

THE SCHELLINGIAN ROOTS OF PEIRCE'S IDEALISM

Ivo Assad Ibri

The German philosophy that immediately followed Kant inherited from him its main ideas and problems, initiating the era of *idealism*. Despite *German Idealism* is their common brand, Fichte and Schelling's thoughts are, at the end, quite distinct considering some nuances. The former is the latter's starting point; in his youth, he adopted the basic lines of Fichtean philosophy. However, endowed with a profoundly poetic spirit that appears in many passages of his text, Schelling could not stand for long a *total lack* of the clear aesthetic quality inherent to German romanticism that colored Fichte's *Doctrine of Science*. Indeed, the principles of Fichtean philosophy evolve in the grounding of a subject that, starting from Kant, is increasingly internalized, acquiring a legislative character taking the Kantian problem of subjective constitution to a radical extreme.

During this period, the question of the «necessity-freedom» dichotomy was actively resumed under a dual trend: causality, as a fundamental rule of knowledge ensnaring the phenomenon in an antecedent-consequent web as inherited from the Kantian solution of Hume's skepticism, and the libertarian winds of the French revolution, which brought about the reassertion of the subject's innate unconditionality. The figure of the constitutive subject owes much to this necessary reassertion of freedom. «I» is the vertex from which emanate the ethical-libertarian edge engraved in the Enlightenment, as well as the epistemological-constitutive edge which marks the apology of rationality in the face of a supposedly definite deciphering of the principles of Nature in the three laws of the Newtonian dynamics.

The specter of the Kantian *thing-in-itself*, however, remained in the center of the questions of Idealism. Fichte keeps it in innerness, resolving, by principle, this Kantian residue of the real world, which remained uncomfortably *loose* in Nature - that is, *uncomfortably external to the self*. An extreme solution was thus called for. Radically, innerness takes over the world to domesticate it in light of a *Self* that emerges as an eminently practical being: the grounding act is no longer solely theoretical; it is the action of that without which no reality is possible; and, on this stage built by an act of the subject, all moral acts are also played out. In a daring step that overcomes the Kantian dichotomy between the theoretical and practical spheres, Fichte merges them in a single world. Just for this reason that unknowable specter had also be ensnared in the inner self. The moral purpose of the subject legitimizes its establishment as cognitive and active being, disseminating to the *non-self* and shaping it in its im-

age - in other words, creating it in accordance with its spirit. On this point, Neuhouser adds:

Thus, Fichte will endeavor to prove the existence of practical reason by showing that such a faculty is a necessary condition for the possibility of theoretical reason [...] Although the account of theoretical reason will precede that of practical reason in order of exposition, this strategy actually implies a primacy of practical reason over theoretical reason in the sense that the latter is shown to be grounded in, or conditioned by, the former¹.

It is on the three principles of his 1794 *Science of knowledge*² that Fichte achieves the basis of his project. The first one is a self-founding of the Self as the active apprehension of a consciousness of itself that posits itself: it is self-identical and so constitutes a sole and indissoluble unit in its genesis, scene of all reactions against which that, necessarily, will have to posit itself and oppose. Thus an absolute subjectivity, modeled on the logical principle of identity $A = A$ and grounded in the form of $I = I$, establishes itself and, as such, is absolute. This self-positing is, above all, *practical*. In the words of Hartmann:

[...] neither the “I am” nor the “I think” of Descartes; but solely the “I act”. Kant’s transcendental perception, to which Fichte here consciously links himself, is not exhausted for him in being the supreme principle of cognitive consciousness; it also represents the supreme principle of practical consciousness.³

This self-identical «I» that senses its absolute freedom and posits itself as innately practical is, for this reason, genetically *productive*; there shall no longer be an equivalence of rights between subject and object; the *latter* will be the product of the *former*. That intellectual intuition which, according to Kant, is the source of all metaphysical errors, now becomes the ground of all

¹F. Neuhouser, *Fichte's theory of subjectivity*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1990, p. 47.

²J. G. Fichte, *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre (als Handschrift für seine Zuhörer)*, in *Werke 1793-1795*, Reinhard Lauth e Hans Jacobeds., Friedrich Frommann Verlag (Günther Holzboog), Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 1965, pp. 173-478. English transl.: Id., *Science of knowledge*, Peter Heath e John Lachs eds., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2003.

³N. Hartmann, *Die Philosophie des deutschen Idealismus*, Walter De Gruyter, Berlin/New York 1974, p. 48: «[...] weder das “ich bin” noch das “ich denke” [Descartes] ist das Letzte, worauf die Reflexion hinausführt, sondern einzig das “ich handle”. Die transzendente Apperzeption Kants, an die Fichte hier bewusst anknüpft, ist damit nicht erschöpft, dass sie oberstes Prinzip des erkennenden Bewusstseins ist; sie ist auch oberstes Prinzip des praktischen Bewusstseins».

possible reality⁴. The work and product of this Self-primary productive action, exteriority antithetically *comes into existence* as *non-Self* in resistance to the Self's absolute freedom. By opposing, then, a non-Self to the original I, a duality is established that must be resolved at the level of reason. This reduction of the *object* to an integral function of the *subject* translates into the formulation of the *second principle* of the Doctrine of Science: the Self *posits* the non-Self as its opposite; and this active, practical act of positing is what grounds the reality of the entire exteriority; without the subject and its act, it is nothing. The solution of this dichotomy is synthetically given in the *third principle* at the consummation of a dialectical process that has both its genesis and end in innerness. A possible conciliation is only accomplished by the constraint of that consciousness that, initially absolute, is cut and limited to contain that which is foreign to its freedom, but which it posited in itself. On the other hand, this cut and limitation cannot be restricted to consciousness; the *other* posited must be a limited *other* for the conscious *substratum* to contain the opposition of two finitudes⁵. Thus the *Self* and *non-Self* are conciliated, mutually limiting in a process of synthesis that distinguishes the similarities and differences, but united under the same consciousness that, ultimately, requires the *other* as resistance to its unlimited action, though initially it is solely a self-contemplation of its absolute freedom. Hartmann expresses well this fundamental trait of the *Doctrine of science*.

If the practical behavior of the Self simply consists in pure activity that, without resistance, would be infinite, the practical I would coincide with the absolute I and, thus, there would be no need to explain self-constraint. But this is not the case. Conduct, action and act are not an unlimited production, but rather an act on anything. Its activity is aspiration and to aspire is to conquer. One can only conquer where there is resistance, one can only aspire to something where there is something that resists aspiration, that is, an obstacle; in a word, where there is an object to which one can, in some way, aspire. However, the object

⁴In R. R. Torres Filho, *O espírito e a letra*, Ática, São Paulo 1975, p. 67, it reads: «he finds intellectual intuition as the “absolute form of knowledge, the pure form of ‘egoity’”. To say, then, from his viewpoint, that: “only freedom is the first immediate object of a knowledge” may be correctly translated as: knowledge only starts with self-consciousness».

⁵Fichte is explicit as to this concept of limitation: «The self cannot posit the not-self without restricting itself. For the not-self is completely opposed to the self; what the not-self is, the self is not; [...] – The expressions to posit a not-self and to restrict the self are completely equivalent, as was shown in the theoretical Science of Knowledge» (*Science of knowledge*, cit., pp. 222-3). (Id, *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre*, cit., p. 389: «Das Ich kann das Nicht-Ich nicht setzen ohne sich selbst einzuschränken. Denn das Nicht-Ich ist dem Ich völlig entgegengesetzt; was das Nicht-Ich ist. [I] ist das Ich nicht [...]. Die Ausdrücke: ein Nicht Ich setzen, und: das Ich einschränken, sind völlig gleichgeltend, wie in der theoretischen Wissenschaftslehre dargethan worden»).

emerges for the theoretical I in its action of positing the non-Self as determinant and real. Opposition, thus, is a condition of aspiration. The absolute *I* has to become theoretical to be practical; it first has to create the world of objects in whose resistance it shall become active⁶.

In fact, this reality posited by the subject in its own innerness to perform the necessary role of opposition is the means by which moral action becomes possible. In the standpoint of resolvable antithesis, the subject's innately grounding freedom must be redeemed, not only as a predicate of itself but as a predicate of an entire cognitive history of such a *Self/non-Self* dialectical relationship. For this reason, Fichte cannot admit the thing in itself outside of the subject; its ensnarement in innerness is, simultaneously, the basic condition for its overcoming. While the external and demarcatory thing-in-itself remained in Kant, in Fichte everything was radically internalized under the yoke of the *active subject*, whose mission is to recover a freedom experienced as self-contemplation, creating a realm for itself where Nature is mere resistance that must be overcome.

