

***THE DISRUPTION OF SEYENDE – BODY,  
EVIL, AND FREEDOM IN SCHELLING’S  
STUTTGART PRIVATE LECTURES\****

***A RUPTURA DO SEYENDE – CORPO,  
MAL E LIBERDADE NAS PRELEÇÕES  
PRIVADAS DE STUTTGART-DE SCHELLING***

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**ABSTRACT** *The aim of this article entitled “The disruption of Seyende” is twofold. On the one hand, we intend to present to the reader for the first time Schelling’s complete conception of the body in his Stuttgart Private Lectures as an outstanding moment of his middle metaphysics dominated by the metaphysical formulation of a “higher realism” which revindicates the role of the body in human life and experience. On the other hand, we will attempt to highlight the textual and theoretical interrelationships between this Schellingian theory of the body and the broader metaphysical discussion on dualism, pluralism, and epiphenomenalism when thinking about corporeity and its relation to spirit – a discussion that for Schelling takes place under the label of the role of the real and ideal elements in the development of the system of philosophy. We will develop thus the theories of the neutral or innocent status of the body with regards to the spirit, on one hand, and of the centrality of the human spirit, in connection*

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*with the body and the soul, clarifying Schelling's famous assertion according to which "the spirit is not the highest", on the other. Our main anthropological thesis is that Schelling's humanism and anthropocentrism do not entail a position of privilege and a right to domination, but, on the contrary, a supreme moral and metaphysical responsibility in the face of all created beings.*

**Keywords:** *Schelling. Body. Evil. Freedom. Stuttgart. Seyende.*

**RESUMO** *O objetivo deste artigo intitulado "A ruptura do Seyende" é duplo. De um lado, pretendemos apresentar ao leitor pela primeira vez a concepção completa do corpo de Schelling em suas Preleções Privadas de Stuttgart como um momento marcante de sua metafísica média dominada pela formulação metafísica de um "realismo superior" que revigora o papel do corpo na vida e na experiência humana. De outro lado, tentaremos destacar as inter-relações textuais e teóricas entre esta teoria schellinguiana do corpo e a discussão metafísica mais ampla sobre dualismo, pluralismo e epifenomenalismo ao pensar a corporeidade e sua relação com o espírito – uma discussão que para Schelling ocorre sob o rótulo do papel dos elementos reais e ideais no desenvolvimento do sistema da filosofia. Desenvolveremos assim as teorias do status neutro ou inocente do corpo em relação ao espírito, e, em contrapartida, da centralidade do espírito humano, em relação ao corpo e à alma, esclarecendo a famosa afirmação de Schelling segundo a qual "o espírito não é o mais elevado". Nossa tese antropológica principal é que o humanismo e o antropocentrismo de Schelling não implicam uma posição de privilégio e um direito à dominação, mas, ao contrário, uma suprema responsabilidade moral e metafísica diante de todos os seres criados.*

**Palavras-chave:** *Schelling. Corpo. Mal. Liberdade. Stuttgart. Seyende.*

## I

During the development of his *Stuttgart Private Lectures*, given in 1810 before a select audience, Schelling introduces for the first time in his middle period of thought (1806-1820) the theory according to which "the spirit is not the highest", because it is linked to self-will, to freedom, and, consequently, to evil. Schelling reserves the highest place in the human mind for the soul, that is, for the impersonal and universal element which represents, so to speak, the subjection of self-will to understanding and reason.

Schelling's theory of the spirit is of great philosophical interest for the elucidation of the subject at hand, namely the concept of body and corporeality, since the spirit is opposed, at least in the work of 1810, to the *Leib*, namely to self-awareness of the body. Our author considers in famous passages of his work, that it is not the body that makes the spirit sick, but the latter that makes the body sick, formulating one of the first theories of psychosomatic illness. At the same time, he develops his vision of the body as a receptacle of different influences coming from the mind, incorporating various elements of Platonic, Renaissance, vitalist, and Kantian motifs into his analysis of the body itself, on the one hand, and, on the other, into his contribution to the debate on the link between body and spirit (Cf. Beiser, 2002, pp. 549-550).

In this article, we will establish Schelling's theory of the body and its connection with the predominant power of the mind, the spirit. In accordance with this objective, we will present the theories of the neutral or innocent status of the body with regards to the spirit, on one hand, and of the centrality of the human spirit, in connection with the body and the soul, clarifying Schelling's famous assertion according to which "the spirit is not the highest". In so doing, we follow the path below.

We begin by elucidating the extent to which man is a dual essence, whose ground resides in nature or the real B, but at the same time he is a sort of "idealized matter" or A2, that is, the ideal elevated from nature into personality and spirit (II).

Being man consists essentially of the formation of the self-will that represents the real into the ideal, the force of gravity and darkness, a center of self-interest that drives him to rival and oppose nature. This self-will is also the first power of the spirit as such that is also described as the will of man which opposes his understanding, or the universal will that represents the divine in the mind.

Nevertheless, Schelling does not consider the spirit – like other German idealists – to be the highest (III), precisely because it entails a power of decision that is related to freedom and thus to the possibility of enacting evil. The spirit is then the power of the mind that is responsible for evil, and, as such, it must be transcended.

