulation of spontaneous energies, is a divine system. It is the system of God in love with the productive tensions of its own *Wesen* [Being].”²²³

“The antithesis eternally produces itself; in order always again to be consumed by the unity, and the antithesis is eternally consumed by the unity in order always to revive itself anew. This is the sanctuary, the hearth of the life that continually incinerates itself and again rejuvenates itself from the ash. This is the tireless fire through whose quenching, as Heraclitus claimed, the cosmos was created.”²²⁴

Mythologically, this rotary motion may be understood as none other than the archetypal *uroboros* of which it is said, “[i]t slays weds, and impregnates itself. It is man and woman,

²²⁰ “The perfection of that which rests in itself in no way contradicts the perfection of that which circles in itself. Although absolute rest is something static and eternal, unchanging and therefore without history, it is at the same time the place of origin and the germ cell of creativity. Living the cycle of its own life, it is the circular snake, the primal dragon of the beginning that bites its own tail, the self-begetting [*uroboros*]”[Neumann, The Origins and History of Consciousness, P. 10]. As will emerge below, this symbolic notion of the mythical heavenly serpent, the *uroboros* that both begets and destroys, foreshadows the thinking of Friedrich Schelling; similar to the ontological conceptions of early humankind, the Schellingian conception of individual coming-to-be is imitative of cosmological emergence. In alchemy, the *uroboros* “was the symbol of the *prima materia*, of the original matter of the world” [von Franz, Creation Myths, P. 3].

²²¹ Schelling, The Ages of the World, P. 20.

²²² “In the circle out of which everything becomes, it is no contradiction that that through which the One is generated may itself be in turn begotten by it. Here there is no first and last because all things mutually presuppose each other, no thing is another thing and yet no thing is not without another thing. God has in himself an inner ground of his existence that in this respect precedes him in existence; but, precisely in this way, God is again the *prius* [what is before] of the ground in so far as the ground, even as such, could not exist if God did not exist *actu*” [Schelling, Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Freedom, P. 28].

²²³ Ibid., P. xxviii.

²²⁴ Ibid., Pp. 20 -21.

begetting and conceiving, devouring and giving birth, active and passive, above and below, at once.”²²⁵ This paper early introduced a correspondence between the *life of life* and the universal symbol of the *uroborus*; remember that the *uroborus* “is dominated by the symbol of the snake, standing for total non-differentiation, everything issuing from everything and again entering into everything, depending on everything and connecting with everything.”²²⁶ The *uroborus*, understood most often as an image of mutual material implication, may be more profoundly understood to symbolically convey not substance but the primordial and undifferentiated Dionysian²²⁷ life force – the *life of life*. As such, this paper suggests to the reader’s consideration that an understanding of the annular drive might be approached through the mythological *uroborus*; as such, the rotary movement of the annular drive is also metaphorically the mythological cosmic wheel – the center (the one) representative of indifferent eternity from which all emerges and to which all tends and the infinite points along the wheel’s periphery, connected by radii to the centrum, representative of manifest reality (the many).

How then, asks Schelling, is “life redeemed from this annular drive and led into freedom?”²²⁸ Asked differently, how come phenomenon from this *uroboric life of life*? We read from Schelling, “[t]he subject is at first a subject which is pure and not present to itself - in which to have itself, in becoming an object to itself – is tainted with contingency.”²²⁹ In this, a clue emerges to Schelling’s response to the riddle “why is there something and not nothing;” he posits that the primordial annular drive, pure and impersonal subject, somehow freely elects (remember

²²⁵ Neumann, P. 10.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, P. 276.

²²⁷ “As the *Weltalter* continues, Dionysus emerges as a symbol of the ongoing poem of cosmic time” [Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, P. 139, fn. 33].

²²⁸ Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, P. 22.

²²⁹ Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, P. 116.

that the annular drive is “pure actus”) between “nothing,” the *uroboric Ungrund*, and something in order to become an object to itself – so begins the self-realization of God in a free act. Schelling tells us that “God is pure *actus* the Godhead is wholly pure consciousness [spirit] and is nothing whatsoever and everything wrapped up in its being.”²³⁰ Importantly to the balance of his project, this objectification of the pure subject of the *life of life* is “tainted with contingency” and, as such, inauthentic. Accordingly, this objectification is “always in the sense of ‘something extra, something additional, something foreign/put on, in a certain respect something contingent.’”²³¹ As Schelling tells us, “[f]or either it remains still (remains *as it is*, thus pure subject), then there is no [manifest] life and it is itself as nothing, or it *wants* itself and becomes another, something not the same as itself (*sich selbst Ungleichliches*) *sui dissimile*.”²³² As emerges in this paper’s reading, the primordial act by which the nothing becomes something is determinative of the Schellingian project in its entirety. Indeed, Žizek argues that “Schelling entire philosophical revolution is contained, condensed, in the assertion that this act which precedes and grounds every necessity is in itself *radically contingent* – for the very reason that it cannot be deduced, inferred, but only retroactively presupposed.”²³³ Be that as it may, from Schelling’s vantage, it is precisely because this original cision, this primordial falling-away, cannot be either deduced or inferred that it is indicative of the Absolute’s free *actus*²³⁴ and, as the reader will later notice, this original election²³⁵ of phenomenalization by the *life of life* is inversely repetitive of that moment of grace within intellectual intuition when the anagogic traveler attains *sui generis* to *that which is*. Moreover, as this paper is soon to argue, the

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, P. 26.

²³¹ Žizek, P. 44.

²³² Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, P. 116.

²³³ Žizek, P. 45 (italics in the original).

²³⁴ In another tradition, this free *actus* might be symbolic of metaphysical zero.

²³⁵ Indeed, the radical contingency of this first act within Schellingian cosmology is phylogenetically and ontologically replicated in the emergence of human consciousness.

precedence of being over thought and the limits of negative philosophy are revealed in this same mythical instant. Accordingly, this very first wanting “involves a primordial, radical and irreducible alienation, a distortion of the original balance, a kind of out-of-jointedness.”²³⁶ Reading again from Schelling, “[t]his whole construction therefore begins with the emergence of the first contingency – which is not identical with itself – it begins with a *dissonance*, and it must begin this way.”²³⁷ Just as it was for Plato²³⁸ so too for Schelling; Zizek correctly claims that “[t]he implications of this [original dissonance] are very radical and far-reaching: fake is original, that is, every feature, every ‘something’ that we are, is ultimately ‘put on’.”²³⁹ Accordingly, for Schelling, the eventual aim of human life, decidedly Orphic in understanding, is to recover one’s authentic identity by moving from image to reality and to restore the noetic perfection of the primordial state. Schelling, in some accord with mystics everywhere, claims the doctrine of possession and reversion; these doctrines imply an existential yearning for authenticity and contain an inherent call to the itinerant initiate to return to restful repose in the primordial *real* self, the harmonious and indifferent *life of life*, located at the eternal beginning to attain to soteriological redemption and ontological renewal. As will soon emerge in this paper’s telling, creation’s original dissonance, its melancholic “out-of-jointedness,” which is replicated most vividly by the emergence of symbolic thought in man, prompts the anagogic traveler’s reversion from the periphery to the center; the peripheral life of conatus, too, is ontologically dislocated and is mere pretense of the nomadic *life of life*. As Zizek rightly notes,

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

²³⁷ Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, P. 116 (italics in the original).

²³⁸ Plato’s “view of the world knows of his belief that everything we encounter in this world of experience, all reality, truth, good, is image – that is, it points to a prototype which is not directly encountered” [Pieper, P. 83].

²³⁹ Zizek, P. 45.

“[t]he relationship between the divine ‘ages of the world’ and human history is that of repetition: first, the rotary motion of contraction and expansion, this ‘divine madness’, is released by the intervention of the divine word – that is, the act of creation; however, on account of man’s Fall, this shift from the timeless-eternal rotary motion to the progressive-temporal line repeats itself within human history.”²⁴⁰

In accord with his isomorphic positions, Schelling holds humankind is poured from the same source as the Absolute *prius*; the essence of the human soul “is one and the same with the Absolute.”²⁴¹ As Schelling writes:

“Only man is in God and capable of freedom exactly through this Being-in-God [*in-Gottheit Sein*]. He alone is a being of the centrum [*ein Centralwesen*] and, for that reason, he should also remain in the centrum.”²⁴²

The *Life of Life* and humankind share the same essence; accordingly, insofar as man shares the capacity for freedom, man is also understood by Schelling as he who may prospectively redeem the world. Fallen²⁴³ away from the paradisiacal innocence of its beginnings,²⁴⁴ humankind is

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, P. 42. In the Schellingian cosmological and ontological cycles, difference arises from indifference and, in inspired circular ascent, returns to indifference. Writes Schelling: “God is the absolute harmony of necessity and freedom, and . . . [h]istory is an epic composed in the mind of God. It has two parts: one depicting mankind’s egress from its Centrum to its farthest point of displacement; the other, its return. The former is, as it were, history’s *Iliad*; the latter, its *Odysey*. In the one, the direction is centrifugal; in the other, it becomes centripetal. In this way, the great purpose of the phenomenal world reveals itself in history. The final cause of history is the ‘reconciliation of the falling-away.’” [Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, P. xiii].

²⁴¹ Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, P. 12.

²⁴² Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Freedom*, P. 72.

²⁴³ “In a word, there is no continuous transition from the Absolute to the actual; the origin of the phenomenal world is conceivable only as a complete falling-away from absoluteness by a leap” [Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, P. 26].

²⁴⁴ “That state of unconscious, natural happiness, the original placidness of earth, has been preserved by the legends of all peoples in the myth of the Golden Age, wherein the second human race immortalized the guardian spirits of its childhood in the images of those heroes and gods with whom, according to its earliest and oldest peoples, its history began” [Schelling, *Philosophy & Religion*, P. 46].

condemned to confront the terror of a ceaselessly becoming world – a world in which life and death are inevitably conjoined.²⁴⁵ Indeed, Dionysus, who represents the comings and goings of ordinary reality in cosmic time, “punishes by revealing the absolute terror of his reality.”²⁴⁶ For Schelling, Dionysus is symbolic of “the self-lacerating madness [that] is still now what is innermost in all things.”²⁴⁷ Schelling tells his reader that “the true prime matter of all life and existence is precisely what is horrifying.”²⁴⁸ One is reminded of Goethe, who identifies nature with the *Ungeheures* – the prodigious and the monstrous.²⁴⁹ Writes Goethe, “[w]e are terrified by the silent gravity of Nature, and by her silence.”²⁵⁰ Similarly, Schelling tells us, “[w]hat is frightening about nature is that nothing lasts; that inner necessity that in the end destroys everything – a necessity that is all the more hideous the quieter it is.”²⁵¹ Indeed, when confronted by the Dionysian monstrosity of nature, the human tendency is to look away. However, to Goethe’s understanding of the human condition and likewise for Schelling,²⁵² “[t]o be fully human means having the courage to become aware of what is terrible, unfathomable,

²⁴⁵ “They give birth astride of a grave, the light gleams an instant, then it's night once more” (*Waiting for Gadot*) [www.notable-quotes.com/b/beckett_samuel/]. “The world man knows, the world in which he has settled himself so securely and snugly – that world is no more. The turbulence which accompanied the arrival of Dionysus has swept it away. Everything has been transformed” [Otto, Walter, P. 95]. So mankind finds itself in the world.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, P. 96.

²⁴⁷ Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, P. 103.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, P. 104. A “religious man can only live in a sacred world, because it is only in such a world that he participates in being, that he has real existence. This religious need expresses an unquenchable ontological thirst. Religious man thirsts for being. His terror of the chaos that surrounds his inhabited world corresponds to the terror of nothingness. The unknown space that extends beyond his world – an uncosmicized because unconsecrated space, a mere amorphous extent into which no orientation has yet been projected, and hence in which no structure has yet arisen – for religious man, this profane space represents absolute nonbeing” [Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, P. 64].

²⁴⁹ Hadot, P. 279.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.* We might also read from Schelling, “[i]f we take into consideration the many terrible things in nature and the spiritual world and the great many other things that a benevolent hand seems to cover up from us, then we could not doubt that the Godhead sits enthroned over a world of terrors. And God, in accordance with what is concealed in and by God, could be called the awful and the terrible, not in a derivative fashion, but in their original sense” [Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, P. 49].

²⁵¹ Schelling, *Clara: or, On Nature’s Connection to the Spirit World*, P. 22.

²⁵² “How purely the ancient doctrine of true philosophy argues for the nothingness of the I-ness as the principle of the world, and what a contrast to the unphilosophy, which shudders at the thought of this nothingness . . . “ [Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, P. 32].

and enigmatic in the world and in existence, and not to refuse the shudder and the anguish that seize human beings in the face of mystery.”²⁵³ To Schelling’s way of thinking, “a re-acquaintance with our primitive selves can make us more human rather than less.”²⁵⁴ Indeed, Schelling demands that the dignity of man be equal to its task; he writes:

“But most people are frightened precisely by this abyssal freedom in the same way that they are frightened by the necessity to be utterly one thing or another. And where they see a flash of freedom, they turn away from it as if from an utterly injurious flash of lightning and they feel prostrated by freedom as an appearance that comes from the ineffable, from eternal freedom, from where there is no ground whatsoever.”²⁵⁵

One recognizes reflection in alienation when one discovers himself to be “in contradiction with the world”²⁵⁶ and no longer in *participation mystique* with all that is. “The Arcadian god Pan is the best known Classical example of this dangerous presence dwelling just beyond the protected

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, P. 280. “The shudder is the best part of man. However dearly the world makes him pay for this feeling. It is with emotion that man feels, deep within, the terrifying [*das Ungeheure*]” [*Ibid.*]. In some contrast to Goethe, Mircea Eliade posits that archaic humankind sought solace from the terrors and sufferings of history, by repetition of the exemplary and paradigmatic gestures of archetypes, those inhuman gods, heroes and ancestors who reside *in ille tempore*. In this telling, archaic ontology stands as representative of that ontological tradition, which stretched from the primitive mind into the Renaissance, that understands the microcosm as the reproduction or imitation of the macrocosm. The primitive mind, not far removed from its unconscious animalistic beginnings within that swallowing, perfect, *uroboric* whole, is pressed to “re-identify with nature’s eternal repetition the few primordial, creative and spontaneous gestures that had signalized the appearance of freedom” [Eliade, *The Myth of Eternal Return*, P. 155]. So much thirsts the archaic mind for the consecration of being, for meaning, in the face of primal madness, that it locates its ground in the lived repetition of mythical time – those moments in which the profane, the meaningless, is abolished and the individual, through ritual or essential act, is projected into the sacred time of archetypes. One might imagine humankind’s early years – when youthful humankind, fragile of body, unsettled of consciousness and precarious in place, was obliged to heroically hew cosmos from chaos in imitation of the cosmogonic gesture *ab origine*. “All these wild, uncultivated regions and the like are assimilated to chaos; they still participate in the undifferentiated, formless modality of pre-Creation. This is why, when possession is taken of a territory – that is, when its exploitation begins – rites are performed that symbolically repeat the act of Creation: the uncultivated zone is first ‘cosmicized,’ then inhabited” [Eliade, *The Myth of Eternal Return*, P. 10]. So, it may be seen that, in accordance with this primitive ontological conception, archaic man “sees himself as real, i.e., as ‘truly himself’, only, and precisely, insofar as he ceases to be so” [Eliade, *The Myth of Eternal Return*, P. 34]. and participates in his governing archetype.

²⁵⁴ Young, P. xxix.

²⁵⁵ Schelling, *Ages of the World*, P. 79.

²⁵⁶ Schelling, *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy*, P. 17.

zone of the village boundary.”²⁵⁷ The reader is encouraged to remember that in the imaginations of the ancients, the wilderness was the province of demons²⁵⁸ and, as such, representative of the innermost and unknown territories of the soul. For anagogues everywhere, the most profound experiences invariably seem to come when one is withdrawn from the world and solitary; the Gospels tell us that, following his baptism, Jesus retreated to the wilderness for forty days to wrestle internally with demons. It is only by trespassing boundaries of the known that new ontological dimensions can be entered. So, when Themus heard the divine voice proclaim, “[t]he great god Pan is dead,”²⁵⁹ it may be understood to signify the mythological emergence of humankind from its *uroboric* and unconscious indifference and, with such emergence, man discovers himself “in contradiction to the world” about him – we might say that he is suddenly shorn of necessity and clothed in the capacity for freedom. Whenever there occurs a shift of the human spirit, either ontogenetically or phylo-genetically, man encounters new ontological dimensions. Somewhat paradoxically, the death of Pan both separates man from his original monotheism of the centrum and, simultaneously, opens a reversionary path for the anagogic traveler from the periphery back to the centrum – beyond the veil of the known and into proximity of Pan’s unknown.

²⁵⁷ Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, P. 66.

²⁵⁸ Keating, P. 78.

²⁵⁹ Pan’s death has been variously interpreted throughout the years; not unsurprisingly, two prominent interpretations connect the death of Pan to Christianity – one interpretation claims the death of Pan expresses, *mutis mutandi*, the death of paganism and the second interpretation holds that the death of Pan (that is, the “all”) heralds the death of Christ (who is, the “alpha and the omega”). The latter interpretation is directionally concordant with that reading forwarded by this paper.

Jason Wirth, a preeminent contemporary Schellingian scholar, understands intellectual intuition as “an intimation, an *Ahnung*, of the abyss of freedom.”²⁶⁰ In some contrast to Wirth, this paper reads Schellingian intellectual intuition much more robustly; to the reading offered by this paper, the anagogic traveler attains by purposeful effort and deep sacrifice – via the initiatic path of contemplative *askesis* and orison – to the primordial annular drive in a flash of intellectual intuition and thereby connects the least to the greatest. Indeed, to this paper reading of Schellingian intellectual intuition, the anagogic wayfarer, in accordance with the ancient notions of traditionalist doctrine, may attain to supra-human state in identification with the supreme principle of the *life of life*. Yet, even in the telling of this paper, the anagogic traveler cannot say what “the abyss of freedom” is; he can only know *that* it is and, as we shall see, even this bare declaration of *thatness* can be known by the anagogic traveler only *a posteriori*. No one, even an anagogue of the most subtle spirit, can attain to insight into the nature of *that which is*; precisely because no Archimedean point exists from which the *life of life* may be conceptually approached; one can only become present to the *life of life* in intellectual intuition and, accordingly, it forever remains the dark *Ungrund* and the absolute *prius* to all. In opening oneself to the divine domain of Pan, the *liminal personae* becomes present to a inhuman wisdom outside of the self – “the indispensable birth of philosophy.”²⁶¹

In the Schellingian architecture, we understand the natural world as unconscious and man as consciousness; accordingly, mankind is cast to make heroic ascent to ever greater consciousness. In Jungian terms, this ontological and phylo-genetic moment of astonishment at the world may

²⁶⁰ Wirth, *The Conspiracy of Life*, P. 114.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, P. 115. We might also read from Heidegger, “[o]nly when the strangeness of beings oppresses us does it arouse and evoke wonder. Only on the ground of wonder – the revelation of the nothing – does the ‘why?’ loom before us” [Heidegger, P. 109].

be read as the fulcrum moment of finite freedom and, simultaneously, the first step of reflection and, thus, philosophy; after all, were man not to discover himself as foreign to nature, no need for philosophy would arise. Accordingly, this moment of disassociation bifurcates the world from the individual and, even more crucially to our discussion of Schelling's distinction between being and thought, separates the individual from himself. We will again encounter this notion of disassociation in the epistemic collapse of negative philosophy – there, Schelling tells us, the putative anagogic traveler is awoken from the confines of ordinary consciousness and, prompted by the demand for epistemic closure in the bewilderment of *aporia*, is made receptive to an ecstatic encounter with the divine *that which is* in intellectual intuition. Inverting the primacy of existence over thinking, the individual doubles himself by separating himself into object and subject as the act of reflection elevates one part of his being over the others.²⁶² So separates man from the absolute Centrum and takes residence on the periphery in his own conatus.²⁶³

Section 3: Intellectual Intuition, Negative and Positive Philosophy and the Antique Contemplative Tradition

²⁶² “This cision, this doubling of ourselves, this secret circulation in which there are two beings, a questioning being and an answering being, an unknowing being that seeks knowledge and an unknowing being that does not know its knowledge, this silent dialogue, this inner art of conversation is the authentic mystery of the philosopher” [Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, P. xxxvi].

²⁶³ Anxiety is symptomatic of life lived on the periphery and, inversely, given the reversionary movement of intellectual intuition, *Gelassenheit* is its relief. After all, if one is detached from the things of the world, there is nothing to cause anxiety – one has identified instead with the supreme principle. Traditionalism tells us that “knowledge is the sole remedy against anguish” [Guénon, *Initiation and Spiritual Realization*, P. 17], and, accordingly, as will soon emerge, noetic perfection, wherein the anagogic traveler identifies with the absolute center in intellectual intuition, relieves anxiety. As will become clear, the detachment from exterior things and from the vicissitudes of existence are preparatory to the intellectual intuition. For the adept, however, who has attained *henosis* with the divine (the *epopteia* of the greater mysteries), there are no exterior things. As Schelling tells us: “[A]ll original healing consists in the reconstruction of the relation of the periphery to the centrum, and the translation from disease to health can in fact only occur through its opposite, namely through restoration of the separate and individual life into the being's inner glimpse of light, from which restoration division (*Krisis*) once again proceeds” [Schelling, *The Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*, Pp. 34 – 35]. As Schelling describes the moment of intellectual intuition, “[t]rue freedom is in harmony with a holy necessity, the likes of which we perceive in essential cognition, when spirit and heart, bound by their own law, freely affirm what is necessary” [Ibid., P. 56].

In this section, this paper sets forth what Schelling intends by the term intellectual intuition. In large measure, this section draws from Schelling's work, Philosophy and Religion; among other aspirations in that work, Schelling tries to comprehend those instances when the *life of life*, which eludes our ordinary plane of consciousness, fleetingly appears before the soul in unmediated intellectual intuition. As Schelling tells us:

“[The absolute] appears before the soul only at the moment when subjective activity joins the objective in unexpected harmony, which because it is unexpected has an advantage over free, desire-less rational cognition to manifest itself as happiness, as illumination, or as revelation. But as soon as this harmony is brought about, reasoning sets in, and the apparition takes flight.”²⁶⁴

In offering this short description of a moment of intellectual intuition, Schelling provides his readers several clues: intellectual intuition is a “harmony,” by which he intends a simultaneity,²⁶⁵ of subjective and objective activities and thus resides beyond conceptual determination in the unmediated identity of the knower and known, arrives unexpectedly as free *actus* of the divine, endures but momentarily in the space between thoughts, is attended by possession of bliss or metaphysical realization, and, because Schelling acknowledges it to take flight with the return of reason, claims intellectual intuition is only accessible to the anagogic traveler ecstatic to discursive reason.

This paper began its account of Schellingian intellectual intuition by exploring the mystic-theosophical and German Pietist pre-ontology of Schelling's Swabian youth and, later, by alluding to the Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic traditions that profoundly underpin

²⁶⁴ Schelling, Philosophy and Religion, P. 9.

²⁶⁵ As Coomaraswamy tells it, we must “distinguish the accidental simultaneity of things in time from their essential simultaneity apart from time” [Coomaraswamy, P. 80].

Schellingian thought; thereafter, because Schelling's Orphic inspired enterprise recognizes a shared quintessence of the soul and the cosmic *life of life* (and, for that reason, a penetration of the soul is a journey into the cosmic *life of life*), this paper sought to provide a general cosmological account of the *life of life*. This paper now augments that introduction by locating and conceptually funding Schellingian intellectual intuition through discussion of his immediate philosophical mentor, J. G. Fichte and their philosophical predecessors, Descartes, Hume and Kant.

A. Descartes, Hume, Kant, Fichte and the Philosophical Origins of Schellingian Intellectual Intuition

Descartes, emerging from experiential meditations that might be better identified as mystical contemplations and attained in submission to spiritual disciplines known by anagogues everywhere,²⁶⁶ intuits that the self “has to be single, abiding, self-identical, and the most indubitable aspect of all of one's experience.”²⁶⁷ Challenging Descartes claims, the empirically-

²⁶⁶ Following a pattern of ancient contemplative *askesis* and orison, Descartes, in his *First Meditation*, writes: “I suppose that I possess no senses; I believe that body, extension, motion, and place are merely fictions of my mind” [Popkin, P. 134]. Again, in his *Third Meditation* and *Fourth Meditation*, Descartes tells us, respectively: “I will close my eyes, I will stop by ears, I will turn away my senses from their objects, I will efface from my consciousness all the images of corporal things; or at least, because this can hardly be accomplished, I will consider them as empty and false; and thus, holding only conversation with myself, and closing examining my nature, I will endeavor to obtain by degrees a more intimate and familiar knowledge of myself” [Ibid., P. 141] and “I have been habituated these bygone days to detach my mind from the senses . . .” [Ibid., P. 154]. And finally, and perhaps most declaratively, we hear of a moment of intellectual intuition at the end of the Third Meditation, “[b]ut before I examine this with more attention, and pass on to the consideration of other truths that may have evolved out of it, I think it proper to remain here for some time and in the contemplation of God himself – that I may ponder at leisure his marvelous attributes – and behold, admire, and adore the beauty of this light so unspeakably great, as far, at least, as the strength of my mind, which is to some degree dazzled by the sight, will permit. For just as we learn by faith that the supreme felicity of another life consists in the contemplation of the Divine majesty alone, so even now we learn from experience that a like meditation, though incomparably less perfect, is the source of the highest satisfaction of which we are susceptible in this life” [Ibid. (italics added)].

²⁶⁷ Shear, *On Mystical Experiences as Support for the Perennial Philosophy*, P. 336. As this paper variedly claims throughout, soteriological redemption and ontological renewal in the Schellingian architecture are only available in intellectual intuition. As McGrath writes: “The primordial decision at the ground of the Schellingian self is much

minded Hume counters that introspection fails to reveal any “quality or perception corresponding to this notion of the self.”²⁶⁸ Hume argues that because the self is that to which perceptions appear, the self must be separate from perceptions and “therefore unperceivable as well as unperceived.”²⁶⁹ Given these structural insights, Hume concludes that the Cartesian self cannot be empirically confirmed. Taking these two opposing positions in hand, Kant paradoxically concludes that Descartes and Hume each identifies an important aspect of the self; so, to Kantian thought, the self must be envisioned as simultaneously “(a) single, simple, and abiding and as (b) completely vacuous and empirically unintelligible.”²⁷⁰ As Shear nicely describes it:

“Thus, in short, Descartes argued commonsensically that the self, as single, simple, and self-identical, is indubitable; Hume argued introspectively that we have neither experience nor knowledge of any such self; and Kant argued paradoxically that both were right, for the self is both logically necessary and in principle unexperienceable and empirically unknowable.”²⁷¹

Kant based his paradoxical conclusion on the following thinking: (a) all experiences are extended in either time or space; moreover, all of an experience’s parts must become known to the same subject in order for that experience to exist; after all, if no subject experienced all aspects in conjunction, then no one would be positioned to confirm the existence of the original experience. From this insight, Kant concludes that perception demands the foundation of a single self. And (b) the self must be open to and compatible with all possible perceptions without

deeper, older and more elusive than the fleeting feeling of spontaneity disclosed in the experience of Cartesian introspection; it does not coincide with the I that grasps itself in the act of thinking but rather with the being that always withdraws from view in any self-reflective act and which reflection itself presupposes, the *sum* unthought in Descartes’ *cogito ergo sum*” [McGrath, P. 137].