To posit the non-Self within the absolute subject is to draw away from an infinite freedom toward an existence that also reacts as finite in a reciprocal determination of absolute opposites. Primarily, however, the absolute *I* is the ground where the world is fulfilled: «The source of all reality is the self, for this is what is immediately and absolutely posited. The concept of reality is first given with and by way of the self.»⁷

While being the instance where the world acquires its condition of possibility, the Self actively posits its own opposition to determine itself in finitude and, by doing so, posits something foreign to its absoluteness, which, inherently, has no opposites: «*But man, insofar as the predicate of freedom is applicable to him, that is, insofar as he is an absolute and not a presented or presentable subject, has*

⁶N. Hartmann, *op. cit.*, p. 64: «*Bestünde das praktische Verhalten des Ich einfach in der reinen Tätigkeit, die widerstandslos ins Unendliche ginge, so fiel das praktische Ich mit dem absoluten Ich zusammen, und dann wäre an eine Erklärung der Selbstbeschränkung von hier aus nicht zu denken. Das aber ist nicht der Fall. Praktisches Verhalten, Handlung, Wirken ist nicht unbeschränkte Produktion, sondern ein Einwirken auf etwas. Seine Tätigkeit ist Streben, Streben aber ist ein Überwinden. Nun lässt sich überwinden nur, wo ein Widerstand ist, streben nur, wo ein Widerstreben, eine Hemmung, kurz wo ein Gegenstand ist, an dem sich etwas erstreben lässt. Der Gegenstand aber entsteht dem theoretischen Ich in seiner Setzung des Nicht-Ich als eines Bestimmenden, Realen. Die Entgegensetzung ist also Bedingung des Strebens. Das absolute Ich muss theoretisch werden, um praktisch zu sein. Es muss sich die Welt der Gegenstände erst erschaffen, an deren Widerstand es handelnd werden soll.*

⁷J. G. Fichte, *Science of knowledge*, cit., p. 129. (Id., *Grundlage*, cit., 1965, p. 293: «*Aller Realität Quelle ist das Ich. Erst durch und mit dem Ich ist der Begriff der Realität gegeben.*»).

nothing whatever in common with natural beings, and hence is not contrasted to them either.»⁸.

Torres Filho refers to Fichte's statement in which he calls himself *acosmist* while affirming the *nullity of the empirical world*: «the given world – whether taken as a system of thing or as a system of determinations of consciousness – absolutely does not exist in any strong sense of the word, and in its base and ground is nothing»⁹.

It is obvious that between the Self and the non-Self there can be no form of *continuum*, which, in itself, would only be the fundamental trace of that absolute consciousness filled by naught but itself: «It is thus that, between nature and intelligence, there cannot be any kind of *continuity*»¹⁰.

Schelling, for his part, in search of an Idealism in which Nature is not solely this obstacle to moral action, and after moving away from the basic principles¹¹ of Fichtean thought he had absorbed in his youth, replaced that genealogical intellectual intuition by an eminently empirical intuition, where the aesthetic qualities of the world point toward a unity between consciousness and Nature quite distinct from an empty and unlimited unity that is free but without a world where this infinitude can also be immediately apprehended. The Schellingian eye does not turn on itself as Fichte's does; it opens to a Nature whose verbal silence is not indicative of a radical lack of language, but is rather a challenge to see it in time as a teleological process intelligently articulated by it¹².

⁸J. G. Fichte, *Science of knowledge*, cit., p. 115. (Id., *Grundlage*, cit., p. 277: «Aber der Mensch, insofern das Prädikat der Freiheit von ihm gelten kann, d.i. in sofern er absolut und nicht vorgestelltes noch vorstellbares Subjekt ist, hat mit den Naturwesen gar nichts gemein und ist ihnen also auch nicht entgegengesetzt»).

⁹J. G. Fichte (SW, IV, p. 378), *apud* R. R. Torres Filho, *op. cit.*, p. 76; my translation: «o mundo dado – quer seja tomado como sistema de coisas ou como um sistema de determinações da consciência – absolutamente não existe em nenhum sentido forte da palavra, e na sua base e fundamento não é nada».

¹⁰R. R. Torres Filho, *op. cit.*, p. 80; my translation: «É assim que, entre a natureza e a inteligência, não pode haver nenhuma espécie de continuidade».

¹¹On this point, see Thomas Pfau in the Introduction to three essays by Schelling, in F. W. J. v. Schelling, *Idealism and the endgame of theory: three essays*, Thomas Pfau ed., SUNY Press, New York 1994, p. 22-57.

¹²In *Ideas for a philosophy of nature* (1797, 1803²), the author mentions the aura that the philosophy of Nature inherited since the beginning of Greek cosmological philosophy, which is not redeemable by reflexive philosophy, in an obvious reference to Fichte, stressing this utterable natural language: «Hence the peculiar aura which surrounds this problem, an aura which the philosophy of mere reflection, which sets out only to separate, can never develop, whereas the pure intuition, or rather, the creative imagination, long since discovered symbolic language, which one has only to construe in order to discover that Nature *speaks to us the more intelligibly the less we think of her in a merely reflective way*»(J. W. J. v. Schelling, *Ideas for a philosophy of nature*, E. E. Harris e P. Heath eds., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1988, p. 35; my italics).(Id., *Ideias para uma filosofia da natureza*, bilingual edition Carlos Morujão ed., Centro de Filosofia da Universidade de Lisboa/Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, Lisboa 2001, pp. 98-9: «Daher der

Schelling's reconciliation of ideality and reality will not be accomplished by conceiving the latter as a product of subjectivity, as a consequence of a complete interiorization of the world, but rather by the extensionality of the former to a subject-object relationship consummated in an ontological idea of Nature and identity. The experience of infinitude that Fichte confined in the void of intellectual intuition becomes objectified in Schelling as *aesthetic* experience: «This universally acknowledged and altogether incontestable objectivity of intellectual intuition is art itself. For the aesthetic intuitions simply is the intellectual intuition become objective»¹³.

This objectified infinitude must, in turn, be the starting point of philosophy; art is the factual source of this merger of the finite and the infinite. The artist starts from this contradiction of expressing, in the finite work, the infinite that becomes the identity of the ideal and the real. Art is the primary document of this identity; the product, albeit conscious, manifests its production:

Just as the man of destiny does not execute what he wishes or intends, but rather what he is obliged to execute by an inscrutable fate which governs him, so the artist, however deliberate he may be, seems nonetheless to be governed, in regard to what is truly objective in his creation, by a power which separates him from all other men, and compels him to say or depict things which he does not fully understand himself, and whose meaning is infinite¹⁴.

eigenthümliche Schein, der um diese Probleme her ist, ein Schein, den die bloß speculative Philosophie, die nur auf Trennung ausgeht, nie zu entwickeln vermag, während der gesunde Verstand, oder vielmehr die schöpferische Eingildungskraft längst die symbolische Sprache erfand, die man nur auslegen darf, um zu finden daß die Natur um so verständlicher zu uns spricht, je weniger wir über sie spekulirem»).

¹³ F. W. J. v. Schelling, *System of transcendental idealism*, P. Heath ed., University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville 1978, p. 229; my bold type. (Id., *System des transzendentalen Idealismus*, in *Ausgewählte Schriften*, Band I (1794-1800), Manfred Frank ed., Suhrkamp, Frankfurt 1985¹, p. 693: «Diese allgemein anerkannte und auf keine Weise hinwegzuleugnende Objektivität der intellektuellen Anschauung ist die Kunst selbst. Denn die ästhetische Anschauung eben ist die objektiv gewordene intellektuelle»).

¹⁴Ivi, p. 223. (Ivi, p. 685: «Ebenso wie der verhängnisvolle Mensch nicht vollführt, was er will, oder beabsichtigt, sondern was er durch ein unbegreifliches Schicksal, unter dessen Einwirkung er steht, vollführen muss, so scheint der Künstler, so absichtsvoll er ist, doch in Ansehung dessen, was das eigentlich Objektive in seiner Hervor – bringung ist, unter der Einwirkung einer Macht zu stehen, die ihn von allen andern Menschen absondert, und ihn Dinge auszusprechen oder darzustellen zwingt, die er selbst nicht vollständig durchsieht, und deren Sinn unendlich ist. Da nun jenes absolute Zusammentreffen der beiden»).