The description of the spirit as the place where evil takes place allows us to clarify the degree to which the body is not evil, nor is it a receptacle for evil tendencies, but on the contrary: the body, as for all of nature, is so to speak innocent or incapable of evil and thus gets infected by the evil tendencies that arise from the spirit (IV).

The task of moral philosophy is not for Schelling to describe a perfect moral world order, as in Fichte's ethical idealism, that would be legitimized to suppress nature and other human beings as well (cf. Lachs, 1972, p. 317), but rather to gradually overcome the evil tendencies of the spirit with the help of the soul, namely, allowing the soul to influence the mind. The description of the soul will enable us to see the true nature of Schelling's neutral dualistic standpoint (V), according to which the real has a primacy regarding reality but comes second to the ideal in dignity or preeminence (*SW* VIII, pp. 299–300, 339–344. Cf. Bracken, 1972, p. 39; Kosch, 2006, p. 73; Underwood Vaught, 2011, p. 212; Zizek, 2007, p. 74).<sup>1</sup> The ideal is hence the domain of freedom, of religion, and love, that rivals and overcomes the centrality of the State – the mere B in human life – and of the self-enthroned all-encompassing rationality of “History”.

In this paper we defend Schelling's humanism and anthropocentrism elucidating the degree to which man's central role in the world does not entail a position of privilege and a right to domination, but, on the contrary, a supreme moral and metaphysical responsibility in the face of all created beings.

## II The man as A2 or as an idealized matter

At the very beginning of his *Lectures* of 1810 Schelling introduces his theory of the powers, according to which the beginning of the universe, and, consequently, of philosophy itself, resides in a principle that unfolds into three powers, none of which is reducible to the others, and that develop according to a scheme that goes from the internal to the external (*SW* VII, pp. 425–431).<sup>2</sup> These powers are the ideal, the real, and the bond (*das Band*) between the two, or freedom.

The beginning of the universe lies in the real, which in another sense is also the ideal-internal, the self-enclosed principle or God. This first power is the ground in God, according to which God is in a state of indistinction

1 On this problem in Kant cf. Rohlf, 2008, pp. 338–360. Most resonant contributions to Schelling's *Lectures* of 1810 are Schulze, 1957, and Müller-Lüneschloß, 2012. On a broader specter see Carrasco Conde 2013.

2 The doctrine of the powers utilized by Schelling from the formulation of his Philosophy of nature to the Munich and Erlangen periods is also non-reductive, and the lower powers are not resolved into the higher ones but are quantitatively distinguished from them. Cf. *Darstellung meines Systems der Philosophie*, *SW* IV, p. 134; Beiser, 2002, pp. 533, 549; Bowie, 1993, p. 97; Schopenhauer, 1819, § 27, p. 28; Vetö, 2000, pp. 352–354, 358–359; Zizek, 2007, p. 56. We can thus say that Schelling's neutral dualism is located between Spinoza's naturalistic monism, which does not recognize the particularity of human nature outside of nature in general, and Fichte's ethical idealism, which does not accept any nature that is not for the I (Cf. *SW* VII, pp. 423, 441–446). See Frank, 2014. On Fichte's idealism see Lachs, 1972, pp. 311–318.

and non-differentiation between its constituent factors (*SW VII*, pp. 357-358, 438-439, 447. Cf. *WA I*, pp. 43-46).<sup>3</sup> The first power cannot develop as such since an all-embracing real principle could not but prevent the existence of any other creature. The beginning of the real outside itself is thus a form of “condescendence” (*Herablassung*) of God. For this reason, Schelling declares that the beginning of all reality depends on a certain “contraction of God”, that is, on his self-limitation to mere interiority to allow a world to exist *extra et praeter deum* (*SW VII*, pp. 428-431).

The second power or the ideal resides in the awakening, in God, and in nature, of light and understanding, according to which the real is transfigured (*versetzt*) into will and spirit, and, ultimately, into personal existence. This is the potency according to which God exists as a particular entity, it is the existence of God (*SW VII*, pp. 431, 435, 437, 441). The man also emerges into the world of the ideal, when he splits and cuts himself off from nature, as A2, that is, as a finite spirit, whose essential function in the process of God’s self-revelation consists in linking nature, now split off from God, with spirit, the existing God (*SW VII*, pp. 454-458).

The third power, or the bond between the first and the second power, constitutes properly the focal point of the system, characterized also by Schelling as the absolute itself, “the third” (*das Dritte*) which becomes in the end again the first, or, simply put, freedom (*SW VII*, pp. 453, 458-460). Freedom is determined in God as a “mere possibility of being or of not being”, what Schelling calls the “*Seynkönnendes*”, and its function resides in opening the possibility of a separation between the principles of ground and existence to guarantee the mobility of *Seyende* in the former, without, as in Spinoza, canceling their independent existence, that is, of the finite, of the world and of man (*WA I*, p. 30; *SW XIV*, p. 338).