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., P. 337.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

regard to their particular qualities. Logic then recommends that the self can have no qualities of its own; if the self carries its own qualities, it would be incompatible with and thus unavailable to some of its own possible perceptions. Accordingly, Kant concludes that the self “can only be a ‘pure consciousness,’ a ‘bare consciousness’ having nothing in it to be experienced and ‘known’ only as an empty, merely logical, empirically nonsignificant ‘object = x.’”²⁷² This Kantian notion of the self as pure consciousness, which this paper hastens to add is supported by the experiences of contemplatives everywhere, and transcendent to the polarities of discursive thought is instrumental to Schellingian intellectual intuition and its accompanying *maieutic*.

Schelling, consistently with the Kantian location of the self in pure consciousness, writes to Hegel that “[p]hilosophy must depart from the unconditioned. Now the question is: where is the unconditioned to be found – in the I or the Non-I.”²⁷³ Remembering the Socratic *maieutic*, which wants to midwife “the birth of *wisdom from a center outside of our subjectivity*,” Schelling, like Socrates long before, locates wisdom in the Non-I. Given that only “[t]he gods are absolutely blessed,”²⁷⁴ Schelling wants to recover for philosophy its proper attention on the “sacred teachings;”²⁷⁵ we will soon see that, for Schelling, the birth of wisdom demands ascetic withdrawal into the darkness of intellectual intuition in which one is present to the innermost and divine *life of life*. After all, “establishing the existence of things outside the realm of thought requires going beyond the realm of thought, and deduction by itself remains within the realm of thought.”²⁷⁶ In his assertion that philosophy must depart from the unconditioned, Schelling leans heavily on Jacobi’s claim that a category of knowledge (*Kenntnis*) exists that requires no

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Frank, P. 78.

²⁷⁴ Schelling, The Philosophy of Art, P. 39.

²⁷⁵ Schelling, Philosophy and Religion, P. 8.

²⁷⁶ Shear, On Mystical Experiences as Support for the Perennial Philosophy, P. 324.

condition to be valid. This type of unconditioned knowledge has “no opposition between the grounded (*Begrundeten*) and the ground (*Grund*) or the knowing (*Erkennenden*) and the known (*Erkannten*);”²⁷⁷ effectively, the knower is identical with the known and the ground is identical with that which is grounded. Jacobi’s epistemological claim of unconditioned knowledge carries symmetry with Kant’s ontological claims of the self as pure consciousness; both, in the Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic traditions, may be understood to express aspects of the perfection of the human dimension as later claimed in Schellingian intellectual intuition.

According to Schelling, the application of intellectual intuition to philosophy originates with Fichte;²⁷⁸ for Fichte, immediate certainty was obtained in the proposition of the “I am” – in the very self-assembling activity of one’s self-consciousness. Consciousness requires a subject-object dichotomy to reflect upon itself; however, as Descartes, Hume and Kant argue, the subject-object structure cannot explain consciousness itself. To explain consciousness, “one needs a third aspect that establishes the identity of reflector and reflected.”²⁷⁹ Fichte turned to the notion of intuition, which identifies an ability to understand something immediately and without application of conscious reasoning to self-awareness;²⁸⁰ in this novel application of intuition, Fichte located the ground of a particular “I” beyond the subject-object dichotomy. Uniquely to the “I am,” the propositional subject and object are one and the same.

“Fichte demanded something immediately certain as the beginning. For him this was the ‘I’, which he wanted to make sure of by intellectual intuition as something immediately certain; i.e., as something that indubitably exists. The expression of intellectual intuition was precisely the ‘I am’, stated with immediate

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Schelling, On the History of Modern Philosophy, P. 150.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., P. 5.

²⁸⁰ www.merriamwebster.com

certainty. *The act was called intellectual intuition because in this case, unlike in sensuous intuition, subject and object were not different from each other but the same.*²⁸¹

Accordingly, for Fichte, “subjectivity . . . is a self-acting spontaneity which cannot be explained via a prior cause.”²⁸² After all, if subjectivity could be explained by reference to a prior cause, the “I”, would then be dependent on a causal relationship and, as a result, would not be free. In the Fichtean system, then, because the “I” is prior to the condition of objectivity, “access to the condition depends, therefore, upon an action of the I upon itself, in ‘intellectual intuition,’ where the I as subject and the I as object are immediately identical.”²⁸³ Indeed, “the I-ness is its own deed, its own action; it is nothing apart from this activity.”²⁸⁴ The Fichtean system permits no predicate to attach to the “I” other than being itself. The reader might recall that God was known to the ancient Hebrews as *Eherh asher Eherech*, which, while commonly translated as “I AM WHO I AM” might be better rendered as “being is being.”²⁸⁵ Devoid of predicates, the nameless name of I AM WHO I AM signifies that “God *is* but his being is not completed like that of a thing, but is a living process, a becoming; only a thing, that is, which has reached its final form, can have a name.”²⁸⁶ This paper suggests to the reader’s consideration that the Fichtean “I am,” which, as a foundational activity of the spirit, is incomprehensible to later understanding of the subject, ought to be understood in an analogous manner: I-ness as a pure and a continual self-assembling consciousness.

²⁸¹ Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, P. 150 [italics added].

²⁸² *Ibid.*, P. 5.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁴ Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, P. 31.

²⁸⁵ Guénon, *The Symbolism of the Cross*, P. 93.

²⁸⁶ Fromm, P. 27. “The Hebrew text says EHEYEH asher EHEYEH . . . the importance of the Eheyeh lies in the fact that it is the imperfect of the verb ‘to be’” [*Ibid.*, Pp. 26-27].

Schelling constructs a somewhat different version of intellectual intuition than Fichte. Unlike Fichte's notion of intellectual intuition which is grounded immediately in a particular "I am", Schelling claims that his universal notion of intellectual intuition removes the subject-object dichotomy in its entirety; that is, Schelling claims that intellectual intuition is the indifferent common ground prior to any subject-object distinction whatsoever. "In intellectual intuition, a subject is no longer distinguishable from its object. This is not an "I am" enjoying an immediate grasp of the essence of an object, for what the I 'sees' in the intuition is that it is identical with its object."²⁸⁷ Accordingly, the Schellingian intellectual intuition is universalized and without any particular determination. There is no "I am." As is readily apparent, Schellingian intellectual intuition loses its Fichtean claim to immediate certainty;²⁸⁸ as Schelling acknowledges, "there is immediate certainty in the 'I am' - but is there also in the 'it is' which is the universal subject-object? All power of immediacy is lost here."²⁸⁹

In the thread of this "universal" narrative, it may be noticed that Schelling marries the individualized self-consciousness of "Fichte's I, which is the spontaneous cause of itself, to Spinoza's [universalized] God, which is likewise *causa sui*."²⁹⁰ Accordingly, we may note that the conception of intellectual intuition claimed by Schelling is not a Fichtean "I am" but an all inclusive, universalized *thatness*. Schelling tells us, "[t]he I is only a particular concept, a particular form of the subject-object; this was supposed to be shed, so that the subject-object in general should emerge as the universal content of all being."²⁹¹ Accordingly, Schelling argues that intellectual intuition is the *prima materia* of un-thought thinking precedent to any subject-

²⁸⁷ McGrath, P. 97.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Ibid., P. 151

²⁹⁰ Ibid., P. 6.

²⁹¹ Ibid., P. 151.

object opposition; as such, Schelling claims, with echoes of Kant, that intellectual intuition “can only be a matter (*Sache*) of pure thought.”²⁹² Accordingly, Schelling contends his formulation of intellectual intuition, removed from the subjective particularities inherent in the Fichtean “I am”, is the objective ground, the condition precedent, of thought itself. Schelling terms this objective ground the “absolute” ground because it designates that ground prior to any distinction between subject and object – a ground that is neither subjective nor objective but simultaneously neither and the negation of both. Schelling asserts that intellectual intuition, as the absolute ground to thought, is the only legitimate “beginning of an objective philosophy which is freed from all subjectivity.”²⁹³

To this reading, and in keeping with traditionalist thought, the primordial state of intellectual intuition is attained following a “hellish” descent, which recapitulates and exhausts the terrestrial realm²⁹⁴ and which is otherwise known as an initiatic death; having transformed himself into spirit, because, as is anciently said, “like may only be known by like,” and succeeding to its objective, the anagogic traveler realizes an unmediated encounter, that is, an encounter empty of all imagery, symbolism and representation, with the *that which is* in intellectual intuition (what the German Pietists understood as the Boehmean *Zentralerkenntnis*) – here in the primordial state of intellectual intuition, the anagogic wayfarer simply abides in the presence of *thatness*.

In this moment of intellectual intuition, philosophy “no longer posits knowing outside of itself, but rather within itself.”²⁹⁵ Importantly, the *life of life* that is made available in intellectual intuition is simple, pure subject. Accordingly, Schelling tells us that theurgy’s last task, that is,

²⁹² Ibid., P. 150.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ See Guenon, Perspectives on Initiation, Henry Fohr, Trans. Sophia Perennis. Hillsdale, NY (2001), P. 173.

²⁹⁵ Schelling, The Grounding of Positive Philosophy, P. 195.

the occasion of intellectual intuition, “**shows** at the end what already was at the beginning.”²⁹⁶

Yet, Schelling tells us:

“The last task could not only be to show the relationship of this subject, whose nature is inaccessible and which lives as if in an inaccessible life – because it cannot become an object – to human consciousness; for it has to have some relationship or other to human consciousness.”²⁹⁷

Because the *life of life*, as pure subject, cannot be objectified, the *life of life* can only relate to human consciousness as simple manifestation and, as the “only One”²⁹⁸; it is thus unavailable to discursive discrimination – it is simply *thatness* or the *that which is*. Writes Schelling:

“For as it itself no longer becomes, or can become, an object, one can only say that it manifests itself.”²⁹⁹

This intellectual intuition, incommunicable because of its inwardness and immediacy, is thus not an object of thought – there is in the simplicity of divine chaos, after all, no object to be encountered – it is rather the *prima materia* of thought and, as such, is *ein nicht denkendes Denken* (a “thinking which does not think”) and, as will emerge shortly herein, it best understood as an instance of Kantian pure consciousness.

²⁹⁶ Schelling, On the History of Modern Philosophy, P. 127 (bold in original).

²⁹⁷ Schelling, On the History of Modern Philosophy, P. 127 (underline added).

²⁹⁸ Ibid., P. 128.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., P. 127.

One would be remiss not to remind the reader that Schelling's notion of intellectual intuition parallels his portrayal of the cosmic *life of life*: each, as will be recalled, carries no predicates and, as such, is free to go through everything and yet be nothing; as Schelling tells us, “[c]omplete revelation of God only occurs where in the reflected world itself the individual forms resolve into absolute identity, and this occurs only within reason. Reason is thus within the All itself the full reflected image of God.”³⁰⁰ Said otherwise, intellectual intuition is the replication³⁰¹ in the succession of thought, that is, as the nothingness of that which precedes thought, of the originary chaos of the cosmic *life of life* – just as the *life of life* is the undifferentiated absolute ground of existence, so too is intellectual intuition the absolute and undifferentiated ground of consciousness; after all, the knower and known depend “upon the division in the Absolute that gives rise to a manifest world by splitting subject and object.”³⁰² Accordingly, given the Orphic underpinnings to the Schellingian project, the dissolution of thought into *that which is* prior to thought parallels the “totality and absolute unity of forms,” the divine *life of life*, that is precedent to manifest reality.

Posited as prior to thought, intellectual intuition is for Schelling a glimpse into the *prima materia* of thought, the common stuff out of which thought arises and from which it is composed and to which, presumably, thoughts are Orphically reabsorbed. From this is recognized that, “intellectual intuition is never a conscious act”³⁰³ but is the absolute ground from which consciousness emerges. From the point-of-view of ordinary consciousness, the *prima materia* of thought, the *life of life*, is a negativity, a nothingness insofar as it there is in intellectual intuition

³⁰⁰ Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, P. 27.

³⁰¹ In Schellingian thought, replication is to be understood as simultaneity and not in the more traditional manner of imitation of a preexisting prototype.

³⁰² Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, P. 28.

³⁰³ McGrath, P. 98.

nothing that ordinary consciousness can seize upon; prior to any decision between subject and object, intellectual intuition can be neither defined, experienced nor apprehended. As the *prima materia* of thought, “the *life of life* cannot relate to thinking as an object of thought.”³⁰⁴ Indeed, consistently with the experiential character of intellectual intuition, Schubeck notes that “[t]he decision between subject and object, the de-cisional character of consciousness, is not a presupposition but rather what necessarily comes after, a moment in which the *life of life* exposes itself in its negativity as nothingness;”³⁰⁵ in other words, the anagogic traveler who returns to the world from the undifferentiated bliss of intellectual intuition experiences the break between the ontological planes (the recognition of the German Pietists’ *Durchbruch*) only in his transition back to ordinary consciousness.

In language suitably poetic to the liminal nature of thought that it aspires to capture, Schelling calls the *prima materia* of thought “[a] thinking that does not think (*ein nicht denkendes Denken*).”³⁰⁶ The undifferentiated *life of life* is the primal matter of thought; more primordial than discursive thought can penetrate, it is the undifferentiated and formless archetype of thoughts yet-to-be formed; consequently, intellectual intuition as *ein nicht denkendes Denken* is the Schellingian embrace of the Kantian pure consciousness that underlies, carries forward into and is the transport of all subsequent thinking. As Schelling tells us:

“It is not really an object, but rather the mere material of thought throughout the whole science; for real thought expresses itself precisely only in the continual determination and formation of this which is indeterminate, of this which is never the same as itself, which always becomes another. This first basis, this true *prima*

³⁰⁴ Wirth, *Schelling Now*, P. 69.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁶ Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, P. 153.

materia of all thought, cannot be what is really thought, not be what is thought in the sense that the single formation is.”³⁰⁷

As a naked consciousness empty of all discernable qualities, there is no *what* to intellectual intuition; accordingly, the *whatness* from which thought arises is not available to thought; at best, the *thatness* of thought’s parentage can be located in intellectual intuition. We might recall that conscious thought is a latter addition to the human experience;³⁰⁸ and so, prior to the emergence of symbolic thought, human life resided in intuitive unity, *participation mystique*, with its surroundings – to the reading offered by this paper, this primordial state, know otherwise in varied traditions as the golden age, is disclosed within intellectual intuition. Schelling tells us that early man was originally monotheistic and that only through spiritual crisis (that is, by accretions to, enlargements of and shifts within man’s symbolic understandings), did man descend into polytheism.³⁰⁹

Having attended to certain preliminaries, this paper rotates to its central preoccupation: namely, the Schellingian mystagogy whereby the anagogic traveler attains to intellectual intuition and its ultimate *epopteia* – soteriological deliverance and ontological renewal.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, P. 152.

³⁰⁸ Traditionalist thought claims that in the gold age man was porous to the divine; Today, however, but for moments of intellectual intuition experientially available only to those of uncommon qualities, the nothingness of the *life of life* remains largely imperceptible to the ordinary plane of consciousness. This devolution within the human spirit, however, is not to be equated with Darwinian evolution. Schelling disfavored evolutionary notions; he writes, “we have shown that the almost general opinion that man only gradually raised himself up from the dullness of animal instinct to reason is not our own” [Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*, P. 76. Rather, it would seem that for Schelling, as a psychological compensational-ist, each enlargement of consciousness simultaneously divests its holder of receptivity to its unconscious complement – thus pressing it further into the unconscious.

³⁰⁹ In *A Secular Age*, Charles Taylor writes of the gradual dis-embedding of the human self from the cosmic structure; the individual is newly constituted by a buffered self and, as such, remote from the world. To this view, the world, once enchanted, is now disenchanting, and the gods, once immanent, have been lost. The individual is now condemned to increasingly suffer the world alone.

B. The Schellingian *Mystagogy*: Negative Philosophy as Preparatory to Theurgic Positive Philosophy

This paper is centrally purposed to explore the anagogic journey of the Schellingian initiate to intellectual intuition and its particular *epopteia*; accordingly, it only concerns itself with those aspects of Schelling's complementary conceptions of negative philosophy and positive philosophy as they may be material to this analysis. In this section, this paper wants to define Schellingian negative and positive philosophies and, building on its preceding discussion of German Pietist thought, which, as will be remembered, strenuously argued against the inversion of discursive thought over unmediated encounters with the numinous, and the Orphic trajectory of intellectual intuition, presents Schellingian negative philosophy, its movement toward the vitality of the *Ungrund* and its ultimate epistemic collapse as preparatory to the theurgic and hieratic practices of contemplative *askesis* and orison, which, for an anagogic wayfarer of uncommon and subtle qualities, can lead to the positive, originary and historical encounter with the numinous *that which* is in intellectual intuition.

This paper proposes and labors, in greatest part, to support the argument that intellectual intuition is the central axis around which the entirety of the Schellingian project rotates; it is here in the unmediated encounter with the *life of life* that the anagogic adept bridges the earthly and celestial realms in noetic perfection and attains to soteriological redemption and ontological renewal – it is here, in intellectual intuition, that the greatest connects to the least. As Evelyn Underhill tells us, “[t]he common ground that unifies us with the world, this identity that locates the starting point of all thinking and deliberation is that which is the condition of reflexive thinking, namely,

the intuitive realm of unmediated certainty.”³¹⁰ Like mystics everywhere, the primordial point of epistemological certainty and ontological reality for Schelling is intellectual intuition of the “non-human” origins of all that is.

Once intellectual intuition is attained and the illuminated anagogic traveler returns to an ordinary plane of consciousness, negative philosophy is then re-employed to locate that intellectual intuition’s datum of consciousness *a posteriori* and to consciously connect the anagogic encounter with the *thatness* of the divine *life of life* to the world below – in application of a Jungian framework to the arc of Schellingian thought, we invariably encounter light (consciousness) emerging from darkness (unconsciousness). While one may be inclined to identify positive philosophy, because it confers an originary revelation or knowledge to the anagogic traveler and is expressive of the perfection of the human dimension, as the preeminent cognitive mode, such a view misreads Schelling; not only is the function, composition and advancement of everyday life supported by the utility of negative philosophy, but the anagogic descent to and reemergence from the primordial state and its divine revelations is impossible without the coupled assistance of negative and positive philosophies; each, in accordance with its own measure, is necessary to disclose the intuited *life of life* in a historical moment. After all, Schelling tell us, “all knowledge must pass through the dialectic”³¹¹ because “there is no understanding in vision in and for itself.”³¹²

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, P. 22.

³¹¹ Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, P. xxxix.

³¹² *Ibid.*, P. xxxviii.

Sofia perennis, careful to reserve space for the inexpressible,³¹³ resists any pretense of complete systemization. Writes René Guénon, “[t]his is what makes all modern Western philosophical systems impotent from the metaphysical, that is, the universal point of view, and this is precisely to the extent that they are systems . . . they are in fact only restricted and closed conceptions, which can have a certain validity in a relative domain”³¹⁴ – it might be said that the pretence of these philosophical systems are revealed “as soon as, taken as a whole, they pretend to be something more and, try to pass themselves off as an expression of total reality.”³¹⁵ Similarly, Boehme notes that “[r]eason thinks it is a prophet. And yet it is only in itself and moves in its own desire.”³¹⁶ Sympathetic to the inclinations of traditionalist philosophy, Schelling, as this paper wants to establish over the next few pages, seeks to make a place for the inexpressible by demonstrating how the reach of apodictic thought may be exhausted and how its collapse prompts a movement to the non-discursive realm. During much of Schelling’s career, the Hegelian school and its conflation of reason and reality cast a shadow over European philosophy. Accordingly, the emphasis of Schellingian project on the nomadic force of the *life of life* as the dark and mad *Ungrund* ought to be read not only as affirmation of the Pietist sensibilities inculcated during his formative years and not only as recovery and revalorization of ancient sacred teachings; in addition, the Schellingian project’s ecstatic orientation toward soteriological freedom and ontological renewal in the non-human *life of life* stands in direct defiance and rebuttal to the closed system of the Hegelian dialectic then prevailing in intellectual circles. In short, Schelling maintains that breadth and richness of Hegelian philosophy represents the

³¹³ Etymologically, “[i]t is the inexpressible (and not, as commonly believed, the incomprehensible) that was originally designated by the work, ‘mystery’” [Guenon, *The Multiple States of the Being*, P. 24, ft. 8] for the Greeks.

³¹⁴ Guénon, *The Multiple States of the Being*, P. 13.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*

³¹⁶ Boehme, P. 101.

pinnacle and, consequently and concurrently, the spiritual exhaustion, of negative philosophy; said otherwise, because the circularity of Hegel's rationalism cannot account for its own origin and is detached and abstracted from manifest existence, Schelling persuasively argues that the lifelessness of Hegelism inevitably terminates in nihilism.

Consistently with ancient tradition, Schelling draws a critical division between negative (dialectical) philosophy and positive (initiatic) philosophy; as the reader may recall, the neo-Platonist Pseudo-Dionysius maintains that “[t]heological tradition has a dual aspect, the ineffable and mysterious on the one hand, the open and more evident on the other. The one resorts to symbolism and involves initiation. The other is philosophic and employs the method of demonstration.”³¹⁷ To the reading of the Schellingian project that emerged in this paper, the dual aspects of the theological tradition, the initiatory and the demonstrative, are expressed in Schelling's notions of positive philosophy and negative philosophy, respectively. We note with Jason Wirth that “negative philosophy defines negatively the nothingness of the [A]bsolute, while positive philosophy concretizes (*Konkretisiert*) the experience of the positivity of [A]bsolute nothingness.”³¹⁸ Negative philosophy is “[t]he movement toward the buried, obscured and repressed center . . . [which is simultaneously] the movement toward the vitality at the ungrounded ground.”³¹⁹ Accordingly, from the perspective of intellectual intuition, the *life of life* is encountered as an naked *thatness* – the onto-theistic, divine *that which is* and the *fons et origio* of all that is; from the perspective of negative philosophy, the supra-conceptuality of the *life of life's* nothingness is approached analogically through the “negative” application of concepts; indeed, ultimately even the concept of god itself must be discarded in *askesis* to an

³¹⁷ Pseudo-Dionysius, P. 283.

³¹⁸ Wirth, *Schelling Now*, P. 69.

³¹⁹ Wirth, *Schelling and the Future of God*, P. 3.

encounter with the divine in unmediated intellectual intuition. Said otherwise, a moment of intellectual intuition is seen as nothingness from the perspective of the world and, inversely considered from the perspective of an originary revelation of the *life of life*, the world is seen as nothing. Indeed, this paper wants above all to demonstrate that intellectual intuition is the governing principle of the Schellingian philosophical project; accordingly, intellectual intuition is the spiritual *axis mundi* for human life and, more particularly to this needs of the instant discussion, the point of instantaneous inflection between negative and positive philosophy – in this paper’s telling, the liminal moment of intellectual intuition, which establishes what it intuits, is the immediate identity of thought and being. Like the Roman god Janus³²⁰ who presides over liminal experiences, the anagogic traveler turns inward to encounter the mysteries and ineffable *thatness* of the Absolute *life of life* and, once having attained to the originary revelation of the non-conceptual and con-categorical *life of life*, he turns outward again to ratiocination and demonstration.

Schelling declares negative philosophy to be the science “that grasps the essence of things and the content of all being”³²¹ while positive philosophy is the science “that explains the actual existence of things.”³²² Negative philosophy “moves through the things of nature to the living ground of nature, moving always *über x hinaus*, through x to get beyond x. In this movement, thinking arrives at ‘*das Urlebendige*,’ ‘*das Wesen, dem kein anderes vorausgeht, also der älteste der Wesen* [what is primordially living, the being that is preceded by no other and is therefore the

³²⁰ “[T]he god Janus who is depicted with two faces, yet has only one, which is not either of those that we can touch or see” [Guenon, *The Symbolism of the Cross*, P. 141]. Consistently with this paper’s reading of Schelling’s thought, one face of the god Janus turns inward and the other outward to the world; the third countenance, which cannot be seen from the plane the ordinary consciousness, corresponds to the moment of intellectual intuition when one regains the primordial whole.

³²¹ Schelling, *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy*, P. 155.

³²² *Ibid.*

oldest of all beings].”³²³ And yet, while negative philosophy can arrive at an abstract comprehension of the “oldest of all beings,” it cannot confirm the existence of the primordial *life of life* – for this confirmation, this paper claims that positive philosophy, representative of the *gnosis* obtained through intuited revelation, must be employed. To help us begin to untangle these notions and to continue to draw, in part, on the spiritual sensibilities and strains within the Platonic project identified by Shear and Schelling, we recall Socrates’ famous claim that “I do not think that I know what I do not know.”³²⁴ In so professing ignorance, it is important to note that Socrates does not disclaim all knowledge; rather, Socrates maintains only that the knowledge others boast of having is not true knowledge – such knowledge is merely a pretense of true knowledge – and, consequently, Socrates “was the better for it since he knew that he knew nothing.”³²⁵ Schelling thus contends that Socrates funds his insistence of ignorance on an ironic presupposition of “a profound and even exceptional knowledge,”³²⁶ after all, Schelling suggests, “without a profound knowledge that precedes it, the pronouncement that one knows nothing is merely ridiculous.”³²⁷ Schelling encourages us to consider that the type of knowledge “common with the other types of knowing, but which he regarded as ignorance”³²⁸ is the science of reason, “a science that occurs solely in thought”³²⁹ – this is what Schelling recognizes as negative philosophy and, in keeping with our Socratic reading, is understood as a kind of pretense. In contrast to these “other types of knowing,”³³⁰ Socrates then posits a different science, “a science that must be a knowing, that is, a positive science,”³³¹ which, although it may

³²³ Wirth, Schelling and the Future of God, P. 3.

³²⁴ Plato, *Apology*, 21:d

³²⁵ Schelling, The Grounding of Positive Philosophy, P. 157.

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ Ibid., P. 158.

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ Ibid.

be intimated or glimpsed indirectly by negative philosophy, cannot be possessed by negative philosophy. Indeed, one might here suggest to the reader's consideration the age old distinction between mind (*nous*) and reason (*logos*), which in Schellingian extension is witnessed as a distinction between intuition and ratiocination – “only the former, a special gift from God, leads to saving knowledge (*gnosis*); the latter, shared by all men, implies both discursive reasoning and the expression of reasoning in speech.”³³²

In Socrates' profession of ignorance a deeper sense of irony reveals itself: Socrates, denying any knowledge of divine wisdom, states “I certainly have no knowledge of such wisdom, and anyone who says that I have is a liar and a willful slanderer.”³³³ After all, Socrates claims that “real wisdom is the property of God, and this oracle is his way of telling us that human wisdom has little or no value.”³³⁴ And yet, Socrates' statement carries a deeper implication sympathetic to our Schellingian project; in keeping with our exegesis of Schellingian thought, it is suggested to the readers consideration that Socrates seems to claim that although he can be a spectator to the *thatness* of the divine, he cannot attain to insight into the *whatness* of the divine.

Accordingly, in his claim to know “nothing” of divine wisdom, Socrates is consistent with the contemplative tradition.³³⁵ Certainly any ignorance of the “other types of knowing,” ratiocination, professed by Socrates may be remedied through the application of a discursive dialectical inquiry; however, Socratic ignorance of the “positive science” is the result of the

³³² Copenhaver, P. 133.