The undeniable polysemy of the work of art, and Schelling's original concept that contemporaneity seems to ignore by proposing, as new, the idea of an *open work*, assumes full importance in that author in the philosophical sphere, since the artistic product is a form of documentation of the Absolute and a means for the ideality-reality-ideality transference in a *continuum* of possibilities where the central idea of freedom is engraved. This *unruliness of the senses* of the artist that overcomes his or her initial or even final intentionality, Schelling calls an *unconscious activity* transgressing *consciousness*; it is the work of art that consummates the identity between them¹⁵. There is an unconscious poetics permeating ideality and reality that, as a universe of heuristic possibilities, overcomes merely conscious activity; such an unconscious poetics is the metamorphosing and necessary ability to achieve the artistic object:

If we are to seek in one of the two activities, namely, the conscious, for what is ordinarily called art, though it is only one part thereof, namely, that aspect of it which is exercised with consciousness, thought and reflection, and can be taught and learnt and achieved through tradition and practice, we shall have, on the other hand, to seek in the unconscious factor which enters into art for that about it which cannot be learned, nor attained by practice, nor in any other way, but can only be inborn through the free bounty of nature; and this is what we may call, in a word, the element of poetry in art¹⁶.

Aesthetic experience reveals the One, the Absolute; this must be the primary point of all philosophy: hence the importance of art for it. The Absolute now is no longer excluded from the sphere of possible experience; on the contrary, it is original immediate experience in which there is this *exclusion of time* in the full consciousness of infinite. Schelling sees in a primary experience

¹⁵Ivi, p. 225. This point is reaffirmed here: «Hence, that which appears to us outside the sphere of consciousness, as real, and that which appears within it, as ideal, or as the world of art, are also products of one and the same activity» (Ivi, p. 230). (Ivi, p. 694: «*Es ist ein und dasselbe, was in beiden thätig ist, das Einzige, wodurch wir fähig sind auch das Widersprechende zu denken und zusammenzufassen, – die Einbildungskraft. Es sind also auch Produkte einer und derselben Thätigkeit, was uns jenseits des Bewusstseins als wirkliche, diesseits des Bewusstseins als idealische, oder als Kunstwelt erscheinen.*»)

¹⁶Ivi, p. 222-23. (Ivi, p. 686: «*Wenn wir in der einen jener beiden Thätigkeiten, der bewussten nämlich, das suchen müssen, was insgemein Kunst genannt wird, was aber nur der eine Theil derselben ist, nämlich dasjenige an ihr, was mit Bewusstsein Ueberlegung und Reflexion ausgeübt wird, was auch gelehrt und gelernt, durch Ueberlieferung und durch eigne Uebung erreicht werden kann, so werden wir dagegen in dem Bewusstlosen, was in die Kunst mit eingeht, dasjenige suchen müssen, was an ihr nicht gelernt, nicht durch Uebung, noch auf andere Art erlangt werden, sondern allein durch freie Gnußt der Natur angeboren sehn kann, und welches dasjenige ist, was wir mit Einem Wort die Poesia in der Kunst nennen können.*»)

of world an entirety that does not oppose itself, that does not resist and that interiorizes itself as an aesthetic feeling.

Fichte, on the other hand, in order to banish resistance, requires that genetic grounding innerness of self-identity that leads him to experience the empty freedom of the empirical. However, for Fichte this spirit is a gift from a divinity that remains hidden: God remains absolutely *Othervas* infinitude; Nature is absolutely *othervas* finitude. The absolute *I*is primarily alone, and this solitude can never be broken by the presence of the *non-Self*in consciousness: they are as antagonistic as spirit and stone.

In *Bruno*(1802)¹⁷, Schelling seems to invite Fichte to abdicate from that innate solitude:

So, come now, abandon that narrow strand that you clung to before, when you tried to confirm the supreme identity to the domain of consciousness! Venture with me upon the free ocean of the absolute, where we shall move with greater freedom, the more we come to directly know the heights and the depths of reason!

But would Schelling's placing the Absolute as genesis within the cognitive realm legitimately make of his philosophy a pre-critical regression, as some scholars might suspect? As a faithful heir of Kant, Schelling could not make an epistemological discourse on the Absolute without first preparing a suitable space in the universe of possible experience. In this respect, the Absolute is primarily given as an aesthetic experience that, in turn, is the sensitive expression of absolute freedom: no longer of the Self alone, but of the *whole* of the subject-Nature identity. This experience of the very order of the ineffable is absolutely consummated as a contemplation that, ultimately, is the aesthetic transgression of the possibility of the abstract concept:

Thus, to know the eternal is to contemplate, in things, being and thinking solely unified by their essence, but not to place, be it the concept as effect of things, or things as effect of the concept. Nothing is more distant from truth than this. For thing and concept are not one through a linkage of cause and effect, but through the Absolute and, truly considered, are solely the different perspectives of one and the same; for

¹⁷ F. W. J. v. Schelling, *Bruno, or On the natural and the divine principle of things 1802*, Michael G. Vater ed., State University of New York Press, Albany 1984, p. 190. (Id., *Bruno, oder Über das göttliche und natürliche Prinzip der Dinge*, Felix Meiner, Hamburg 1954, p. 85: «*Du wirst also diese Enge, in der du dich zuvor festgehalten, indem du die höchste Einheit auf das Bewußtsein eingeschränkt hattest, verlassen, und dich mit mir in den freien Ozean des Absoluten begeben, wo wir uns sowohl lebendiger bewegen, als die unendliche Tiefe und Höhe der Vernunft unmittelbar erkennen werden*».

nothing exists that had not been finitely and infinitely expressed in the eternal. [...]

[...]Nevertheless, the *nature* of that eternal in itself and for itself is *difficult to express in mortal words*¹⁸.

From that original experience of infinite, Schelling brings the Absolute to the interior of the Universe, making of the latter the external and finite expression of the former. This is one of the points of Schelling's criticism of the philosophies that consider God outside of Nature and of Man, perpetuating the opposition between finite and infinite:

Through this opposition, men have learned to see nature outside of God, and God outside of nature and, insofar as they have divested the former of the sacred need, they subordinated it to the profane that they call mechanical, but for this very reason, made of the ideal world the *stage of a lawless freedom*. At the same time, insofar as they have determined the former as a merely passive being, they believed they have acquired for themselves the right to determine God, who they raise above nature, as pure activity, pure activeness, as if one of these concepts had not remained and perished with the other, and had truth by itself. [...] But if they are told that *nature is not outside of God, but in God*, they understand by it this nature that was killed by the separation from God, as if this, generally, were something *in itself*, generally, something more than the creature created by they themselves¹⁹.

¹⁸F. W. J. v. Schelling, *Bruno, oder Über das göttliche und natürliche Prinzip der Dinge*, Kar-Maria Gutthed., Hofenberg, Berlin 2014 (ed. orig. 1802), p. 71: «Das Ewige demnach erkennen, heißt, in den Dingen Sein und Denken nur durch sein Wesen vereinigt erblicken, nicht aber, es sei den Begriff als die Wirkung des Dings oder das Ding als Wirkung des Begriffs zu setzen. Dieses ist die weiteste Entfernung von der Wahrheit. Denn Ding und Begriff sind nicht durch Verknüpfung von Ursach und Wirkung, sondern durch das Absolute eins, wahrhaft betrachtet aber nur die verschiedenen Ansichten eines und desselben; denn nichts existiert, was nicht im Ewigen endlich und unendlich ausgedrückt wäre [...] Die Natur indes jenes Ewigen an und für sich selbst durch sterbliche Worte auszudrücken ist schwer, da die Sprache von den Abbildern hergenommen und durch den Verstand geschaffen ist»).

¹⁹Ivi, p. 99: «Durch diese Entgegensetzung haben die Menschen gelernt, die Natur außer Gott, Gott aber außer der Natur zu sehen, und, indem sie jene der heiligen Notwendigkeit entzogen, sie der unheiligen, welche sie mechanisch nennen, untergeordnet, die ideale Welt aber eben dadurch zum Schauplatz einer gesetzlosen Freiheit gemacht. Zugleich, indem sie jene als ein bloß leidendes Sein bestimmten, glaubten sie sich das Recht erworben zu haben, Gott, den sie über die Natur erheben, als reine Tätigkeit, launere Aktuosität zu bestimmen, als ob nicht der eine dieser Begriffe mit dem andern stande und feile, keiner aber Wahrheit für sich hätte [...] Sagt man ihm aber, daß die Natur nicht außer Gott, sondern / in Gott sei, so verstehen sie darunter diese eben durch die Trennung von Gott getötete Natur, als ob diese überhaupt etwas an sich, oder überhaupt etwas anderes als ihr selbst gemachtes Geschöpf wäre»).