In man, freedom acquires a different tinge with respect to God, since it is as much freedom before nature, that is, before the ground, as before God considered as a particular entity (*Seyende*). Man is, as a free being, “absolved” before nature and before God. In the face of nature, since his spirit no longer must necessarily follow, like the animal, the dictates of the universal will that pervades the natural world. In the face of God man is free because he possesses an origin of his being in a “ground” (*Grund*) or root independent of God, and

3 On the difference between metaphysical dualism and the aspectual or modal dualism that Schelling proposes, in terms of an “internal dualism”, cf. Hermanni, 1994, pp. 85-113; Baumgartner, 1990, pp. 185-206. Regarding the characterization of the “being other” of the absolute or God as the possibility of freedom, cf. Veto, 2000, p. 422.

which resides in nature, but which man then transcends thanks to his spirit and his particular will (*SW VII*, pp. 364, 471. Cf. *GA 42*, p. 245; Müller-Lüneschloß, 2012, p. 273; Schulze, 1957, pp. 587-588). Let us now see how the three powers develop anew in man, that is, according to an anthropological point of view, to investigate Schelling's conception of the body and its relation to the spirit more precisely.

The three powers in man are again the real, the ideal, and their bond or freedom, depending on whether man can establish a connection between the two factors or separate them ever increasingly (*SW VII*, p. 465). The real is man's resistance to the world, which he can neither control nor reduce. In his critique of the state as mere second-order nature, as a purely physical and coercive order, Schelling mentioned that the origin of mankind lies in a relapse into nature, so that at the beginning of his development man was in a state of submission to nature as to an external power. His only possible commencement of elevation resided in his acceptance of this externality and his submission to its rules, that is, to its universal legality (*SW VII*, pp. 459-461).

The ideal, on the other hand, is the transformation of this world into spirituality, into what is truly human. This event unfolds gradually, as man becomes conscious, reflexively, of his inner difference from nature, that is, he gradually recognizes his moral status and his personal freedom, in short, he realizes that he possesses, unlike natural entities, personality, and spirit.

The bond that mediates between the two powers of the real and the ideal, of the exterior and the interior reflective withdrawal of man, is, then, freedom. Freedom thus constitutes a faculty that allows man to unite or dissolve the link between the two worlds, to link himself with nature, or to set himself up before it as a finite and self-subsistent spirit:

Opposed to this is the ideal power, the side of his highest transfiguration, his purest spirituality. The intermediate or second is that by which he enters the middle between the ideal and the real world, to reestablish the link of both worlds in himself, developed through freedom (*SW VII*, p. 465).

Human freedom is at the beginning of its deployment in the real an ambiguous faculty. Freedom seems to place man in a sort of "original indecision" (*SW VII*, p. 382. Cf. *GA 42*, pp. 257-258), according to which man pre-poses reflection before action so that he makes it a rational motive for action and opens before him two directions towards which he can turn his decision: good and evil. However, unlike nature, there is no transition in man between the facts of the physical world, to which his body is subject, on the one hand, and, on the other, the decisions that depend on the free choice of his character. Freedom is then a form of wedge or juncture that man introduces into nature. The latter

is undecided, in the sense that no proper decision takes place in it. In nature as universal legality sheer necessity dominates. God, or the real-internal principle, is already maximally decided, and the proof of this consists in the fact that, in effect, a world, outside and beyond God, exists.

Man, alone, bears upon himself the highest metaphysical and moral responsibility of having to decide, for the world of the spirit to develop, without being previously decided, so that the burden of this decision rests entirely upon himself. As Schelling affirms, this ambiguous and indecisive character of man is the cause of the anguish for life, and of the sadness and loneliness that man experiences in the face of his destiny, the mark at the same time of his finite origin, and of his (impossible) yearning to transcend finitude itself (*SW VII*, pp. 381, 399. Cf. *GA 42*, pp. 263, 277-278).

The sadness inherent in all finite life and the melancholy which, in Schelling's view, pervades all of nature are indications of man's longing for something higher, which is, however, unattainable to him: "The deepest part of nature, too, is melancholy; it too mourns for a lost good, and all life too has an indestructible melancholy attached to it because it has beneath it something independent of itself." (*SW VII*, pp. 465-466).<sup>4</sup>

Melancholy is the subjective indication that there is another, deeper or higher state in relation to the present world, a state that man can "forebode" but not fully actualize in this world. Against all theodicy and against all rationalism in the philosophy of history, the becoming of man in the world is for Schelling always an open and unfinished development, for this is the development, with advances and retreats, of freedom itself.

### **III The spirit is not the highest: spirit, freedom, and evil**

As we have seen, the spirit marks in man, on the one hand, the appearance of the ideal, and on the other, his split from the Seyende and from nature in general. Because it begins and continues in this split, the spirit of man manifests an insatiable desire for new conquests - the satisfaction of new desires - and for what Schelling calls "the hunger for Being." However, since this separation from Being exists in man, we see at the same time the impossibility of satisfying

4 In the *Freedom Essay* stated Schelling similarly that "Man never succeeds in taking possession of the condition [of his life], even though he aspires to it in evil; it is only lent to him, independent of him; whence his personality and selfhood can never rise to a perfect act. This is the sadness inherent in all finite life [...] Hence the veil of melancholy that is cast over the whole of nature, the deep, indestructible melancholy of all life." (*SW VII*, p. 399).

this hunger for Being and, consequently, its constant expansion. Man is, then, in relation to Being, “the naked Seyende” or the mere Seyende (*SW VII*, p. 466).

It is necessary to make two observations in this respect. The first concerns the concept of lustfulness (*Begierde*), which Schelling sees here negatively (cf. Müller-Lüneschloß, 2012, pp. 262-263) as a mark of finitude and, like Schopenhauer, as the negative dynamic of the drive of a blind will.