³³³ Plato, *Apology*, 20:e.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*, 23:a.

³³⁵ “This, I take it, gentlemen, is the degree, and this the nature of my advantage over the rest of mankind, and if I were to claim to be wiser than my neighbor in any respect, it would be in this – that not possessing any real knowledge of what comes after death, I am conscious that I do not possess it” [Plato, *Apology*, 29:b].

supersensible, incomprehensible and inexpressible quality of *that which is* – it is hubristic overreach for a mortal to know the gods. We read from Schelling:

“If he confesses his ignorance in the face of this different knowledge, it follows that ignorance once again has an entirely different meaning than one customarily expects. For the one is unknowing or ignorance due to a lack of science, whereas *the other is an ignorance caused by the exuberant nature [Ueberschwenglichkeit] of what is to be known.*”³³⁶

Schelling maintains that if Socrates is correct, then “these other types of knowing,” which fall under the category of negative philosophy in Schelling’s rubric, cannot contain positive knowledge but can help guide the anagogic traveler toward later possession of a “positive” knowledge. Returning again to his notion that “all instruction in philosophy that precedes this cognition [of intellectual intuition] can only be negative,”³³⁷ Schelling tells us:

“Only the correctly understood negative philosophy leads to positive philosophy; conversely, the positive philosophy is first possible only in contrast to the correctly understood negative. *Only the latter’s withdrawal back into its limits makes the former discernable and then, not only possible, but necessary.*”³³⁸

Schelling tells us that somehow and in some way the putative anagogic wayfarer must come to recognize the limits of negative philosophy in order to purposefully trespass its boundaries in the initiatic *praxis* of *askesis* and orison. As others have stated in one way or another, “[e]stablishing the existence of things outside the realm of thought requires going beyond the

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, P. 159 (italics added).

³³⁷ Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, P. 15 (italics added).

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, P. 145.

realm of thought, and deduction by itself remains within the realm of thought;”³³⁹ restated in Schellingian terms, negative philosophy, as the child of thought, must ultimately yield to positive philosophy in order to attain to the non-discursive ground of thought. After all, the ground of human consciousness cannot be human consciousness and the ground of human reason cannot be human reason – the human being, as a creature of the center, has its innermost beginnings in non-human spirit; indeed, “the attempt at such an immanent [intra-human] grounding, as we will see, always proves circular and thus futile.”³⁴⁰

In begin to make sense of this, we might consider the example of language; Schelling suggests “[l]anguage as the infinite affirmation that expresses itself in a living fashion is the ultimate symbol of chaos eternally residing in absolute knowledge.”³⁴¹ The many and varied languages contain different tones and sonorities, and yet, “those differences are all blended into human language, which accordingly does not particularly resemble any one sonority or tone, since all reside within it.”³⁴² To this view, although each language may be a universe to itself, it nonetheless shares underlying elements common to all language. So said, “[l]anguage viewed absolutely or in itself is unified or *one*, just as [discursive] reason is unified or one.”³⁴³

Anticipating Cassirer, who avers that “[p]hysical reality seems to recede in proportion as man’s symbolic activity advances,”³⁴⁴ we read from Schelling that “the real world is no longer the living word, the speech of God himself, but rather only the spoken – or expended – word.”³⁴⁵ To

³³⁹ Shear, On Mystical Experiences as Support for the Perennial Philosophy, P. 324.

³⁴⁰ Schelling, The Grounding of Positive Philosophy, P. 20.

³⁴¹ Schelling, The Philosophy of Art, P. 101.

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ Ibid. (italics in the original). Interesting, Schelling notes that, for painting, the color of flesh is chaotic; “[f]lesh is the true chaos of all colors and for just that reason resembles none in particular, but is rather the most indissoluble and beautiful admixture of them all” [Ibid., P. 141].

³⁴⁴ Cassirer, An Essay on Man, P. 25.

³⁴⁵ Schelling, Philosophy of Art, P. 101.

further assist our unpacking of what Schelling has in mind, it is may prove helpful to introduce the notion of the “whole” from the Scholastic tradition. As earlier mentioned in this paper, “[a] true whole is logically anterior to its parts and independent of them”³⁴⁶ and, as such, “contains a real principal of unity superior to its parts.”³⁴⁷ In comparison to a true whole, a whole might also be “conceived as logically posterior to its parts, or which it is merely the sum, . . . the *ens rationis*, whose existence as a ‘whole’ depends upon the condition of actually being thought of as such.”³⁴⁸ Accordingly, this latter way of envisioning a whole, because its putative unity is only an attribute of thought, presents only a pretense of a true whole. For the purposes of this paper, we might understand the former true whole as analogous to positive philosophy and the latter pretense of a whole, or the *ens rationis* whole, as analogous to negative philosophy. So, anticipating the Heideggerian project, this paper reads Schelling to claim that the prospective initiate is prompted to his anagogic journey by the recognition that the putative unity and of discursive reasoning is but a pretense of the wholeness of the hidden *life of life* – a *life of life* that is beyond the capability of negative philosophy, limited as it is to the manipulations of concepts, to confirm. Helping point our way forward, we read from Schelling:

“it is precisely in this moment, when the thinking subject begins to operate in the inverted world of reflection, that it naively assumes that the beginning of this reflected world is in fact the beginning of the actual world. The cogito’s ‘I think’ thus becomes the confession of allegiance to the naïve belief that this thinking is the initiator, the prime mover as it were, of this subject’s world. The task of the ‘true philosophy,’ however, is to expose this illusion created by reflection, thereby dethroning reflection as an end to itself so it can be put back into its proper role as the necessary means to the end of its own overcoming. According to Schelling, the very word itself signals this inversion: just as left is right in a mirror image, in reflection what appears as the cause to the thinking subject is actually effect.”³⁴⁹

³⁴⁶ Guénon, *The Multiple States of the Being*, P. 11.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, P. 21.

Negative philosophy offers a *via negativa* to the divine *that which is*. In keeping with this paper's reading of negative philosophy as preparatory to the contemplative *praxis* of *askesis* and orison to motivate an encounter with the divine, negative philosophy provides the spiritual energy for positive philosophy; writes Schelling, "[e]very philosophy that does not keep its basis in the negative, and wishes to reach the positive, the divine in an immediate manner, without the negative, finally dies of spiritual exhaustion."³⁵⁰ This being so, Schelling suggests that the negative philosophy may be seen as a sufficient, but not necessary, condition precedent to positive philosophy insofar as it wants a completion that it is unable to attain on its own.³⁵¹

Schelling's repeated suggestion that one must advance through negative philosophy before one is readied for an encounter with positive philosophy seems to comply with the strictures of the great mystical traditions.³⁵² To help understand what Schelling may have in mind, we might

³⁵⁰ Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, P. 173.

³⁵¹ Schelling, *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy*, P. 154. Schelling is careful to emphasize that positive philosophy does not require grounding by negative philosophy. Indeed, negative philosophy demands the positive "only in its own interest [in order] that it completes itself – but not as if the positive had the need to receive this demand from it or to be grounded by it" [Ibid]. Importantly to remember, positive philosophy "requires no foundation: it is that which through itself is the certain and absolute beginning" [Ibid.]; said otherwise, "positive philosophy can begin purely of itself with even the simple words: I want what is *above* being, that which is not merely being, but rather what is more than this, the *Lord* of Being" [Ibid.]. In the Schelling architecture, the beginning of authentic philosophy begins with wanting (the will, which mediates the earthly and celestial realms).

³⁵² Because Schelling, like all those of an initiatic strain, strenuously denies identification with mysticism, some might want to claim that this paper's reading of Schellingian intellectual intuition is misplaced. After all, might go this claim, the transmissions available to contemplative *askesis* and orison are, to the contemporary mind, of a mystical character; moreover, continues this argument, if Schelling disavows mysticism, it would seem inappropriate to read Schellingian intellectual intuition through the lenses of the Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic Traditions and the mystery teachings. While a surface understanding of this argument appears to carry persuasive weight, we must be carefully unpack Schelling's notion of mysticism. Indeed, Schelling recognizes the possibility of this misunderstanding arising and, consistent with traditionalist initiatic doctrine, contrasts his notion of intellectual intuition from mysticism; indeed, when Schelling sometimes employs the term mysticism, he does so within this initiatic framework. This paper follows a similar template; when used herein, mysticism bespeaks of an initiatic encounter with the divine. Schelling draws a distinction between formal and material meanings of the word "mysticism," writing: "The word mystical has in scholarly contexts always initially meant only a *formal* distinction.

If one wanted to extend this concept to the material, then rationalism in its highest objective form would, e.g., have to be called *mysticism*, for both are in accordance with each other in terms of material, of content, both know only substantial movement” [Schelling, The History of Modern Philosophy, P. 184 (italics in original)]. In this passage, Schelling acknowledges that intellectual intuition is materially consonant with mysticism; that is, intellectual intuition makes available to the anagogic traveler the same metaphysical realizations as an occasion of mystical transport. Accordingly, Schelling tells us, “[n]obody, then, is a mystic because of *what* they assert, but rather because of the manner *in which* they assert it” [Ibid. (italics original)]. Thus, while acknowledging that mysticism and intellectual intuition share the same substance, Schelling wants to assert a clear and formal distinction between mysticism and science. As has become evident in this paper’s telling, Schellingian thought aligns with the initiatic elements of traditionalist thought; in contrast, mystical experience, which is of passive and spontaneous nature, is, both to Schellingian thought and to perennialist doctrine, of an inferior ontological dimension.

Taking Schelling’s contention of a formal distinction between mysticism and science first, Schelling claims that “only that constitution of mind can be called mysticism that spurns *all* scientific justification or argument” [Ibid. (Italics original)]. As this paper has sought to persuade the reader, Schelling wants to establish a science that connects the greatest to the least; he acknowledges that “[w]e do not live in vision” [Schelling, The Ages of the World, P. xxxviii] of intellectual intuition and, accordingly, “the [scientific] goal is not reached in simple vision. For there is no understanding in vision in and for itself,” [Ibid.] because vision, Schelling claims, is transcendent to ratiocination and ineffable. “[T]he mystic could have no method since he has a ‘passive’ attitude and, as a result, limits himself to receiving what comes to him spontaneously as it were and with no initiative on his part” [Guenon, Insights into Islamic Esoterism & Taoism, P. 5]. As Schelling writes: “If [the theosophical mystics] were really in the Centre, then would have to go silent, but – they want to talk at the same time, to speak out, to speak out for those people who are outside the Centre. Herein lies the contradiction in theosophy” [Schelling, The History of Modern Philosophy, P. 181]. As will be remembered, the moment of Schellingian intellectual intuition is transcendent to any subject – object dichotomy; in intellectual intuition, the anagogic traveler attains to “the self in its naked, unmade unbegin state,” [Shear, P. 332] which is simultaneously the undifferentiated stillness of primordial chaos. Accordingly, the anagogic traveler lacks any mediating organ to experience or translate intellectual intuition as it occurs. As this paper has already noted, because Schellingian intellectual intuition is an unconscious activity (*a nicht denkendes Denken*), there is no external perspective by which the anagogic traveler might decipher its experience. To this point, Schelling tells us that “all experience, feeling, vision is itself mute and needs a mediating organ to be expressed” [Ibid., P. 182]. The mediating organ is the conscious mind which, insofar as it may view an experience through a transcendental lens, can bring such an experience into real reflection. Indeed, “if the visionary lacks this organ or intentionally pushes it away from themselves in order to speak immediately from vision, then they lose their necessary standard and are one with the object” [Schelling, The Ages of the World, P. xxxvii]. Accordingly, Schelling’s assertion that “all knowledge must pass through the dialectic” [Ibid., P. xxix] may be said to mark the border between theosophy and philosophy. Whereas theosophy is content with its attained vision, philosophy seeks to disclose the world through the incremental constructions of negative philosophy in which the knower holds himself separate from that which is to be known. “It is not our vocation to live in visions, but rather in belief, i.e., in mediated knowledge. Our knowledge is incomplete, i.e., has to be created bit by bit, successively, according to gradations and classifications. Whoever has felt the beneficial effect of the analysis of his thoughts, of a successive creation of knowledge and cognition will, so to speak, not give up that considered duality at any price. There is no understanding in vision in and of itself” [Schelling, The History of Modern Philosophy, P. 182]. In summation, like positive philosophy, theosophy “wants to comprehend the emergence of things from God as an actual chain of events” [Schelling, The Grounding of Positive Philosophy, P. 175]. This similarity, notwithstanding, Schelling claims that the approach of theosophy and positive philosophy differ; whereas positive philosophy makes use of science (that is, science understood by Schelling as dialectical philosophy), theosophy proceeds in the “non-methodical fashion” [Ibid.] of spontaneous mystical experience.

This now steps us into the second thread within Schelling’s above quote. Theosophical thought, similarly to the interpretation of Schelling forwarded by this paper, holds “that there is a deeper spiritual reality and that direct contact with that reality can be established through intuition, meditation, revelation, or some other state transcending normal human consciousness” [www.britannica.com/topic/theosophy]. In so far as this paper has established that intellectual intuition is reason’s most distinctive act, Schelling asserts that no one can deny the “elevation of the powers of the mind to vision” [Schelling, The Ages of the World, P. xxxviii]. Moreover, in noting that the uneducated call “everyone who believes in Revelation at all, even if it were to happen in the most historical sense, a

consider apophatic³⁵³ and, its epistemic counterpart, cataphatic,³⁵⁴ ascents to the divine as practiced by mystics everywhere. Both apophatic and cataphatic ascents, similarly funded by the precept that is no “access to the *invisibilia* of God except through the *visibilia* of creation,”³⁵⁵ ultimately lead to collapse in the face of the unknowability of God; indeed, “*apophasis* is a

mystic,” [Schelling, *The History of Modern Philosophy*, P. 183]. Schelling implies that he in no way wants to deny instances of revelation. After all, Schelling maintained an affectionate relationship with Emmanuel Swedenborg. Undoubtedly having in mind the Swedenborgian spirit world, Schelling understands theosophy to contain paranormal contacts with spirits; as such, he acknowledges that “[t]heosophy is much ahead of philosophy in depth, fullness, and vitality of content in the way that the actual object is ahead of its image, and nature is ahead of its presentation” [Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, P. xxxix]. While for his part, however, Schelling “rejects any conjuring up of spirits,” [Horn, P. 14]. he does allow for the possibility of visitations from the *mundus imaginis* at an intermediate location in the anagogic descent to the primordial state; Schelling writes, “[o]nce the relationship to the body has become extinct enough, the soul begins to *dream* that is, receive images from the non-real and ideal world” [Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, P. 55 (italics in original)]. However, in contrast to the initiatic mentality, mystics “stop short at ‘vision,’ and the entire extent of the angelic worlds separate them from Deliverance.” [Guénon, *Initiation & Spiritual Realization*, P. 48]. Given that similar spiritual influences may be occasioned by and encountered in both mystical and scientific *askesis*, Schelling recognizes that the same content of thought might be variously identified as mystical or scientific depending on the station of the observer; he writes: “The same truth can, then, be mystical to one person which is scientific to the other, and vice versa. For to the person who expresses truth on the basis of a merely subjective feeling (*Empfindung*) or a supposed revelation, it is mystical; to the person who derives truth from the depths of science and hence alone truly understands it, it is scientific” [Schelling, *The History of Modern Philosophy*, P. 185]. Accordingly, Schelling acknowledges that the same material content of thought may be recognized as either an instance of mysticism or intellectual intuition; what distinguishes one from the other is whether the encounter with the divine or one’s familiars is framed by the anagogic traveler as an instance of subjective feeling or a moment of scientific unfolding. Carrying forward this notion of scientific unfolding, Schelling wants to distinguish positive philosophy from mystical teachings in another, more instructive manner for the purposes of this paper. Both positive philosophy and theosophy, he insists, want “to comprehend the emergence of things from God as an actual chain of events” [Schelling, *The History of Modern Philosophy*, P. 175]. Said somewhat differently, positive philosophy takes “God as a place to begin rather than a conclusion to be reached” [Horn, P. 1]. In contrast, Schelling criticizes inductive philosophy as commencing from a negative *prius* – “from something nonexistent . . . that must first move itself into being” [Schelling, *The History of Modern Philosophy*, P. 177]. Positive philosophy, as its name implies, begins “from something positive, that is, from an existing *prius* that does not first have to move itself into being” [Ibid.]. Importantly, because as the absolute it can have neither condition precedent nor contingency, this existing “*prius* thus posits only with complete freedom without being somehow required by its nature to posit a being” [Ibid.]. In contrast to positive philosophy, which moves toward experience, Schelling claims that certain mystical teachings “start out from experience – from something that occurs in experience” [Ibid., P. 178]. Schelling notes that all mystical doctrines, whether revelatory, enthusiastic or of immediate intuition, spring from a common encounter; namely, “something given in immediate or mediated experience” [Ibid., P. 178]. Mystical experiences of this Swedenborgian sort include visions, auditory experiences, feelings and visitations from the spirit world; accordingly, these revelations are historical in the Schellingian vernacular insofar as they may be experienced as they happen. In delineating mystical experiences as revelatory, we might surmise the Schelling was greatly influenced by the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg.

³⁵³ The notion of theology as an acquired ignorance or, as Nicholas of Cues termed it – a *docta ignorantia*. The Latin tradition within Christianity understood apophaticism as the *via negativa*.

³⁵⁴ The opposite of apophatic, cataphatic emphasizes the definition of the divine through positive statements; in Greek, *kataphasis* means affirmation, from *kata*, an intensifier and *phanai*, meaning to speak [http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/cataphatic].

³⁵⁵ Turner, Denys. P. 253.

Greek neologism for the breakdown of speech.”³⁵⁶ As Turner points out, “we must encounter, and then transcend the last differentiation of all: the difference itself between similarity and difference . . . [t]herefore, only way in which we can attest to the absolute transcendence of God is by transcending the language of similarity and difference altogether.”³⁵⁷ As noticed in Schellingian thought, negative philosophy is envisioned as preparatory to the theurgic ascent to the absolute *life of life* in contemplative *askesis* and orison; yet, because negative philosophy is inherently apodictic in character, Schelling asserts that it, like apophatic and cataphatic speech, ultimately collapses when one, urged to uncover epistemic completion in actual existence, recognizes a chasm between reason’s contents, “which are mere abstractions and thus nothing real”³⁵⁸ and “actual, present existence.”³⁵⁹ Writes Schelling, “[o]f itself, reason cannot realize or prove any actual, real being even in the sensible world; *it cannot realize or prove any present existence.*”³⁶⁰

As Schelling writes, “our [positive] philosophy cannot proceed from the mechanistic (what is negative), but rather must start with the organic (what is positive).” To Matthew’s intriguing reading, the “[p]ositive here refers to nature’s self-organizing systems of creation as opposed to the stable results of such generative systems.”³⁶¹ We again might remember the distinction drawn by Spinoza between the progressive *natura naturans*, the productive activity of nature as a whole, and the regressive *natura naturata*, the “result of this producing reflexively determined in its static forms.”³⁶² We read from Matthews:

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, P. 20.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, P. 45.

³⁵⁸ Schelling, *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy*, P. 211.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, P. 210.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.* (italics added).

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, P. 22.

³⁶² *Ibid.*

“In the same way as the static concept relates to productive intuition, the unbounded productive activity of *natura naturans* is the positive yet undetermined ground of the resulting product, whose articulation as *natura naturata* occurs through a limiting and thus negative force.”³⁶³

Importantly to the claims of this paper, “Schelling considers the creative power of organic life itself to ‘the schema of freedom’”³⁶⁴ – what this paper calls the *life of life* that is within and is the generative force of the phenomenal world. Writes Schelling, there “are not two worlds, but rather only one true world that is not external or above the phenomenal world, but is itself within it.” To the reading offered by this paper, the “true world” of which Schelling speaks is the ever-fecund *life of life* that courses through all of reality. Accordingly, it is because of the inversion of thinking and being, in which being becomes the object of thinking rather than its condition, that mankind finds itself alienated from the positive world of existence.

As has been noted, the Schellingian Absolute, that is “everywhere and nowhere” at once, cannot be depicted by a predicate. As Andrew Bowie points out, “if it [the Absolute] remained anywhere, life and development would be hindered,”³⁶⁵ indeed, if the *life of life* tarried anywhere, freedom would descend into necessity. Because no predicate may attach to the Absolute, the mind characterizes the Absolute negatively when using literal language; in Hinduism, the infinite is *nir-guna* (that which is without qualities), in Buddhism, it is *nir-vana* (the non-drawing), in Taoism, it is called the Tao that cannot be spoken, in Judaism, it is ‘*en-sof*

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ Ibid., P. 23.

³⁶⁵ Schelling, The History of Modern Philosophy, P. 26.

(the non-finite).³⁶⁶ For similar reason, affirmative terms may be applied only analogically to the Absolute – that is, positive terms might be said to be more accurate than their opposites. Freedom, the Schellingian divine, is the non-ground primordial to the oppositional realm of subject and object and, accordingly, is a pure indifference; as Schelling likes to say, the Absolute is both A and –A; as such, the Absolute is simultaneously both manifested and non-manifested form. As Bowie writes, “[f]reedom in this view is the ground of the world’s being disclosed in ways which we cannot attribute to the activity of our consciousness. What we know is determined in reflexive terms; the fact that we know cannot be.”³⁶⁷ Said otherwise, the Absolute, because it funds our consciousness, lies beyond the reach of our consciousness to gather it in.

For Schelling, positive philosophy begins neither “merely in thought”³⁶⁸ nor “from some being present in experience.”³⁶⁹ Rather, positive philosophy “begins with the completely transcendent being,”³⁷⁰ external to all thought in an absolute sense and not merely in a relative sense. In drawing this distinction between absolute and relative externality to thought, Schelling seeks to differentiate the Absolute, to which no predicates adhere, from the relatively external “which carries with it the logical determinations of the understanding.”³⁷¹ Accordingly, if Being is only relatively external, then it would be *necessarily* subject to logical determinations cannot and come within the purview of negative philosophy. Accordingly, transcendent Being must be the “absolute *prius* which has no necessity to move itself into being.”³⁷² Thus, the Absolute *prius* is

³⁶⁶ Huston, Pp. 54-55.

³⁶⁷ Schelling, On the History of Modern Philosophy, P. 27.

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

³⁶⁹ Ibid.

³⁷⁰ Ibid., P. 179.

³⁷¹ Ibid., P. 178.

³⁷² Ibid., P. 179.

absolutely free and, if it moves into being, it does so as a free act, an act incapable of *a priori* comprehension and knowable in the world of experience only *a posteriori*.

Schelling maintains that “the relationship of thought and being becomes inverted if being is understood in reflexive terms.”³⁷³ Here we might again remember the mythical image of the child Dionysus, who, when playing with a mirror, reflects the *noetic* realm into the manifold reality.³⁷⁴ The world seems to become known as the light of consciousness spreads over it. Accordingly, consciousness accredits the manifestation of the world to its own activity; however, to Schelling’s way of thinking, the very workings of the world are the condition precedent to consciousness. The absolute *life of life* in its formation of manifest reality, as we have seen, separates into subject and object. As a result, “the ‘Absolute subject’ may be internalized as knowledge by the consciousness, which has thereby become the other of the object world being manifest.”³⁷⁵ Because of this inversion of the actual relationship between being and thinking, the world seems to be the consequence of consciousness, the predicate of consciousness, rather than the condition of consciousness’ possibility.

Because thought is the reflexive other of Being,³⁷⁶ thought inevitably consists of the determinate manifestations of the *life of life*. So, much like an object reflected in water is an inverted image of the original, knowledge “results when the Absolute subject becomes the object that manifests itself in thought.”³⁷⁷ Understood this way, one is not able to know what casts the reflection onto

³⁷³ Ibid.

³⁷⁴ “The Orphics describe Dionysus as a child playing with a ball, a mirror, and a pair of dice, and randomly arbitrating world events as he does so” (McEvillery, P. 39].

³⁷⁵ Schelling, On the History of Modern Philosophy, P. 27.

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

the surface the water; what can be known is only the reflection cast. Reflective thought, as implied by this analogy's isomorphic imagery, cannot attain to more than the inverted image. In keeping with a maxim of traditionalist philosophy, the greater (the Absolute *prius* in this instance) cannot be known by the lesser (individual consciousness).³⁷⁸ Reflected thought, as the lesser, can know only the *natura naturata*, that which is produced by the *life of life*; it cannot know the greater, the *natura naturans*, itself.

However, “one can arrive at the necessity of its [the *life of life*] existence only when thinking tries and fails to ground itself in an absolute manner;”³⁷⁹ discursive reasoning is unable to find secure footing because it is a self-referential system – it cannot recognize an Archimedean point external to its mechanics. As we have seen, Schelling claims the anagogic traveler can intuit the *life of life* only after renouncing knowledge;³⁸⁰ as is anciently understood, only after realizing a state of *aporia*³⁸¹ is the hold of the ego released. As Campbell notes, “[t]he forms of sensibility and the categories of human thought, which are themselves manifestations of this [Absolute], so confine the mind that it is normally impossible not only to see, but even to conceive, beyond the colorful, fluid, infinitely various and bewildering, phenomenal spectacle.”³⁸² In this vein of thought, Schelling holds that “reason and I-ness in their true absoluteness, are one and the same, and if for the reflected world this is the pinnacle of its being-for-itself, then it is also the point where the fallen world restores itself to the original.”³⁸³ What Schelling means is that reason and I-ness, once dispossessed of all particularities, and thus retaining only their primordial universal

³⁷⁸ Guénon, *The Multiple States of the Being*, P. 8.

³⁷⁹ Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, P. 27.

³⁸⁰ One might remember the words of Frithjof Schuon, “[t]he role of the sage is not – as in the radically mistaken view of the Europeans – to explain things from zero and to construct a system, but to firstly ‘see’ and secondly to ‘cause to see,’ that is, to provide a key” [Huston, P. 50, quoting *Islam and the Perennial Philosophy*, P. 149].

³⁸¹ *Aporia* means “impasse, difficulty of passing, lack of resources, puzzlement” [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aporia].

³⁸² Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, P. 221.

³⁸³ Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, P. 31.

character, are intellectual intuition and the *life of life*, respectively, and, consistent with this paper's reading of the Schellingian project, intuitive reason and the spark of the divine *life of life* within the anagogue "are one and the same."³⁸⁴ Accordingly, harmonious with this paper's narrative, Schelling claims that intellectual intuition is the restoration of the primordial state, in which the fallen world attains salvific redemption; intellectual intuition, to this reading, is the point of inflection, the Heraclitean joint, between the exoteric and the esoteric. This notwithstanding, it is clear that within intellectual intuition, all distinctions disappear, resolving into simple unity.³⁸⁵

The beginning of negative philosophy is nothing other than content that is identical with thought; accordingly, Schelling maintains that "it does not go toward thought (since it is identical to it), only proceeds out from thought."³⁸⁶ However, "that which simply *is* is the content that is not identical with thought"³⁸⁷ and, accordingly, positive philosophy precedes from a place more primordial than thought. Existence, as it were, precedes essence. Accordingly, since it is originally external to thought, "that which simply is" must be conveyed *to* thought. The *life of life*, the "that which simply is" is *a priori* incomprehensible; reason, however, appropriates and makes comprehensible the in its concept of God. Accordingly, that which infinitely exists, which transcends understanding, becomes immanent for reason in the term, God. The concept of God is that "of universal essence, the *potential universalis*"³⁸⁸ precedes every potency and is the

³⁸⁴ Ibid.

