Philosophical Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism (1795; second edition, 1804)

Prefatory Remark

A number of events have convinced the author of these letters that, in the minds of quite a few of the true friends of critical philosophy, there is as yet no sharp enough determination of the boundaries which the Critique of Pure Reason drew between dogmatism and criticism. Unless the author is mistaken, a new system of dogmatism is about to be fashioned of the spoils captured by critical philosophy—a new system to which every candid thinker would prefer the old. Although it is not an agreeable task, yet it is certainly not without merit to obviate in good time such confusions, which are usually more detrimental to true philosophy than even the most pernicious system that is at least consistent. The author chose the form of letters because he believed that he could present his ideas more clearly in this form than in any other. Also, in this genre he had to strive harder for clarity than he would have in any other. If here and there the presentation should sound too emphatic to unaccustomed ears, the author declares that the emphasis is due only to his most ardent conviction of the perniciousness of the system which he is attacking.

First Letter

I understand you, dear friend! You deem it greater to struggle against an absolutely power and to perish in the struggle than to guarantee one's safety from any future danger by positing a moral god. To be sure, the struggle against the immeasurable is not only the most sublime that man can conceive, but is also, I think, the very ground of all sublimity. However, I ask you how dogmatism can ever explain that power by which man takes a stand against the absolute, and how it can explain the feeling which accompanies this contest. For dogmatism, if consistent, is bent not upon contest but upon surrender, not upon enforced but upon voluntary annihilation, upon quiet abandonment of oneself to the absolute object. Any thought of resistance and of contentious self-assertion [Selbstmacht] that has found its way into dogmatism comes from a system better than dogmatism. However, in consistent dogmatism, that surrender has a purely aesthetic side. Quiet abandonment to the immeasurable, to rest in the arms of the world, is what art sets up in extreme contrast with struggle. What is midway between the extremes is a stoical peace of mind, a repose which expects the contest, or which has ended it.

While the spectacle of the struggle presents man at the climax of his self-assertion, the quiet vision of that rest on the contrary finds him at the climax of simply being alive; he abandons himself to the youthful world in order to quench his thirst for life and existence as such. To be, to be! is the cry that resounds within him; he would rather fall into the arms of the world than into the arms of death. If we consider the idea of a moral God from this aesthetic side, we can pronounce judgment quickly: whenever we accept that idea we lose the proper principle of aesthetics.

For the thought of taking a stand against the world loses all greatness the moment I put a higher being between the world and myself, the moment a guardian is necessary to keep the world within bounds. The farther the world is from me, and the more I put between it and myself, the more my intuition of it becomes restricted and the less possible is that abandonment to the world, that mutual approach, that reciprocal yielding in contest which is the proper principle of beauty. True art, or rather, the divine (ναυτον) in art, is an inward principle that creates its own material from within and all-powerfully opposes any sheer mechanism any aggregation of stuff from the outside lacking inner order. This inward principle we lose simultaneously with the intellectual intuition of the world, an intuition which arises in us by means of an instantaneous unification of two opposing principles and is lost when neither the contest nor the unification is any longer possible in us.

So far we agree, my friend; the idea of a moral God has no aesthetic side at all. But for my part, I go even farther and say that it has not even a philosophical side. The idea not only signifies nothing sublime, but signifies nothing whatsoever; it is an empty as every other anthropomorphic
representation (for in their principle they are all alike). This idea takes away with one hand what it gave with the other, and it would give on one side what it wants to wrest from us on the other; it would cater at the same time to weakness and to strength, to moral despondency and to moral autonomy [Selbstmacht].

[286] The idea demands a God. With that alone nothing is gained over dogmatism. The idea of a God cannot restrict the world without giving to God what is taken away from the world; instead of fearing the world, I must now fear God.

What distinguishes criticism is not the idea of a God, but the idea of a God conceived as being under moral laws. Naturally, the first question I must ask is, how do I arrive at this idea of a moral God?

If closely scanned, the answer of most [Kantians] proves to be nothing else than this: because theoretical reason is too weak to comprehend a God, and because we can realize the idea of a God only through moral demands, I have to think of God as also under moral laws. Thus, I need the idea of a moral God in order to save my morality and, inasmuch as I assume a God merely in order to save my morality, this God must be a moral God.

Hence, it is not the idea of God, but only the idea of a moral God that I owe to that practical ground of conviction. In this case, pray, where did you get that idea of God which you must have before you can have the idea of a moral God? You say that theoretical reason is not able to comprehend a God. So be it; but call it what you will—assumption, knowledge, belief—you cannot get rid of the idea of God. Why is it that you have arrived at this idea only through practical demands? Its ground lies hardly in the magic words practical need, practical faith! For the assumption of a God was impossible in theoretical philosophy not because there was no need for the assumption, but because one could conceive of no place for an absolute causality.

"Still, practical need is more pressing, more urgent than theoretical need." That is beside the question. No need, however urgent, can make the impossible possible. For the moment, I'll grant you the urgency of the need; all I want [287] to know is how you are going to satisfy it, or what new world you have suddenly discovered in which you find a place for absolute causality.

I'll not ask for an answer. Be it as you say! Nevertheless, though theoretical reason could not find that right, it has the right to take possession of it now that it has been discovered. You say that theoretical reason by itself cannot penetrate to the absolute object; but since you have now discovered it, how are you going to prevent theoretical reason from taking part in your discovery? Thus your theoretical reason would become quite a different reason; with the help of practical reason it would be broadened so as to admit a new field alongside the old.

However, once it is possible to broaden the field of reason, why should I wait so long? You yourselves assert that theoretical reason too is in need of assuming an absolute causality. And, once your needs are capable of creating new worlds, why should not theoretical needs be equally capable? Because theoretical reason is too narrow, too restricted for that." Very well, this is the reply I expected! Thus sooner or later you must admit theoretical reason into your game. For what you think when you speak of a merely practical assumption, frankly I cannot see. Your phrase cannot mean more than the acceptance of something as true. And that, like any other acceptance of a truth, is theoretical in form; in its foundation or matter, however, it is practical. Yet, it is precisely your complaint that theoretical reason is too narrow, too restricted, for an absolute causality. If so, from where can it receive the theoretical justification for accepting as true that assumption for which, as you say, your practical reason has given the ground; from where a new form broad enough for an absolute causality?