On the other hand, it is worth mentioning that Schelling’s concept of man as a naked *Seyende* in the face of Being also anticipates Heidegger’s analysis of the *Dasein* as that entity whose ontological determination is most problematic and equally enigmatic (Cf. *GA 42*, pp. 204-205, 282-285).

The spirit is the second stage or power of the mind, whose first manifestation is the mind proper or *Gemüt*. Before introducing the subject of the spirit and its relation to the body, it is necessary to inquire into the first power of the mind, which Schelling also associates with feeling.

In general, the accusations of irrationalism against Schelling ascribe to our author a high appreciation of the role of feeling in science and philosophy which, however, he explicitly rejects in the lectures, thus partially differentiating himself from the philosophy of longing of Jena Romanticism, on the one hand, and from the sentimentalist irrationalism of Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi and Johann Georg Hamann, on the other. (*SW VII*, pp. 412, 467).

Such is the case that Schelling holds, on the one hand, that feeling is the highest and noblest of the soul, but that it still belongs, on the other hand, to the power of the real, which is the first in reality, but the last in dignity (*Würde*). Therefore, science must not be grounded on feeling, as Jacobi or Hamann claimed, but on the mediation of feeling by the spirit or the ideal, which surpasses even understanding in dignity.

According to Schelling, the spirit, or the power that transcends understanding, is the true power of consciousness. The spirit is thus the will, which in turn has three other powers or sides. The real is individuality or self-will. This is the case because self-will or the real and dark principle of the spirit has indeed a root in nature (Cf. Müller-Lüneschloß, 2012, p. 268). In fact, all individuation comes from nature even if then nature herself aspires to the dissolution of all individual beings. The reason for this inner contradiction in nature relates to the fact that nature seeks, through this birth and death of the individual, to transcend herself from within, to reach that, which lies outside and beyond all nature (*SW VII*, p. 457. Cf. Vetö, 2000, p. 318).

The ideal is the general, the universal will or understanding. The ideal represents, so to speak, this transcendence of nature from within that we have recently introduced. It holds true that it develops originally from nature, but also



points outside of nature, which in this case refers to the dark ground of human nature itself. Therefore, Schelling refers to the ideal as A2, and not merely as A, because the mere ideal cannot exist at all. The same is true for human nature: the understanding as such cannot exist without a previous “flexing reference” to the ground and to the self-will (*SW VII*, pp. 360-361). The ideal is consequently the light in the mind that arise from overcoming the original darkness of the self-will that is now so to speak, transfigured into a new universal element or universal will (*SW VII*, pp. 359-360).<sup>5</sup>

Freedom is the connection or bond between the two so that the self-will is not abolished but subordinated to the understanding or to the universal.

We would like to elaborate further on this point referring to freedom as a bond since it carries special importance for the elucidation of the subject that concerns us here, namely Schelling’s account of the body and its relationship with the spirit.

When freedom is linked to the mind it consists in a sort of fluctuation or unstable equilibrium between the real and ideal powers of the mind so that the will proper to man is placed under the understanding, but without nullifying it, that is, without dissolving the individuality and the personality of each human subject. (*SW VII*, p. 374. Cf. *GA 42*, p. 246). The self-will can hence manifest itself as such. Schelling does not consider the self-expression of the will to be problematic, provided that - thanks to the freedom that is achieved by the balanced development of both powers - the general and intersubjective elements of the understanding are also enacted.

Now we can see the reason behind the resonant statement of our author, according to which the self-will is not evil or negative, but, on the contrary, it “must exist”. (*SW VII*, p. 467).<sup>6</sup>

On this point, Schelling differs from both Rousseau and the young Nietzsche, both of whom seek to abolish the individual in man to which they

5 When the primal self is denied, it becomes the object of its own desire and splits into two essences. Cf. *The Ages of the World*, *SW VIII*, 223-224; *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, *SW X*, 101: “[...] but it is inevitable for it to put on itself, for it is only for this purpose that it is a subject, that it becomes an object to itself, since it is presupposed that there is nothing apart from it that can become an object to it; but in putting on itself, it is no longer as nothing, but as something - in this self-attraction it makes itself into something; in self-attraction, then, lies the origin of being-something, or of objective, representational being in general. But as that which it is, the subject can never become aware of itself, for it is precisely in attracting itself that it becomes another; this is the ground contradiction [...]”

6 Müller-Lüneschloß considers that Schelling sees more negatively the concept of “personality” in 1810 *Lectures* than in the *Freedom Essay* of 1809 (2012, p. 268). This could be conceded if we clarify the following points. Firstly, that particular or self-will is not directly evil; neither should be suppressed. Second, that personality entails, notwithstanding its right to exist, the possibility of evil, and as such, it cannot be considered the highest power of the spirit – and this is stated by Schelling both in 1809 and in 1810.

attribute the ultimate source of evil.<sup>7</sup> For Schelling evil is only the blind, one-sided domination of the self-will, which recognizes no other touchstone. Good is the overcoming of this one-sidedness of evil, without which, however, good could not exist, because there would be nothing to oppose it that could serve as its basis.