This text highlights Schelling's critique of both Kant and Fichte – of the former, in the reference to the concept of Nature as a *thing in itself*; of the latter, in the considerations of subjective ideality as a *stage of a lawless freedom* of Nature as mere creature of subjectivity. Even Spinoza, whom he genuinely admired as «the first who, with a complete clarity, saw mind and matter as one»²⁰, made the mistake of placing the identity of the ideal and the real outside the human in an Infinite Substance²¹.

Nevertheless, what Schellingian concept joins this primary intuition of infinitude, explicating the way in which Nature is in the Absolute, and conversely? What does that experience of totality, ineffable of genesis, legitimize in the universe of the utterable? Schelling conceived Nature as the finite aspect of the infinite, i.e., the external expression of the divinity that, from potency, is made actuality and becomes known. Nevertheless, as this exteriority is the finite form of the infinite, such *becoming known* cannot be to another, for: «*The absolute produces nothing out of itself except itself, thus again an absolute*»²². Therefore:

*The Absolute is an eternal act of cognition, which in itself is matter and form, a creating in which, eternally, it makes of itself in its wholeness as idea, as pure identity, realm form and inversely, but equally eternally, dissolves itself as form, to this extent as object in essence or in subject*²³.

The reflectivity of the Fichtean subject migrates, in Schelling, to the Absolute. As eternal *act of cognition*, subjectivity is a kind of innerness in the exteriority of the Absolute; one could say that contemplation is nothing more than self-contemplation of an infinite process of exteriorization as Nature.

²⁰F. W. J. v. Schelling, *Ideas for a philosophy of nature*, cit., p. 15. (Id., *Ideias para uma filosofia da natureza*, cit., p. 50: «*Der erste, der Geist und Materie als Eines, Gedanke und Ausdehnung nur als Modifikationen desselben Principis ansah, war Spinoza*»).

²¹Ivi, p. 28. This paper does not intend to discuss Espinosa's position on this issue but solely to present the reading that Schelling makes of that author.

²²F. W. J. v. Schelling, *Ideas for a philosophy of nature*, cit., p. 48. (Id., *Ideias para uma filosofia da natureza*, cit., p. 57: «*Das Absolute producirt aus sich nichts als sich selbst, also wieder Absolutes; jede der drei Einheiten ist der ganze Absolute Erkenntnisakt und wird sich selbst als Wesen oder Identität, ebenso wieder wie das Absolute selbst, zur Form. Es ist in jedem*»).

²³Ivi, p. 136: «*Das Absolute ist ein ewiger Erkenntnisakt, welcher sich selbst Stoff und Form ist, ein Produciren, in welchem es auf ewige weise sich selbst in seiner Ganzheit als Idee, als lautere Identität, zum Realen, zur Form wird, und hinwiederum auf gleich ewige Weise sich selbst als Form, insofern als Objekt, in das Wesen oder das Subjekt auflöst.*») This original unity is also explicated here: «[...] that insofar as the infinite is embodied into a finite, the latter, as finite, is itself again embodied into the infinite, and that both these unities, with respect to that essence, are [...]» (Ivi, p. 49).

Ideal and real merge in that unity of the Absolute in reciprocal connaturality. Divinity permeates all, engraving in the finite a symbolic character:

In eternal Nature the absolute becomes, for itself in its absoluteness (which is sheer identity), a particular, a being, but in phenomenal nature only the particular form is known as particular, the absolute veils itself here in what is other than is in its absoluteness, in a finite, a being, which is its *symbol*, and as such, like every *symbol*, takes on a life independent of that which it means. In the ideal world it lays the veil aside, as it were, and appears even as that which it is, as ideal, as *act of cognition*, but, on the other hand, in such a way that it leaves the other side behind and only contains the one, that of resolution of the finitude in infinitude, of the particular in the essence.²⁴

In the *Stuttgart Seminars*(1810), Schelling proposes the formula $A/(B=C)$ to express that the Real (B) keeps a relation of original identity with the Ideal (C), under the Absolute (A), affirming that «[t]his is not to say that the Real and the Ideal are numerically or logically the same but, instead, designates an essential unity»²⁵. In this work, he writes further:

We are frequently questioned over how, if philosophy conceives of God as its ground, we can arrive at any knowledge of God or the Absolute. There is no answer to this question. The existence of what is unconditional cannot be proven as the existence of something finite. The unconditional is the element on which any demonstration becomes possible [...] Philosophy is occupied with the *progressive demonstration* of the Absolute, which cannot be required as a principle of philosophy²⁶.

²⁴Ivi, p. 50. (Ivi, p. 136: «*In der ewigen Natur wird das Absolute (welche lautere Identität) ein Besonderes, ein Seyn, aber auch hierin ist es absolute-Ideales, absoluter Erkenntnisakt; in der erscheinenden Natur wird nur die besondre Form als besondre erkannt, das absolute verhüllt sich hier in ein andres, als es selbst in seiner Absolutheit ist, in ein Endliches, ein Seyn, welches sein Symbol ist und als solches, wie alles Symbol, ein von dem was es bedeutet unabhängiges Leben annimmt. In der ideellen Welt legt es die Hülle gleichsam ab, es erscheint auch als das, was es ist, als Ideales, als Erkenntnisakt, aber so, dass es dagegen die andre Seite zurücklässt und nur die eine, die der Wiederauflösung der Endlichkeit in der Unendlichkeit, des Besondern in das Wesen, erhält*»).

²⁵ Id., *Idealism and the endgames of theory*, cit., p. 198. (Id., *Stuttgarter Privatvorlesungen*, cit., p. 34: «*Die Meinung ist hier nicht, dass das Reale und Ideale numerisch oder logisch einerlei sey; es ist eine wesentliche Einbeit gemeins*»).

²⁶Ivi, p. 35-6: «*Es ist eine gewöhnliche Frage die: wenn die Philosophie Gott zu ihrem Grund macht, wie gelangen wir zu Erkenntnis Gottes oder des Absoluten? — Auf diese Frage gibt es keine Antwort. Die Existenz des Unbedingten kann nicht erwiesen werden wie die des Bedingten. Das Unbedingte ist das Element*

Thus, it is a fact that there is no definitely deductive proof of the Absolute or, as Kant well demonstrated, there is no call to venture in the game of antinomies in this respect. However, this passage in Schelling's work tacitly suggests an idea of the task of philosophy in *progressive demonstration* as well as the author's consciousness that his thought is not a regression to a pre-critical metaphysics. In what concerns to that role of philosophical activity, there is a concept of progressivity that is not confined only to an evolution of making-philosophy along the time, but also to the gradual exteriorization of the Absolute as Nature. Knowledge, in other words, does not objectify something *lifeless*, already accomplished as a process. This is an evolutionary view of Nature and of its representation, which, in the analysis of the conception of the Absolute in Schelling, was well characterized by Arthur Lovejoy in *The Great Chain of Being*: «But true philosophy and truly objective science are not a chanting of tautologies. Their object is always a concrete and living thing; and their progress and evolution is a progress and evolution of the object itself»²⁷.

This concept of the exteriorization of the Absolute's atemporal-ity in time, as Lovejoy comments further, is original in the face of emanationist and creationist ideas:

God himself was temporalized — was indeed identified with the process by which the whole creation slowly and painfully ascends the scale of possibility; or, if the name is to be reserved for the summit of the scale, God was conceived as the not yet realized final term of the process. Thus for emanationism and creationism came to be substituted what may best be called radical or absolute evolutionism — the typically Romantic evolutionism of which Bergson's *L'évolution créatrice* is in great part re-editing²⁸.

It is in the Idea of an eternally processive Nature that Schelling sees this *living symbol* of the Absolute as the gradual transposition of the infinite

worin allein Demonstration möglich ist. [...] sonder die ganze Philosophie beschäftigt sich mit diesem Dasein, die ganze Philosophie ist eigentlich der fortgehende Beweis des Absoluten, der daher nicht im Anfang derselben gefordert werden darf»).