³⁸⁵ For this reason, "Allah, just as He is 'the First and the Last' (*al-Awwal wa al-Akhar*)"[Guenon, Insights into Islamic Esterism and Taoism, P. 13] and, in *Revelations* 22:13, Jesus says: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

³⁸⁶ Ibid., P. 209.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ Ibid., P. 211.

simple One. “He is, this means, this one who is not, who is the sheer totality of all possibility, and who is the cause of being, for the very reason that he is this.”³⁸⁹

Because it is transcendent to any mediating organ, an occasion of intellectual intuition cannot be experienced by the anagogic traveler during its occurrence; for this reason, Schelling claims that positive philosophy begins neither in thought nor in experience. Schelling argues that positive philosophy cannot be said to begin in thought because, as we have seen, it proceeds from a location prior to thought in the *prima materia* of thought or from the *nicht denkendes Denken*. Moreover, Schelling maintains that positive philosophy does not proceed from experience because it proceeds “from being, but not from empirical being”³⁹⁰ – that being which can be experienced. Given that analytical cognition of experience requires a bifurcation of the knower from the known, such a bifurcation is unavailable in intellectual intuition where an identity of the knower and the known is occasioned. Being, the *Deus Absconditus* and the *fons et origio* of all that is, cannot be experienced because it is the dark *Ungrund* to human cognition. On the other hand, empirical being is *relatively* external to thought; as we have seen, because “every being that occurs in experience inherently carries with it the logical determinations of the understanding without which it could never even be represented,”³⁹¹ it is subject to cognitive comprehension. Accordingly, because relative externality fails to escape the confines of reason, it is an insufficient beginning for positive and objective philosophy. To be certain that it is grounded in the un-ground of the Absolute *prius*, positive philosophy is obliged to begin from a

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, P. 211.

³⁹⁰ Schelling, *The History of Modern Philosophy*, P. 178.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*, Pp. 178 – 179.

“*completely transcendent being*,”³⁹² the *life of life*, which “has no necessity to move itself into being.”³⁹³

However, while positive philosophy begins neither in thought nor experience, because it neither supposes to hold an object in immediate experience nor “attains to its object through inferences drawn from something given in experience,”³⁹⁴ it moves toward experience in the attempt to demonstrate *a posteriori* the *prius* of God. God, to this way of thinking, can only be known *a posteriori* because “God is not a *res naturae*, something that is self-evident, but is a *res facti*, and can therefore only be proved factually.”³⁹⁵ Factual demonstration, it is to be remembered, is in no way coequal with conceptual proof; rather, factual proof demands an experiential basis. Schelling is adamant in his claims that the *life of life* is the living God, fully real and to be affirmatively encountered, and not merely available as a concept to be logically disclosed and thus dependent on negative philosophy; he writes:

“This proposition does not mean the concept of this *prius* is equal to the concept of God. It means that this *prius* is God, not according to its concept, but according to its reality.”³⁹⁶

However, if positive philosophy does not begin in experience, “then it must be an *a priori* science.”³⁹⁷ As both negative and positive philosophies are *a priori* sciences, Schelling claims

³⁹² *Ibid.*, P. 179 (italics in the original). “If that being from which positive philosophy proceeds were also merely relative, then the necessity of passing over into being would inhere within its principle. Thus, through this principle, that being would be subordinated to the thought of necessary movement and, consequently, the positive philosophy would fall back into the negative” [*Ibid.*].

³⁹³ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, P. 179.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

that negative and positive philosophy share common ground as both go toward experience.

Notwithstanding that each are *a priori* sciences and tend toward experience, experience adjudicates the claims of negative philosophy and positive philosophy much differently; because negative philosophy, tautological in character, “has its truth in the immanent necessity of its movement,”³⁹⁸ experience is merely confirmatory. However, for positive philosophy, which is available only to the intuition, experience provides both meaning and force of proof. Schelling identifies his positive philosophy as an *a priori*³⁹⁹ science because it originates from the Absolute *prius* (*life of life*) that is before and above all experience. Marking its difference from negative philosophy, Schelling writes:

“[T]he *prius* from which [positive philosophy] proceeds is not simply before all experience so that it must *necessarily* move into experience, but rather, it is above all experience, and thus there is no *necessary* transition into experience for this *prius*.”⁴⁰⁰

Schelling thus claims that, because the *prius* need not necessarily move into experience, negative philosophy is not able to conclusively demonstrate the existence of God *a priori*. Emphasizing this point, Schelling asserts that “positive philosophy merely denies that the supersensible [*prius*] is known only in a rational manner;”⁴⁰¹ accordingly, Schelling does not say inductive reasoning is unable to know the supersensible but only that nothing forecloses the *prius* from being known affirmatively. Because it does not necessarily need to transition into experience (otherwise the *prius* would not be free), the *prius* is free to act or to not act; “[a] free action is something more

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

³⁹⁹ In Latin, the literal meaning of *a priori* is “from what comes first” [www.dictionary.com/browse/a_priori].

⁴⁰⁰ Schelling, The Grounding of Positive Philosophy, P. 180.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., P. 171.

than what allows itself to be discerned in mere thought⁴⁰²— a free action is discernible in history. To this claim, intellectual intuition “can only be the consequence of a free act . . . and only known *a posteriori*.”⁴⁰³ Accordingly, Schelling insists that “from this *prius*, positive philosophy derives in free thought and in evidentiary sequence that which is *a posteriori* or that which occurs in experience, not as what is possible, as in the negative philosophy, but as what is real.”⁴⁰⁴

As we have seen, however, Schelling carefully tailors his argument to avoid claiming that the Absolute *prius* itself can be proven or known essentially; that the *life of life* cannot be known essentially, he states, “is above all proof, since it is the absolute and through itself indubitable beginning.”⁴⁰⁵ After all, as the lesser cannot know the greater, the anagogic traveler can only know the *thatness* of the *life of life*. What can be established, Schelling argues, are the consequences that follow from a positive encounter with the *life of life*. What he means is something like this: following the anagogic traveler’s return from a liminal moment of intellectual intuition, in which he was suspended in the *prima materia* of thought, the anagogic traveler is possessed of profound conviction of particular *epopteia*. Indeed, the fact that the anagogic traveler feels a deep conviction is described by Schelling as a historical datum of consciousness. Indeed, Schelling claims that this datum of experience is testimony *a posteriori* of an occurrence of intellectual intuition that is otherwise independent of and unavailable to analytic cognition. This being so, Schelling maintains that the anagogic traveler’s encounter with the *thatness* of *life of life* in intellectual intuition provides epistemic closure to negative

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*, P. 171

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, P. 180.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

philosophy, which, as will be remembered, suffers epistemic collapse when it is unable to confirm the existence of the divine. While negative philosophy can establish and develop the concept of God, it is incapable of stepping outside of conceptual abstraction in order to confirm the historical existence of God. To the thread of this argument, “since the Absolute *prius*, by definition, cannot be known *a priori*, knowledge of the Absolute *prius* is available only through its consequences [*per posterius*”⁴⁰⁶]. It will be remembered that the collapse of negative philosophy is occasioned precisely by its incapacity to attain to epistemic closure. Schelling argues that if the governing concept of the absolute *life of life* includes the capability, but not the necessity, of such a consequence being derived from an instance of intellectual intuition and “the existence of such a consequence is a datum, a fact of experience . . . then the *prius* [*life of life*] also exists in the way that we have conceived it, that is, that God exists.”⁴⁰⁷ In this way, we resurrect Zizek’s earlier claim that the *life of life* is radically contingent insofar as it is retroactively presupposed; an experience of intellectual intuition is presupposed by a later datum of conscious experience. Schelling’s argument *a posteriori* may be extended; it might be further claimed that the illuminated anagogic traveler’s realignment of his life around a new spiritual axis following intellectual intuition is testament to his divine encounter in intellectual intuition. Accordingly, Schelling claims that the experience of a “religious” (*epopteia*) conviction after an otherwise mute event of intellectual intuition is testament of an encounter with the divine *life of life* in intellectual intuition. Writes Schelling in summary of his claim:

“To express this distinction in the sharpest and most concise manner: the negative philosophy is a priori empiricism, it is the *Apriori* [*Apriorimus*] of what is empirical, but, for this very reason, it is not itself empirical. Conversely, the

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

positive philosophy is an empirical *Apriori*, or it is the empiricism of what is *a priori* insofar as it proves that the *prius per posterius* exists as God.”⁴⁰⁸

As Schelling emphasizes, “[t]he God of a truly historical and positive philosophy however does not move, he acts.”⁴⁰⁹ To this way of thinking, a truly historical philosophy “starts out as something positive,”⁴¹⁰ the absolute *life of life*, and not, as negative philosophy requires, from “something nonexistent”⁴¹¹ – that is, a mere concept. To the reading of this paper, the absolute *life of life* “is that which *just is*; from the immediate, simple necessary being, that necessarily is because it precedes all potency and all possibility.”⁴¹² Further establishing this point, Schelling notes that “[t]he nature of that which *just is* [*das bloss Seyende*] is precisely to exist independently of every idea, thus, even from the final idea of negative philosophy”⁴¹³ – which is “God”; said otherwise, to attain to God in intellectual intuition – to release oneself into the divine nothing – the anagogic traveler must ultimately detach himself even from the notion of God, his final earthly binding. Accordingly, positive philosophy necessarily stands in *ekstasis* to all forms of reason of a lesser hierarchical order than intellectual intuition.

Accordingly, and consistently with this exegesis, Schelling claims that the mature negative philosophy “contains the demand . . . to posit the positive outside of itself;”⁴¹⁴ negative philosophy in self-consciously recognizing its own limitations, that is, in so far as it becomes aware that offers a mere pretense of the living whole and fails to capture the living experience in

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, P. 181 (italics in the original).

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, P. 177. The reader can draw similarities to the Aristotelian unmoved mover.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*

⁴¹² Schelling, *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy*, P. 202.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, P. 202. One might suggest that if the final idea of negative philosophy is the concept of God, this concept too must be discarded in order to confront the nothingness in intellectual intuition.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, P. 153.

its entirety, demands, in Schellingian language, a positive science in order to find epistemological closure. Positive philosophy is thus understood as complementary to negative philosophy's rationalism, which "is familiar only with pure essential relations"⁴¹⁵ and is tautological in nature. Because of its tautological nature, negative philosophy can arrive at a concept of the *life of life* but cannot know that it actually exists; only the actual experience of positive philosophy can ascertain *that* something exists. Accordingly, in the Schellingian *mystagogy* as presented herein, the recognition of the limitations of negative philosophy – its epistemic collapse – motivates the anagogic traveler's epistemic desire for a positive encounter with *that which is*. Indeed, under this schema, Schelling seems to claim that the arc of negative philosophy must be exhausted before a countervailing movement to positive philosophy can commence.

Consistently with this viewpoint, Schelling argues that negative philosophy, accustomed to merely presuppose positive content, presumes to have "completed knowledge"⁴¹⁶ and, as such, to be co-equal with finite being. However, because negative philosophy expresses only apodictic knowledge, it is restricted to the logical circularity inside of thought and, accordingly, is unable to attain to any positive (real) experience transcendent to thought. Writes Schelling, "[i]f we want anything that exists outside of thought, then we must precede from a being that is absolutely independent of all thought, which precedes all thought."⁴¹⁷ In so far as negative philosophy "is aware of itself, and understands itself completely, [it] has the need to posit the positive outside of itself;"⁴¹⁸ indeed, Schelling insists that "[i]n its culmination, negative

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, P. 177

⁴¹⁶ Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, P. 175.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*, P. 204.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*, P. 153.

philosophy itself contains the demand for the positive.”⁴¹⁹ In essence, Schelling claims that negative philosophy is exoteric and confined by its inductive mechanics to the discursive realm; the inductive nature of negative philosophy is its greatest strength (it is needless to point out that mankind’s increasing differentiation of consciousness has produced wondrous gifts) and, yet, its inductive strength masks its weakness – the inversion (and, ultimately, the reification) of reason over being. The rectification of negative philosophy’s exoteric structure thus requires acknowledgment of its esoteric counterpart, namely, positive philosophy, to bind man to *that which is*. Were negative philosophy not counterbalanced by an affirmative encounter with being (positive philosophy), philosophy would empty of meaning and be constituted by a self-enclosed formalism.⁴²⁰ To this paper’s reading of Schellingian *metanoia*, the recognition of reason’s collapse into empty formalism triggers a moment of *aporia*, when the anagogic traveler finds himself dislocated from familiar surroundings and in ontological contradiction to the world – in the bewilderment of *aporia*, the anagogic traveler, unmoored from his accustomed context for understanding the world in reason’s collapse, is made available to an illumination (*fiat lux*) that a wisdom must be sought “*from a center outside of his own subjectivity*.”⁴²¹

“[*M*]etanoia means – first – that a man abandons the complacency of a mind which imagines itself autarchic . . . [s]econdly, the concept of *metanoia* also suggests that such a change of mind cannot be affected by a mere act of will; rather, it must come to a man as a divine gift.”⁴²²

Remember, too, that Jung quotes the “ancient motto of the mysteries: Let go of what you have;

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁰ Writes Schelling, “[w]hen the dialectic has become only form, it is this [inner dialogue that is the authentic mystery of the philosopher] conversation’s empty semblance and form” [Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, P. xxxiii].

⁴²¹ Wirth, *Schelling Now: Contemporary Readings*, P. 17 (italics in the original).

⁴²² Pieper, P. 62.

then you will receive.’ What is to be received bears the same name in modern psychology as in Plato’s: purification, *katharsis*.⁴²³ At the beginning of Hesiod’s *Theogony*, the muses deride the poets as “[s]hepherds of the wilderness, wretched things of shame, mere bellies, we know how to speak many false things as though they were true; but we know, when we will, to utter true things.”⁴²⁴ The muses thus draw a correspondence between human appetites and untruths; as this profound wisdom of ancient lineage reveals, immortal truths cannot be seen except by those who are freed of the appetites and accidentals of self – or, in Schellingian terms, freed of the particularities of *I-ness* and released into the universal. The absolute *life of life* “is necessarily unapproachable to anyone still embroiled in Being.”⁴²⁵ In the Schellingian project, the putative anagogic traveler must, to commence his journey, rid himself of the domesticating bindings of reason – God cannot be known by analytic reason. Accordingly, this desertion of reason, as will be recalled, occasions an ontological dislocation which, in the demand for epistemic certainty, prompts a receptivity to and movement toward a positive encounter with the divine in intellectual intuition. As has been said elsewhere, “[t]his very abandonment of critical sovereignty may bring him an abundance of insight, of light, of truth, of illumination as to the nature of reality which would otherwise remain completely out of his reach.”⁴²⁶ Illumination for Schelling must be a matter of spiritual insight because primordial spirit is the vivifying force to life.⁴²⁷

⁴²³ *Ibid.*, P. 61.

⁴²⁴ www.sacred-texts.com/cla/hesiod/theogony

⁴²⁵ Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, P. 25.

⁴²⁶ Pieper, P. 56.

⁴²⁷ “[S]pirituality, which has the mode of being of *psyche*, of breath, *pneuma*. When we grandly talk about the ‘psychic,’ about ‘spirituality,’ or the ‘pneumatic’ character of mind, we are doing nothing but repeating variations of the word *breath*. What is meant, then, is the ‘breath of life,’ non-corporeal and vivifying at once” [Pieper, P. 74 (italics in the original)].

Having come to the realization that negative philosophy cannot account for its own origin, the way is prepared for the anagogic traveler to seek epistemic and ontological closure in an encounter with the divine *life of life* in intellectual intuition (positive philosophy). Possible only for the hardy few, the initiatic way that lies before him is rough and untraveled by common men and demands profound and enduring sacrifice; it is to the *via contemplativa* as template for the anagogic work of the Schellingian initiate that this paper now turns.

C. The Antique Contemplative Tradition of *Askesis* and Orison

In this section, this paper shifts its attention to provide an account of the antique contemplative tradition of *askesis* and orison. As indicated in this paper's introduction and foreshadowed in the above sketch of the German Pietist movement that prevailed during Schelling's formative years, this paper claims in part that contemplative orison is revealing of the shape and substance of Schellingian intellectual intuition. Accordingly, once the reader is availed of a description of contemplative orison, this paper's account of Schellingian intellectual intuition will no longer give the impression of unfamiliarity; to this point, a persuasive line of thought is recommended to the reader's consideration that Schellingian intellectual intuition is, by intention of its author, deeply ensconced in the antique lineage of contemplative silence. Indeed, but for a handful of passages within Philosophy and Religion, nowhere in his writings does Schelling provide either rich instruction or descriptive account of the hieratic preparations and methodology required of the anagogic traveler to intellectual intuition; accordingly, this paper claims that Schelling leans on a preexisting ontological archetype to provide both structural and explanatory support for his

notion of intellectual intuition – namely, the theurgic and hieratic practices within contemplative *askesis* and orison are taken as exemplar of the Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic traditions and the mystery teachings. As earlier discussed, the Pietist movement privileges the unmediated access to the divine “beyond the reach of reason in the bedrock certainty of lived experience;”⁴²⁸ as the reader will remember, this “lived experience” is, for the Pietist anagogue, the Boehmean and Oetingerian *Zentralerkenntnis*, that modality of knowing reality “lacking the mediation of any discursive ratio or the use of images.”⁴²⁹ In order to help locate this paper’s understanding of Schellingian intellectual intuition as an instance of the Pietist *Zentralerkenntnis*, this paper argues that both the Boehmean and Oetingerian *Zentralerkenntnis* and Schellingian intellectual intuition are best appreciated as moments within the antique Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic contemplative traditions that aspire to imagelessness intuition; as such, Pietism and Schellingian intellectual intuition are in privity with the hieratic practices and virtues of contemplative *askesis*, the body of practices that prepare the anagogic traveler for higher spiritual development, and orison. Accordingly, to help develop this line of reasoning, this paper offers a brief sketch of the antique contemplative tradition through which the devout may be transported beyond the plane of ordinary consciousness and attain to an unmediated living encounter with the divine.

By his own account, Schelling seeks the return of philosophy to its ancient prominence and divine province; instructive to the reading provided by this paper, Schelling tells us:

“From Pythagoras onward, and even further back, down to Plato, philosophy conceived of itself as an exotic plant in Greek soil, and this feeling expressed itself among other places in the universal impulse leading those initiated into

⁴²⁸ Matthews, P. 43.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*, P. 47-48.

higher teachings – either through the wisdom of earlier philosophers or through the mysteries – back to the birthplace of the ideas, namely, the Orient.”⁴³⁰

Algis Uždavinys, in sympathy with Schelling’s historical exegesis of philosophy, provides insightful account of the origins of western philosophy in the Orphic-Pythagorean hieratic rites of ascent, which he, like Schelling before him, persuasively grounds in ancient Egyptian and Indian theurgical rites and practices. In support of this paper’s claim that the Schellingian project, both in its cosmological and ontological aspects, is funded by the Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic traditions, Schelling, in succinct summary of the Orphic cosmology, acknowledges his reliance on “an old, sacred doctrine;”⁴³¹ to wit:

“an old, sacred doctrine says that souls descend from the world of intellect into the sensate world, where they find themselves tethered to a physical body, as if incarcerated, as a penalty for their selfness and for offences committed prior (ideally, not temporally) to this life. While they bring along the memory of the unison and harmony of the one *true* universe, their apprehension of it is distorted by the cacophony and dissonance of the senses just as they are unable to recognize truth in what *is*, or what appears to be so, but only in what (for them) *was* and in that to which they strive to return – the life of the intellect.”⁴³²

Accordingly, the correspondence that this paper draws between the Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic traditions and the Schellingian project is consistent with the Schelling’s stated intentions and, as this paper claims throughout, with Schelling’s mythological, cosmological and ontological framing of his enterprise; so, to this paper’s reading, the Schellingian *mystagogy*, standing firmly within the ancient Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic traditions and the Hellene mystery teachings on which they, in part, draw, views philosophy as theurgic, revelatory and

⁴³⁰ Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, P. 5.

⁴³¹ Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, P. 36.

⁴³² *Ibid.*

soteriological. Conveying the notion that ancient philosophers sought transformative and salvific *epopteia* in the Dionysian realm, Uždavinys informs us:

“[t]he Greek word *philosophos* is an equivalent or even an exact translation of the Egyptian *mer rekh*, ‘lover of knowledge,’ that is, one who in pious pursuit of *gnosis*, liberating wisdom, provided by Troth⁴³³ and other gods for accomplishment of transformation and spiritual resurrection in the realm of Osiris-Ra.”⁴³⁴

“The aim of philosophical life includes an ability to live well here and now, because the noetic background of one’s very being is everywhere and the ineffable One is always immediately present.”⁴³⁵ Indeed, in the ancient Egyptian cosmology, a life well-lived in opens one to possible transformation into the Osirian⁴³⁶ realm. So, to this Orphic line of thought, we might say that learning to live presupposes learning to die.

The Orphico-Pythagorean tradition, which descended from the Egyptians and the East and was accepted and rationalized by Plato,⁴³⁷ “places its emphasis . . . on purification, concentration, unification, remembrance, separation of the soul and spiritual ascent, aimed at the mystic (*aporrhotos*) union with Dionysios (*Osiris*) and Apollo (*Horus-Ra*).”⁴³⁸ As Socrates tells us, “[w]e are in fact convinced that if we are ever to have pure knowledge of anything, we must get

⁴³³ Troth, as the Egyptian god charged with preserving and transmitting tradition, is best understood as “the principle of spiritual inspiration” [Guenon, *Traditional Forms & Cosmic Cycles*, P. 74].

⁴³⁴ Uždavinys, *Philosophy & Theurgy in Late Antiquity*, P. 15.

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*, P. 14.

⁴³⁶ The god, Osiris, is the Egyptian equivalent of Dionysus.

⁴³⁷ In support of the notion that the Platonic tradition represents a repackaging of more ancient traditions, Frithjof Bergmann levies the argument that, in his philosophical project, Plato translates the older, natural values that contain their own justification into values more suitable to the polis [see, Bergmann, *On Being Free*. University of Notre Dame Press. Notre Dame, IN (1982)].

⁴³⁸ Uždavinys, *Philosophy & Theurgy in Late Antiquity*, P. 24.

rid of the body and contemplate things by themselves with the soul by itself.”⁴³⁹ And developing the manner in which the soul is purified of bodily contamination and rehearsed for existential death, Plato prescribes contemplative *askesis*: “purification . . . consists in separating the soul as much as possible from the body, and accustoming it to withdraw from all contact with the body and concentrate itself by itself, and to have its dwelling, so far as it can, both now and in the future, alone by itself, freed from the shackles of the body.”⁴⁴⁰ With this short reading of Platonic thought in hand, it becomes evident why the true Orphic philosopher, in laboring to emancipate his soul from the body, is said to be in preparation for death; as is said elsewhere, “[f]or whoever loses his life . . . will save it.”⁴⁴¹

Jonathon Shear, in his remarkable book, The Inner Dimension, reads the Platonic dialogues as identifying and recommending the employment of a special faculty, a “higher,” intuitive dialectic,⁴⁴² in order to elicit immediate knowledge of the transcendental forms. While this paper cannot hope to recapitulate the entirety of Shear’s argument, certain of Shear’s claims will be highlighted in order to support the operating thesis of this paper.

⁴³⁹ Plato, *Phaedo*, 66 d. Quoting Socrates at length, we read the following passage: “So as long as we keep to the body and our soul contaminated with this imperfection, there is no chance of our ever attaining satisfactorily to our object, which we assert to be the truth. In the first place, the body provides us with innumerable distractions in the pursuit of our necessary sustenance, and any diseases which attack us hinder our quest for reality. Besides, the body fills us with loves and desires and fears and all sorts of fancies and a great deal of nonsense, with the result that we literally never get an opportunity to think at all about anything. Wars and revolutions and battles are due simply and solely to the body and desires. All wars are undertaken for the acquisition of wealth, and the reason why we have to acquire wealth is the body, because we are slaves to its service” [Ibid., *Phaedo*, 66 b – c].

⁴⁴⁰ Plato, *Phaedo*, 67 c. Along similar lines, we note that “[t]hose who have chosen the Quest, the road that leads to the Center, must abandon any kind of family and social situation, any ‘nest,’ and devote themselves wholly to ‘walking’ toward the supreme truth, which, in highly evolved religions, is synonymous with the Hidden God, the *Deus absconditus*” [Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, P. 184].

⁴⁴¹ Holy Bible, *Mark* 8:35.

⁴⁴² The lower form of “[d]ialectic is, after all, nothing but the use or practical application of logic” [Guénon, Initiation and Spiritual Realization, P. 8].

In the well-known passage from *Republic* known as “the Divided Line,” the Platonic four-tiered ontological and epistemological structure is concisely set forth. Socrates instructs Glaucon to draw a line bifurcating an area and to then again partition both areas, giving four sections in total. These four sections together represent the Platonic ontological hierarchy, which, taken from highest to lowest, are (1) something called the ‘Forms,’ supposed to be innately known universal archetypes, (2) objects of thought, especially those of mathematics and deductive reasoning, (3) physical objects, and (4) the shadows, reflections, and other insubstantial, ‘unreal’ objects.”⁴⁴³ Socrates then tells us that:

“answering to these four sections, assume these four sections occurring in the soul – intellection or reason for the highest, understanding for the second, belief for the third, for the last, picture thinking or conjecture.”⁴⁴⁴

We are well-acquainted with the illusory perceptions, the sense perceptions and the analytic thinking that comprise the faculties of the lower three hierarchical levels. However, the type of faculty, “intellection or reason,” associated with the highest level is elusive to common understanding. *The Republic*, in Shear’s compelling account, identifies the “‘dialectic,’ [as] the special faculty that is supposed to produce knowledge of the Forms, distinguishing it emphatically from all the mental facilities we are familiar with.”⁴⁴⁵ The conventional understanding of the Socratic *maieutic* is that the dialectic is a form of elenchus, that is, a cooperative form of argumentation and logical refutation intending to stimulate thought and reveal weaknesses with the common objective of truth in mind. Shear does not discount this

⁴⁴³ Shear, *The Inner Dimension*, P. 12 [in Shear’s account, these appear in inverted order].

⁴⁴⁴ Plato, *The Republic*, 511:d.

⁴⁴⁵ Shear, *The Inner Dimension*, P. 13.

notion of dialectic and its employ in the Platonic dialogues; however, he identifies another, little understood sense of the Socratic dialectic that implies direct experience and has nothing in common with the usual Socratic question and answer elenchus. We turn to Shear's own words for assistance:

“The dialectic, according to Plato's account in the *Republic*, in fact is so different from what we today call ‘reasoning’ (as, for example, that characteristic of mathematics and physics) that he describes it as:

- (a) turning the mind in *the opposite direction*,
- (b) employing a *different faculty*,
- (c) having *different objects* (as different as solid objects from shadows and reflections); and
- (d) producing a *different kind of knowledge*, a knowledge so different that it is likened to the difference between *different states of consciousness*, waking and dreaming.”⁴⁴⁶

Returning to the dialogue, Socrates tells Glaucon that “all this procedure of the arts and sciences that we have described indicates their power to lead the best parts of the soul up to the contemplation of what is best among realities.”⁴⁴⁷ Bewildered, Glaucon asks Socrates, “Tell me, then, what is the nature of this faculty of dialectic? Into what divisions does it fall? And what are its ways? For it is these, it seems to me that would bring us to the place where we may, so to speak, rest on the road and then come to the end of our journeying.”⁴⁴⁸ Indicating that “the dialectic is something radically different from the kind of discursive, philosophical reasoning that occupied the preceding pages of the *Republic*,”⁴⁴⁹ Socrates responds “You will not be able,

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Pp. 13 – 14 [italics in original].