Self-will arises as freedom precisely when a connection is established between the individual or real and the understanding, which Schelling had called the “will in the will” in the *Freedom Essay*. (SW VII, p. 359). In the following lines we will deal with this question, that is, with the riddle regarding the essence of freedom.

Evil dwells in the spirit so that the spirit cannot be the highest. Evil is neither a lack of good nor a mere denial of harmony, but an inner disharmony: “Likewise, evil is not a mere deprivation of good, not a mere denial of inner harmony, but a positive disharmony.” (SW VII, pp. 467-468).

The spirit, then, in the multiplicity of its judgments, cannot distinguish between truth and error.<sup>8</sup> Error is not only a deprivation of truth - as held by rationalist theories that conceive of evil as a non-Seyende *privatio boni* or *per accidens* - but something positive, an inversion of the spirit itself (SW VII, pp. 370-371).

At the end of this argumentation, we find the famous assertion that constitutes the object of our inquiries, namely that the body does not infect the spirit with evil, but rather, conversely, it is the spirit - which is the milieu of self-will and, consequently, of the possibility of evil - that infects the body:

It is not the spirit that is infected by the body, but vice versa the body by the spirit. Evil is, in a certain sense, the most purely spiritual, for it wages the fiercest war against all being; in fact, it would like to suppress the ground of creation [itself] (SW VII, p. 468).

Evil lies in the spirit, and not in the body. This is the thesis that follows from Schelling’s higher realism, or as Lawrence has called it – in a provocative fashion - “critical and non-reductive materialism” (Cf. Lawrence, 2010).

7 On Rousseau see *Social contract* (1762), also *Emile, or On Education* (1762). Kain (1990, p. 318) has tried to show, quite unsuccessfully, that Rousseau does not incur such a denial of human individual action, but he failed because, following here Rousseau himself, he incurs rather a mystification of the “General Will” that Schelling – anticipating Marx in this point – has denounced both in the *Freedom Essay* (SW VII, pp. 359-365) as in the *Lectures* (SW VII, pp. 461-467) in an even clearer fashion. On young Nietzsche’s rejection of individuality see KSA I, p. 73.

8 This point reminds us of the doubt arguments in Descartes’ First Metaphysical Meditation. Schelling’s radical stance on evil makes us think that he is trying to overcome, so to speak, Descartes’ *malin génie* hypothesis, according to which the possibility for error lies in the intrinsic constitution of our knowing faculty, or, conversely, in the existence of an “inverted” such faculty.

Aligned here with Spinoza and Nietzsche Schelling seems to adhere to the thesis about the superior potency of the body in relation to the spirit. However, we should not reduce Schelling to a position of one-sided materialism like the French or the later dialectical materialism - Schelling harshly criticizes the former as a position for which there is no A, i.e., nothing spiritual, and, consequently, as a one-sided *revertio* of Fichte's subjective idealism. (*SW VII*, p. 447).

We must not forget that freedom, which our author qualifies as the highest, lies in the spirit A2 as fully developed, and that it is up to the spirit to combat its inherent tendency towards evil and ultimately to redeem all nature, that is, all matter or B.

The revaluation of the body in Schelling is now evident, rather, as a critical standpoint with respect to the spirit and a romantic vindication of the innocence of nature, including human nature, in the face of the intellectualism that sought to degrade it and oppose it, as in Fichte, to the moral order of the world.<sup>9</sup> Schelling's moral position is fundamentally suspicious of any purely moral point of view, that is, of the so-called "ethical idealism" which sees in nature and in the body a mere obstacle to be overcome for the realization of the ends of reason (*SW VII*, pp. 25-45. Cf. Schulze, 1957, p. 578), because evil lies, precisely, in reason itself.

Evil implies, as Heidegger elegantly states, a "disruption of Seyende" (*Zerrüttung des Seyenden*), that is, an attempt to dissolve and rearrange the elements that constitute Being or the Good (Cf. *GA 42*, p. 248). Evil thus does not belong to sensibility but arises, as we have seen, from the very essence of reason.

#### **IV The relation of the spirit to the body, the mind, and the soul**

For Schelling, the soul is the divine in man, and like the agent intellect in Aristotle or the third kind of knowledge in Spinoza, the soul is the impersonal to which all personal elements that dwell in the spirit must be subordinated.<sup>10</sup>

The soul is incapable of evil or error because it does not have the personal element that characterizes the *Selbstsein* in man. (*SW VII*, p. 468).

9 On Schelling's heterodox romanticism, transitioning from the Jena circle to a darker middle and late romantic conception of nature, see Lindberg, 2010; Nassar, 2014; Pinkard, 2010; Rodriguez, 2022.

10 In the dialogue *Clara* the soul is characterized, in contradiction to this passage, as the most proper and individual in man's mind overall. Cf. *SW IX*, pp. 45, 49; Müller-Lüneschloß, 2012, pp. 266-268. More on Schelling's theory of the soul in Marquet, 1981, pp. 141-153.

The sound character of the mind - as well as of the spirit and the soul - is based on a constant development among the three, especially on a stable relationship between the spirit and the soul, representing God in the mind. Without this relationship with God, man cannot exist even for a single moment. (*SW VII*, p. 469).

Without God, man sinks into the non-*Seyende*. Disease and evil, therefore, arise from a severance of the connection between the various potencies of spirit and God and man, or between the impersonal soul and the spirit representing personality. (*SW VII*, p. 469).

