

Schellingiana

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Philosophy of F. W. J. Schelling

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Freedom and Creation in Schelling

Edited by Henning Tegtmeier
and Dennis Vanden Auweele

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The handwritten original of the quatrain on page 1

Ich bin der ich war.
Ich bin der ich sein werde.
Ich war der ich sein werde.
Ich werde sein der ich bin

is found in the archive of the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie
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Introduction

Responding to a criticism from Adam Karl August von Eschenmayer (1768–1852), Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling writes that »freedom can never be taken up fully in the concept, and there must always be a remainder that does not resolve into the concept«.¹ Here, Schelling implicitly addresses a seemingly Kantian qualm about his famous essay *Philosophische Untersuchungen über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit* (1809), usually referred to as the *Freiheitsschrift* (*Freedom Essay*). Did Schelling, after Kant had explicitly forbidden this, turn freedom into a concept that could be understood through theoretical reason? This was close to blasphemy for those who took seriously Kant's restriction of knowledge to the realm of possible experience, a realm that did not include a sensory intuition of freedom. Or did Schelling come up with new ways to talk about freedom that go beyond but do not conflict with transcendental idealism?²

Whatever Schelling's relationship to Kant may be, a topic that will return time and again in this volume, it is beyond dispute that Schelling's essay on human freedom did open up a new avenue for philosophical idealism, one that was gladly taken by Schelling's erstwhile roommate, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. Hegel took Schelling's cues and claimed that freedom could be understood by a more robustly dialectical philosophy that uses the long arch of history for

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- 1 Cf. J. Wirth (2015): *Schelling's Practice of the Wild. Time, Art, Imagination*. Albany, NY, 175.
 - 2 The classical view on this issue, a view endorsed by both Horst Fuhrmans and Xavier Tilliette, is that Schelling breaks free from the bonds of German Idealism and consequently is no longer subject to Kant's auto-critique of reason. See H. Fuhrmans (1956/57): »Der Ausgangspunkt der Schellingschen Spätphilosophie«. In: *Kant-Studien* 48, 302–323; X. Tilliette (1970): *Schelling. Une philosophie en devenir*. 2 vol. Paris. More recently, it is argued that Schelling does not so much oppose Kantian idealism but opens up new ways of doing philosophy after taking seriously Kant's critical philosophy. For further discussion, see D. Vanden Auweele (2020): *Exceeding Reason. Freedom and Religion in Schelling and Nietzsche*. Berlin / New York, 195–223.

spirit to come to know itself. Hegel's philosophy of freedom and history is well known. But what roads did Schelling walk after the *Freiheitsschrift*? That remained a question mark for a long time. Schelling's post-idealistic philosophy was not taken very seriously after the damning critiques of his late Berlin lectures. Even a philosopher of the stature of Edmund Husserl confided in 1913 to Karl Jaspers that »Schelling is not to be taken seriously as a philosopher«.³ Over the last decade or two, however, there has been an increase in interest in Schelling's philosophy in and after 1809, both in the German literature – for example R. Scheerlinck (2020), G. Kozdra (2016), R. Dörendahl (2011), O. Florig (2010), M.D. Krüger (2008), and L. Knatz (1999) – and in French-speaking scholarship – for example A. Roux (2016 and 2010), M. Saule (2011), and J.-F. Courtine / J.-F. Marquet (eds.) (1994) –, but also in the English-speaking world – for example D. Vanden Auweele (2020), A. Hampton (2019), B. Freyberg (2017), J.M. Wirth (2015), L. Ostaric (ed.) (2014), T. Tritten (2012), and M. Gabriel (2011).

The present volume attends to Schelling's development on the notion of freedom in and after his *Freedom Essay*. This development gets tangled up with numerous other issues, most importantly creation (*Schöpfung*). It appears to be a basic assumption of Schelling's that God's act of creating the world is an important measuring rod for understanding human freedom. Though he initially felt attracted to other views of creation, Schelling, in his late philosophy, eventually settled on the thought that creation is an expression of unforeseeable freedom. There is no way to make sense of the act of freedom – at least within a *negative* system of philosophy. Freedom can only be discovered by a *positive* philosophy of nature, history, and of Christian revelation.

Schelling's philosophy did not evolve only through the organic development of his own thinking but took shape by means of reading and dialoguing with other philosophers. Though he disappeared

3 »Schelling sei doch gar kein ernst zu nehmender Philosoph« (K. Schuhmann [1977]: *Husserl-Chronik. Denk- und Lebensweg Edmund Husserls*. The Hague [*Husserliana 1*], 175).