²⁷A. Lovejoy, *The great chain of being*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge (MA) 1982, p. 324. The author is emphatic in stressing the importance of this idea of evolution present in Schelling's work: «It is — as has too little been noted by historians — in this introduction of a radical evolutionism into metaphysics and theology, and in the attempt to revise even the principals of logic to make them harmonize with an evolutionary conception of reality, that the historical significance of Schelling chiefly consists»(Ivi, p. 325).

²⁸Ivi, p. 317.

to the finite; *life* in Nature, observable as a phenomenon, places the Schellingian philosophy before all those that have as a concept of exteriority an inexorable other that, lifeless in itself, merely obstructs the freedom of the Absolute:

No wonder that language, used dogmatically, soon lost sense and meaning. So long as I myself am identical with Nature, I understand what a living nature is as well as I understand my own life; I apprehend how this universal life of Nature reveals itself in manifold forms, in progressive developments, in gradual approximations to freedom. As soon, however, as I separate myself, and with me everything ideal, from Nature, nothing remains to me but a dead object, and I cease to comprehend how a life outside me can be possible²⁹.

To Schelling it is certainly believable that where there is *freedom* there is *life*. And the knowledge of life is no longer acquired in the immediateness of aesthetic intuition, but rather through temporal observation of the processes of nature that reveal organisms endowed with purpose:

Only in organized beings are they [the objects] real; they exist without my participation, because there is an objective relationship between them and the whole. Thus a concept lies at the base of every organization, for where there is a necessary relation of the whole to the part and of the part to the whole, there is concept. But this concept dwells in the organization itself, and can by no means be separated from it; it organizes itself, and is not simply, say, a work of art whose concept is to be found outside it in the understanding of the artist. Not only its form but its existence is purposive [...] In the organic product for this very reason, form and matter are inseparable; this particular matter could only arise and come to be along with this particular form, and vice-versa. Every organization is therefore a whole; its unity lies in itself; it does not depend on our choice whether we think of it as one or as many³⁰.

²⁹F. W. J. v. Schelling, *Ideas for a philosophy of nature*, cit., p. 36. (Id., *Ideias para uma filosofia da natureza*, op. cit., p. 100: «Kein Wunder, daß jene Sprache wissenschaftlich und dogmatisch gebraucht, bald selbst Sinn und Bedeutung verlor. So lange ich selbst mit der Natur identisch bin, verstehe ich, was eine lebendige Natur ist, so gut, als ich mein eignes Leben verstehe; begreife, wie dieses allgemeine Leben der Natur in den mannichfaltigsten Formen, in stufenmäßigen Entwicklungen, in allmählichen Annäherungen zur Freyheit sich offenbaret. Sobald ich aber mich von der Natur trenne, bleibt mir nichts übrig, als ein todttes Objekt, und ich höre auf zu begreifen, wie ein Leben außer mir möglich seye»).

³⁰Ivi, p. 31. (Ivi, p. 88: «Im organisirten Wesen allein sind sie real, sie sind da ohne mein Zuthun, weil zwischen ihnen und Ganzen ein objektives Verhältniß ist. Also liegt jeder Organisation ein Begriff zu

Although Schelling refers to the *realas* simply that which is *outside of us*, be it particular or general, contrary to scholastic realism that distinguishes *real* from *existent*, there emerges in this last passage, in the idea of *organism*, in which lies a *concept* responsible for its systemic behavior, the reality of the universal as *law*, whose fabric is of an intellectual nature³¹. Further, two points of this passage must be stressed: on the one hand, it affirms this law *in self*³² and, on the other hand, defines it as independent of our thought. This realistic stance that deals unrestrainedly with the *thing in itself*, and with an *otherness* that ultimately derives from an utter repudiation of subjective constitution, is legitimized by the Schellingian Absolute Idealism. In fact, the idea of *living organism* as a teleological conduct originating in experience is a proof of it. Only a mental nature, unified in the concept of matter, can attribute this *telos* to *life*. Also according to the author, the mere mechanical scheme of causality cannot explain this living and purposeful character of natural organizations:

Cause and effect is something evanescent, transitory, mere appearance (in the usual sense of the word). [...] So, if the purposiveness of the organic product is to be explained, the dogmatist finds himself completely deserted by his system. Here it no longer avails to separate concept and object, form and matter, as it pleases us. For here, at least, both are originally and necessarily united, not in our idea, but in the object itself. I should like one of those who take playing with concepts for philosophy, and fantasies of things for real things, to venture with us into this field³³.

Grunde, denn wo notwendige Beziehung des Ganzen auf Theile und der Theile auf ein Ganzes ist, ist Begriff. Aber dieser Begriff wohnt in ihr selbst, kann von ihr gar nicht getrennt werden, sie organisirt sich selbst, ist nicht etwa nur ein Kunstwerk, dessen Begriff außer ihm im Verstande des Künstlers vorhanden ist. Nicht ihre Form allein, sondern ihr Daseyn ist zweckmäßig. [...] Im organischen Produkt ist eben deswegen Form und Materie unzertrennlich, diese bestimmte Materie konnte nur zugleich mit dieser bestimmten Form, und umgekehrt, werden und entstehen. Jede Organisation ist also ein Ganzes; ihre Einbeit liegt in ihr selbst, es hängt nicht von unsrer Willkühr ab, sie als Eines oder als Vieles zu denken).

³¹Peirce, incidentally, comments on this presence of thought in Nature: «Thought is not necessarily connected to a brain. It appears in the work of bees, of crystals, and throughout the purely physical world; and one can no more deny that it is really there, than that the colors, the shapes, etc., of objects are really there. Consistently adhere to that unwarrantable denial, and you will be driven to some form of idealistic nominalism akin to Fichte's» (CP 4.551).

³²To Schelling, the concept of a *thing in itself* is absolutely meaningless, calling it a *speculative chimera*, extracted from Leibniz and taken to an extreme by Kantian transcendentalism. (Cf. Id., *Ideas for a philosophy of nature*, cit., p. 16).

³³*Ibidem*. (*Ibidem*: «Ursache und Wirkung ist etwas Vorüberschwindendes, bloße Erscheinung (im gewöhnlichen Sinne des Worts). [...] Soll also die Zweckmäßigkeit der organischen Produkte erklärt werden, so sieht

Opposing, in a fictitious dialogue, someone advocating a subjectivist idealism³⁴, Schelling states:

Hence the first thing that you grant is this: Any conception of purpose can arise only in an intelligence, and only in relation to such intelligence can anything be called purposive [...] When you think of each plant as an individual in which everything concurs together for one purpose, you must seek the reason for that in the thing outside you: you feel yourself constrained in your judgment; you must therefore confess that the unity with which you think it is not merely logical (in your thoughts) but real (actually outside you)³⁵.

It is interesting to see that the so-called *German Idealism* manifests a certain conceptual affinity between its members; it houses both the radical realism of an author like Schelling together with the critical idealism of Kant and the subjective idealism Fichte. However, while the latter authors are the starting point for Schelling, he clearly distances himself surgically from their idealisms grounded on the constitutive subject. His fundamental critique of the viewpoint of subjective constitution, as regards the empirical evidence of natural law, is centered on the assumption of giving form to the phenomenon:

That which is form in the things, they [some philosophers] say, we initially imposed on the things. But I have long sought to know just how you could be acquainted with what the things are, without the form

sich der Dogmatiker völlig von seinem Systeme verlassen. Hier hilft es nicht mehr, Begriff und Gegenstand, Form und Materie zu trennen, wie uns beliebt. Denn hier wenigstens ist beydes nicht in unserer Vorstellung, sondern im Objekt selbst ursprünglich und nothwendig vereinigt. Auf dieses Feld, wünschte ich, wagte sich mit uns einer von denen, die ein Spiel mit Begriffen für Philosophie, und Hirngespinnste von Dingen für wirkliche Dinge halten). – To this viewpoint of Schelling, Andrew Bowie adds: «Schelling's fundamental idea in *Naturphilosophie* is that the organized character of the mind (*Geist*) and the organized character of nature, absolutely, cannot be separated» (A. Bowie, *Schelling and modern european philosophy: an introduction*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1993, p. 38).

³⁴Which, incidentally, does Schelling define as «relative idealism» featured by «only one of the sides which, without the other, is unthinkable».