⁴⁴⁷ Plato, *The Republic*, 532:d.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, *The Republic*, 532:e. The reader is urged to note that Glaucon intimates the twin notions of anagogic journeying and ultimate repose, which this paper will understand as Schellingian indifference, in his questions to Socrates.

⁴⁴⁹ Shear, *The Inner Dimension*, P. 15.

dear Glaucon, to follow me further, though for my part there will be no lack of good will. And, if I would show you, *no longer an image and symbol of my meaning, but the very truth, as it appears to me.*⁴⁵⁰ Indeed, Socrates, in his elliptical response, betrays the underpinnings of his thought in the Orphico-Pythagorean tradition and the Hellenic mystery teachings; in part, Socrates indicates to Glaucon that the way, because it is deeply experiential, cannot be shown discursively but must be lived singularly and profoundly. And in other part, Socrates offers the gentle revelation in this exchange that “the very truth as it appears to me”⁴⁵¹ lies beyond image and symbol in an unmediated encounter with the divine. As this paper hopes to later persuade the reader, the thematics surrounding Schellingian intellectual intuition and its demand for an experiential *positive* and unmediated encounter with the divine *life of life* are disclosed in this Socratic exchange. According to Shear’s account, “Plato indicated repeatedly that the dialectic, his procedure for gaining transcendental knowledge and insight, had an essential experiential component and was contrasted sharply with discussion and reason – involving different faculty, having different objects, leading the mind in an ‘opposite’ direction, and producing a radically different kind of knowledge.”⁴⁵² Supportive of Shear’s reading and further drawing out this distinction between negative and positive philosophy, we read from Uždavinys:

“Human learning may be contrasted to the divine omniscience as discursive reasoning is to Neoplatonic intellection (*noesis*). The first is a sort of dialectic which uses classifying division and collection, and strives for rational ‘scientific knowledge’; the second a kind of non-discursive dialectic which rules out not

⁴⁵⁰ Plato, *The Republic*, 533:a (italics added).

⁴⁵¹ Ibid.

⁴⁵² Shear, *The Inner Dimension*, P. 31. Further supporting this reading, it is noted that “[f]or Plotinus, it is dialectic which constitutes the contemplative path upward to Intellect. . . . Since wisdom (*Sophia*) is an intellectual, purificatory, and anagogic activity which turns away from the things below, the dialectical wisdom (or the science of the dialectic) enables the soul, when it is purified, to become an *eidos* belonging to the plenitude of God” [Uždavinys, *Philosophy & Theurgy*, P. 47].

only transition from subject to predicate, but even language itself, and which noetically contemplates and apprehends all that is as a *totum simul*.⁴⁵³

To this reading, Plato discriminates two phases of the “dialectic;” the initial phase, which is “closely associated with disputation and discovery of contradictions,”⁴⁵⁴ is akin to Schellingian negative philosophy, and the later phase of the dialectic, akin to Schellingian positive philosophy, “was to enable the most successful students to ‘turn upward the vision of their souls and fix their gaze on that which sheds light on all . . . [and behold] the good itself.’”⁴⁵⁵

Accordingly, this paper claims that the Schellingian notions of negative and positive philosophy, respectively, vehicle the two phases of the Platonic dialectic within Schelling’s greater *mystagogy*. Given this Platonic lens and in an effort to shed light on Schelling’s notion of positive philosophy as experiential theurgy, this paper turns to the telestric work of contemplative *askesis* and orison.

The contemplative tradition, as practiced and known previously by the Greeks as *theoria*,⁴⁵⁶ and implying “a viewing with the mind or contemplation,”⁴⁵⁷ and as prevailed during the initial fifteen centuries of the early Christian church, holds “that contemplation is the normal evolution

⁴⁵³ Uždavinys, Orpheus and the Roots of Platonism, P. 76 (underline added).

⁴⁵⁴ Shear, The Inner Dimension, P. 19.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid., quoting *The Republic*, 540:a.

⁴⁵⁶ The last and highest level of spiritual education asserted by Plato within *The Republic*; “[w]e shall require them to turn upward the vision of their souls and fix their gaze on that which sheds light on all” [Plato, *Republic*, Book VII, 540 a]. We might read, too, from *Phaedo*, “[b]ut when it [the soul] investigates by itself, it passes into the realm of the pure and everlasting and immortal and changeless, and being of a kindred nature, when it is once independent and free from interference, consorts with it always and strays no longer, but remains in that realm of the absolute, constant and invariable, through contact with beings of a similar nature. And this condition of the soul we call wisdom” [Plato, *Phaedo*, 79 d].

⁴⁵⁷ Uždavinys, Philosophy & Theurgy in Late Antiquity, P. 25. “Let us remember that the Greek word *theoria* initially meant contemplation of the gods at their festivals, before it started to mean the beholding of the well-ordered Pythagorean cosmos or the Platonic Ideas” [Uždavinys, Orpheus and the Roots of Platonism, P. 21].

of a genuinely spiritual life and hence is open to all;”⁴⁵⁸ this notwithstanding, the contemplative life demands certain natural qualifications and, importantly to this paper’s later claims, a spiritual discipline in order to attain to metaphysical realizations. Indeed, as will emerge, the act of contemplation is rightly understood as an intentional passage from one ontological plane to another. “No wonder that philosophy, as enterprise of raising (*anagein*) the soul to the level of the divine *eidos* and uniting (*sunagein*) it to the divine, is . . . tantamount to prayer.”⁴⁵⁹ As will emerge, contemplative orison (*theoria*) within the Platonic tradition is an initiation into the terrestrial or primordial state and, once attained by those anagogic travelers of uncommon qualities, a higher initiation into the celestial, supra-human realms. The contemplative, yielding to the non-discursive reason, engages in a disciplined practice of *askesis* and orison in the hope of opening himself to spiritual influences; accordingly, this paper understands contemplative *askesis* and orison as theurgy insofar as it both motivates the movement toward the divine and opens one to spiritual influences from the divine. Indeed, similar to Uždavinys’ apprehension of the non-discursive Platonic dialectic which may be imagined as “a dialogue between ‘the-one-who-loves-knowledge,’ and a deity, ‘He-who-praises-knowledge (and, in fact, reveals knowledge),”⁴⁶⁰ contemplative *askesis* may be likened to the acquired receptivity to the divine voice – silence. This theurgic movement of a non-discursive dialectic makes available *theoria*:

“This *theoria* or vision (analogous to the Eleusinian *epopteia*) refers to something inner, immediate, comprehensive, experiential and supra-rational: it will not take the form of an argument or proposition in their usual technical sense. Platonic

⁴⁵⁸ Keating, *Open Mind Open Heart*, P. 26.

⁴⁵⁹ Uždavinys, *Philosophy & Theurgy in Late Antiquity*, P. 25. “He used to say that when the soul is in holy prayer (*en tais hierais euchais*) facing the mighty ocean of the divine, at first, disengaged from the body, it concentrates on itself; then it abandons its own habits, withdrawing from logical into intuitive thinking (*apo tton logikon ennoion epitas to no sungeneis*); finally, at a third stage, it is possessed by the divine and drifts into an extraordinary serenity befitting gods rather than men” [*Ibid.*, quoting Phil. Hist. 22].

⁴⁶⁰ Uždavinys, *Orpheus and the Roots of Platonism*, P. 74.

theoria is more related to the realm of sacred liturgies and mysticism, because its gaze is synthetic rather than analytic, inclusive and integrative rather than exclusive and scattering.”⁴⁶¹

Traditionally, the practice of contemplative *askesis* and orison is understood as the vehicle by which descent is made by the anagogic traveler to the primordial state.

“We will say only that this descent is on the one hand a sort of recapitulation of the states that logically precede the human state and that have determined its particular conditions, and that must also partake in the ‘transformation’ that is to be accomplished; on the other hand, the descent allows the manifestation according to certain modalities of the possibilities of an inferior order that the being still carries in an undeveloped state, and that must be exhausted before it is possible to attain the realization of the superior states.”⁴⁶²

Needlessly to say, the anagogic wayfarer does not literally revisit those earlier states; rather, he can only “become aware of the traces they have left”⁴⁶³ and, as such, bring these “demons” into consciousness.⁴⁶⁴ Otherwise unconscious psychic energies may only be identified and integrated into the personality once they are revealed to the consciousness. Accordingly, to this understanding, the traveler in anagogic descent to the primordial state is required to recapitulate the intermediary human states by recollecting their traces into consciousness and then discarding these same recollections. Ultimately, the success of the anagogic transport is determined not only by the reclamation of these earlier states but by the traveler’s conscious detachment from them;

⁴⁶¹ Uždavinys, *Philosophy & Theurgy in Late Antiquity*, P. 27.

⁴⁶² Guénon, *The Esoterism of Dante*, P. 33.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁴ In an interesting passage, and profoundly reflective and expressive of the Schellingian enterprise that funds this paper, Marie-Louise von Franz writes, “[I]f we could see through all our projections down to the last traces, our personality would extend to the cosmic dimensions” [von Franz, *Projection and Recollection in Jungian Psychology*, P. 14].

the anagogic traveler must detach himself from these physic traces in order to sufficiently purify himself for noetic union with the supreme principle in intellectual intuition.

To envision Schelling's thinking, the reader might remember that, in traditionalism, the conscious acquisition of a heavenly state demands first a descent into the hellish: the Christian tradition speaks of Jesus' descent into Hell prior to his resurrection and the Islamic tradition speaks of Mohammed's nocturnal flight "consisting of descent into the infernal regions (*isra*), followed by ascension to the various paradises or celestial spheres (*mir-aj*)."⁴⁶⁵ As Schelling writes, "in philosophy, as in Dante's poem, the path toward heaven leads through the abyss [*Abgrund*]."⁴⁶⁶ Hell is understood by traditionalist thought to be in the centermost of the earth⁴⁶⁷ and, as such, would represent the full extension of the terrestrial dimension. Writes Guénon:

"The center of the earth thus represents the extreme point of manifestation in the state of existence under consideration; it is a true stopping point, from which a change of direction occurs, the preponderance passing from one to the other of the contrary tendencies. This is why an ascent or return toward the principle commences immediately following upon a descent to the bottom of Hell."⁴⁶⁸

To this way of thinking, the hellish represents the recapitulation of all the human states "that must be exhausted before it is possible to attain the realization of the superior states."⁴⁶⁹ To envision Schelling's thinking geometrically, it helps to recall that Schelling identifies the center

⁴⁶⁵ Guénon, The Esoterism of Dante, P. 27.

⁴⁶⁶ Schelling, Philosophy and Religion, P. 31.

⁴⁶⁷ "[T]his is why Hell is represented symbolically as situated in the interior of the earth" [Guenon, The Esotericism of Dante, P. 33].

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid., P. 52.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid.

of the sphere as the primordial state of the *life of life* and the sphere's periphery as manifest reality. Accordingly, the anagogic wayfarer descends (recapitulates the terrestrial plane) from the periphery to the "innermost beginning," the primordial state, located at the center of the sphere. Once attained to the center in intellectual intuition, the anagogic traveler, if he is to attain the celestial realm of unitive knowledge of the *life of life*, must ascend. After all, "[t]he center of the earth represents the extreme state of existence . . . from which a change of direction occurs."⁴⁷⁰

As intimated above, contemplative orison might be described as a unique form of prayer. As the reader will have observed, this paper employs the term *orison* rather than prayer so as to avoid conflating any conventional understandings implied by the term *prayer* with contemplative or meditative practice. In contrast to conventional prayer, contemplative orison is neither a petition of God nor an interpleading on behalf of another; moreover, contemplative orison is neither an expiation nor a penance. Rather, contemplative orison, as will emerge, is nothing more or less than the detachment from all thoughts and mental images in favor of a wakeful stillness of mind. And, given the contingent nature of the human condition, this detachment is extraordinarily difficult for the practitioner to achieve. As will shortly emerge, the *sine qua non* of contemplative orison is an intentional cognitive passivity denoted by yieldingness (*Gelassenheit*), which is understood as a release from unconscious projections and cognitive activity; importantly to our purposes, we will come to see that contemplative orison discloses an ontological state synonymous with the *nicht denkendes Denken* of Schellingian intellectual intuition. Accordingly, in contemplative orison, the anagogic traveler empties himself of all things profane so as to become present to the sacred and inexpressible *nothing*; insofar as he

⁴⁷⁰ Guénon, The Esoterism of Dante, P. 52.

solely attends to the sacred in the simple presence of quiet,⁴⁷¹ a contemplative would claim that his devotion to divine *nothingness* is the highest form of worship. Indeed, for the contemplative, we might rightfully say that the *hieros logos* is silence.

In contemplation, the anagogic traveler attends to the divine mystery, which, because it is inexpressible, can only be confronted in silence. It is to be remembered that the word, mystery, derives from the Greek root *mu* which represents a “closed mouth and hence silence.”⁴⁷² And the divine realm, given its non-human composition, is supra-individual and supra-rational and, accordingly, beyond human expression. As the divine is non-human, the anagogic traveler must break from the multiplicity of sensible reality; as the divine is supra-rational and inexpressible, he may only approach the ontological dimension of the divine in simple contemplative silence.⁴⁷³

To attain to this simple presence before the divine, all traditions claim that the contemplative must withdraw his attentions, both those conscious and unconscious, from the external world and turn inward; as has been said elsewhere, “the Kingdom of God is in the midst of you.”⁴⁷⁴ The commencement of the contemplative *askesis* always calls for a decision by the anagogic traveler

⁴⁷¹ Quiet is the “intellectual complement and expression of the moral state of humility and receptivity: the very condition, says Eckhart, of the New Birth. ‘It may be asked whether this Birth is best accomplished in Man when he does the work and forms and thinks himself into God, or when he keeps himself in silence, stillness and peace, so that God may speak and work in him. . . .’ [Underhill, *Mysticism*, P. 319].

⁴⁷² Guénon, *Perspectives on Initiation*, P. 118. Interestingly, *muthos*, or myth, shares a similar kinship to the root *mu*. In effect, myth, struggling to give voice to the inexpressible “non-human” hyperborean realm, tries to provide a presentiment of the inexpressible through analogies accessible to the human plane of consciousness. Accordingly, “we could say that one keeps silent in the very act of speaking, and that it is from this that myth draws its name” [*Ibid.*, P. 120].

⁴⁷³ In Greek, “a consecrated place is called a *templum*, of which the root *tem* (found in the Greek *temno*, ‘to cut off from’, ‘to separate’, from which *temenos*, ‘a sacred enclosure’, is derived) also expresses the same idea, and ‘contemplation’, derived from the same root, is again related to this idea by its strictly inward character” [Guenon, *Perspectives on Initiation*, P. 122]. Also to note, “the close similarity between the words ‘sacred’ (*sacratum*) and ‘secret’ (*secretum*) is not simply coincidence; both involve something ‘put aside’ (*secernere*, ‘to place apart’, from which is derived the participle *secretum*) ‘reserved’, separated from the profane realm” [*Ibid.*].

⁴⁷⁴ *Holy Bible*, *Luke* 17:21.

and, accordingly, ought to be understood as an act of heroic self-mastery. For this reason, contemplative *askesis* and orison are understood as an initiatic and theurgic movement toward the divine and wholly other than a form of mysticism. “The contemplation of spirit, as it seems to those who practice it, requires a deliberate refusal of the messages of the senses, which is understood as an ingoing or ‘introversion’ of our faculties, a ‘journey to the centre.’”⁴⁷⁵

In A.K. Coomaraswamy’s notion of intellectual metamorphosis, there is implied:

“both a ‘gathering’ or concentration of the powers of the being, and a certain ‘return’ by which the being passes from ‘human thought’ to ‘divine comprehension.’ Metanoia or ‘conversion’ is therefore the conscious passage of the ordinary and individual mind, normally turned toward sensible things, to its superior transposition, where it is identified with the hegemon of Plato.”⁴⁷⁶

While a withdrawal of attention from outward things is rightly associated with a conscious shift inward and the intentional activity of detachment, we must also remember that, more challengingly, the withdrawal of attention applies to the release of unconscious projections. Here, Jung emphasizes that the paladin virtues of “common sense, reflection and self-knowledge are the only ways of clearing away unconscious contents.”⁴⁷⁷ Considerable moral effort is demanded of the anagogic traveler to recollect those parts of himself that have been scattered about in unconscious projections and to unify them – as has been said elsewhere, the flight of the anagogic traveler may only be taken from the alone to the alone.⁴⁷⁸ So the anagogic traveler must

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, P. 302. “It is natural that all askesis, or any rule of life directed to a spiritual goal, appears in the eyes of the ‘worldly’ to be clothed with an appearance of austerity, even if it in no way implies the idea of suffering, and quite simply because it is bound to dismiss or neglect things that they themselves regard as the most important, if not even wholly essential, to human life, the pursuit of which fills their entire existence” [Guenon, *Initiation and Spiritual Realization*, P. 100].

⁴⁷⁶ Guénon, *Initiation & Spiritual Realization*, P. 61.

⁴⁷⁷ von Franz, *Projection and Re-collection in Jungian Psychology*, P. 161.

⁴⁷⁸ Underhill, *Mysticism*, P. 300.

recollect himself into one by mortification of his multiplicity. The Orphic myth⁴⁷⁹ of Dionysus is the “central metaphysical axis of all Platonic theology and dialectic.”⁴⁸⁰ It will be remembered that the Orphic Dionysus is rent asunder by the Titans and scattered about.⁴⁸¹ When fragmented into multiplicity, “we are Titans, but when we recover that lost unity, we become Dionysus and we attain to what can be truly called completeness.”⁴⁸² Accordingly, “[t]he final goal for the

⁴⁷⁹ As Ernst Cassirer tells us, “[w]e cannot reduce myth to certain static elements; we must strive to grasp it in its inner life, in its mobility and versatility, in its dynamic principle” [Cassirer, P. 76]. Understood in this manner, myth is reflective of the primitive mind – embodying a synthetic rather than analytical view of life. Like the Schellingian *Weltanschauung*, “[t]he world of myth is a dynamic world – a living world of actions, of forces, of conflicting powers. In every phenomenon of nature, it sees a collision of these powers” [*Ibid.*]. Because the primitive mind expresses itself in literal and immediate terms, Cassirer understands myth to be populated by physiognomic characters. A similar narrative runs through Schellingian thought; for him, the “gods of any mythology are nothing other than the ideas of philosophy intuited objectively or concretely” [Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, P. 17]. Accordingly, only those ideas that are “real, living and existing ideas are gods” [*Ibid.*]; and, as Jungian thought tells us, all else is but withered projection. “When an order thus created no longer corresponds to the way things behave, it is then recognized as a projection, but until this occurs it appears to us simply as ‘true knowledge’” [von Franz, *Projection and Re-collection in Jungian Psychology*, P. 74]. To this point, in his *Historical-critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*, Schelling anticipates this Jungian notion; because mythology “was only able to be produced in life itself . . . and had to be *lived* and *experienced*” [P. 89] and, as such, “the gods are actually existing essences” [P. 136], Schelling writes that “it is unthinkable that a people – would be without a mythology” [P. 48], and, accordingly, a mythology is only known in hindsight after it has been succeeded in consciousness by other gods.

⁴⁸⁰ Uzdavinys, *Philosophy & Theurgy in Late Antiquity*, P. 58. As argued throughout this paper, the Schellingian *life of life* bears remarkable resemblance to the visage of Dionysus, the mad god of Greek antiquity. Like Dionysus, Persephone also identifies *zoë*, the ever-generative life force, with “a godlike human face” [Kerenyi, *Eleusis*, P. 144]. As such, the myth of Dionysus is particularly suited to the thought of Schelling. We remind the reader that, for Schelling, mankind, uniquely among all creatures, is a creature of the Centrum and poured from the very source of all things. Indeed, Schelling explicitly recognizes the irrational principle, the “divine and holy madness” [Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, P. 102.] of Dionysus, as “the personality of God” [*Ibid.*, P. 107]. For his part, Otto instructs us that “[t]he visage of every true god is a visage of a world” [Otto, Walter, P. 136]. Accordingly, “there can be a god who is mad only if there is a mad world which reveals itself through him” [*Ibid.*]. This paper claims that of Myth of the birth of Dionysus is revealing of Schellingian intellectual intuition; this myth is, as Otto notes, “the most sublime expression of his Being” [Otto, Walter, P. 73]. Given that each facet of human experience has a claim to reality, the myth of Dionysus’ birth might be understood as a phenomenological and psychological account, albeit reduced by the mythopoeic mind to the concrete image of divine visitation, of that startling moment of intellectual intuition into the *fons et origio* of reality. This correspondence adds to this paper’s claims that Schelling’s notion of intellectual intuition is in accordance with a robust and ancient mythological and contemplative lineage.

⁴⁸¹ In another myth that describes the same dispersion of the one into the many: “[w]hen Dionysus had projected his reflection into the mirror, he followed it and was thus scattered over the universe” [*Ibid.*, P. 61].

⁴⁸² *Ibid.*, quoting Damascius. “Myth is a directing of the mind and heart, by means of profoundly informed figurations, to that ultimate mystery which fills and surrounds all existence” [Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, P. 228].

contemplative philosopher is to remember and rediscover Dionysus in himself, the Monad united with the superior principles.”⁴⁸³

Simplicity, as discussed above, characterizes the *life of life* and, accordingly, the anagogic traveler’s reversion to the primordial state likewise demands that he attain to simplicity. As stated elsewhere, “whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.”⁴⁸⁴ In the Gospels, simplicity and childhood are synonymous with spiritual poverty; Matthew 5:3 reminds us: “[b]lessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”⁴⁸⁵ If spiritual poverty is the realization of one’s complete dependence on the divine, outside of which nothing exists, then the anagogic traveler who has attained consciousness of this dependence detaches from all manifested things “for thenceforward the being knows that these things too are nothing, and that their importance is strictly nothing with respect to absolute Reality.”⁴⁸⁶

Guidance from another tradition carries a similar refrain:

“According to Islamic esotericism, this ‘poverty’ (in Arabic, *al-faqr*) leads to *al-fanā*, that is, to the ‘extinction’ of the ego [*moi*]; and by this ‘extinction’ once attains the ‘divine station’ (*al-maqām-ilāhi*), which is the central point where all distinctions inherent in outward points of view are surpassed, where all oppositions have disappeared and are resolved in a perfect equilibrium.”⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸³ *Ibid.*, P. 60. In Platonic thought, a similar pattern prevails: “[s]ince the embodied soul is ‘dismembered’ and ‘scattered’ like Osiris, its recollection, restoration and ascent to the One by means of Nous is related to the soul’s going ‘out of its mind drunk with the nectar’, as Plotinus would say (*Enn.* VI.7.35.25-26), that is, out of its discursive *logismos*. Therefore, Shaw concludes that rational thinking for Plato ‘has a purely cathartic function’, because the soul’s purification and the subsequent restoration of its lost divinity ‘was the way of Platonic *paideia*, and while a well-exercised skill in rational analysis was necessary to strip the soul of false beliefs, it could never awaken it to its innate dignity” [Uždavinys, *Orpheus and the Roots of Platonism*, P. 77].

⁴⁸⁴ *Holy Bible*, *Mark* 10:15. Instructive too for the purposes of this paper, we may read from the Gospel of Thomas, “Jesus said, ‘When you strip without being ashamed and you take your clothes and put them under your feet like little children and trample them, then [you] will see the child of the living one and you will not be afraid’” [Meyer, P. 39].

⁴⁸⁵ *Holy Bible*, *Matthew* 5:3.

⁴⁸⁶ Guénon, *Insights into Islamic Esoterism & Taoism*, P. 18.

⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, P. 20.

“‘Self recollection,’ writes Jung, ‘is a gathering together of the self.’”⁴⁸⁸ As the reader might imagine, unconscious projections are typically animated by emotions. Accordingly, recollection of an unconscious projection requires an identification of its emotional funding. Once the emotion invigorating an unconscious projection is identified, its emotional strength dissipates and the previously untamed unconscious projection is reduced to the order of consciousness permitting its willful release; it might be said that the emotion detaches from the projection, thereby releasing the anagogue from the projection’s enchantment. “The usual bond of feelings . . . always contain projections that have to be withdrawn if one is to attain to oneself and to objectivity.”⁴⁸⁹ Accordingly, conscious and unconscious detachment⁴⁹⁰ are touchstones to successful contemplative *askesis* and orison. As we see, the contemplative experience obligates the anagogue to an ascetic practice; ultimately, the anagogue either dies to the self or dies to the quest. As Underhill tells us:

“Recollection and quiet lead up to it. Contemplation cannot take place without it. All the mystics assure us that a unification of consciousness, in which all outward things are forgotten,⁴⁹¹ is the necessary prelude of union with the Divine.”⁴⁹²

⁴⁸⁸ von Franz, Projection and Re-collection in Jungian Psychology, P. 169.

⁴⁸⁹ von Franz, Projection and Re-Collection in Jungian Psychology, P. 177.

⁴⁹⁰ “[A]n interior fire must consume what the Kahlalists would call the ‘shells’ that is to say it must in effect destroy everything within us that is an obstacle to spiritual realization” [Guenon, Initiation and Spiritual Realization, P. 102].

⁴⁹¹ Meister Eckhart tells us, “[t]he first is ‘shed everything which is yours and take possession of God, then God will belong to you as he belongs to himself, and he will be your God, as he is his own God, no less” [Eckhart, P. 127].

⁴⁹² Underhill, Mysticism, P. 364. “‘We must,’ says Dionysius the Areopagite, ‘be transported wholly out of ourselves and given unto God.’ This is the ‘passive union’ of Contemplation: a temporary condition in which the subject receives a double conviction of ineffable happiness and ultimate reality” [Underhill, Mysticism, P. 333].

Thus, introversion⁴⁹³ asks for the return to a stillness of mind, a recollection, by which is intended “a voluntary concentration . . . or gathering in of the attention of the self to its most hidden cell”⁴⁹⁴ from its dispersed interests – an inward turn implies that “the ‘world’ must be overcome and hence the struggle with the passions that fetter man to the ‘world.’”⁴⁹⁵ So this is the price of the contemplative experience: “a stilling of that surface mind, a calling in of all of our scattered interests: an entire giving of ourselves to this one activity [of orison], without self-consciousness, without reflective thought.”⁴⁹⁶

Similar to Schelling’s claim that an original dissonance attaches to finite being and human symbolic understanding, the contemplative holds that “to reflect is always to distort: our minds are not good mirrors.”⁴⁹⁷ Accordingly, contemplative orison insists on detachment from all thought. So understood, contemplative prayer “has nothing in common with petition. It is not articulate; it has no forms.”⁴⁹⁸ Rather, the orison of the contemplative, “is internal silence”⁴⁹⁹ and, according “to Evagrius, ‘is the laying aside of thoughts.’”⁵⁰⁰ In keeping with this contemplative tradition, Boehme too advocates the devoted to attain to an imageless dimension that exists between thoughts; the Boehmean imagery calls on contemplatives to “swing yourselves up for a moment into that in which no creature dwells.”⁵⁰¹ The “that in which no

⁴⁹³ “The whole of this process, this gathering up and turning ‘inwards’ of the powers of the self, this gazing into the ground of the soul, is that which is called introversion” [*Ibid.*, P. 303].