You may give me a thousand revelations of an absolute causality outside of myself, and a thousand demands for it on behalf of an intensified practical reason, yet I shall never be able to believe in it as long as my theoretical reason remains the same! My capacity even to assume an absolute object [288] would presuppose that I had first abolished myself as believing subject!*

Still, I shall not inconvenience your Deus ex machina! I shall allow you to presuppose the idea of God. But how do you arrive at the idea of a moral God?

The moral law is supposed to guard you against the predominance of God? Take heed that you do not admit the predominance before you have made sure of the will, which is supposed to be in conformity with that law. With what law do you want to match that will? With the moral law itself? But this is exactly what I question; how can you be convinced that the will of that being is in conformity with this law? The shortest reply would be to say that that being is itself the creator of the moral law. However, this is against the spirit and the letter of your philosophy. Or is the moral law simply to exist, as independent of any will? That puts us in the domain of fatalism. For a law that cannot be explained by anything

*If you tell me that these objections leave criticism [i.e., the critical philosophy of Kant] untouched, you are not telling me anything I have not thought myself. My objections are not aimed at criticism, but at certain exponents of it, who might have learned that criticism advances the idea of God merely as an object of action, and not at all as an object to be considered as true. I don't say that they should have learned it from the very spirit of critical philosophy. But they might have learned it at the very least from the word Kant used: postulate. The meaning of this term they should know from mathematics, if not otherwise.
that might exist independently of that law, a law that dominates the
greatest power as well as the smallest—such a law has no sanction other
than that of necessity. Or is the moral law to be explained by my will? Shall
I dictate a law to the Highest? A law, limits to the Absolute, from me, a
finite being?

“No, you shall not! What you ought to do is merely to start your
speculation with the moral law, and to arrange your system so that the
moral law appears first and God last. If you proceed thus as far as God, the
moral law is held ready to set bounds to his causality, bounds with which
your [289] freedom is compatible. And if anyone should declare that he
doesn’t like this order of proceeding, very well, it is his own fault if he
despairs of his condition [Existenz].”

I understand. But let us suppose that there should come upon you
someone shrewder, who would tell you that what is valid at all is valid
backwards as well as forwards. Believe, if you will, in an absolute causality
outside yourself, but allow me also to draw my conclusions backwards; that
there is no moral law for an absolute causality, that the deity cannot be
affected by the weakness of your reason; though you could arrive at the
deity only through the moral law, this is not in turn the only yar
dstick by which the deity is to be measured; this is not the only way the deity can be
conceived. In short, as long as the steps of your philosophy progress, I’ll
grant you all you say; but don’t be astonished, my dear friend, if, on my
way back, retracing the steps I took with you, I destroy all that you have
just laboriously erected. Your salvation is only in perpetual flight: take
care not to stop anywhere, for, as soon as you stop, I seize you and compel
you to return with me, and destruction would accompany our every step:
before us paradise, behind our desert and solitude.

With good reason, my friend, you are tired of the praises which people
load upon the new philosophy, and of the constant appeals to it, as soon as
there is a desire to defame reason! The philosopher’s system has been
misunderstood or misused; it has been perverted into conventional phrases
and preachers’ litanies, and as a consequence the philosopher is pilloried
with praise. Can we think of a spectacle more mortifying to him? If Kant
meant to say: Dear people, your (theoretical) reason is too feeble to
comprehend a God, but even so you ought to be morally good people, and
for the sake of morality you ought to assume a Being who rewards the
virtuous and punishes the vicious—if Kant meant to say nothing but this,
then there was nothing unexpected, uncommon, or unheard of in Kant;
nothing that could have brought about the widespread uproar he caused,
and nothing that could induce our prayer: Dear Lord, protect us from
our friends; our enemies we will take care of ourselves.
For there seemed to be no danger that criticism would demonstrate more than the *inademonstrability* of your system. And this fault of your system you would naturally attribute not to dogmatism itself, which in your conviction was the desirable system, but to your cognitive faculty, to its *shortcoming*, to its *weakness*. You believed that dogmatism, founded on something deeper than the mere cognitive faculty, would defy our proofs. The more emphatically we proved that your system cannot be established by the cognitive faculty, the firmer became your faith in it. And what you could not establish in the present you transposed to the future. For at all times you regarded the cognitive faculty as a wrap or garment which a higher hand could take off at its pleasure should it go out of fashion, or as a garment which could be shortened or lengthened at will.

*Shortcoming, weakness*—are these not accidental limitations admitting of infinite expansion? You were convinced of the weakness of reason. (And what a glorious spectacle it is to see philosophers and visionaries, believers [292] and unbelievers, now at last meet on a common point!) But did you not harbor, along with your conviction, the hope of partaking some day of higher powers? Nay, did not your very belief in that limitation impose upon you the duty of trying every possible means to annul it? Truly, you owe us a great debt of gratitude for the refutations of your system. Now you need no longer engage in crafty proofs difficult to grasp; we have opened a shortcut for you. What you cannot prove you mark with the stamp of practical reason, giving the positive assurance that your draft will be taken for current coin wherever human reason still reigns. It is well that this proud reason has been humbled. Once she was sufficient unto herself; now she recognizes her weakness, and patiently awaits the guidance of a higher power which will promote you favorites farther than a thousand strenuous vigils could advance the poor philosopher.