³⁵F. W. J. v. Schelling, *Ideas for a philosophy of nature*, cit., p. 32. (Id., *Ideias para uma filosofia da natureza*, cit., p. 92: «Das Erste also, was ihr zugeht, ist dieses: Aller Begriff von Zweckmäßigkeit kann nur in einem Verstande entstehen, und nur in Bezug auf einen solchen Verstand, kann irgend ein Ding zweckmäßig heißen {...} Daß ihr aber jede Pflanze als ein Individuum denkt, in welchem Alles zu Einem Zweck zusammenstimmt, davon müßt ihr den Grund in dem DING AUSSER euch suchen; ihr fühlt euch in euerm Urtheil gezwungen, ihr müßt also einräumen, daß die Einheit, mit der ihr es denkt, nicht bloß logisch [in euern Gedanken] sondern real [außer euch wirklich] ist»).

which you first impose on them, or what the form is, without the things on which you impose it. You would have to concede that, here at least, the form is absolutely inseparable from the matter, and the concept from the object. Or, if it rests with your choice whether or not to impose the idea of purposiveness on things outside you, how does it come about that you impose this idea only on certain things, and not on all?³⁶

There is clearly, in Schelling's realistic view, this otherness that hinders the judgment of the subjective constitution. It seems fitting to consider that the vector of ontological determination is from the object to representation. On the other hand, it is evident that in the mind-matter unity as professed by Schelling, there must be gradual stages of life, i.e., from less free and determined forms to freer and more undetermined ones: «there is a hierarchy of life in Nature. Even in mere organized matter there is life, but a life of a more restricted kind»³⁷.

By contrast, by not conceiving in the phenomenon this autonomy of the law that confers order to exteriority, Kant like Fichte, cannot attribute life to matter in the sense of acknowledging in it an organized substratum of an intellectual nature. Thus, for example, in his *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Sciences* (1786), Kant³⁸ relates the inertia of matter to an absence of life, whereas in the evolutionary prism of Schellingian philosophy the question of the *genesis of subjectivity* almost *naturally* emerges. And we purposefully stress the *naturalness* of the question because it can have an unencumbered treatment within a realistic and evolutionary philosophy, contrary to the hindrances that it provokes within nominalism. Andrew Bowie stresses this aspect in the following passage:

Kant's theoretical philosophy has no way of explaining this genesis. For the Kant of the theoretical philosophy, answers to such questions of genesis depend upon the cognitive functioning of the already consti-

³⁶Ivi, p. 33. (Ivi, p. 92: «Zwar giebt es Philosophen, die für alle diese Fragen Eine Univesalantwort haben, die sie bey jeder Gelegenheit wiederholen und nicht genug wiederholen können: (...) Was an den Dingen Form ist, sagen sie, tragen wir erst auf die Dinge über. Aber eben das verlange ich längst zu wissen, wie ihr das könnt? Was denn die Dinge sind ohne die Form, die ihr erst auf sie übertraget? Oder was die Form ist, ohne die Dinge, auf welche ihr sie übertraget? Ihr muß aber zugeben, daß hier wenigstens die Form von der Materie, der Begriff vom Objekt schlechterdings unzertrennlich ist. Oder wenn es in eurer Willkühr steht, die Idee von Zweckmäßigkeit auf Dinge außer euch überzutragen oder nicht, wie kommt es, daß ihr diese Idee nur auf gewisse Dinge, nicht auf alle übertraget?»).

³⁷Ivi, p. 35. (Ivi, p. 98: «... es gebe eine Stufenfolge des Lebens in der Natur. Auch in der bloß organisirten Materie sey Leben; nur ein Leben eingeschränkterer Art»).

³⁸I. Kant, *Metaphysical foundations of natural science*, J. Ellington ed., Bobbs-Merrill, New York 1970, p. 105.

tuted subject, which means that one has no right to ask how such subject itself becomes constituted. Schelling justifiably thinks that this is insufficient to account for our ability to understanding the nature of which we are a part³⁹.

This question in Schelling is clear in the following passage of *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*, in which he states that the rule of causality, fundamental for a mechanical worldview, does not apply to that which is endowed with growth and life:

[...] the concepts of cause and effect are altogether inapplicable to a mind. It is, therefore, absolutely self-explanatory of its being and knowing, and just because it exists at all, is also what it is, i.e., a being to whose nature this particular system of ideas of external things also belongs [...] Philosophy, accordingly, is nothing other than a *natural history of our mind*. From now on all dogmatism⁴⁰ is overturned from its foundations. We consider the system of our ideas not in its being, but in its becoming. Philosophy becomes genetic; that is, it allows the whole necessary series of our ideas to arise and take its course, as it were, before our eyes. From now on there is no longer any separation between experience and speculation. The system of Nature is at the same time the system of our mind, and only now, once the great synthesis has been accomplished, does our knowledge return to analysis (to research and experiment)⁴¹.

To let the mind flow just as it is, would be the same as saying that its natural form will force itself experientially upon its representation, in the formation of all its nuances. There is now an *origin* for the mind-matter af-

³⁹A. Bowie, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

⁴⁰It should be remembered that Schelling considers dogmatic all philosophies that underlie their reading of Nature exclusively on causality.

⁴¹F. W. J. v. Schelling, *Ideas for a philosophy of nature*, cit., p. 30; italics mine. (Id., *Ideias para uma filosofia da natureza*, cit., pp. 84-5: «Denn er behauptet ausdrücklich, kein Geist könne entstanden seyn, d.h. auf einen Geist lassen sich Begriffe von Ursache und Wirkung gar nicht anwenden. Er ist also als absoluter Selbstgrund seines Seyn und Wissens, und dadurch, dass er überhaupt ist, ist er auch das, was er ist, d.h. ein Wesen, zu dessen Natur auch dieses bestimmte System von Vorstellungen äußerer Dinge gehört Philosophie also ist nichts anders, als seine Naturlehre unsers Geistes. Von nun an ist aller Dogmatismus von Grund aus umgekehrt. Wir betrachten das System unserer Vorstellungen nicht in seinem Seyn, sondern in seinem Werden. Die Philosophie wird genetisch, d.h. sie läßt die ganze nothwendige Reihe unserer Vorstellungen vor unsern Augen gleichsam entstehen und ablaufen. Von nun an ist zwischen Erfahrung und Spekulation keine Trennung mehr. Das System der Natur ist zugleich das System unsers Geistes, und jetzt erst, nachdem die große Synthesis vollendet ist, kehrt unser Wissen zur Analysis [zum Forschen und Versuchen] zurück»).

finitude and a radical rupture of the estrangement between innerness and exteriority or, in other words, between subject and object. As a method, the Schellingian philosophy is primarily *synthetic*⁴²; *analysis* finds its legitimacy in that essential unity. Thus, there is in Schelling no characterization of a dialectic of opposites whose synthesis occurs within subjectivity through *apriori* forms, an operation that, by not revealing its *genesis*, dichotomizes the necessary link between representation and world⁴³. It is thus that intuition, as originary *locus* of all knowledge, is no longer the sole primary organizing instance of the phenomenon, conferring to it only a spatio-temporal structure, but also the faculty that legitimately apprehends the *external must-be* to the conditions of truth of representation: «From this it is clear why intuition is not as many pretended philosophers have imagined the lowest level of knowledge, but the primary one, the highest in the human mind, that which truly constitutes its mental nature»⁴⁴.

Experience becomes the central vertex where the *form* penetrates subjectivity, constituting not a path for substantially estranged matter, but matter that is innate and exclusively mental:

[...] we are required to know not how such a Nature arose outside us, but how even the very Idea of such a Nature has got into us [...] What we want is not that Nature should coincide with the laws of our mind by chance (as if through some third intermediary), but that she herself, necessarily and originally, should not only express, but even realize, the laws of our mind, and that she is, and is called, Nature insofar as she does so⁴⁵.

⁴²Another passage that reaffirms this point is: «It is safer, therefore, to allow the concept to arise, as it were, before our eyes, and thus to find the ground of its necessity in its own origin, This is the synthetic procedure» (Id., *Ideas for a philosophy of nature*, cit., p. 172).

⁴³Id., *Ideias para uma filosofia da natureza*, cit., p. 76: «Daher die abentheuerliche Erklärung die dieses System vom Ursprung der Vorstellung zu geben genöthigt ist. Den Dingen an sich stellt es gegenüber ein Gemüth, und dieses Gemüth enthält in sich gewisse Formen a priori, die vor den Dingen an sich nur den Vorzug haben, daß man sie wenigstens als etwas absolute-Leeres vorstellen kann. In diese Formen werden die Dinge gefaßt, indem wir sie vorstellen. Dadurch erhalten die formlosen Gegenstände, Gestalt, die leeren Formen Inhalt. Wie es zugehe, daß Dinge überhaupt vorgestellt werden, darüber ist tiefes Stillschweigen».