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, P. 314.

⁴⁹⁵ Berdyaev, P. 161.

⁴⁹⁶ Underhill, *Mysticism*, P. 302.

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, P. 302.

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, P. 306.

⁴⁹⁹ Keating, *Open Mind Open Heart*, P. 14.

⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰¹ Boehme, P. 33 [*italics added*].

creature dwells” is an ineffable darkness absent “mental activities such as thought, imagination, and feeling.”⁵⁰² Admonishing the anagogic traveler to ascetic discipline, Boehme writes:

“Therefore, it is necessary for the children of God to know what they are to do with themselves if they wish to learn the way of God. *They must shatter and cast away their thoughts, and wish to desire nothing and to learn nothing. Then they will experience themselves in true nothingness.*”⁵⁰³

Concordantly with Schelling’s cosmological architecture, Boehme maintains that if one is successful in yielding⁵⁰⁴ to imagelessness, “you are what God was before nature and creatureliness.”⁵⁰⁵ He writes, “[i]f you forsake the world, you will come into that from which the world was made.”⁵⁰⁶ Accordingly, the true end of orison is union with the divine. As we read in a lovely passage from Underhill:

The essence of orison “is a progressive cleaning of the mirror, a progressive self-emptying of all that is not real: the attainment of that unified state of consciousness which will permit a pure, imageless apprehension of the final Reality which ‘hath no image’ to be received by the self. ‘Naked orison,’ ‘emptiness,’ ‘nothingness,’ ‘entire surrender,’ ‘peaceful love in life naughted,’ say the mystics again and again.”⁵⁰⁷

In the lighting flash of intellectual intuition, as an instance of *metanoia*, the illusory nature of phenomenal reality is revealed and real is encountered; as the *Qur’an* reminds us “everything

⁵⁰² *Ibid.*, P. 29.

⁵⁰³ *Ibid.*, P. 107.

⁵⁰⁴ *Gelassenheit* or yieldingness has a long history within German mystical tradition; it “connotes equanimity, inner calm, and serenity” [Boehme, P. 30].

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, P. 30.

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, P. 34.

⁵⁰⁷ Underhill, *Mysticism*, P. 308.

will perish save His Countenance.”⁵⁰⁸ The anagogic traveler, however, is not of sufficient constitution to withstand the holy outpouring of the divine for more than an instant. As Underhill tells us, the

“It is a brief act. The greatest of the contemplatives have been unable to sustain the brilliance of this awful vision for more than a little while. ‘A flash,’ ‘an instant,’ the space of an Ave Maria,’ they say. ‘My mind,’ says St. Augustine, in his account of his first purely contemplative glimpse of the One Reality, ‘withdrew its thoughts from experience, extracting itself from the contradictory throng of sensuous images, that it might find out what that light was wherein it was bathed . . . And thus, with the flash of one hurried glance, it attained to the vision of *That Which Is*.”⁵⁰⁹

While negative in technique, the self-naughting introversion of the contemplative might be said to be positive in content insofar as it constitutes an *askesis* to the divine.⁵¹⁰ In harmony with the contemplative account that we are assembling, Schelling identifies the true philosophic life with spiritual asceticism; he writes:

“The first preparation for attaining the highest truth can only be the negative; it consists in the weakening and, wherever possible, the extinction of sensate effects and anything that disturbs the placid and moral organization of the soul.”⁵¹¹

⁵⁰⁸ Qur’an 28:88.

⁵⁰⁹ Underhill, *Mysticism*, P. 331 [italics in original].

⁵¹⁰ In similar fashion, we may read a passage from Henry Corbin, who, in discussing *mundus imaginalis*, writes: “when [the *mundus imaginalis*] is separated from this world it can continue to avail itself of active imagination. By means of its own essence and this faculty, the soul is thereby capable of perceiving concrete things who existence, as actualized in knowledge (cognition) and in imagination, constitutes *eo ipso* the very concrete existential forms of these things. In other words, consciousness and its object are ontologically inseparable here. After this separation all the soul’s powers are assembled and concentrated in the sole faculty of active imagination. Because at that time imaginative perception ceases to be scattered across the various thresholds of the physical body’s five senses, and because it is no longer required for the care of the physical body, which is exposed to the vicissitudes of the external world, imaginative perception can finally display its true superiority over sense perception” [Corbin, P. 9].

⁵¹¹ Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, P. 54.

Again, consistently with the contemplative tradition and most startlingly emphatic and pointedly to our purposes, Schelling tells us:

“hence it is also the intention of philosophy in relation to man not to add anything but to remove from him, as thoroughly as possible, the accidentals that the body, the world of appearances, and the sensate life have added and to lead him back to the originary state [*Ursprüngliche*]. Furthermore, all instruction in philosophy that precedes this cognition can only be negative; it shows the nullity of all finite oppositions and leads the soul indirectly to the perception of the infinite. Once there, it is no longer in need of those makeshift devices [*Behelfe*] of negative descriptions of absoluteness and sets itself free of them.”⁵¹²

Schelling repeatedly asserts that “only by surrendering its selfness and returning to its ideal oneness will [the anagogic traveler] once again arrive at intuiting the divine and producing absoluteness.”⁵¹³ As Augustine describes his moment of metaphysical insight, “[m]y soul went on and in the *twinkling of an eye* (I Cor. 15:52) attained to *that which is*.”⁵¹⁴ As *ekstasis* to thought, these encounters with the divine *that which is* are always left un-described by the anagogic travelers. Although these encounters with the *life of life* do not provide knowledge *ens rationis*, it cannot be concluded that these encounters provide no epistemological assistance. Foreshadowing of our discussion of negative and positive philosophies, we will learn that Schelling contrasts *an-sich* essence or *whatness* (“what something is”⁵¹⁵) and phenomenal *thatness* (“that it exists”⁵¹⁶). “[T]he essence, logical structure or ‘whatness’ (*Was*) of the universe – and even of God himself – is, in principle, a bare possibility, which could either exist

⁵¹² *Ibid.*, P. 15 [italics added].

⁵¹³ *Ibid.*, P. 33.

⁵¹⁴ Augustine, P. 153 [italics added].

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*, P. 159.

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.*

or not exist.”⁵¹⁷ In contrast, *thatness* is “the transcendent cause of existence and therefore standing at the pinnacle of the universal chain of being,”⁵¹⁸

We will come to see that, for Schelling, being cannot be reduced to discursive reason; while discursive reason requires a predicate, no predicate attaches to the *life of life*. Indeed, because the Absolute *prius* is “the existential condition of the possibility of the concept,”⁵¹⁹ discursive reason is unable to fully account for it – as is often said, the lesser cannot contain the greater. Moreover, because *thatness* must not necessarily reveal itself, *thatness* is not deductible *a priori*; an encounter with *thatness* in intellectual intuition may only be factually determined *a posteriori*. Indeed, as will emerge in this paper’s reading, Schellingian positive philosophy begins with this intuitive experience of the unity of existence in and through *thatness*.

Indeed, “[t]hat Absolute – the *Mysterium tremendum et fascinans* – will not be ‘known of the heart’ until we acknowledge that it is ‘unknown of the intellect.’”⁵²⁰ The reader should take note that, for Schelling, reason includes not only the profane varieties of discursive and discriminatory thought, but, more importantly for our purposes, the sacred and ecstatic qualities of contemplative thought. Identifying ecstatic reason with intellectual intuition, Schelling contends that in intellectual intuition “philosophy itself has withdrawn into a territory above reason.”⁵²¹ More emphatically, he writes elsewhere:

⁵¹⁷ Schelling, Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom, P. 144, nt. 26.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid.

⁵¹⁹ Bowie, P. 159.

⁵²⁰ Underhill, Mysticism, P. 348.

⁵²¹ Schelling, Philosophy and Religion, P. 10.

“It is said that reflection is hostile to the idea [*Idee*]; but it is exactly the highest triumph of truth that it may emerge victorious from the most extreme division and separation. Reason is in man that which, according to the mystics, the *primum passivum* [first passivity] or initial wisdom is in God in which all things are together and yet distinct, identical and yet free each in its own way. *Reason is not activity, like spirit, nor is it the absolute identity of both principles of cognition, but rather indifference*; the measure and, so to speak, the general place of truth, the peaceful site in which primordial wisdom is received, in accordance with which, as if looking away toward the archetype [*Urbild*], understanding should develop. On the one hand, philosophy receives its name from love, as the general inspiring principle, on the other hand, from this original wisdom which is her genuine goal.”⁵²²

To Schelling, intellectual intuition is reason’s most distinctive act; indeed, perennialism maintains that “all true and effective knowledge is immediate.”⁵²³ Without immediate knowledge *ekstasis* to the ordinary plane of consciousness, access to metaphysical claims would be impossible. Forman speaks of knowledge-by-identity, which is synonymous with Schellingian intellectual intuition. “In knowledge-by-identity the subject knows something by virtue of being it.”⁵²⁴ Knowledge-by-identity, similarly to our earlier examination of Fichte’s “I am” has an immediacy; it is a reflexive form of knowing. “I know my consciousness and I know that I am and have been conscious simply because I am it.”⁵²⁵ After all, “true knowledge of these [metaphysical] states implies their effective possession, and inversely, it is by this very knowledge that the [anagogic traveler] takes possession of them.”⁵²⁶

⁵²² Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Freedom*, P. 76 [italics added].

⁵²³ Guénon, *The Multiple States of the Being*, P. 78.

⁵²⁴ Forman, P. 118.

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵²⁶ Guénon, *The Multiple States of the Being*, P. 79. “She participated for an instant in the Divine Life; knows all and knows naught. She learnt the world’s secret, not by knowing, but by being: the only way of really knowing anything” [Underhill, *Mysticism*, P. 342].

Accordingly, descending from intellectual intuition, which as the most primordial state corresponds to the highest form of reason, lower forms of reason, as layered over the primordial state, are “out-of-joint” with the primordial state and, accordingly, ontologically less real. In contrast to intellectual intuition, in which the anagogic traveler attains to the free *life of life*, discursive reason, as a reason of necessity and a mediate knowledge of merely symbolic and representational value, is less ontologically primordial than intellectual intuition, which, in its display of indifference to subject and object contraries, is an absolute convergence of freedom and necessity. Importantly, as will later become clear, discursive reasoning is unable to provide existential certainty; the manifest world connects to the realm of the divine *life of life* only in intellectual intuition. Schelling, then, consistent with traditionalist thought, requires reversionary transport of the anagogic traveler to the primordial state prior to any ascension to a supra-human state. Accordingly, Schelling tells us that “[c]omplete revelation of God only occurs where in the reflected world itself the individual forms resolve into absolute identity, and this occurs only within [intuited] reason.”⁵²⁷ On such an occasion, the anagogic traveler, emptied of self, is transported to the *life of life* in humility and anonymity and yields to unitive numinous possession; after all, “only a god can provide meaning.”⁵²⁸ It is precisely for this reason of profound numinosity that an occasion of intellectual intuition is experienced *a posteriori* by the anagogic traveler as a religious event – the anagogic wayfarer is seized at the core of his being.

Recent scholarship also supports this Schellingian notion of the experience of a *nicht denkendes Denken* more primal than thought itself. In *Mysticism, Mind, Consciousness*, Robert Forman describes pure conscious events, descriptively consistent with Schellingian intellectual intuition,

⁵²⁷ Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, P. 27.

⁵²⁸ *Ibid.*, P. 11.

that may be attained to in meditation (contemplative orison); he calls these peculiar states of pure consciousness trophotropic states. Trophotropic states are “hyper-aroused states, marked by low levels of cognitive and physiological activity; here we find Hindu *samadhi*, *mushingo* in *zazen*, the restful states associated with the Cloud of the Unknowing’s ‘cloud of forgetting,’ or Eckhart’s *gezucket*.”⁵²⁹ To this extent, “[m]ysticism describes a set of experiences or more precisely, conscious events, which are not described in terms of sensory experiences or mental images.”⁵³⁰ In keeping with this paper’s contemplative narrative, Meister Eckhart, describing the state of *gezucket*, maintains it is attained:

“when we are stripped of our own form and are transformed by God’s eternity, becoming wholly oblivious to all transient and temporal life, drawn into and changed into an image of the divine, and have become God’s son. Truly, there is no stage higher than this, and here peace and blessedness reign, for the end of the inner man and the new man is eternal life.”⁵³¹

In this passage, Meister Eckhart highlights the introversion of recollection, quiet and contemplation so that the alone may take flight to the alone.⁵³² As representative of the German contemplative tradition with which Schelling was deeply familiar, we might remember Meister Eckhart’s instructions:

“You should love God non-mentally, that is to say the soul should become non-mental and stripped of her mental nature. For as long as your soul is mental, she will possess images. As long as she has images, she will possess intermediaries,

⁵²⁹ Forman, P. 4 and see Forman, P. 7.

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*, P. 5-6 [quoting Ninian Smart, *Interpretation and Mystical Experience*, P. 75].

⁵³¹ Eckhart, P. 102. “The more you are empty of self and are freed from the knowledge of objects, the closer you come to him” [*Ibid.*, P. 225].

⁵³² “For we must be One in ourselves and must seek it in ourselves and in Oneness and must receive it in Oneness. . . One with One, one from One, one in One and one in One in all eternity” [Eckhart, P. 107-108]. Along similar lines, we might also note the following quote from the *Phaedo*, “[f]or one who is not pure himself to attain to the realm of purity would no doubt be a breach of universal justice” [Plato, *Phaedo*, 67 b].

and as long as she possesses intermediaries, she will not have unity or simplicity. As long as she lacks simplicity, she does not truly love God, for true love depends upon simplicity. Therefore your soul should lose all her mental nature and should be left non-mental, for it you love God, as ‘God,’ as ‘Spirit,’ as ‘Person,’ as ‘Image,’ then all this must be abandoned. You must love him as he is a non-God, a non-Spirit, a non-Person, a non-Image. Indeed, you must love him as he is One, pure, simple and transparent, far from all duality.”⁵³³

Meister Eckhart here captures very succinctly the ascetic practice that underpins the contemplative tradition – the emptying of all cognitive activity in the self in favor of cognitive stillness. Here, in the orison of quiet expectancy, the contemplative may be graced by a moment of unitive knowledge of the divine. In a summary reminiscent of our brief exploration, Forman writes:

“In *gezucken*, then, one is aware of, according to Eckhart, neither thought, word, speech, or even vague daydreams. Even oblivious of himself, such a man becomes completely silent and at rest, without cognitive content: he is contentless yet open and alert. Restated, according to this passage in *gezucken* the subject is merely awake, simply present, but devoid of a manifold for awareness, either sensory or mental. Once again, we have a description of a state in which there are no thoughts, no sensations, no cognitive content: a nonintentional, yet wakeful moment.”⁵³⁴

Accordingly, consistently with the attestations of the antique contemplative tradition, Forman, in constructing his case from Meister Eckhart among others, recognizes a pure conscious event as a non-cognitive, yet wakeful state, absent occurrences of images, symbols or sensory input. The pure conscious event is precisely that plane of consciousness to which Schelling wants to attain to in intellectual intuition – that peculiar *epopteia* of the undifferentiated and divine *life of life* –

⁵³³ Eckhart, Pp. 238-239.

⁵³⁴ Forman, P. 15.

this, for Schelling, is the spiritual axis of the world. In close proximity to Schelling's intellection intuition, we read Delacroix's description of a contemplative's psychological character:

“When contemplation appears (a) It produces a general condition of indifference, liberty, and peace, an elevation above the world, a sense of beatitude. The Subject ceases to perceive himself in the multiplicity and division of consciousness. He is raised above himself. A deeper and purer soul substitutes itself for the normal self. (b) In this state, in which consciousness of I-hood and consciousness of the world disappear, the mystic is conscious of being an immediate relation with God Himself; of participating in Divinity. Contemplation installs a method of being and of knowing. Moreover, these two things tend at the bottom to become one. The mystic has more and more the impression of being that which he knows, and of knowing *that which he is.* Temporally rising, in fact, to levels of freedom, he knows himself real, and therefore knows Reality.”⁵³⁵

As the reader will have noticed, there are abundant commonalities between contemplative orison and Schellingian intellectual intuition; indeed, this paper claims that contemplative orison is synonymous with intellectual intuition – importantly for the conclusions of this paper, both contemplative orison and intellectual intuition provide the anagogic traveler with a profound conviction *a posteriori* that he has encountered the *thatness* of the divine *that which is*.

Resounding the Pietist and Orphic themes of interest to this paper, an authority tells us that the business of the contemplative is “to remake, transmute, his total personality in the interest of his spiritual self, to bring it out of hiddenness, and unify himself about it as a centre, thus ‘putting on divine humanity.’”⁵³⁶ Ultimately, this paper wants to offer to the reader's consideration that the anagogic traveler, acting with religious resolution on that knowledge which he came to possess

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*, P. 330 [Italics added].

⁵³⁶ Underhill, *Mysticism*, P. 53-54.

in the metaphysical instant of intellectual intuition, provides *a posteriori* testimony of his historical encounter with the *life of life*.

“[I]t is by this inward work alone that a being, if capable of it, will ascend from degree to degree, to the summit of the initiatic hierarchy, to the ‘supreme identity’, the absolutely permanent and unconditioned state beyond the limitations of all contingent and transitory existence, which is the state of the true *sūfī*.”⁵³⁷

Keeping faith with his claim that the intellectual intuition provides a window to the universal content of being, Schelling declares “[n]ot I know, but only totality *knows* in me.”⁵³⁸ As such, the anagogic traveler accomplishes metaphysical realization *for itself* and not *for himself*; after all, the traces of the anagogic traveler’s egoistic individuality have been removed through theurgic practices and contemplative disciplines. Indeed, the limitations of individuality have been effaced precisely so that “the being may ‘establish itself’ in the unmanifested”⁵³⁹ *life of life*. The universal content of thought that emerges in intellectual intuition is acknowledged by other traditions; the reader may remember that Islamic esotericism identifies the anagogic traveler who succeeds to the greater mystery and attains to supreme identity with the word as “Universal Man,”⁵⁴⁰ which signifies the “complete and perfect realization of the total being.”⁵⁴¹

⁵³⁷ Guénon, *Insights into Islamic Esoterism & Taoism*, P. 8.

⁵³⁸ McGrath, P. 96 (quoting Schelling, 1804a: 143). Interestingly, McGrath makes the Jungian claim that intellectual intuition is somehow hidden away in the “undifferentiated unity that unconsciousness has already left behind but that continues to make possible everything that that ego knows” [*Ibid.*]. “Whatever reason there was in human experience received its ultimate sanction solely from the solitary majesty of the sovereign ego knowing itself in intellectual intuition” [*Ibid.*, P. 45].

⁵³⁹ Guénon, *Initiation and Spiritual Realization*, P. 172.

⁵⁴⁰ Guénon, *The Symbolism of the Cross*, P. 12 “‘Universal Man’ (in Arabic *al-Insān al-kāmil*) is at the same time ‘Primordial Man’ (*al-Insān al-qadīm*); it is also the *Adam Qadmon* of the Hebrew Kabbalah; it is also the ‘King’ (*Wang*) of the far eastern tradition (*Tao Te Ching*, Chapter 25)” [*Ibid.*, Ft., 1].

⁵⁴¹ *Ibid.*, P. 13.

Schellingian thought too allows for a metaphysical hierarchy or “preparations for attaining the highest truth;”⁵⁴² Within the Schellingian architecture, the first preparatory stage is spiritual *askesis* and consists of the “weakening and, wherever possible, the extinction of sensate effects and anything that disturbs the placid and moral organization of the soul.”⁵⁴³ In the second preparatory stage, broadly conceived, emerges, Schelling writes, “[o]nce the relationship to the body has become extinct enough, the soul begins to dream, that is, to receive images from the non-real and ideal world.”⁵⁴⁴ At this preparatory level of the *mundus imaginalis*, Schelling claims that certain consolations of the spirit figuratively reveal “the history and destiny of the universe are represented figuratively;”⁵⁴⁵ yet, these consolations, as contemplatives everywhere tell us, must also be discarded if one desires unity with God. However, those anagogic travelers of rare refinement, endurance and valor, “who penetrate the shell and reach the meaning of the symbols and have proven themselves through moderation, wisdom, self-conquest and devotion to the non-sensate world will pass to a new life and, as adepts, see the pure truth for what it is, without the mediation of images.”⁵⁴⁶

It is to the initiatic hierarchy of the ancient mystery teachings that this paper now turns in order to set forth and to amplify the particular *epopteia* available accessible with the Schellingian intellectual intuition.

⁵⁴² Schelling, Philosophy and Religion, P. 54.

⁵⁴³ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid., P. 55.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid.

Section D: *Epotheia* within Intellectual Intuition and the Hellenic Lesser and Greater Mysteries

In his preliminary remarks to Philosophy and Religion, Schelling points to the demand for self-qualification and for self-possession as contained within the ancient mystery teachings; the initiatic way, as profoundly experiential, cannot be attained by borrowings from another but, rather, makes a demand of self-discovery⁵⁴⁷ through the deep, cathartic interior work of contemplative *askesis* and orison as described in the foregoing section. As Schelling writes, “[b]ut we know that these things [the mysteries] nevertheless cannot be profaned, that they must subsist through themselves, and that those who do not possess them already ought not to and cannot possess them at all.”⁵⁴⁸ Accordingly, at the onset, Schelling identifies the philosophic reversion to the ancient sacred teachings with the Delphic demand for transformative self-discovery. Indeed, tying the ancient mysteries to his “philosophical-religion” enterprise, Schelling reminds his readers that “the legends of antiquity name the earliest philosophers as the originators of these mystery cults.”⁵⁴⁹ Over time, however, Schelling argues that religion dispossessed philosophy of the “great themes”⁵⁵⁰ – namely, “the true mysteries of philosophy have as their most noble and indeed their sole content the eternal birth of all things and their relationship to God”⁵⁵¹ – and constrained philosophy to the analytic realm; degraded from its lofty beginnings, it was left to philosophy merely to “treat the origins of reason and ideas as concepts”⁵⁵² rather than as experiential. For its part, Schelling maintains that religion, which

⁵⁴⁷ “They may be satisfied with their superficial understandings of these mysteries, but as regards their deeper meaning: ‘Don’t move, goat! Or you’ll get burned!’” [Schelling, Philosophy and Religion, P. 5].

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid., P. 5.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid., P. 7.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁵¹ Ibid., P. 8.

⁵⁵² Ibid., P. 7.

claimed these singular themes for itself, turned outward and, as an exoteric and increasingly profane power, lost touch with its originary revelation and its earlier receptivity to the living truth. Certain cultural and individual dispositions, if no longer sensitive to spiritual realities, might be said to conceal those very aspects from observed reality; accordingly, if Schelling rightly identifies a deterioration of philosophy and religion from their ancient esoteric and intuitive source, then it follows that the location of this spiritual realm is likely to become increasingly distant for the larger number of men as spiritual culture solidifies into the material. As this paper wants to make clear, Schelling, who cultivates deep sensitivities to sacramental realities and spiritual influences, aspires to revalorize the ancient teachings by returning philosophy and religion to their original, true and “common sanctuary,”⁵⁵³ so, commencing with dialectical and theurgic practices, which ultimately give way to a non-discursive *epopteia* in which religiosity grips the soul, Schelling seeks to make available the *Deus Absconditus* and, through the theurgic mediation of the anagogic traveler, to reconnect the least to the greatest in a revalorized philosophical - religion.

Reinvigorating the ancient ideal of philosophy as the cultivation of a flourishing soul, Schelling wants to re-establish and to revalorize the ancient theurgic “philosophic-religious” template, to bring forward this ontological archetype in order to sacralize modern life and, through intellectual intuition’s *epopteia*, the mystical vision through which the anagogic traveler is brought proximate to the ecstatic, non-human and divine *life of life*, to ontologically renew within and soteriologically deliver the anagogic traveler from his earthly bindings. Schelling

⁵⁵³ Schelling, Philosophy and Religion, P. 7.

describes these early sacred doctrines, which are decidedly Orphic in their trajectories and which descriptively govern the Schellingian philosophical project, as follows:

“the old sacred doctrine . . . says that souls descend from the world of intellect into the sensate world, where they find themselves tethered to a physical body, as incarcerated, as a penalty for their selfness and for offenses committed prior (ideally, not temporally) to this life. While they bring along the memory of the unison and harmony of the one true universe, their apprehension of it is distorted by the cacophony and dissonance of the senses just as they are unable to recognize truth in what *is*, or what appears to be, but only in what (for them) *was* and in that to which they strive to return – the life of the intellect.”⁵⁵⁴

As has become apparent to the reader, the Schellingian enterprise explicitly relies upon the Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic traditions and ancient mystery teachings both for inspiration and as archetype for its cosmological and ontological arcs. Given Schelling’s reliance on the perennial doctrine at the heart of these traditions, this paper suggests to the reader’s consideration that an understanding of the particular *epopteia* available in Schellingian intellectual intuition rightfully returns to the Platonic tradition and to the sacred Hellenic mystery teachings for interpretation and amplification. Indeed, because Schelling’s own writings evidence his formal and implicit intent and, moreover, because the deep truths of these mystery teachings follow directly from the Schellingian suppositions that attend to the *life of life*, there exists ample textual and hermeneutic testimony to the propriety of this paper reading the ancient mysteries into and making their particular *epopteia* descriptively available to Schellingian intellectual intuition.

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, P. 36.

As we have seen, Schellingian thought calls for conscious self-conquest through the reversal of consciousness from outer to inner things; “access to the spiritual life always entails death to the profane condition, followed by a new birth”⁵⁵⁵ into the divine. Indeed, it might be said that it is from the relative truth of the profane world that the anagogic traveler wants liberation. In this introversion of ascetic renunciation, spiritual discipline, recollection and contemplative orison, the anagogic traveler becomes available to reversionary descent to the primordial state wherein he ultimately obtains to the metaphysical possibilities of celestial ascent; as Schelling somewhat differently, but with similar intent, tells us, his mystagogy requires negative philosophy (discursive dialectic) and its attendant epistemological crises as “preparations for attaining the highest truth”⁵⁵⁶ in synthetic intellectual intuition. Schelling tells us that “those who penetrate the shell”⁵⁵⁷ and, after the work of many years, reach the meaning of the symbols and have proven themselves through moderation, wisdom, self-conquest, and devotion to the non-sensate world will pass to a new life and, as adepts, see the pure truth as it is, without the mediation of images.”⁵⁵⁸ Accordingly, while a full discussion of the ontological and epistemological considerations that become available to the anagogic traveler in *henosis* with the supreme principle exceeds this paper’s scope, this paper nonetheless hopes to gesture to the metaphysical hierarchies and accompanying *epopteia* available to the Schellingian anagogic traveler who successfully attains to the primordial state in intellectual intuition.

⁵⁵⁵ Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, P. 201.

⁵⁵⁶ Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, P. 54.

⁵⁵⁷ In Islamic esoterism, there are two ways of life: “these are the *sharī’ah*, literally the ‘great way,’ common to all, and the *haqīqah*, literally the ‘inward truth,’ reserved to an elite” [Guenon, *Insights into Islamic Esoterism & Taoism*, P. 1]. In his use of the term, shell, and in his employ of the notions of center and circumference (which, admittedly, are of almost universal application), it may be that Schelling evidences a familiarity with Islamic esoterism; “[t]o express their respective ‘outward’ and ‘inward’ natures, exoterism and esoterism are often compared to the ‘shell’ (*qishr*) and the ‘kernel’ (*lubb*), or to the circumference and its center” [*Ibid.*].