The time has come, my friend, to destroy the delusion, and to state plainly and resolutely that criticism means to do more than merely deduce the weakness of reason, and prove only *this much*, that dogmatism cannot be proved. You know best yourself how far those misinterpretations of criticism have led us already. Give me the old honest Wolffian! Whoever had no faith in his own demonstrations was regarded as lacking all philosophical sense. That was little! Now, whoever has no faith in the demonstrations of our latest philosophers bears the anathema of moral depravity.

The time has come to part company so that we may no longer nourish in our midst a secret enemy who, laying down his arms here, takes up new weapons elsewhere in order to massacre us, not in the open field of reason, but in the recesses of superstition. The time has come to make the freedom of minds die Freiheit der

"Third Letter"

[293] That I did not intend, my friend. I did not intend to lay the blame for those misconstructions on the *Critique of Pure Reason*. To be sure, that book furnished the motive for the misinterpretation; it had to. But the blame lies upon the still-persisting reign of dogmatism which, even in its ruins, imprisons the hearts of men.

The motive for the misconstructions was furnished by the *Critique of Pure Reason* because it was a critique of the cognitive faculty only, and as such it could not proceed farther than the negative refutation of dogmatism. The first attack upon dogmatism could be made only from a point which dogmatism had in common with the better system. They are opposed to each other in their first principle but they must meet at some common point some time or other. No line of distinction could be drawn between different systems except in a field they had in common.

This is a necessary consequence of the very concept of philosophy. Philosophy must not be a feat that merely inspires admiration for the cleverness of its author. Philosophy must present the course of the human mind itself, not only the march of an individual. And this course must pass through fields common to all parties.

If we had had to deal with the absolute alone, the strife of different systems would never have arisen. Only as we come forth from the absolute does opposition to it originate, and only through this original opposition in the human mind does any opposition between philosophers originate. And if there should ever be success, not for the philosophers indeed, but for man, in an attempt at leaving this field into which he entered by egressing from the absolute, then all philosophy, and the field itself, would cease to be. For that field comes about only through that opposition and the field has reality only as long as the opposition lasts.

[294] He, therefore, who intends to close the controversy between the philosophers must proceed from the very point from which the controversy of philosophy itself proceeded, or, what amounts to the same thing, from the point from which the original opposition in the human mind proceeded. This point, however, is nothing but the egress from the absolute. For, if we had never left its sphere we should all agree about the absolute, and if we had never stepped out from it, we should have no other field for dispute.
And indeed, the Critique of Pure Reason started its contention from that point alone. *How did we ever come to judge synthetically?* This is what Kant asked at the very beginning of his work, and this question lies at the base of his entire philosophy as a problem concerning the essential and common point of all philosophy. For expressed differently, the question is this: *How do I ever come to egress from the absolute, and to progress toward an opposite?*

**Synthesis comes about only through the manifold’s opposition to the original unity.** For without opposition no synthesis is necessary; where there is no manifold there is absolute unity [Einheit schlechthin]. On the other hand, if the manifold were original, then again there would be no synthesis. Now, though we can comprehend synthesis only as an original unity in opposition to plurality, yet it was impossible for the Critique of Pure Reason to ascend to that absolute unity because, in order to close the controversy between the philosophers, it could proceed only from the fact from which the controversy of philosophy itself proceeds. And that is just why it could only presuppose the original synthesis as a fact within the cognitive faculty. Therewith it had gained a great advantage which by far outweighed the disadvantage on the other side.

The Critique of Pure Reason did not have to contend with dogmatism about the fact in itself, but only about the inference from it. I do not need to substantiate this for you, my friend. You never could understand how one could impute to dogmatism the contention that there are no corrected by a critique of the cognitive faculty alone, inasmuch as this error, standing was inevitable as long as the cognitive faculty was considered to be something of the subject’s own, but not really necessary. It was an error, however, to think that the cognitive faculty could be independent of the very essence of the subject. And this error could not be entirely corrected by a critique of the cognitive faculty alone, inasmuch as this critique can consider the subject only insofar as it in its turn is an object of the cognitive faculty and hence entirely different from it. The misunderstanding became still more inevitable because the Critique of Pure Reason, like every other purely theoretical system, could not get beyond utter indecision, that is, it could go only as far as to demonstrate the theoretical indemonstrability of dogmatism. Moreover, because a delusion hallowed by long tradition had represented dogmatism as the most desirable system from a practical angle, nothing was more natural

than that dogmatism should try to save itself by an appeal to the weakness of reason. That delusion however, could hardly be fought as long as one was under the dominion of theoretical reason. And if anyone was capable of taking the delusion over into the dominion of practical reason, could he well be fit to hear the voice of freedom? 

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**[296]** Fourth Letter

Yes, indeed, my friend, I am firmly convinced that even the consummate system of criticism cannot confute dogmatism theoretically. True enough, in theoretical philosophy dogmatism is overthrown, but only to rise again with even greater power.

True enough, the theory of synthetic judgments must defeat dogmatism. Criticism proceeds from the point it has in common with dogmatism, from the original synthesis. This common fact, however, criticism can explain only by the cognitive faculty itself. With triumphant evidence criticism proves that, as soon as the subject enters the sphere of the object, that is, as soon as it judges objectively, the subject egresses from itself and is compelled to engage in a synthesis. Once dogmatism has admitted this, it must also admit that no absolutely objective cognition is possible, that is, that the object is knowable only under the condition of the subject, under the condition that the subject come out from its own sphere and engage in a synthesis. It must admit that in no synthesis can the object be met with as absolute, for as absolute it would endure no synthesis whatsoever, that is, it would not tolerate any condition imposed by an opposite. Dogmatism must admit that I cannot stand on my own shoulders in order to look beyond myself.

So far, dogmatism is theoretically confuted. Yet, with that act of synthesis, the cognitive faculty is far from being exhaustively studied. For synthesis as such is thinkable only under two conditions: *First,* that it be preceded by an absolute unity [Einheit], which becomes an empirical unity only in the synthesis itself; that is, only if an opposite is given, a manifold [Vielheit]. Now, because this synthesis is the very, ultimate term from which the critique of the cognitive faculty proceeds, the critique cannot rise to that absolute unity. But all the more assuredly must the completed system proceed from that unity.