⁴⁴Id., *Ideas for a philosophy of nature*, cit., p. 177.

⁴⁵Ivi, pp. 41-42. (Ivi, p. 114: «Ihr habt uns damit so gut wie nichts erklärt, denn wir verlangen zu wissen, nicht, wie eine solche Natur außer uns entstanden, sondern wie auch nur die Idee einer solchen Natur in uns gekommen sey; [...] Denn wir wollen, nicht daß die Natur mit den Gesetzen unsers Geistes zufällig (etwa durch Vermittelung eines Dritten) zusammentreffe, sondern daß sie selbst nothwendig und ursprünglich die Gesetze unsers Geistes — nicht nur ausdrücke, sondern selbst realisire, und daß sie nur in so fern Natur sey und Natur heiße, als sie dies thut»).

Philosophy as the *natural history of our minds* legitimized as also being a Philosophy of Nature and of the Identity of the ideal and the real, enabling Schelling to state that: «Nature would be the Mind made visible, and the Mind the invisible Nature»⁴⁶.

By refusing deterministic causality as an exclusive method of inquiry, Schelling, although not having lived in the environment of indeterminism that emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century, predicts through his ideas of freedom and systemic organization of the products of Nature a science that addresses the partial indetermination of objects. This tacit indeterminism of Schelling is grounded in this triple relationship between life, freedom and mind: «So here again, we meet that absolute unification of Nature and Freedom in one and the same being. The living organism is to be a product of Nature: but in this natural product an ordering and coordinating Mind is to rule»⁴⁷.

It seems adequate to state that Schelling redeems God, soul, and freedom to the sphere of the cognoscible, by being primary grounds of all experience. Freedom is revealed not only temporally in the intuition that provides the observation of life in Nature, whether in conscious innerness or unconscious exteriority⁴⁸, but also in that non-time of aesthetic, primary intuition of the Absolute. This is what transpires in the following passage of *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom* (1992): «Only those who savored freedom can feel the desire of making everything similar to it, and making the entire Universe a part of it»⁴⁹.

Although adjusted to the Idea of progress in the romanticism of that era, Schelling did not experience the atmosphere of evolutionism typical of the mid-nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the idea of evolution is patently present in his philosophy, redeeming a chaos-cosmos vector of ancient philosophy:

⁴⁶Ivi, p. 42. (Ivi, p. 114: «Die Natur soll der sichtbare Geist, der Geist die unsichtbare Natur seyn»).

⁴⁷Ivi, p. 36. (Ivi, p. 102: «Also begegnen wir hier abermals jener absoluten Vereinigung von Natur und Freyheit in Einem und demselben Wesen, die belebte Organisation soll Produkt der Natur seyn; aber in diesem Naturprodukt soll herrschen ein ordnender, zusammenfassender Geist»).

⁴⁸According to Schelling, nature, while manifesting itself in exteriority, in the process of forming its organization is *unconscious* because it is absolutely free, though the *acts* of freedom are not endowed with intentionality. The purpose found in organisms, in turn, makes them endowed with consciousness. In the human instance, artistic production starts consciously, but the *open* meaning of the product is associated with a form of unconsciousness. (See F. W. J. v. Schelling, *System of transcendental idealism*, cit., p. 204-28).

⁴⁹F. W. J. v. Schelling, *Philosophical inquiries into the nature of human freedom*, J. Gutmann ed., Open Court, La Salle 1992 (orig. ed. 1809), p. 45. (Id. *Über das Wesen der menschlichen Freibeit*, H. Fuhrmansed., Phillip Reclam Jun., Stuttgart 1964, p. 63: «Nur wer Freibeit gekostet hat, kann das Verlangen empfinden, ihr alles analog zu machen, sie über das ganze Universum zu verbreiten»).

After the eternal act of Self-revelation, everything in the world is as appears to us now: law, order and form; but there remains, however, in the background, that which has no rule, as if it could, one day, erupt once more; and nowhere is it shown that order and form represent that which is primitive; it seems, on the contrary, that out of an initial disorder order was implanted⁵⁰.

Hartmann⁵¹, in turn, synthesizes Schellingian thought on the issue:

Nature's evolutionary process follows a principle of progressive differentiation in whose beginnings is absolute "indifference", but, at the same time, also follows a principle of progressive production of the superior in which the original trend of the unity of the whole is exemplified [...] This thought casts a decisive light on the essence of nature as totality, for a primary force that, constantly growing, creates from itself its own opposition and is reduced to the reciprocal action of polar forces, can clearly only be a living force [...]

It is in that non-time of initial chaos and its unity that aesthetic intuition penetrates, transgressing Nature's forms of time and order, and finding that infinite and original freedom. Likewise, it is in this immediacy that art recalls its indefinable source that science can only know through the way this source is exteriorized in finitude and temporality.

These forms of cognition, art and science, in the Schellingian universe, have distinct paths but the same object:

As to the particular relationship between art and science, these are opposites in trend, since if science were to fulfill its full task, as art has always done, both would coincide and merge into one – which is the proof of the opposing directions that both have. For science, at its

⁵⁰Ivi, p. 58. (Ivi, p. 72: «Nach der ewigen. Tat der Selbstoffenbarung ist nämlich in der Welt, wie wir sie jetzt erblicken, alles Regel, Ordnung und Form; aber immer liegt noch im Grunde das Regellose, als könnte es einmal wieder durchbrechen, und nirgends scheint es, als wären Ordnung und Form das Ursprüngliche, sondern als wäre ein anfänglich Regellose zur Ordnung gebracht worden»).

⁵¹N. Hartmann, *op. cit.*, p. 139 (Id., *op. cit.*, p. 117: «Der Entwicklungsprozess der Natur folgt einem Prinzip fortschreitende Differenzierung, an dessen erstem Anfang die absolute "Indifferenz" steht, -- zugleich aber auch einem Prinzip fortschreitender Produktion des Höheren, woran sich die ursprüngliche Einheitstendenz des Ganz dokumentiert [...] Dieser Gedanke wirft das entscheidende Licht auf das Wesen der Natur als Ganzes; denn eine Urkraft, die dem Gegensatz immer wieder potenziert aus sich hervortreibt und in der Wechselwirkung polarer Kräfte sich auslebt, kann offenbar nur eine lebendige Kraft sein [...]»).

highest level, though having the same objective as art, such objective, due to the way in which it is reached, is endless for it, *and where art is, science is yet to be*⁵².

Moving with total freedom through the ideality of the external and internal worlds, art becomes a heuristic expression that is raw material for philosophical reflection on a cosmic poetics: «The objective world is simply the original, as yet unconscious, poetry of the spirit; the universal organon of philosophy – and the keystone of its entire arch – is the philosophy of art»⁵³.

Thus in Schelling's philosophy science and art are based on a principle of synthetic *genesis*. The task of both is innately heuristic and must, in infinite time, as a trend, flow into one another. According to our thinker: «a system is only complete when led back to its starting point»⁵⁴. And for this reason:

Philosophy was born and fed by poetry in the infancy of knowledge and, with it, all those sciences that were guided toward perfection; thus, we must wait for them, on completion, to flow back, as many individual streams to the *ocean of poetry whence they originated*⁵⁵.