The non-*Seyende*, that which is devoid of understanding, is the basis of human understanding and of the spirit itself. The essence of the human spirit, insofar as it springs from the non-*Seyende*, is therefore madness. Madness arises, according to Schelling, when the non-*Seyende* tries to set itself up as a *Seyende* and attain an essence of its own. (*SW VII*, pp. 469-470).

Madness and evil are the sign of a will split from the center, free to reshape the universal with its own powers. In this sense, every human spirit, and will contain a measure of madness that cannot be eliminated, although it can be subjected to rules and controlled by the soul or the divine principle. Madness is a necessary - creative - element of the spirit, one that must not manifest itself but remain in the background. This is the reason behind Schelling's claim that understanding cannot undertake anything great if it does not contain a certain dose of madness: "People who have no madness in them are men of empty and sterile understanding. [...] madness arises as a terrible sign of what is the will in separation from God." (*SW VII*, p. 470)

Error, as we know, results from the subordination of the soul to self-will, that is, to the individual. But we see how error and evil then go hand in hand with human freedom, which Schelling characterizes in part as an intermediate position between the soul and the spirit. When the spirit and the will follow the soul, they enact the good, when they submit to the self-will, the evil.

Schelling seems to imply that evil is derived from self-will, but as we know, this is not the case. Rather, evil depends on an inverted relation between the self-will and the universal - in this case, the soul - so that the self-will relates to the soul by subordinating it unilaterally to its dictates. It is not the self-will that is the origin of evil, but its connection with the attempted domination of the soul. (*SW VII*, pp. 470-471).

The soul has no more stages but is an absolute divine unity. However, it can relate alternately to the real and to the ideal. Art is the relation of the soul to the real. Here, longing and the self-power (*Selbstkraft*) function as tools of art, subordinating themselves to the soul as to the ideal. In art, there is a

complete interpenetration of both the real and the ideal factor, so that the unity or innocence of nature is restored. (*SW VII*, p. 471).

Philosophy is the relation of the soul to feeling and understanding. From this relation arise the sciences and reason. However, there is no real motive to confront the two, as is the case with the understanding and reason, for, they are one, the active element corresponding to the understanding and the passive, or subject to a higher power, to reason. (*SW VII*, pp. 471-472).

Schelling affirms on the nature of reason that it consists in its submission to the impulses of the soul and that, for this motive, reason is to philosophy what space is to geometry, that is, its fundamental presupposition (*SW V*, pp. 382-383). In fact, reason is, at its very foundation, the touchstone of truth. It does not produce truth for its own sake but rather rejects what is false, namely what does not come from the soul but from the personality, from self-will, and from the subjective domain. (*SW VII*, p. 472).

The productions of reason also include an obscure principle that comes from feeling and without which nothing can be achieved, Schelling asserts. Feeling, however, is not the highest, except in connection with the soul and with reason. (*SW VII*, pp. 472-473).

The structure of philosophy is thus completed by the relation of the soul to the will and lustfulness, which, according to Schelling, produces the moral constitution of the soul, virtue in the highest sense. Virtue does not entail hence the goodness of any individual action, but the formation of a morally virtuous character.

Kant's categorical imperative is interpreted by Schelling as the refusal to receive in action the influences of the personality, i.e., the subjective, receiving instead only directives from the soul, from which the impersonal and universal elements emanate. (*SW VII*, p. 473. Cf. Müller-Lüneschloß, 2012, p. 275).

At this point, Schelling introduces a principle that is above the will, which Kant does not recognize as a determining factor for the will of man. Thus, Schelling's anthropology has a metaphysical component that the Kantian standpoint does not possess.

## **V Spirit, body, and neutral dualism**

We have introduced previously the theory according to which Schelling's middle metaphysics consists of a non-reductive realism or at least a deep mistrust of any merely moral standpoint or "ethical idealism".

Considering this label we would like to focus now not only on the element of valorization of the power of the real – what we have done so far – but rather

on its counterpart, namely on the renewed interest in the power of the ideal, and therefore on the sort of unity that we can achieve in the domain of the spirit without relapsing into coercive means, like the State, or in the false unity of an all-encompassing immanent development of reason and history.

Self-will, mastered by understanding, ought to be able to unite individuals with each other based on associations where real individual wishes, not coerced free will and common interests play a major role. To actualize this goal is that Schelling summons two key concepts of his middle period of thought: religion and love. Let us analyze further what he understands under those two high-profile categories.

Religion as the work of love is the pure and highest action of the soul. Here Schelling attributes to religion the summit of virtue, truth, and beauty that he had earlier attributed to art (*SW* III, 615-619) and to philosophy (*SW* V, 364-365, 369, § 16, 382-383). However, since he relates religion to love, and philosophy is the science that we may call the “love for wisdom”, religion becomes a kind of philosophy and vice versa. It is important to recognize the degree to which the culmination of the human soul - and thus of all metaphysics and morality - is love. Through love the various elements are united, and a form of relative unity is restored between God and nature and between human beings themselves. (*SW* VII, pp. 473-474; *WA* I, p. 4. Cf. Müller-Lüneschloß, 2012, p. 276).