*Second,* no synthesis is thinkable except under the presupposition that it terminate in an absolute thesis; the purpose of any synthesis is a thesis. Now, this second condition of every synthesis will be met with on the line of march and must be followed by a critique of the cognitive faculty, for in this case the question is about a thesis that is to be the end, not the
origin, of the synthesis.

From the original absolute unity which precedes every synthesis the completed science must deduce the doctrine that every synthesis tends ultimately to absolute unity. Now, a critique concerned only with the cognitive faculty does not rise to the absolute unity; hence it cannot furnish that deduction. Instead, it resorts to another expedient. Inasmuch as the critique presupposes that the merely formal acts of the subject are not subject to any doubt, it tries to prove the steps of every synthesis, as far as it is material, by the steps of every synthesis as far as it is merely formal. For the critique presupposes as a fact that the logical synthesis is thinkable only under the condition of an unconditional thesis—and that the subject is compelled to rise (through pro-syllogisms) from conditional to unconditional judgments. Instead of deducing the formal and the material steps of all synthesis from a principle at the base of both steps, the critique of the cognitive faculty explains the progress of one synthesis by that of the other.

It must admit that theoretical reason necessarily seeks what is not conditioned, and that the very striving which produces a synthesis demands an absolute thesis as goal of all philosophy. And, for this very reason, the critique must destroy what it only just erected. For it masters dogmatism only within the domain of the synthesis; as soon as it leaves this domain (and the critique must leave it just as necessarily as it had to enter it) the contest begins anew.

(298) I must beg that you extend your patience! Namely, if the synthesis is to end in a thesis, it is necessary to do away with the condition under which alone a synthesis has actuality [wirklich ist]. And the condition of a synthesis is that there be opposition—more definitely, opposition between subject and object.

If the opposition between subject and object is to cease, it ought to become unnecessary for the subject to step out of itself; both must become absolute, that is, the synthesis would terminate in a thesis.23 If, on the one hand, the subject were to disappear in the object, then, and only then, would the object be posited [gesetzt] under no condition of the subject's, that is, it would be posited as thing in itself, as absolute; but the subject would be absolutely done away with as the knower [als das Erkennende].

On the other hand, if the object became identical with the subject, then this would become subject in itself, absolute subject, while the object would be absolutely done away with as what is knowable (als das Erkennbare), that is, as object properly understood [als Gegenstand überhaupt].

One of the two must come to pass. Either no subject and an absolute object, or not object and an absolute subject. How can we end this controversy?

Above all, my friend, let us remember that we are as yet in the domain of theoretical reason; though in asking that question we have already leaped across this domain's boundary. Theoretical philosophy as such is concerned merely with the two conditions of cognition, the subject and the object. Now, however, because we want to do away with one of those conditions, we forsake that domain, in which we cannot close the controversy. If we want to put an end to it, we must seek a new domain where perhaps we shall be luckier.

Theoretical reason necessarily seeks what is not conditioned; having formed the idea of the unconditioned, and, as theoretical reason, being unable to realize the unconditioned, it therefore demands the act through which it ought to be realized.

Here, then, philosophy proceeds to the realm of demands, that is, to the domain of practical philosophy, and only there can the decisive victory be gained—by the principle which we put at the beginning of philosophy, and which would be dispensable for theoretical philosophy if the latter could constitute a separate domain.

And just this far has the Critique of Pure Reason brought us. It has proved that that controversy cannot be closed in theoretical philosophy; it has not refuted dogmatism, whose very claim it has in fact withdrawn from the jurisdiction of theoretical reason; and this much the Critique of Pure Reason has in common not only with the complete system of criticism, but even with a consistent dogmatism. In order to realize its claim, dogmatism itself must appeal to a jurisdiction other than that of theoretical reason; it must seek another domain wherein to obtain a verdict.

You speak of an ingratiating side of dogmatism. I believe I can retort best by presenting a consistent dogmatistic ethics. This may be all the more expedient inasmuch as the steps we have already taken together must make us eager to watch the last attempt of dogmatism to settle the contest to its own advantage, in the field of practical reason.

(300) Fifth Letter

You have anticipated me, dear friend. You say that you have found dogmatism ingratiating only in a popularized system of dogmatism, like
I cannot possibly pass over, although, this answer to your last letter having recourse to practical postulates has given you cause for objections the one of Leibniz. On the other hand, my statement about dogmatism's having recourse to practical postulates has given you cause for objections which I cannot possibly pass over [although], this answer to your last letter being so belated, I almost fear that it may have lost all interest for you with regard to those objections of yours. Yet I may be able to revive some of your interest by a recapitulation.

You say that most of the interpreters of criticism claim that dogmatism is refuted adequately and forever by the Critique of Pure Reason, which calls to account all theoretical proofs for the existence of an objective intelligible world. They hold that dogmatism is characterized by its belief in the ability of theoretical reason to find that which, according to a critical inquiry into the cognitive faculty, is possible only through practical reason. They say that dogmatism could never adapt itself to the use of practical postulates, because in so doing it would cease to be dogmatism and would necessarily become criticism instead. Consequently, they claim that it is precisely the exclusive use of practical postulates that distinguishes the critical philosopher from the dogmatic one; the latter would believe that he was debasing speculative reason if he were to have recourse to moral grounds of belief. And so on.

You are quite right, my friend, if you state historically that the majority of critical philosophers find the transition from dogmatism to criticism so easy. In order to make the transition quite easy and comfortable, they regard the method of practical postulates as a method belonging exclusively to criticism, and they believe that they have adequately distinguished this system from any other by the mere term [301] practical postulates. This implies the additional advantage that one does not find it necessary to fathom more deeply the peculiar spirit of practical postulates within the system of criticism which is deemed to be sufficiently distinguished by the method as such. As if the method were not precisely what even conflicting systems can have in common, and what two systems would have to have in common if they absolutely contradicted each other! But allow me to retrace a few steps.