⁵⁵⁸ Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, P. 55. “[O]nce the shell has been penetrated, one finds oneself in the domain of esoterism, this penetration, by its relationship to the shell itself, being a kind of turning about, of which the passage from the exterior to the interior consists” [Guenon, *Insights into Islamic Esoterism & Taoism*, P. 12].

In intellectual intuition's momentary tear of the metaphysical fabric, it is said that "the twinkling of the eye is not a moment of time, but a production of the rotary movement of time"⁵⁵⁹ and, as this paper repeatedly notes, a restoration of the originary chaos – the *thatness* – of the primordial condition. So, in intellectual intuition, transcendent to ordinary contraries, "[i]t is not a question of not seeing something in particular . . . [i]t is a question of not being able to see *per se*."⁵⁶⁰ In not being able to see, the *liminal personae* might be said to be suspended between the extremes of two chaos-es: the chaos that accompanies an anagogic traveler's emancipation from his individual condition as he holds himself "out into the nothing"⁵⁶¹ on the one side and, on the other, the intellectual intuition's state of primordial chaos; indeed, the anagogic traveler is held suspended until that instant of illumination in intellectual intuition whereupon a new ontological hierarchy establishes and ontological order is re-claimed from primordial chaos. Yet it is to be remembered that the transformative reversion within intellectual intuition only appears as a "return to chaos" from the perspective of the ordinary consciousness; similarly, the reappearance by the anagogic wayfarer from intellectual intuition "takes on the appearance of 'emerging from chaos.'"⁵⁶² In the liminal encounter with chaos (the Pietist *Durchbruch*, which implies that sudden discontinuity between the profane⁵⁶³ and the sacred planes of consciousness), the edges of the ontological planes become perceptible to the *liminal personae* upon emergence from intellectual intuition.

⁵⁵⁹ Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, P. xviii.

⁵⁶⁰ Wirth, *The Conspiracy of life*, P. 111.

⁵⁶¹ Heidegger, P. 103. "This is what properly speaking constitutes 'transformation', conceived as implying the return of beings in modification into unmodified Being" [Guenon, *The Symbolism of the Cross*, P. 132].

⁵⁶² Guénon, *Initiation & Spiritual Realization*, Pp. 149-150.

⁵⁶³ It is important to remember that nothing is profane by its nature because all comes from the life of life; rather, there is only a profane point of view (see, Guénon, *Initiation & Spiritual Realization*, P. 44).

In his analysis of the *Symposium*, Jonathon Shear reads Socrates, in the doctrine of Diotima to which he gives voice, to maintain that the form of beauty at the pinnacle of the heavenly ladder is disclosed in two stages. In the first stage, the anagogic traveler attains to a vision of pure beauty as an “open sea.” As we read:

“And, turning his eyes toward the open sea of beauty, he will find in such contemplation the seed of the most fruitful discourse and the loftiest thought, and reap a golden harvest of philosophy, until, confirmed and strengthened, he will come upon one single form of knowledge, the knowledge of the beauty I am about to speak of.”⁵⁶⁴

Those anagogic wayfarers who successfully attain to the first stage of the mysteries may, says Diotima, if of suitable strength and subtlety, become available to the “final revelation” of the “single form of knowledge” – the beautiful itself:

“Whoever has been initiated so far in the mysteries of Love and has viewed all these aspects of the beautiful in due succession, is at last drawing near the final revelation. And now, Socrates, there bursts upon him that wonderous vision which is the very soul of the beauty he has toiled so long for. It is an everlasting loveliness which neither comes nor goes, which neither flowers nor fades, for such beauty is the same on every hand, the same then as now, here as there, this way as that way, the same to every worshiper as it is to every other.

Nor will his vision of the beautiful take the form of a face, or of hands, or of anything that is of the flesh. It will be neither words, or knowledge, nor a something that exists in something else, such as a living creature, or the earth, or the heavens, or anything that is – but subsisting of itself and by itself in an eternal oneness, while every lovely thing partakes of it in such sort that, however much

⁵⁶⁴ Plato, *Symposium*, 210:d.

that parts may wax or wane, it will be neither more nor less, but still the same inviolable whole.”⁵⁶⁵

In accord with Diotima’s revelation to Socrates of the two-fold metaphysical wisdom, traditionalist doctrines everywhere claim both illuminative and unitive stages to mystical gnosis. For our purposes, the sacred mystery teachings of ancient Greece admit of a metaphysical hierarchy of two noetic levels – the lesser and the greater mysteries.⁵⁶⁶ In truth, the greater and lesser mysteries, as Diotima implies, are but two stages of the same initiatic journey; understood in this manner, the lesser mysteries are preparatory to the greater mysteries and, in turn, the greater mysteries are only available to an anagogic traveler who has already attained the lesser mysteries. Having said this, infinite gradations to metaphysical realizations between the two metaphysical stages must be presupposed; after all, anagogic travel demands the patience and persistence of years of spiritual disciplines and deep engagements with life and each wayfarer comes to his journey from unique circumstances and brings unique natural qualifications to the task. Describing the mystery teachings, *sophia perennis* as understood by René Guénon, offers the following distinction between the lesser and greater mysteries:

“[t]he ‘lesser mysteries’ comprise all that is related to the development of the possibilities of the human state envisaged in its entirety; they therefore end in what we have called the perfection of this state, namely in what is traditionally called the restoration of the ‘primordial state’. The ‘greater mysteries’, on the other hand, concern the realization of the supra-human states: taking the being at the point where the ‘lesser mysteries’ have left it, that is, the center of the domain of human individuality, they lead it beyond this domain through the supra-individual states that are still conditioned, to the unconditioned state that alone is

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 211:a-b.

⁵⁶⁶ Dante terms the greater and lesser mysteries, the “Celestial Jerusalem” and the “Terrestrial Paradise,” respectively (see Guénon, *The Esoterism of Dante*, P. 50 and Dante, Alighieri. *The Divine Comedy*, Allan Mandelbaum, Trans. Everyman’s Library. New York, NY (1995).

the true goal of all initiation and that is called the ‘final deliverance’ or the ‘supreme identity’.”⁵⁶⁷

Insofar as the lesser mysteries comprise “the human state as envisaged in its entirety,” it might be said that the lesser mysteries “imply a knowledge of nature . . . while the greater mysteries [which “concern the realization of the supra-human states”] imply the knowledge that is beyond nature.”⁵⁶⁸ The Schellingian anagogic traveler attains to the lesser mysteries when he accomplishes, through the higher dialectic of contemplative *askesis* and orison, the “descent into Hell”⁵⁶⁹ and restores to the primordial state, which lies beyond subject-object contraries, in intellectual intuition. The greater mysteries can only be attained once the anagogic traveler accomplishes the lesser mysteries because the primordial state, which in the Schellingian architecture is intellectual intuition, is the sole point of communication with the divine *life of life*.

“It can be said that whoever has reached this point, namely the accomplishment of the ‘lesser mysteries’, is already virtually ‘delivered,’ although he is not delivered effectively until he has traveled the path of the ‘greater mysteries’ and finally realized the ‘supreme identity.’”⁵⁷⁰

As we have seen, Schelling claims intellectual intuition, the *nicht denkendes Denken*, is more primordial than the subject-object dichotomy and shares the same essence with the undifferentiated *life of life*. To this point, Guénon maintains that “the being must above all identify the center of his own individuality . . . with the cosmic center of the state of existence to

⁵⁶⁷ Guénon, Perspectives on Initiation, Pp. 244-245.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid., P. 246.

⁵⁶⁹ Guénon, Initiation and Spiritual Realization, P. 170.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid., P. 249.

which this individuality belongs, and which it takes as a base from which to raise itself to the higher states."⁵⁷¹ Intellectual intuition, as the reversion to the Edenic primordial state, is synonymous with what the Islamic initiates call "the divine place where contrasts and antinomies are reconciled,"⁵⁷² what the Hindus term the "the center of the 'wheel of all things,'"⁵⁷³ or what the Far-Eastern tradition refers to as the "invariable middle."⁵⁷⁴ However, "The real aim of initiation is not merely the restoration of the 'Edenic state,' which is only a stage on the path that must lead much higher since it is beyond this stage that the 'celestial journey' really begins, but rather the active conquest of the 'supra-human' states"⁵⁷⁵ – the conquest of these supra-human states called the greater mysteries and known elsewhere as the unitive knowledge of the divine.

In his liminal notion of intellectual intuition, Schelling points us to the ontological limit of reason, where analytic thought gives way to synthetic thought. Indeed, Schelling insists that he "really desire[s] to get beyond thinking, in order, *via* that which is higher than thinking, to be redeemed from the torment of thinking."⁵⁷⁶ In its reification of the things of manifest reality, analytic thought disassociates the individual from the unity hidden within life (*animus mundi*), thereby helping to motivate his "falling away" from the living center to the periphery of finite (I-ness) freedom and, after the ultimate epistemic collapse of negative philosophy, urges a reversionary movement to the Absolute *life of life* for epistemic closure. As Schelling and contemplatives everywhere tell us, it is only in the wake of intellectual intuition when the ego

⁵⁷¹ Guénon, The Esoterism of Dante, P. 47.

⁵⁷² Ibid.

⁵⁷³ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid., P. 33.

⁵⁷⁶ Schelling, On the History of Modern Philosophy, P. 167.

surrenders⁵⁷⁷ the authority of its discursive *logismos* and the anagogic wayfarer attains to the primordial state that he sees the world as if transformed by a sense of eternity and he opens to a profound alterity. As is said elsewhere, “[t]he kingdom of heaven is spread out upon the earth;”⁵⁷⁸ it reveals itself only to those who have the eyes to see. Accordingly, in the dawning of this particular *epopteia*, Schelling claims positive philosophy proceeds not only to the “*particular kind of experience*”⁵⁷⁹ found within intellectual intuition, but to “the entirety of experience from beginning to end.”⁵⁸⁰ Schelling “insists that existence precedes reflection in the same way that the immanence of intuition precedes the concept.”⁵⁸¹ Concepts arise through the act of separating the result of intuition from its productive activity – the intuition provides access to the positive undifferentiated material. Here we find the crux of this claim, namely, “[t]he common ground that unifies us with the world, this identity, locates the starting point of all thinking and deliberation in that which is the condition of reflexive thinking, namely, in the intuitive realm of unmediated certainty.”⁵⁸² So we may read Schelling to claim that the anagogic traveler who, attains to the primordial state (lesser mystery) in intellectual intuition, unifies with the entirety of the terrestrial paradise. This sense of “oneness” that illuminates and pervades the anagogic traveler who attains to the lesser mysteries is precisely that described by Plato as an “open sea” and what others call the sense of eternity;⁵⁸³ this “possession of the ‘sense of eternity’ is linked to what all traditions call, as we mentioned above, the ‘primordial state’, the

⁵⁷⁷ “This teaching of philosophical catharsis as a way of release from the wheel of rebirth and entry to everlasting noetic bliss – the privilege of ruling the whole cosmos with the gods (moving in the barque of Ra or following the chariot of Zeus) – is based on ‘a religious doctrine, which Plato took over from Orphics or Pythagoreans, a doctrine of sin, purgatory, reincarnation, and eventual purification’ [Uždavinys, *Orpheus and the Roots of Platonism*, P. 77].

⁵⁷⁸ Meyer, P. 65. “The kingdom is inside you and outside you” [*Ibid.*, P. 23].

⁵⁷⁹ Schelling, *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy*, P. 181.

⁵⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸² *Ibid.*, P. 22.

⁵⁸³ In the primordial state, it may be said that “all things are contemplated under the aspect of eternity” [Guénon, *The King of the World*, P. 28]. McGrath suggests that intellectual intuition is “[t]he intellect’s act of seeing the part in the whole and the whole in the part” [McGrath, P. 96].

restoration of which constitutes the first stage of true initiation, as it is the preliminary condition for the effective conquest of the supra-human states.”⁵⁸⁴

Metaphysical realizations can only be reached through long and challenging interior work. Accordingly, “if [the anagogic traveler] succeeds in penetrating to the center of his own being, by this very fact he reaches total knowledge with all that this implies, which is to say that ‘he who knows his Self knows his Lord,’ and he then knows all things in the supreme unity of the Principle itself, in which is contained ‘eminently’ the whole of reality.”⁵⁸⁵ In attainment to intellectual intuition, the primordial *life of life* is discovered as the seat of eternity; there is no succession and all things appear in simultaneity in a changeless present of *thatness*.

From the lesser mysteries, the rarest of illuminated anagogic travelers may ascend to the greater, celestial mysteries.

“The initiate can thus rise step by step until he reaches the supreme ‘election’, that belonging to the ‘adept,’ that is to say the fulfillment of the ultimate goal of all initiation; and consequently the elect in the most complete sense of this word, whom we might call the ‘perfect elect,’ will be he who finally achieves the realization of the ‘Supreme Identity.’”⁵⁸⁶

And said again, we learn that the illuminated anagogic traveler transforms himself:

⁵⁸⁴ Guénon, The King of the World, P. 29.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid., P. 262.

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid., P. 273.

“gradually from a simple initiatic affiliation up to identification with the ‘center’, and not only, as at the completion of the ‘lesser mysteries’, with the center of the human individuality, but further, at the completion of the ‘greater mysteries’, with the very center of the whole being, that is to say the realization of the ‘Supreme Identity.’”⁵⁸⁷

For the anagogic traveler, intellectual intuition is simultaneously a movement toward soteriological redemption and toward ontological renewal. In the ordinary world,⁵⁸⁸ absolute freedom can only be realized by those anagogic travelers who, emancipated from the confines of manifest existence, attain via the greater mystery to supra-human identity with “non-being” in intellectual intuition – only they, transcendent to multiplicity and unified with the undifferentiated and free *that which is*, may co-create the world in absolute freedom. As traditionalist philosophy tells us, the metaphysical instant “surpasses Being and is co-extensive with total Possibility itself”⁵⁸⁹ because the *life of life*, with which the anagogic traveler identifies, “is manifestly exempt from constraint.”⁵⁹⁰ Universal possibility, it will be remembered, is co-extensive with absolute freedom. Traditional philosophy conceives of ontological transformation “as implying the ‘return of beings in modification to unmodified Being,’”⁵⁹¹ that is, the purification of the anagogic traveler into spirit, and results in absolute and complete release from the limiting conditions of all modalities and all states⁵⁹² – or, said otherwise, a delivery into the *life of life*. Accordingly, redeemed from the constraints of manifest time and space in the non-

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid., P. 278.

⁵⁸⁸ In the manifested world of multiplicity, only relative freedom is available [See Guénon, The Multiple States of the Being].

⁵⁸⁹ Guénon, The Multiple States of the Being, P. 93.

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁹¹ Guénon, The Symbolism of the Cross, P. 132.

⁵⁹² Ibid., P. 133.

being of intellectual intuition, the anagogic traveler is not unlike the prodigal son of the gospels who returns home;⁵⁹³ at this moment, the adept becomes who he already is – absolutely free.

Under the Schellingian cosmology, the *life of life* gives rise to and sustains all that is; accordingly, the anagogic traveler, vehicled by intellectual intuition, is obliged to become conscious of himself as the intermediate link between the supreme principle and manifestation. The answer to the Schellingian riddle of cosmic phenomenalization, that is, how to link the golden chain from the divine to the manifested world, is only fully realized when the Universal Man⁵⁹⁴ re-descends⁵⁹⁵ to the earthly plane of consciousness; indeed, it is only following the adept's re-descent to the manifest world that the universality of the greater mysteries is realized in all its plentitude. The underlying notion is this: when the adept succeeds to the greater mysteries and realizes his authentic identity in anamnestic *henosis* with the supreme principle, the *fons et origio* of all that is, the adept becomes who he already is – the supra-human *life of life*. Accordingly, when the adept, who is reconciled in noetic perfection to the *life of life*, re-descends into the manifested world, his re-descent might be said to be synonymous with the formation of the world; indeed, the adept may be said to succeed to “the very process of universal manifestation,”⁵⁹⁶ that is, the adept attains to the archetypal of the cosmic Schellingian *Einbildungskraft* which establishes what it intuits and through which the manifested dimension

⁵⁹³ From the Persian, *Nā-Kojā-Abād* is translated as “the country of no-where” [Corbin, P. 2]. In a theosophical tale told by Sohrawadi, a captive, who has momentarily left the world of sensible experience” [Ibid.] asks a being who appears to him, “Whence do you come?” [Ibid.]. The being responds, “I come from beyond Mount Qâf . . . [t]his is where you were at the beginning and it is where you will return, once you are free of your shackles” [Ibid.].

⁵⁹⁴ Guénon, *Initiation and Spiritual Realization*, P. 169. The anagogic traveler who attains to the metaphysical realizations within the greater mysteries is known in Islamic esotericism as “Universal Man.”

⁵⁹⁵ Re-descent is not to be understood as a regression to the same ontological and noetic point from which the anagogic traveler commenced his ascent; rather, the Universal Man who re-descends to manifest reality returns with his new-found metaphysical realizations intact.

⁵⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, P. 176.

comes-to-be. Accordingly, it is in his sacrificial⁵⁹⁷ re-descent to the manifested world that this paper claims the Schellingian adept participates in the eternal creation of the world.

In its introduction and elsewhere, this paper suggested to the reader's consideration that Schelling ought to be approached as a philosopher of religiosity. Schelling describes religiosity as follows:

“conscientiousness or that one act in accordance with what one knows and does not contradict the light of cognition in one's conduct. An individual for whom this contradiction is impossible, not in a human, physical or psychological, but rather in a divine way, is called religious.”⁵⁹⁸

As Schelling presents it, religiosity presupposes the attainment of a profound *epopteia*⁵⁹⁹ and the resolution to act in compliance with that knowledge. To Schelling, a religious man is one who

⁵⁹⁷ Traditional doctrine tells us that re-descent is to be understood as a sacrifice; that is, the anagogic traveler, purified of ego and thus detached from the manifest world, yearns to remain in communion with the divine in intellectual intuition. Accordingly, “recoiling before the prospective sacrifice” [*Ibid.*, P. 178] of his re-descent into the world, the anagogic traveler, reposing in bliss, wants not his return; and yet, it is his sacrifice of the divine in re-descent that “confers a ‘sacred’ character, in the most complete sense of the term, upon those invested with a mission” [*Ibid.*, P. 179].

⁵⁹⁸ Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Freedom*, Jeff Love and Johannes Schmidt, Trans. Pp. 56-57.

⁵⁹⁹ Schelling notes that “the dramatic form is the most suitable for the esoteric representation of religious doctrines. Those who penetrate the shell and reach the meaning of the symbols and have proven themselves through moderation, wisdom, self-conquest and devotion to a non-sensate world will pass into a new life and, as adepts, see the pure truth for what it is, without the need for the mediation of images” [Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, P. 55]. Laden with the mutual implication of life as context, Schelling's appreciation of dramatic tragedy may be approached with new sensitivity to this paper's purposes. Speaking of dramatic tragedy, Schelling writes, “[t]his is the most sublime idea and the greatest victory of freedom: voluntarily to bear the punishment for an unavoidable transgression in order to manifest his freedom precisely in the loss of that very same freedom, and to perish amid a declaration of freedom” [Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, P. 254]. To Schelling's way of thinking, “misfortune obtains only as long as the will of necessity is not yet decided and apparent” [*Ibid.*]. That is, once the protagonist understands what fate, of necessity, awaits him, any hope for its avoidance collapses. At this moment of insight, the protagonist's “moment of greatest suffering” [Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, P. 254] is revealed, namely, when the protagonist recognizes that, inevitably and inescapably, he faces a catastrophic ending; in the Dionysian vocabulary, he, like the bull-god himself, will be dismembered and rent asunder. Whether of guilt or innocence matters not, suffering comes to all – all are torn apart in the maw of time; “[g]uiltlessness does not remove the

knows not by faith but by cognitive confrontation with truth and evidence within the divine *life of life*, which, transcendent to the ordinary plane of consciousness, is singularly absolute. Schelling asserts that “I call only that knowledge authentic which is decided, not through mere thinking, but rather by an *actus*.”⁶⁰⁰ In intellectual intuition, which is a simultaneity of knowing and *actus*, Schelling describes a certitude that “seizes the entire person at his core.”⁶⁰¹ We turn to Schelling for assistance: “[t]hat which is true can only be recognized in truth; that which is evident, in evidence. But truth and evidence are clear in themselves and must therefore be absolute and of the essence of God.”⁶⁰² Accordingly, because cognition of the absolute *life of life* is only available in intellectual intuition wherein one attains to the *thatness* of the Absolute *prius*, Schelling argues that intellection intuition makes available to the anagogic traveler a unique cognition and testimony of truth. Indeed, he writes, “[t]hose who experience the evidence – which lies in and only in the idea of the Absolute and which any human language is too weak to describe – will regard as entirely incommensurate any attempts to reduce or confine it to the individuality of the individual.”⁶⁰³ By this account, the illuminated anagogic traveler attains to a profound, if ineffable and mute, cognitive conviction in intellectual intuition. Purified of the ego through existential death, the anagogic traveler, now emptied of self and thus an anonymity, is

punishment” [Ibid.] that is spun for all things subject to time and space. And yet, claims Schelling, “precisely at the moment of *greatest* suffering he enters into the greatest liberation and greatest dispassion. From that moment on, the insurmountable power of fate, which earlier appeared in absolute dimensions, now appears merely as the relatively great, for it is overcome by the will and becomes the symbol of the absolutely great, namely, of the attitude and disposition of sublimity” [Ibid., (italics in the original and underlines added by this writer)] One surrenders to the moment and, effectively, relaxes into the flow of life which is now apprehended as “a holy reality, that is to say, a totality filled with a true existence” [Otto, Walter, P. 16]. Schelling thus alludes to that metaphysical insight that may accompany a flash of intellectual intuition when the epistemological curtain is drawn back and one intimates the unity of all existence as an eidolon of its indwelling *life of life*; at this moment of sublime liminal insight, the protagonist joyously affirms all the manifestations of existence with equanimity – and celebrates *amor fati*.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid. Schelling also points out that “[f]or Aristotle, God is the pure incessant *actus* of thought (but of no thought without content)” [Ibid., P. 163].

⁶⁰¹ Ibid., P. 108.

⁶⁰² Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, P. 16.

⁶⁰³ Ibid.

available to join into unitive knowledge of the divine. As Schelling puts it, metaphysical realization cannot be an act of particular individual because, after all, the particularities attendant to an individual ego were purified in favor of the universal *nous*; Schelling tells us, “[n]ot I know, but only totality *knows* in me.”

Given the verticality of this intuited knowledge, it is clear that duty and obligation have no role to play in religiosity – they, the offspring of discursive thought, are the conscious impositions of will to direct behavior; if either duty or obligation must be consulted, it is proof that religiosity fails to grip the soul. So religiosity originates in that intuitive plane on which the anagogic traveler is in simultaneity with the divine. As we know, the anagogic traveler catches in intellectual intuition a flash⁶⁰⁴ of the gold of the *life of life* that “[l]ies] concealed within all the things of this world and which . . . glimmer[s] among dark matter.”⁶⁰⁵ As intellectual establishes what it intuits, only an intuited encounter with the numinous could engender such deep conviction; as Schelling tells us, religiosity “does not permit any choice between opposites . . . but rather only the highest resoluteness in favor of what is right without any choice.”⁶⁰⁶ It follows that the religious man acts as he does “because he could not at all have acted otherwise.”⁶⁰⁷ Religiosity, a knowing in simultaneity with the *life of life*, possesses and operates on the anagogic traveler without coercion – after all, [a]bsolute power, precisely because it is

⁶⁰⁴ “Muhammad is miraculously carried from Mecca to Jerusalem by *Buraq*. The name of this mythical beast derives from the Arabic word *baraqa*, ‘to flash’ (in the sense of a flash of lightning)” [Uždavinys, Ascent to Heaven in Islamic and Jewish Mysticism, P. 22].

⁶⁰⁵ Schelling, The Ages of the World, P. 62.

⁶⁰⁶ Schelling, Philosophical Investigations into the Nature of Freedom, P. 57.

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid.

what it is, is also ultimate serenity.”⁶⁰⁸ As is written elsewhere, “the will of Zeus . . . persuades without effort.”⁶⁰⁹

Upon his return to the world, the adept is possessed of a profound “religiosity” – he now *knows*.⁶¹⁰ “‘He who knows’ has at command an entirely different experience from that of profane man,”⁶¹¹ who must rely upon faith for his otherworldly knowledge. Schelling tells us that the adept’s possession of particular *epopteia*, which *knowing* he identifies as a datum of consciousness *a posteriori* to intellectual intuition, is certification of an occasion of intellectual intuition *a priori*. Said differently, ontological shifts within the anagogic traveler *a posteriori* intellectual intuition testifies to an occasion of intellectual intuition. Indeed, the very fact that the illuminated anagogic traveler gears into life differently following his return to the world is a historical testament *a posteriori* of the occurrence of the metaphysical instant.

The anagogic traveler who, once attaining to the primordial state, ascends to the greater mysteries that comprise a supra-human state unifies with the divine principle. The *life of life* is, as will be remembered, eternal; thus, the anagogic traveler who identifies with the *life of life*, the

⁶⁰⁸ Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, P. 42.

⁶⁰⁹ Hyde, P. 223 [citing *The Homeric Hymn to Hermes*]. In the Hindu tradition, Manu, “‘he who makes the wheel turn,’ which is to say, he who placed at the center of things, directs their movement without himself participating therein” [Guénon, *The King of the World*, P. 10].

⁶¹⁰ “The true *sūfī* is therefore the one who possesses the Wisdom, or, in other words, he is *al-‘arīf bi Llah*, that is to say ‘he who knows through God,’ for God cannot be known except by Himself; and this is the supreme or ‘total’ degree of knowledge or *haqīqah*” [Guenon, *Insights into Islamic Esoterism & Taoism*, P. 3]. A similar thinking runs through the Schellingian enterprise wherein Schelling approvingly quotes from Spinoza, “God loves Himself with infinite intellectual love” [Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, P. 50].

⁶¹¹ Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, P. 171.

supreme principle, attains to eternity.⁶¹² “True knowledge of [superior states] implies their effective possession and, inversely, it is by this very knowledge that the being takes possession of them, for the two acts are inseparable one from another, and we could even say that fundamentally they are but one.”⁶¹³ Said otherwise, insofar as the anagogic traveler identifies with the unbegotten *life of life*, “he himself necessarily can only be uncreated.”⁶¹⁴ In attaining to the greater mystery, the anagogic adept,⁶¹⁵ mortified of self-interest, identifies in entirety with *that which is* and unifies with its cosmic law and, in so doing, “[w]hat is only virtually realized at the start of the cycle is effectively realized at its end.”⁶¹⁶ As Campbell suggests to our consideration, “[h]is personal ambitions being totally dissolved, he no longer tries to live but willingly relaxes into whatever may come to pass in him; he becomes, that is to say, an anonymity. The law lives in him with his unreserved consent.”⁶¹⁷ Identifying with the *life of life*, the *elan vital* that lies beyond our ken, the illuminated adept, abiding in the *fons et origo* of all that is and all that will be, is transcendent to death⁶¹⁸ – viewing the comings and goings of the world from the perspective of eternity, he abides in equanimity.⁶¹⁹

⁶¹² “[W]hen the higher states have been attained, and when the attributes (*sifāt*) of the creature (*‘abd*, ‘slave’) – which are really limitations – disappear (*al-fanā*, ‘extinction’), leaving only those of Allah (*al-baqā*, ‘permanence’), the being becoming identified with the latter [Divine attributes] in his ‘personality’ or ‘essence’ (*adh-dhāt*)” [Guénon, *Insights into Islamic Esoterism and Taoism*, P. 2].