Schelling’s so-called humanism and anthropocentrism relate thus to the following point. Man is constituted as the summit of nature and the link between nature and God. (*SW* VII, p. 374. Cf. *GA* 42, p. 246). This does not mean though that man is the highest created being. Neither the opposite is the case. Man is neither the highest nor the lowest, but rather the *Seyende* that has the power to be either like God or even lower than mere nature (Cf. Müller-Lüneschloß, 2012, p. 285). In the *Freedom Essay* he declared, in grandiose fashion, that man cannot be like the animal, submissive under the sheer B. His curse is that he can elevate himself either higher than the animal or sink below the animality, the pure instinctive nature. (*SW* VII, pp. 372-373).

The anthropocentrism of Schelling does not mean either that men ought to dominate nature and subjugate her to his let-loose self-will and lustfulness of desires and never-ending hunger for new conquests. For Schelling, rather the opposite is the truth. Men’s central role in the creation is not to subjugate nature but to elevate her to the A2 towards which nature herself longs. This

men's highest role also implies the highest responsibility towards all created *Seyende*. (*SW VII*, pp. 374, 411, 433-434, 454. Cf. Nassar, 2020, pp. 231-248).<sup>11</sup>

Through his corporeality man belongs essentially to nature, that is, to the first power or the real, so that only after death does man ascend to the second power, to the spiritual world.

Death is necessary for man - metaphysically speaking - because there are two contradictory principles in his mind, the true *Seyende* - the soul or good - and the non-*Seyende*, that is, the spirit, the self-will or evil which tries to establish itself as *Seyende* and displace the true *Seyende*, the soul. We see here how, incidentally, the duality in man does not oppose the spirit and the body, but rather the two ultimate powers of the mind itself, the spirit that incarnates self-will and therefore the possibility of evil, and the soul, that, when is allowed to act by the self-restricting of self-will, cannot but enact the good.

Freedom understood as the capacity for good and evil awakens in man precisely as this underlining struggle between the two principles, a struggle that is ultimately resolved only by death, which is a complete transition to the realm of the true *Seyende*, namely the ideal. (*SW VII*, pp. 404-405, 473-474. Cf. Müller-Lüneschloß, 2012, p. 282).

According to Schelling, man has before him the possibility of good and evil, but his spirit is either good or evil, since he must decide, in each case, on a particular course of action. Therefore, Schelling claims that indecision before the good is also a kind of decision, namely, only the conditional acceptance of the good:

Man's spirit is necessarily a decided thing (more or less decided, by the way; meanwhile, indecision is itself again decision, i.e., wanting the good only conditionally); hence man's spirit is either good or bad (*SW VII*, p. 475).

Nature, on the other hand, is undecided. In it slumbers the conflict between good and evil that awaits its resolution in man (Cf. Müller-Lüneschloß, 2012, p. 280). Nature survives as a unity only in the face of this conflict because, as Hölderlin already affirmed in *Judgment and Being* of 1795, unity is prior to division, and traces of that original unity remain in it:

<sup>11</sup> Nassar deals specially with the central role of man in Schelling's thought vis-a-vis his responsibility towards all created beings, and, in particular, how Schelling's thought, when positing a ground independent from existence, posits, at the same time, a nature independent from man's intentions and desires, thus a fundamental objectivity. Now, this is possible to ascribe to Schelling because he determines man primarily as a natural being, and not as Fichte, as an "I" or abstract *subjectivity*. It is worth mentioning that Schelling anticipates also here the Marxian thesis of the elevation of sheer nature by human action, as it is formulated by Marx in his *Grundrisse* and in the *Theorien über Mehrwert* and that it came to Marx's attention through Feuerbach.

It is true that nature would have fallen apart long ago because of this inner conflict if it were not of later origin, if the split were not posterior to the unity: it is now separated, but it is always held together by the original unity (*SW VII*, p. 475).

In nature, as in man, there is always a mixture of good and evil, without whose interaction the real cannot be kept in equilibrium. Hence, neither good nor evil can reign completely, but even in the most heinous evil there is a trace of good, as not even evil can destroy completely the good that resides in the mind. (*SW VII*, p. 475).

As we have seen, death is man's liberation from the non-essential and his entrance into the purely spiritual or A2.

Since man is always divided between good and evil, his spirit is also divided between himself and his external appearance. In his externality, man is subject to the involuntary and the inevitable, or as Schelling said in 1800 and in *Lectures on the Philosophy of Art*, to fate or necessity (*SW III*, pp. 615-617, IV, pp. 252-257, V, p. 384). Only when man frees himself from the inessential, which expresses itself in evil, and thus from all B of nature, can he aspire to a pure and lasting good and enter fully into the spiritual realm. (*SW VII*, p. 475).

Evil lies in the spirit, and from it, it infects the body. The body does not contain evil, but on the contrary, only the good. The body, however, has within itself, precisely, a spiritual principle (*SW VII*, pp. 475-476. Cf. Müller-Lüneschloß, 2012, pp. 282-283; Schulze, 1957, p. 589).

The body can contain both good and evil, so it is up to the spirit to sow unity or discord within it. Following the Greek myth of metempsychosis - adapted to a Christian worldview - Schelling claims that we will carry with us the good and evil we do in this world into the world after death (Cf. Müller-Lüneschloß, 2012, pp. 284-285).