Nothing, it seems to me, proves more strikingly how little of the spirit of the Critique of Pure Reason the majority have grasped, than the almost universal belief that the Critique of Pure Reason belongs to one system alone, whereas it must be the very peculiarity of a critique of reason to favor no system exclusively, but instead to establish truly, or at least to prepare a canon for all systems. If we suppose that the Critique of Pure Reason allows objective realism to exist along with subjective idealism, it is not destined to establish any one system exclusively, much less to establish that cross between dogmatism and criticism which I have tried to describe in my previous letters. [302] On the contrary, as I understand it, the Critique is destined to deduce from the essence of reason the very possibility of two exactly opposed systems; it is destined to establish a system of criticism (conceived as complete), or, more precisely, a system of idealism as well as and in exact opposition to it, a system of dogmatism or of realism.

Whenever the Critique of Pure Reason spoke against dogmatism, it spoke against dogmatics, that is, against a system of dogmatism put up blindly and without any preceding investigation of the cognitive faculty. The Critique of Pure Reason has taught dogmatism how it can become dogmatism, that is, a solidly established system of objective realism. You may be predisposed to judge my contention as being wholly against the very spirit of the Critique, and your judgment would seem all the more natural to the majority inasmuch as my contention appears to be against the letter, at least, of the Critique. Hence, allow me, by anticipation, to remind you of one part of the Critique that has until this very moment been least elucidated, in spite of all the controversy about it. I mean the part which deals with things in themselves. On this very point, as far as I can see, the Critique of Pure Reason cannot be freed at all from the reproach of inconsistency, provided its aim is to establish criticism alone. [303] But if we suppose that the Critique of Pure Reason does not belong to any system exclusively, we shall soon discover the reason for which it left the two systems of idealism and realism standing side by side. The Critique applies to both, to the system of criticism as well as to that of dogmatism; and criticism and dogmatism are nothing else than idealism and realism systematically conceived. Anyone who reads attentively what the Critique

*By the way, I believe that those names should fall into disuse and that they should be replaced by more definite terms. Why should we not define both names: dogmatism as the system of objective idealism (or subjective idealism), criticism as the system of subjective realism (or objective idealism)? (Obviouisly, in speaking of appearances, at the bottom of which are things in themselves, the Critique of Pure Reason allows objective realism to exist along with subjective.) An improvement upon terminology seems to be of small merit in spite of the fact that, for many people, or even for the majority, more depends on words than on concepts. If, after the publication of the Critique, currency had not been obtained for the terms critical philosophy and criterion, people would sooner have abandoned the opinion that the Critique of Pure Reason establishes only one system (that of the so-called criticism).
says about the practical postulates will certainly admit that it reserves a field in which dogmatism can erect its edifice safely and durably. This has been maintained by many who thought they were antagonists of criticism simply because, like the friends of criticism, they stopped short at its methodological exterior. Accordingly, they asserted that criticism differs from dogmatism solely by its different method. And what was the reply of the so-called partisans of critical philosophy? Most of them were so anxiously modest as to allow that the distinction of criticism was merely the method. They said they wanted merely to believe what the dogmatist imagined he knew. And they claimed that the main advantage of the new method (nothing is more their concern than such advantagex) consists merely in the stronger influence which, by this method, the doctrines of dogmatism gain upon morals.

It may remain the [questionable] glory of our age to have excellently applied the new method in behalf of dogmatism. A future age may have in store the merit of developing the opposite system in its whole purity. Thus we may continue to work at a system of dogmatism; only let none sell us his dogmatic system for a system of criticism on account of having borrowed its form from the Critique of Pure Reason.

Furnishing the method of practical postulates for two wholly opposed systems, the Critique could not possibly go beyond the mere [304] method. Since the method was to be adequate for all systems, its peculiar spirit in a particular system could not be determined by the Critique. In order to maintain the method as generally applicable, the Critique had to retain it in an indefiniteness that did not exclude either system. Nay, in agreement with the spirit of the age, the method was to be applied by Kant himself to the thus renewed system of dogmatism rather than to the system of criticism first founded by him.

Allow me to go still further with my conclusions. The Critique of Pure Reason applies to all systems. Or, inasmuch as all other systems are only more or less faithful reproductions of the two main systems, it applies to both of them. Therefore it is the only work of its kind. Nay, in agreement with the spirit of the age, the method was to be applied by Kant himself to the thus renewed system of dogmatism rather than to the system of criticism first founded by him. [305,306] PHILOSOPHICAL LETTERS ON DOGMATISM AND CRITICISM more essentially freedom and individuality partake of it, and the less it can claim universal validity [Allgemeingültigkeit].

By itself the Critique of Pure Reason is, or contains, the genuine science of knowledge [die eigentliche Wissenschaftslehre] because it is valid for all knowledge [Wissenschaft]. Nevertheless, knowledge may rise to an absolute principle and it must do so if it is to become a system. But the science of knowledge cannot possibly put up one absolute principle in order to become a system (in the narrower sense of the word). [305] It must contain, not an absolute principle, not a definite and consummate system, but the canon for all principles and systems. It is time, though, to return from my digression.

If the Critique of Pure Reason is the canon of all possible systems, then it had to deduce the necessity of practical postulates from the idea of a system as such, not from the idea of some particular system. Consequently, if there are two wholly opposed systems, the method of practical postulates cannot possibly belong to one of them exclusively. For, from the idea of a system as such, the Critique of Pure Reason has first proved that no system, whatever its name, is, in its consummation, an object of knowledge, but merely an object of an activity [Handlung], a practically necessary but infinite activity. What the Critique of Pure Reason deduces from the essence of reason is what had already been applied spontaneously, in establishing his respective system, by every philosopher who was guided by the regulative idea of a system, perhaps without realizing distinctly the ground of such procedure.