⁶¹³ Guénon, *The Multiple States of the Being*, P. 79.

⁶¹⁴ Guénon, *Insights into Islamic Esoterism & Taoism*, P. 50.

⁶¹⁵ “There can be no degree or spiritual state higher than that of the ‘adept’ [Guénon, *Perspectives on Initiation*, P. 278].

⁶¹⁶ Guénon, *The Esotericism of Dante*, P. 50.

⁶¹⁷ Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, P. 205.

⁶¹⁸ As Clara, in Schelling’s work of the same title, voices: “I understand it as meaning that what would live eternally would be just that innermost being, my own self that was neither body nor spirit, but which was the uniting consciousness of both; that is, it was the soul that would live eternally” [Schelling, *Clara: or, On Nature’s Connection to the Spirit World*, P. 36].

⁶¹⁹ McGrath, P. 96 (quoting Schelling, 1804a: 143). Accordingly, Nauen tries to make the case that, for Schelling, the free man, similar to an artist, is he who works to make concrete that which he “sees” in intellectual intuition. “Whatever reason there was in human experience received its ultimate sanction solely from the solitary majesty of the sovereign ego knowing itself in intellectual intuition” [*Ibid.*, P. 45].

Section 4: Conclusion

“Schelling famously concludes in [his] Freedom essay . . . [noting that] modernity ‘lacks a living ground [*es ihr am lebendigen Grunde fehlt*].”⁶²⁰ No longer, claims Schelling, is modern man moored or moved by a sense of eternity or at peace in the world; Charles Taylors has similarly described modern man as the product of the “malaise of immanence,”⁶²¹ empty of and remote from transcendental wisdom. To this understanding of the human condition, modern man has lost awareness of and reverence for the divine, living presence that is the natality and sustenance of all that is. In response to this sense of malaise, Schelling, calling on man to discard the empty pretense and fragmentation of modern life in favor of divine *gnosis*, summons him back to his innermost holy beginnings – modern man is called to reversion to the primordial state in intellectual intuition where, transparent to the ideal within the real, one may assimilate to divine presence and sees the world as through transformed. To this understanding, the philosophical-religion that Schelling espouses is profoundly experiential and deeply personal – here, in the *Einbildungskraft* of originary revelation, the greatest connects to the least in answer to the Schellingian riddle of the world. In the Schellingian philosophical-religion says Wirth, “*a new mythology . . . is born of revelation*, that knows that revelation is now at the heart of all myths. A new mythology is not the absurd return to the mythic age – the old gods have died – but a new kind of mythology, the coming of the gods to nature, the repopulation of the earth by

⁶²⁰ Wirth, Schelling and the Future of God, P. 3.

⁶²¹ Taylor, P. 309.

divine forces.”⁶²² In the Schellingian philosophical-religion, being is revealed as grounded in the ever generative non-being⁶²³ and man is reborn in courageous *amor fati*.

Throughout his writings, Schelling drew “on the truths he found in his study of the world’s mythic, religious and philosophical traditions;”⁶²⁴ in Philosophy and Religion, The Ages of the World, The Philosophy of Art, Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom and elsewhere, Schelling expresses deep sympathy with and seeks recovery of the ancient appreciation of nature as the hidden “dynamic spirit;”⁶²⁵ this *Deus Absconditus*, understood variously as the *amina mundi*, Osiris or the Dionysian spirit, is the incomprehensible, yet not imperceptible, non-human origin of all things. Given Schelling’s aforementioned sensibilities and his aspiration to revalorize a philosophical-religion, this paper turns to mythological, religious and philosophical traditions to help illuminate and inform its examination and support its reading of Schellingian intellectual intuition. This notwithstanding, this paper does not appeal to other traditions as authoritative of the Schellingian enterprise *per se*; rather, in drawing its correspondences and concordances, this paper intends to open possibilities, explore analogies and amplify Schellingian texts with the hope of making Schellingian thought come alive to and to resonate with the reader. Indeed, to the reading of this paper, we understand the Schellingian conception of the *life of life* to endure in and to animate the great esoteric traditions – the *life of life*, to this paper’s telling, may be likened to the breath of God that vivifies all that is.

⁶²² Wirth, Schelling and the Future of God, P. 6 (italics in original).

⁶²³ “Just as Dionysus in the mystery religions brought the real back to its soul, the Pauline retrieval of the esoteric dimension is the revelation of the present as grounded not in any particular thing or event, but abysmally rooted in the still creative depths” [Wirth, Schelling and the Future of God, P. 9 (italics in original)].

⁶²⁴ Schelling, The Grounding of Positive Philosophy, P. 7. Indeed, the last two decades of his academic career were spent on mythological themes; during those years, Schelling wrote his Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology.

⁶²⁵ Schelling, The Ages of the World, P. xxxv. One might recall that in Sufi mysticism the anagogue becomes suffused with “the divine love that conceals itself from this world . . . and accordingly follows the *din Ibrahim*, that is, the original and primordial Islam” [Uždavinys, The Ascent to Heaven in Islamic and Jewish Mysticism, P. 13].

Accordingly, in so setting forth its narrative, this paper aspires to honor “the philosophical tenor of old that [Schelling] sought to resound”⁶²⁶ and to approach Schellingian themes from the deep vantage of authorial intent. With this in mind, this paper introduced a reading of the Schellingian project as a descendent of the Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic spiritual traditions and the Hellenic mystery teachings insofar as Schelling sought to educe the esoteric elements of these traditions for his philosophical project; after all, Schelling, in display of his Orphic sensibilities, tells us that “the ultimate goal of the universe and its history is nothing other than the complete reconciliation (*Versöhnung*) with and re-absorption (*Wiederauflösung*) into the Absolute.”⁶²⁷ Consistently with this Orphic reading, this paper turns to traditionalist philosophical doctrine and to René Guénon as its prophet exemplar, which is understood to preserve and to transmit the perennial “old, sacred doctrine”⁶²⁸ that Schelling holds close, as the key to unlock, inform and to amplify the thematics surrounding Schellingian intellectual intuition. In keeping with this understanding of Schelling’s sympathies, this paper reads the Schellingian project as a *mystagogic* journey into these ancient sacred teachings to reveal esoteric *sophia perennis* contained within; specifically, for the purposes of this paper, the anagogic traveler of uncommon qualities would, through intellectual and moral purifications, transcend the confines of ordinary consciousness and, yielding to synthetic reasoning, attain to an unmediated and immediate encounter with the primordial *life of life* in intellectual intuition – there, the adept, whose valor

⁶²⁶ Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, P. 4.

⁶²⁷ *Ibid.*, P. 31.

⁶²⁸ *Ibid.*, P. 35. Schelling identifies this “old, sacred doctrine” as follows: “it says that souls descend from the world of intellect into the sensate world, where they find themselves tethered to a physical body, as if incarcerated, as a penalty for their selfness and for offences committed prior (ideally, not temporally) to this life. While they bring along the memory of the unison and harmony of the one *true* universe, their apprehension of it is distorted by the cacophony and dissonance of the senses just as they are unable to recognize truth in that *is*, or what appears to be, but only in what (for them) *was* and in that to which they strive to return – the life of the intellect” [*Ibid.*, Pp. 35-36 (italics in original)].

and purposeful labor befit his destiny, may assimilate to the divine, attain to supra-human *epopteia* and answer the Schellingian riddle of the world.

To bolster its claim that the Schellingian project makes use of the pre-existing archetype of contemplative *askesis* and orison as anagogic transport to intellectual intuition, this paper firstly suggests to the reader's consideration that the German Pietist reform movement, which prevailed during Schelling's formative years and assuredly regulated the conversations and spiritual practices of the Schelling household, engendered intimate, if pre-ontological, contributions to Schelling's philosophical sensibilities and spiritual *Weltanschauung*. This paper further suggests to the reader's consideration that the Boehmean and Oetingerian *Zentralerkenntnis* is the immediate, if pre-ontological, forefather to Schellingian intellectual intuition. Following from Schelling's Pietist upbringing and given that German Pietism is a moment within the greater contemplative tradition, this paper further claims that the antique contemplative tradition, which has roots deep in the Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic traditions and the Hellenic mystery teachings, is best positioned to inform and amplify the ontological and epistemological significance of Schellingian intellectual intuition. To the reading propounded by this paper, the silence of contemplative orison is synonymous with Schelling's notion of an ineffable and unmediated intellectual intuition – in the Schellingian project, the golden chain that extends from first principals to the phenomenalization of the material world, is replicated as the Hermaic chain within the human condition; in the Schellingian enterprise, just as for the ancient mind, “this chain is both the chain of theophany, manifestation, or descent (*demiourgike seira*) and the ladder of ascent.”⁶²⁹ So, to this reading, Schelling wants to *sacralize* existence and to invest

⁶²⁹ Uždavinyš, The Golden Chain, P. xxi.

existence with *being* so that all is recognized as a hierophany of the *life of life* and, borrowing an image from *Genesis*, so that Adam (or man) may once again walk with God in the sacred garden.

Schelling claims to have recovered the “dynamic spirit” – the *life of life* – the indestructible, inexhaustible Dionysian madness that is the *fons et origio* of all that is; Schelling claims that noetic perfection as *henosis* with the *life of life* is available only in intellectual intuition when the anagogic traveler intuits and establishes the *thatness* of primal chaos⁶³⁰ – in the simple identity of intellectual intuition, the knower and the known are one and the same. A conviction runs through Schellingian thought that, because humankind is poured from the same quiddity as the *life of life* and thus carries correspondence to *that which is*, if the anagogic traveler “succeeds in penetrating to the center of his being,”⁶³¹ he simultaneously attains to the center of being itself.⁶³²

Intellectual intuition, in which the human soul attains to simultaneity with the “pure absoluteness without any further determination”⁶³³ of *that which is*, is coextensive with total possibility; accordingly, it is in such unitive moments of intellectual intuition in noetic perfection with the *life of life* that the soul attains to absolute freedom. So, when, in the kairological “twinkling of an eye,”⁶³⁴ the anagogic traveler to intellectual intuition slips through a metaphysical tear in time and space and attains to *that which is*, he intuits and restores the originary and absolutely free *life of life*. Here in the numinous wonder of intellectual intuition, Schelling repeatedly insists, “all philosophizing begins and it has always begun, with the idea of the Absolute come alive.”⁶³⁵

⁶³⁰ “The fundamental intuition of chaos itself lies within the vision or intuition of the absolute. The inner essence of the absolute, that in which all resides as one and one as all, is primal chaos itself” [Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, P. 88.

⁶³¹ Guénon, *Traditional Forms & Cosmic Cycles*, P. 78. “*Al-insānu ramzul-wujūd*, ‘man is a symbol of universal Existence’” [Ibid.].

⁶³² “*Man yaraf nafsahu yaraf Rabbahu*, ‘he who knows his self knows his Lord’” [Ibid.].

⁶³³ Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, P. 18.

⁶³⁴ *Holy Bible*, *I Corinthians*, 15:52.

⁶³⁵ Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, P. 16.

To Schellingian genealogy and perennialist doctrine, “[w]hat is living in the highest science can only be what is primordially living, the being that is preceded by no other and is therefore the oldest of all beings”⁶³⁶ – the non-human *life of life*. Schelling insists that while discursive reason can conceive of and move toward the irreducible *life of life*, negative philosophy cannot confirm its existence because *that which is* is more primordial than analytic thought – from this vantage, it might also be said that existence precedes the conscious recognition of essence and, accordingly, the heroic anagogic traveler must undertake an initiatic journey of self-discovery to bring into cognitive clarity that which he already is. Negative discursive philosophy, because it arises within, is subject to and is co-extensive with the human condition, cannot attain to the sacred wisdom of non-human origin. Anticipating Cassirer, who avers that “reality seems to recede in proportion as man’s symbolic activity advances,”⁶³⁷ we read from Schelling that “the real world is no longer the living word, the speech of God himself, but rather only the spoken – or expended – word.”⁶³⁸ So, the constructed unity of discursive reasoning is but a pretense of the living reality, a pretense that the anagogic traveler must overcome to attain to the living word of *that which is*.

Accordingly, this paper reads the Schellingian *mystagogy* into the sacred teachings to position negative philosophy as preparatory to (and, upon the adept’s later return to the profane world, as descriptive of) a positive anagogic encounter with the sacred. Indeed, precisely because negative philosophy is incapable of confirming the existence of the divine *life of life*, Schelling claims that

⁶³⁶ *Ibid.*, P. 75.

⁶³⁷ Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, P. 25.

⁶³⁸ Schelling, *Philosophy of Art*, P. 101.

negative philosophy culminates in epistemic collapse; this collapse, in turn, occasions *aporia*, which, as a chaotic irruption comparable to the undifferentiated simplicity of the originary *prima materia*, places the anagogic traveler in an *unheimlich* dislocation and, in so doing, opens him to spiritual awakening by the vibration of *fiat lux* and makes him susceptible to spiritual influences. Prompted to a wisdom originating outside the self, the paladin anagogic traveler, desirous of epistemic completion, is receptive to the call to “deny himself and take up his cross”⁶³⁹ in contemplative *askesis* and orison so as to be “reborn” in a positive encounter with *that which is* in intellectual intuition – that originary state transcendent to ordinary consciousness. As mystics everywhere tell us, the “*mysterium tremendum et fascinans* will not be ‘known of the heart’ until we acknowledge that it is ‘unknown of the intellect.’”⁶⁴⁰ The liminal primordial state, we are told by perennialism, is “situated in the plane that separates it into its upper and lower halves, that is, at the limit between Heaven and Earth.”⁶⁴¹ Accordingly, to attain to this liminal state, the anagogic traveler must first traverse the terrestrial realm to attain to the lesser mysteries; to the ontological hierarchy articulated by traditionalist philosophy, “the heavens are the superior states of being; the hells, as the name indicates, are the inferior states.”⁶⁴² For this reason, contemplative tradition envisions the anagogic path to the primordial state as attained by descent through all states of existence prior to the wayfarer’s current state; in keeping with traditionalist thought and consistently with Schelling’s reliance on the pre-existing contemplative archetype, this paper has likewise read Schellingian intellectual intuition as the anagogic vehicle to the primordial state. Perennialist doctrine tells us that this spiritual descent is accomplished by the

⁶³⁹ Holy Bible, *Luke* 9:24.

⁶⁴⁰ Underhill, Mysticism, P. 348.

⁶⁴¹ Guénon, The King of the World, P. 71, nt. 16.

⁶⁴² Guénon, The Esoterism of Dante, P. 32.

anagogic traveler, who, in unifying the powers of his being⁶⁴³ through theurgic self-recollection, *gnosis*, *askesis* and detachment from the concerns of the world, attains to a spiritual poverty and so becomes simple as a child.⁶⁴⁴ As the Gospels tell us, “[t]ruly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.”⁶⁴⁵ The anagogic traveler, once purified of being and attained of spiritual simplicity, may dislocate from the ordinary plane of consciousness and, for the span of a lighting flash,⁶⁴⁶ temporarily inhabit the primordial state of Osiris *redivivus* – the originary world egg⁶⁴⁷ which is the embryonic state containing all cosmic and ontological possibilities. Akin to the ontological demands within contemplative *askesis* and orison, the anagogic traveler to the Dionysian noetic realm is obliged to overcome the world through introversion whereby his scattered normative commitments are recollected, his ego mortified, the surface of his mind is stilled and he is given in entirety to an orison of internal silence. In so surrendering self-centeredness (I-ness) to an *ekstasis* beyond being,⁶⁴⁸ the uncommon anagogic traveler, if of sufficiently sensitive, subtle and courageous spirit, is transformed⁶⁴⁹ into glory (spirit) and activated by the hieratic virtues of the *vita contemplative* – a life of religiosity that re-aligns his ontological commitments around a new spiritual *axis*

⁶⁴³ Guénon, *Insights into Islamic Esoterism & Taoism*, P. 19.

⁶⁴⁴ We might remember Socrates description of the primordial state of purity: “But those who are judged to have lived a life of surpassing holiness – these are those who are released and set free from confinement in these regions of the earth, and passing upward to their pure abode, make their dwelling upon earth’s surface. And of these such as have purified themselves sufficiently by philosophy live thereafter altogether without bodies, and reach habitations even more beautiful, which it is not easy to portray” [Plato, *Phaedo* 114:c].

⁶⁴⁵ *Holy Bible*, *Luke* 18:17.

⁶⁴⁶ Muhammad is miraculously carried from Mecca to Jerusalem by *Baraq*. The name of this mythical beast derives from the Arabic word *baraqa*, ‘to flash’ (in the sense of a flash of lightening)” [Uždavinys, *Ascent to Heaven in Islamic and Jewish Mysticism*, P. 22].

⁶⁴⁷ See, for example, Marie-Louise von Franz, *Creation Myths*, Erich Neumann, *The Origins and History of Consciousness*, and Rene Guénon, *The King of the World*, P. 69, nt. 9.

⁶⁴⁸ The reader is asked to remember that, for Schelling, being and discursive reason are one and the same.

⁶⁴⁹ Etymologically, transformation entails “‘passing beyond form’ and hence all that belongs to the order of individual existence” [Guenon, *The Symbolism of the Cross*, P. 15].

mundi,⁶⁵⁰ the intellectual intuition of *thatness*, which, as the transcendent cause of cosmological existence, grounds being in non-being and is the way of freedom and peace.

Intellectual intuition, absent of mental imagery or analytic thought, is an unmediated encounter with the *thatness* of *that which is*; of synthetic character, intellectual intuition is mute and unavailable to knowledge *en rationis*. Robert Forman and Jonathon Shear, in their respective depictions of a *sui generis* pure conscious event, provide ample substantive support to this paper's association of the Schellingian *nicht denkendes Denken*, the "innermost beginning" of the self, with anagogic traditions everywhere. Indeed, this paper takes a *sui generis* pure conscious event as synonymous with Schellingian unmediated intellection intuition and, accordingly, takes as well-founded Schelling's claim that the anagogic traveler is reflexively aware of consciousness only after a pure conscious event; as Forman puts it, "I know my consciousness and I know that I am and have been conscious simply because I am."⁶⁵¹ Tracking a similar understanding, Schelling claims that an anagogic traveler becomes cognizant of intellectual intuition *a posteriori* of its occasion. Schelling maintains that the illuminated initiate experiences a profound religious conviction following an instance of numinous intellectual intuition. Schelling claims that this experience of religious conviction is a historical datum of consciousness that attests to the initiate's interior encounter with the divine *life of life* in intellectual intuition. More broadly, this paper reads Schelling to claim that the illuminated anagogic traveler certifies intellectual intuition *a posteriori* in the resolute re-centering and reorganization of his life around a new spiritual axis; indeed, to this simultaneously traditionalist

⁶⁵⁰ "At the center-point of the [heroic] journey there occurs an atonement with the Father, a recognition that power lies outside of himself, and an abandonment of attachment to the ego. As Campbell as written, 'One must have faith that the father is merciful, and then a reliance on that mercy'" [Father Roger Joslin, *Sermon* 1-22-17].

⁶⁵¹ Forman, P. 118.

and Heideggerian reading of this aspect of Schellingian intellectual intuition, the new and resolute manner in which the adept gears into his life *a posteriori* is testimony of his holy intellectual intuition *a priori*.

The Orphic wayfarer in noetic reversion to the Dionysian monad in intellectual intuition, which as the liminal threshold between heaven and earth, answers the governing Schellingian riddle of the world as mediator between the greatest and the least; indeed, as read by this paper, Schellingian intellectual intuition is the central link within the Hermaic chain between transcendence and immanence and, as such, may be likened to the ternary Sephirothic tree⁶⁵² in which, as Heraclitus elsewhere tells us, "the way up and the way down is one and the same."⁶⁵³

“Proceeding from the unconscious existence of the eternal, science guides it up to the highest transfiguration and into divine consciousness. The most supersensible thoughts now receive physical power and life and, vice versa, nature becomes ever more the visible imprint of the highest concepts.”⁶⁵⁴

As will be recalled, in reversion to the primordial state (that particular *epopteia* otherwise known in the Hellenic sacred teachings as the “lesser mystery”) in the *metanoia* of intellectual intuition, the illuminated anagogic traveler unifies⁶⁵⁵ with the entirety of the terrestrial realm;

⁶⁵² The Sephirothic tree synthesizes the “tree of life” and the “tree of knowledge of good and evil.” In essence, the Sephirothic tree may be said to “depict the process of universal manifestation: everything starts from unity and returns to unity; in the interim there is duality, the division or differentiation from which manifested existence results; the ideas of unity and duality are thus combined here” [Guenon, *The Symbolism of the Cross*, P. 58, ft. 21].

⁶⁵³ Hyland, P. 165.

⁶⁵⁴ Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, P. xi.

⁶⁵⁵ As Pico Iyer suggests in the forward of his lovely and whimsical, *The Year of the Hare*, “[t]here is a sense in which he has thrown his arms around impermanence now, a freedom from routine, and can cheerfully become one with the events that whiz by as zanily as in some animated or graphic novel” [Paasilinna, P. x].

upon his return to the world, he is “one who knows”⁶⁵⁶ that all of manifested reality is one and bound together in love; the anagogic traveler, illuminated by the salvific *epopteia* of this lesser mystery, sees the world as if transformed⁶⁵⁷ – to his newly spiritual eye, the world is transformed into a hierophany of the *life of life*; the world is the indifferent self-realization of the divine, “which *Spinoza* aptly expressed with the following sentence: ‘*God loves Himself with infinite intellectual love.*’”⁶⁵⁸ If he is of rare spiritual gifts and bold and persistent of character, our traveler might continue on his anagogic way and successfully ascend to the celestial mysteries (otherwise known to the Hellenic sacred teachings as the “greater mysteries”); there, the anagogic traveler attains to noetic perfection amid transformation into the unmodified and primordial *life of life*, true being, which, as the simultaneity of all states of being, is the *will that wills nothing* – the absolute freedom of the *prima materia* of all *that which is*; the perfected adept, assimilates in spiritual *henosis* with the sap of life and, in so doing, becomes the *life of life*. So, to the reading of this paper, Schellingian intellectual intuition, understood as noetic perfection, assuredly does not dissolve into a sentimental glorification of a lost undifferentiated and primordial Edenic origin,⁶⁵⁹ but, in the anagogic identification with the *life of life* as the *fons et origio* of all that which was, is and will be, points toward life as continual overcoming⁶⁶⁰ and being as ever-present natality: in the words of the *Zohar*, “the world that is coming – coming

⁶⁵⁶ Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, P. 171.

⁶⁵⁷ There is great consolation in myth and related tales. As we may read from Tolkien, “[b]ut in God’s kingdom the presence of the greatest does not depress the small. Redeemed Man is still man . . . [t]he Christian has still to work, with mind as well as body, to suffer, hope, and die; but he may now perceive that all his bents and faculties have a purpose, which can be redeemed. So great is the bounty with which he has been treated that he may now, perhaps, fairly dare to guess that in fantasy he may actually assist in the exfoliation and multiple enrichment of creation. All tales may come true; and yet, in the last, redeemed, they may be as like and as unlike the forms what we give them as Man, finally redeemed, will be like and unlike the fallen that we know” [Tolkien, P. 73].

⁶⁵⁸ Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, P. 50 (italics in original).

⁶⁵⁹ Bowie, P. 179.

⁶⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

constantly and never ceasing.”⁶⁶¹ And so Schelling insists that in unitive consciousness with the supreme principle, the adept, as mediator between heaven and earth, “regain[s] a clear view”⁶⁶² of *that which is* in intellectual intuition, “summon[s] up fresh power”⁶⁶³ and, in liberating the creative force⁶⁶⁴ and productive imagination (*Einbildungskraft*) of the *life of life*, manifests the formation of the world in his re-descent and participates as co-creator⁶⁶⁵ in the continual cosmological and ontological renewal of the world. The anagogic traveler is “‘the source of life’ flowing into itself.”⁶⁶⁶ Indeed, in *henosis* with the supreme principle of the *will that wills nothing*, the un-begotten, indestructible, undifferentiated and inexhaustible *life of life*, the perfected adept, figuratively reposed at the center of the cosmic wheel,⁶⁶⁷ is soteriologically delivered from the comings and goings of the phenomenal world and, so redeemed, becomes the clear mirror⁶⁶⁸ of the equanimity, absolute freedom and expansive love of the *life of life*. Attained to the noetic perfection of the celestial Jerusalem,⁶⁶⁹ this paper reads Schelling to claim that the transformed adept is revealed to be what he already was in his innermost beginnings –

⁶⁶¹ Matt, The Zohar, 3:290b.

⁶⁶² Tolkien, P. 57. It might otherwise be said that the adept gains a “sense of eternity” [Guenon, The Symbolism of the Cross, P. 146].

⁶⁶³ Schelling, The Ages of the World, P. xxxviii.

⁶⁶⁴ Wirth, Schelling Now, P. 17.

⁶⁶⁵ Nauen tries to make the case that, for Schelling, the free man, similar to an artist, is he who works to make concrete that which he “sees” in intellectual intuition (*Einbildungskraft*).

⁶⁶⁶ Pseudo-Dionysius, P. 281.

⁶⁶⁷ And, as Guénon tell us, “the ideal . . . consists of the indifference [or rather the detachment in activity that is non-action] of the superior man who allows the cosmic wheel to turn” [Guenon, The King of the World, P. 60].

⁶⁶⁸ He “leaves the world of illusions for the world of Reality and when his journey is complete he becomes himself the mirror in which Truth and its cosmic manifestation is reflected [Uždavinys, Ascent to Heaven in Islamic and Jewish Mysticism, P. 112]. We read also from Schelling, “[w]e demand for every single thing a particular and free life” [Schelling, The Philosophy of Art, P. 37].

⁶⁶⁹ “In the case of the Celestial Jerusalem, the circle is replaced by a square, indicating accomplishment of what the Hermeticists designated symbolically as the ‘squaring the circle’: the sphere, representing the development of possibilities through the expansion of the primordial central point, is transformed into a cube when this development is completed and the final equilibrium for the cycle under consideration is attained” [see Guénon, The King of the World, P. 71 and see Guénon, The Reign of Quantity & the Signs of the Times, P. 141]. “Now the form of the ‘Terrestrial Paradise,’ corresponding to the beginning of the cycle, is circular, whereas that of the ‘Heavenly Jerusalem,’ corresponding to the end, is square” [Guénon, The Reign of Quantity & the Signs of the Times, P. 141].

the inexhaustible, indestructible and non-human *life of life*; as such, Schelling might claim that the adept is aptly and succinctly described by these words from the Gospel of Thomas:

“[f]or where the beginning is, the end will be. Fortunate is one who stands at the beginning: That one will know the end and will not taste death.”⁶⁷⁰

⁶⁷⁰ Meyer, P. 31. Under the reading of this paper, a similar message might be discerned in the following passage from the Gospel of Luke: “[b]ut I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of heaven” [Holy Bible, *Luke* 9:27].

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