⁵² F. W. J. v. Schelling, *Idealism and the endgame of theory*, cit., p. 227. In Bowie's reading of Schelling, there is a negation of the possibility of a science of art: «A work of art is not art because it shares the same attributes as other objects, or because it may be defined in relation to them, but because it reveals the world in its own particular way. There cannot be, therefore, any science of art» (A. Bowie, *op. cit.*, p. 52). Cf. also F. W. J. v. Schelling, *System of transcendental idealism*, cit., p. 227: «So far as particularly concerns the relation of art to science, the two are so utterly opposed in tendency, that if science were ever to have discharged its whole task, as art has always discharged it, they would both have to coincide and merge into one --which is proof of directions that they are radically opposed. For thought science at its highest level has one and the same business as art, this business, owing to the manner of effecting it, is an endless one for science, so that one may say that art constitutes the ideal of science, and where art is, science has yet to attain to [...]» (Id., *System des transzendentalen Idealismus*, in Id., *Ausgewählte Schriften*, Band I [1794-1800], M. Franked., Suhrkamp, Frankfurt 1985¹, p. 69: «Was Insbesondere das Verhältnis der Kunst zur Wissenschaft betrifft, so sind sich beide in ihre Tendenz so sehr entgegen gesetzt, das wenn die Wissenschaft je ihre ganze Aufgabe gelöst hätte, wie sie die Kunst immer gelöst hat, beide in Eines zusammenfallen und übergehen müssten, welches der Beweis völlig entgegengesetzter Richtungen ist. Denn obgleich die Wissenschaft in ihren höchsten Funktion mit der Kunst eine und dieselbe Aufgabe hat, so ist doch diese Aufgabe, wegen der Art sie zu lösen, für die Wissenschaft eine unendliche, so, dass man sagen kann, die Kunst sey das Vorbild der Wissenschaft, und wo die Kunst sey, soll die Wissenschaft erst Hinkommen»).

⁵³ Ivi, p. 12.

⁵⁴ Ivi, p. 232. (Ivi, p. 696: «Wir schliessen daher mit der folgenden Bemerkung – Ein System ist vollendet, wenn es in seinen Anfangspunkt zurückgeführt ist [...]»).

⁵⁵ Ivi, 232, italics mine. (Ivi, 697: «[...] zu ziehen, zu erwarten, das die Philosophie, so wie sie in der Kindheit der Wissenschaft von der poesie geboren und genährt worden ist, und mit ihr alle diejenigen Wissenschaften, welche durch sie der Vollkommenheit entgeggeführt werden, nach ihre Vollendung als ebenso viel

Not without reason, Schelling returns to mythology as redemption of this lost origin of philosophy⁵⁶. This entire heuristic challenge of recovering an ultimately original philosophy, such as Schelling's, requires for its acceptance, according to the author himself, an *aesthetic sense*⁵⁷ essential for a look that, turned either to innerness or exteriority, does not discern two opposing worlds where *lifè*s solely confined in a subjectivity intended as origin of unity, as if there could be a prophylaxis capable of ensuring an arsenal of faculties independent of experience, but which, in fact, dogmatically does not show its primary credentials. Thus, to Schelling, the pristine indifferenciation of ideal and real assures heuristic grounds not only for science, but also for the arts, making them related as activities of the spirit.

In short, while the temporality of history traces a long and enduring path for science, necessary for the obtainment of identity between the logical forms of human thought and Nature, in the a-temporality of poetry everything is already pre-contained as virtually written as an amorous and pleasurable invitation to the deciphering of the Absolute.

Therefore, not without reason, Schiller's thought seems wholly welcome in the Schellingian philosophy in the proposition: «The way to the intellect must be opened by the heart»⁵⁸.

Epilogue: On Peirce's idealism – the Schellingian roots

To compare Schelling' and Peirce's ontologies would require not a simple essay, but certainly a whole book. Notwithstanding such limitation, the present essay is destined to scholars who reasonable know the grounds of Peirce's ontology, to which I hope it could show the theoretical closeness between him and Schelling. Regarding Peirce's metaphysics, particularly his theory of reality or ontology, it is worth remembering that it was firstly influenced by Duns Scotus's realism, which affirmed the reality of universals, namely, real generali-

einzelne Ströme in den allgemeinen Ocean der Poesie zurückfließen, von welchem sie ausgegangen waren [...]»).

⁵⁶In this respect, Schelling conjectures: «But the way in which a new mythology can emerge, such that it should be the creation not of some individual author, but of a new race, personified as if it were a sole poet – is a problem whose solution can only be visualized in the world's future destinies and in the course of the history that is to come into being» (Ivi, pp. 232-33). (Ivi, p. 697: «Diese, wie es jetzt scheint, unauslöschliche Trennung geschehen ist. Wie aber eine neue Mythologie, welche nicht Erfindung des einzelnen Dichters, sondern eines neuen, nur Einen Dichter gleichsam vorstellenden Geschlechts seyn kann, selbst entstehen könne, dies ist ein Problem, dessen Auflösung allein von der künftigen Schicksalen der Welt und dem weiteren Verlauf der Geschichte zu erwarten ist [...]»).

⁵⁷Ivi, p. 14. see also R. R. Torres Filho, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

⁵⁸F. Schiller, *On the aesthetic education of man*, Dover, New York 2004, Letter VIII.

ties as a true acting part of Nature. In his mature thinking, Peirce improved his realism through his studies of the logic of relatives and his Synechism or theory of *continua*, proposing his realism in a new formula, expressed in the question that follows in this passage:

(...) the 'continuum' is that which the logic of relations shows the true universal to be. I say the true universal; for no realist is so foolish as to maintain that no universal is a fiction. Thus, the question of nominalism and realism has taken this shape: Are any 'continua' real?⁵⁹

Then, ontological generalities were re-conceptualized as real continuities. It is interesting to highlight that Peirce and Schelling have theoretic axial similarities that can be found in their writings under different vocabularies. By the way, it can be mentioned, for instance, their common admission of a realism of continuities, which in Peirce corresponds to two of his three categories, namely, firstness and thirdness. Firstness is cosmically grounded on its internal sphere as a *continuum* of possibilities, continuum of qualities of feeling, while its external manifestation in Secondness is ruled by Chance: «Wherever chance-spontaneity is found, there in the same proportion feeling exists. In fact, chance is but the outward aspect of that which within itself is feeling». The third category is the mode of being of continuities of forms - logical forms of necessity. In fact, to be fairer with Peirce's indeterminism, quasi-necessity forms, performed by laws of Nature. Both continuities can be found in Schelling's philosophy of Nature. Firstness as the phenomenological esthetic experience of infinite, provided by a sort of unconscious contemplation of Nature or a work of art in their many manifestations. The *qualia* that are a part of Nature are the immediate presence of the Absolute that may be experienced as unity, indeed as originary unity. Schelling abundantly mentions natural logical forms as I suppose this paper endeavored to show. It seems quite licit to consider him a *realist* in the same way Peirce is, surely under different vocabulary. I think that it is licit to say that the reader somewhat acquainted with Peirce's ontology will realize a similar philosophical environment that sometimes explicitly, sometimes tacitly, promotes the closeness between the two thinkers: a sort of poetic ground that rules the stage where both philosophies develop their main ideas⁶⁰.

⁵⁹C. S. Peirce, NEM-IV (orig.ed. 1898) p. 343.

⁶⁰See I. A. Ibri, *Reflections on a poetic ground in Peirce's philosophy*, «Transactions of The Charles S. Peirce Society», 45, 3, 2009, pp. 283-30.; see also Id., *The continuity of life: on Peirce's objective idealism*, in Vinicius Romanini e Eliseo Fernandes (eds.), *Peirce and biosemiotics: a guess at the riddle of life*, Springer, Dordrecht/Heidelberg/New York/London 2014, where I exposed Peirce's idealism as rooted in Schelling's objective idealism.

It is worth stressing again the realism shared by both, negating all philosophy of an anthropocentric nature and, on the other hand, the ontological indeterminism essential in both. In Schelling, the real being of the Absolute as Nature prevents it from being regarded as a mechanism ruled by necessity: it is innately pure freedom and its passage from the infinite to the finite cannot imply abdication from it. In Peirce, freedom is also revealed in the most primary experience: that of firstness. That phenomenological experience of unity of consciousness, of a rupture with objective time, is connected with the reality of Chance, on a journey promoted by the arrow of hypothesis in its search for final conciliation between appearing and being. In both thinkers, no longer is there a polarizing subject, founder and creator of a formal asymmetry with Nature. On the contrary, in these thinkers one may visualize an effort to decentralize the subject from ontology, creating symmetries with the object that enable a natural transition between innerness and exteriority. In Peirce, this transition relates, fundamentally, to the possibility of a semiotic trade between the human and the natural; the intelligibility of Nature confirms the experience of aesthetic unity with it; both experiences derive from the understanding that, between subject and object, there must not be, innately, a relation of estrangement. It is in this unity and intelligibility that Peirce and Schelling see a more compact and genetic presence of philosophy. They are experiences of enchantment and awe, not surprisingly conducive, in both authors, to the conception of the idea of *divine*⁶¹.

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⁶¹See Peirce's famous essay, *A neglected argument for the reality of god* (CP 6.452-493).

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