Perchance you remember that I once asked, Why did Spinoza present his philosophy in a system of ethics? Certainly he did not do it to no purpose. Of him it can be said properly, he lived in his system. But surely he also conceived of more than a mere airy fabric of theory in which a spirit like his could hardly have found the rest and the "heaven in understanding" in which he so obviously lived and moved.

Either a system of knowledge is an artifice, a mental play (and you know that nothing could be more loathsome to the serious spirit of Spinoza), or the system must obtain reality, not by a theoretical but by a practical faculty; not by a cognitive faculty but by productive realization; not by knowledge [Wissens] but by action [Handeln].

Yet, people will say, "This is precisely what distinguishes dogmatism: it is occupied with mere mental play." I know quite well that such is the common language of those very people who have hitherto continued to dogmatize ostensibly on Kant's account. However, a mere mental play never results in a system. "This is precisely what we mean; there shall be no system of dogmatism; the only possible system is that of criticism." As for myself, I believe that there is a system of dogmatism as well as a system.
of criticism; I even believe that, in this very criticism, I have found the solution of the riddle as to why these two systems should necessarily exist side by side, why there must be two systems directly opposed to each other as long as there are any finite beings, and why no man can convince himself of any system except pragmatically [praktisch], that is, by realizing either system in himself.

Consequently, I believe that I can also explain why, for a spirit who has made himself free and who owes his philosophy only to himself, nothing can be more unbearable than the despotism of narrow minds who cannot tolerate another system beside their own. Nothing can rouse the indignation of the philosophical mind more than the declaration that henceforth all philosophy shall be detained in the fetters of a single system. The genuine philosopher has never felt himself to be greater than when he has beheld an infinity of knowledge. The whole sublimity of his science has consisted in just this, that it would never be complete. He would become unbearable to himself the moment he came to believe that he had completed his system. That very moment he would cease to be creator and would be degraded to an instrument of his own creature. How much more unbearable he would find the thought if somebody else should want to force such fetters on him!

The highest dignity of philosophy is precisely to expect everything of human freedom. Hence, nothing can [307] be more detrimental to philosophy than the attempt to confine it in the cage of a system universally valid by theory. He who attempts it may have a sagacious head, but the true critical spirit is not upon him. For this spirit means to quell the vain passion of demonstrations in order to save the freedom of knowledge [Wissenschaft].

Accordingly, how much more merit, on behalf of true philosophy, lies in the skeptic who declares war in advance upon every universally valid system. How much more than in the dogmaticist, who henceforth lets all respect in the skeptic the true freedom. The higher or lower degrees of which we owe only to our human freedom. We ourselves must have worked our way up to the point from which we want to start. Man cannot get there by arguing, nor can others argue him up to that point.

(i maintain that dogmatism and criticism both have the same problem. What is the problem is I have already said in one of my previous letters. The problem is not concerned with the being of an absolute as such, because no controversy is possible about the absolute as such. For in the realm of the absolute, none but analytical propositions are valid. Here no laws are observed except the law of identity; here we are concerned not with proofs but only with analyses, not with immediate cognition [Erkenntnis], but only with immediate insight [Wissen]—in short, here all is intelligible [begreiflich].

No proposition can be more groundless, by its very nature, than the one which asserts an absolute in human knowledge. Just because it affirms that which is absolute, no further ground can be given for the proposition. As soon as we enter the realm of proofs, we enter the realm of that which is conditioned and, vice versa, entering the realm of [309] that which is conditioned we enter the realm of philosophical problems. How we should wrong Spinoza if we were to believe [310] that his concern in philosophy was only with the analytical propositions which he puts down as a basis of his system. You can understand quite clearly how small an accomplishment that was to him; he was troubled by another riddle, the riddle of the
world, the question of how the absolute could come out of itself and oppose
to itself a world:**

This very riddle troubles the critical philosopher.** His main question is
not how analytical propositions are possible, but rather synthetic ones. For
him, nothing is more intelligible than a philosophy which explains all from
our very essence, nothing more unintelligible than a philosophy which
transcends ourselves. For him, the absolute in ourselves is more intelligible
than anything else. What is unintelligible is how we egress from the ab-

*It seems almost unintelligible that people criticizing the proofs for the existence of God could
have overlooked for such a long time the simple, intelligible truth that for the existence
of God only an ontological proof can be given. If there is a God he can be only because he is. His
existence and his essence [Wesen] must be identical. The proof for the being of God can be
given only from this being. For that very reason every proof given by dogmatism is no proof in
the proper sense of the term. The proposition here is: a God is the most unproved, the most un-
provable, the most groundless proposition—just as groundless as the supreme principle of
criticism, I am! Even more unbearable for a thinking mind is the talk about the
proofs for the existence of God. As if a being that can be intelligible only through itself, through its absolute
ontological preexistence, could be made intelligible, like a many-sided historical proposition, which can be ap-
proached from different sides! What would a thinking person feel when reading an announce-
ment like the following: Attempt at a new proof for the existence of God. As if one could ex-
periment with regard to God and ever so often discover something new about him! Such essays are
philosophical in the highest conceivable degree; their ground is the ground of all un-
philosophical procedure, lies in the inability to abstract (from what is merely empirical), and,
with regard to the case at hand, in the incapacity for the purest and highest abstraction.
These essayists thought of the being of God not as the absolute being, but as an existence
which is not absolute in itself, but is called absolute only insofar as nothing beyond it is
known. This is the empirical concept which every man incapable of abstraction forms of God.
Having formed this concept, people would stop at it all the more readily because they feared
that the pure idea of absolute being would lead them to a Spinozistic God. In order to escape
the pure abstraction of Spinozism, many a philosopher would continue the philosopher
ly existing God; but what was he to think when he saw that a proposition which he himself
could establish only at the end of his system, and as the result of the most troublesome proofs,
was put forth by Spinoza at the very first principle of all philosophy? Yet, while Spinoza did
not offer proof of an absolute being, but simply and absolutely asserted it, our modern
philosopher wanted to prove the very actuality [Wirklichkeit] of God. (And that indeed can
be done only synthetically. It is significant enough that even language has distinguished very
precisely between the act (which is present in sensation, that which acts upon me, and
upon which I react), the action (that which is there at all, i.e., in space and time), and the
being (which is by itself, absolutely independent of all temporal conditions). Having com-
pletely confused these concepts, how could anyone have even as little as an inkling of the in-
tention of Descartes and Spinoza? While these two spoke of absolute being, we bestowed upon,
them our crass concepts of actuality, or at best, the pure concept of existence [Dasein]. And
this, though pure, is nevertheless valid only in the world of appearances and is absolutely
empty outside of it. Our empirical age seems to have entirely lost that idea, yet it lives on in
the systems of Spinoza and Descartes, and, as the holiest idea of antiquity (To ov), in the im-