With death, the good that man has done is incorporated into God, the absolute A2: "The divine A<sup>2</sup> as absolute is necessarily also the absolute good, and in this sense, no one is good but God alone", while evil is expelled, through the mediation of nature, from the divine A2 in which it was still located. This process resembles an eschatology of the end of the world, according to which evil is returned to total unreality. However, we know that this is not possible for how long human freedom and action exist, so Schelling reserves it for the epoch of the world called "the future" in the *Freedom Essay* (*SW VII*, pp. 403-405) and that he names now, in the *Lectures*, as "the third power" (*SW VII*, pp. 476-477; *WA I*, p. 12. Cf. Schulze, 1957, pp. 591-593).

The theory of evil in the lectures, as in *Freiheitsschrift*, is complex and dual. On the one hand, actual evil constitutes man's own fault, since it requires the realization of his particular will or freedom as the ground of the maxim



of action. On the other hand, the possibility of evil also resides in the mixed character between the *Seyende* and the non-*Seyende*, which distinguishes nature and in which, as has been said, man participates through the body.

This contradictory account of evil is resolved when we consider the difference that Schelling introduces between the present and future epochs of the world (Cf. Lawrence, 2010, pp. 181-184; Müller-Lüneschloß, 2012, pp. 291-294). We will now briefly examine this topic.

The struggle between good and evil that takes place in man's mind characterizes the present epoch of the world signed by the constitutive dualism that runs through all of nature. This is the dualism between the dark principle of the ground, on one hand, and the existence, or light, on the other. Notwithstanding this fact, Schelling believes that such a dualism must come eventually to a final closure when evil would be eradicated and the good of the ideal A2 would be reincorporated into the divine existence. Then, and only then, man and nature would be reconciled with God as supreme *Seyende*, and the pantheism, that is, the being of all things in God, would hold true. (*SW* VII, pp. 416, 484. Cf. Müller-Lüneschloß, 2012, pp. 279, 281).

Such a "moment" of Schellingian eschatology would also signal the end of human freedom since it would have achieved its ultimate goal, namely, the triumph of the will against its inherent evil tendencies. As such, this kind of development would not belong to human history and to the paths of humanism, but rather to a sort of post-historic epoch that Schelling calls "the future" and whose outcome cannot be anticipated – less written – because it depends on the future deeds of human freedom itself. (*WA* I, p. 12).<sup>12</sup>

## VI

In this article, we have established Schelling's theory of the body and its connection with the predominant power of the mind, the spirit. We have developed the theories of the neutral or innocent status of the body with regards to the spirit, on one hand, and of the centrality of the human spirit, in connection with the body and the soul, clarifying Schelling's famous assertion according to which "the spirit is not the highest". To achieve these tasks, we dealt with the following points.

12 Only a kind of figurative or poetic anticipation of the future can be found in his 1810 dialogue *Clara*, written after his wife Caroline's death.

We have elucidated the extent to which man is a dual essence, whose ground resides in nature or the real B, but at the same time a sort of “idealized matter” or A2, that is, the ideal elevated from nature into personality and spirit.

Being a man consists essentially of the formation of the self-will that represents the real into the ideal, the force of gravity and darkness, a center of self-interest that drives him to rival and oppose nature. This self-will is also the first power of the spirit as such that is also described as the will of man which opposes his understanding, or the universal will that represents the divine in the mind.

Nevertheless, Schelling did not consider the spirit to be the highest, precisely because it entails a power of decision that is related to freedom and thus to the possibility of enacting evil. The spirit is then the power of the mind that is responsible for evil, and, as such, it must be transcended.

The description of the spirit as the place where evil takes place helped us clarify the degree to which the body is not evil, nor is it a receptacle for evil tendencies, but on the contrary: the body, as for all of nature, is so to speak innocent or incapable of evil and thus gets infected by the evil tendencies that arise from the spirit. In this incidental way, Schelling described the very nature of psychosomatic disorder as a perverted relation of the spirit to the body, which represents nature, and to the soul, which entails the impersonal influence of the divine upon the mind.

The task of moral philosophy was not for Schelling to describe a perfect moral world order, as in Fichte’s ethical idealism, that would be legitimized to suppress nature and other human beings as well (cf. Lachs, 1972, p. 317), but rather to gradually overcome the evil tendencies of the spirit with the help of the soul, namely, allowing the soul to influence the mind. The description of the soul showed us also the very nature of Schelling’s neutral dualistic standpoint, according to which the real has a primacy regarding reality but comes second to the ideal in dignity or preeminence. The ideal was hence the domain of freedom, of religion, and love that opposed the centrality of the State and the self-proclaimed rationality of “History”.

We defended Schelling’s humanism and anthropocentrism elucidating the degree to which man’s central role in the world did not entail a position of privilege and a right to domination, but, on the contrary, a supreme moral and metaphysical responsibility in the face of all created beings. The dual and apparently contradictory account of evil in human nature was clarified by us introducing the difference that Schelling defends between the present dualistic epoch of the world, and the anticipation of a possible “future” or post-historic

moment of humanity signed by the completed overcoming of evil and of a final reconciliation of all nature with God.

The issue of future cannot, nevertheless, be anticipated and written because it must be actualized by the deeds of human freedom itself.

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