**This question is intentionally expressed this way. The author knows that Spinoza asserts only
an immanent causality of the absolute object. Still, what follows here will show that he
asserted it only because for him it was unintelligible as to how the absolute could go out of
itself, i.e., because he could propose that question but was unable to answer it.

solute in order to oppose something to ourselves that is radically different
from us. The most intelligible is how we determine all, merely by the law of
identity; the most enigmatic is how we can determine anything beyond this
law.

As far as I can see, this unintelligibility is indissoluble, theoretically, for
criticism as well as for dogmatism.

True enough, criticism can prove the necessity of synthetic propositions
for the realm of experience. But of what avail is that in answering our
question? I ask again, why is there a realm of experience at all? Every reply
I give to this already presupposes the existence of a world of experience. In
order to be able to answer this question we should first of all have to have
left the realm of experience; but if we had left that realm the very question
would cease. Hence this question cannot be solved except in the way in
which Alexander solved the [problem of] Gordian knot, that is, by doing
away with the question. [311] Hence it is absolutely unanswerable, because
it can be answered only in such a way that it can never again be asked.

But now it is already evident that such a dissolution of the question can
no longer be theoretical; it necessarily becomes practical. For in order to
be able to answer it, I must leave the realm of experience myself, that is, I
must do away, for myself, with the bound of the world of experience: I
must cease to be a finite being [endliches Wesen].

Therefore that theoretical question necessarily becomes a practical
postulate, and the problem of all philosophy necessarily leads us to a claim
which can be met only outside of all experience [of any objects]. And thus
the problem necessarily leads me beyond all bounds of knowledge
[Schränken des Wissens; cf. n.1] into a region where I do not find firm
ground, but must produce it myself in order to stand firmly upon it.

True enough, theoretical reason might try to leave the realm of
knowledge and set out haphazardly for the discovery of some other realm;
however, nothing would be attained by that, except reason's losing itself in
vain fancies through which it could not gain any real possessions. To pro-
vide against such ventures, reason itself would have to create a new realm
there where its knowledge ceases, that is, from a merely cognitive it would
have to turn into a creative reason, from theoretical reason into practical.

This necessity, however, to become practical is valid for reason as such,
not only for a specific reason confined in the fetters of a particular system.

Dogmatism and criticism, starting from principles however different,
must nonetheless meet in one point in one and the same problem. Only at
this meeting does the time come for their proper separation; only here can
they realize that the principle which they had so far presupposed, was
nothing but a problem upon which the verdict is to be given only at this
point. Now only is it manifest that all the propositions which they had put
forth thus far were propositions asserted absolutely, that is, without
ground. Now, as they enter a new realm, the realm of creative reason, it will be revealed whether they are capable of giving reality to those propositions; now only is it to be decided whether they are able to maintain their principles as well, in the scrimmage of the contest, by the autonomy of their freedom, as they did in the realm of general peace (by absolute power which has no merit). Criticism could not follow the lead of dogmatism nor, vice versa, lead it into the realm of the absolute, because in that realm nothing was possible for either except absolute assertions—assertions of which the opposite system would take no notice, assertions that would decide nothing for a conflicting system. Only now when both systems meet, can neither ignore the other any more, and just as before they were concerned with an undisturbed possession conquered without resistance, so now they must concern themselves with a possession gained by victory.

It would be vain to believe that the victory is decided by the mere choice of principles which are to serve as a basis of one’s system, and that in order to save one system or the other, it matters only what principle one has set up at the outset. For what matters is not a trick by which one finds at the end what one had prepared initially and cleverly for such eventual discovery, but the theoretical assertions which we put forth absolutely will not coerce our freedom to decide this way or that (that would be blind dogmatism) but, as soon as we are in the contest, those very principles as set up in the beginning are no longer valid in and by themselves; no, only is it to be decided, practically and by our freedom, whether they are valid or not. And it is nothing indeed but an inevitable circle if our theoretical speculation sets up beforehand what our freedom will maintain afterwards in the scrimmage of the contest. If we want to establish a system and, therefore, principles, we cannot do it except by an anticipation of the practical decision. We should not establish those principles unless our freedom had already decided about them; at the beginning of our knowledge they are nothing but proleptic assertions, or, as Jacobi expresses it somewhere—wryly and awkwardly enough, as he says himself, yet not quite unphilosophically—they are original insuperable prejudices [Vorurteile].

Consequently, no philosopher will imagine that he has done everything by merely setting up the highest principles. For those principles have only a subjective value as a basis of his system, that is, they are valid for him only inasmuch as he has anticipated his own practical decision.

Seventh Letter

I begin to approach the goal. The ethics of dogmatism becomes more intelligible for us as soon as we know what the problem is which, like any other ethics, it has to solve.

The main task of all philosophy consists of solving the problem of the existence of the world. All philosophers have worked at this solution, whatever different expression they have given to the problem. He who wants to conjure up the spirit of philosophy must conjure it up here.

When Lessing asked Jacobi what he would consider the spirit of Spinozism to be, Jacobi replied: it could be nothing else than the old a nihilo nihil fit, which Spinoza contemplated according to concepts more abstract and pure [nach abgezogenen Begriffen] than those of the philosophizing cabalists or of others before him. According to these purer concepts he found that the notion of anything emerging within the nonfinite [Entstehen im Unendlichen] posits something from nothing regardless of any support which images and words seem to furnish. “Consequently, he rejected every transition of the nonfinite into the finite,” all transitory causes whatsoever, and for the emanating principle he substituted an immanent principle, an indwelling cause of the world, eternally immutable in itself, a cause which would be one and the same as all its effects. I don’t believe that the spirit of Spinozism could be better circumscribed. But I believe that the very transition from the nonfinite to the finite is the problem of all philosophy, not only of one particular system. I even believe that Spinoza’s solution is the only possible solution, though the interpretation it must have in his system can belong to that system alone and another system will offer another interpretation for the solution.

I hear you say: “This statement needs an interpretation itself.” I shall give it as well as I can.

No system can realize the transition from the nonfinite to the finite. A mere play of thoughts is always possible, but it is never of much avail. No system can fill the gap between the nonfinite and the finite. This I presuppose; it is the result, not of critical philosophy, but of the Critique of Pure Reason, which concerns dogmatism as well as criticism, and which must be equally evident for both.

Reason [personified as feminine] sought to realize that transition from the nonfinite to the finite in order to bring unity into her cognition. She wanted to find the middle term [das Mittelglied] between the nonfinite and the finite in order to connect them both in the same unity of knowledge. While she cannot possibly find that middle term, yet she does not on that account surrender her highest aspiration, unity of cognitions; it is now her will no longer to need that middle term. Her effort to realize that transition consequently becomes the absolute demand—there shall be no transition from the nonfinite to the finite. How different is this demand from the opposite there shall be such transition! The latter is transcen-
dent; it wants to extend its sway to a realm in which it has no power (the realm of the nonfinite). It is the demand of blind dogmatism. The former demand, on the contrary, is immanent; it wills that I shall not admit of any transition. Thus dogmatism and criticism unite in the same postulate.

Philosophy cannot make a transition from the nonfinite to the finite, but it can make one from the finite to the nonfinite. [315] It is precisely the refusal of a transition from the nonfinite to the finite which, as an aspiration [Strebens], comes to be the connecting middle term of the two in human cognition. In order that there may be no transition from the nonfinite to the finite, the finite itself must have a tendency towards the nonfinite, a perpetual striving to lose itself in the nonfinite.

Now only does light dawn for us with regard to Spinoza's Ethics. It was not theoretical necessity alone, it was not merely a consequence of ex nihilo nihil fit, that led him to his solution of the problem, the solution that there is no transition from the nonfinite to the finite, no transitive, but only an indwelling cause of the world. It was to the practical dictum hedged by all philosophy that he owed that solution, except that Spinoza interpreted the dictum according to his system.

He had begun with a nonfinite substance, an absolute object. "There shall be no transition from the nonfinite to the finite"—behold, the demand of all philosophy. Spinoza interpreted it according to his principle, which let the finite differ from the nonfinite only because of the limitations of the finite. According to his principle everything in existence was merely a modification of the same infinite. Consequently there was no transition, no conflict, but only the demand that the finite strive to become identical with the infinite and to merge in the infinity of the absolute object.

Do you ask, my friend, how Spinoza could bear the contradiction of such a demand? Truly, he felt that the commandment annihilit thyself could not be fulfilled as long as he had to value the subject as highly as it is valued in the system of freedom. But this was his very aim; his self was not to be his property; it was to belong to infinite reality.

The subject as such cannot annihilate itself for, in order to do so, it would have to survive its own annihilation. But Spinoza did not acknowledge any subject as such. On his part, he had done away with that concept of a subject before he set up his postulate.

If the subject has an independent causality of its own in so far as it is object, then there is a contradiction in the demand Lose yourself [316] in the absolute. But Spinoza had done away with just that independent causality of the ego by which it is ego [Ich]. In demanding that the subject lose itself in the absolute, he had demanded implicitly the identity of subjective with absolute causality. He had decided, practically, that the finite world is nothing but a modification of the infinite, finite causality merely a modification of infinite causality.

That demand was to be fulfilled, not by the subject's own causality, but by a foreign causality in the subject. In other words, the demand was this: Annihilate yourself through absolute causality! Be absolutely passive toward absolute causality!

Finite causality was to differ from absolute not by principle but only by its limitations. The very causality governing in the infinite was to govern in every finite being. In the absolute this causality purported absolute negation of every merely finite state [Endlichkeit]. Similarly, its significance in the finite was to negate finitude empirically, a negation to be produced progressively, in time. Furthermore, Spinoza could not but infer that a complete fulfillment of the task of this finite causality, attained at any time, would mean identity with absolute causality, the finite having overcome the limitations by which alone it differed from the absolute.

Let us stop here, my friend, and admire the calmness with which Spinoza approached the completion of his system. He may have found that calm only in the loss of the infinite. Who would think any the worse of his serene spirit for harboring such an image, under which he found bearable the thought at which his system stopped?

Eighth Letter

I believe that I am touching on the very core of all possible utopianism [Schwärmerisch] when I speak of the ethical principle of dogmatism. The most sacred thoughts of antiquity and the phantoms of human insanity [317] meet on this spot. "The return into the deity, into the fountainhead of all existence, the unification with the absolute, the annihilation of selfhood"—is this not the principle of all utopian [schwarmerischen] philosophy, except for the different interpretations given by different enthusiasts who would expound it and shroud it in different images according to their spirit and their intentions. The principle of the history of all enthusiasm [Schwärmerische] is to be found here.

You say: "I can understand how Spinoza could keep out of sight the contradiction involved in his ethical principle. However, granting that, how was it possible for the serene spirit of Spinoza to bear that destructive and annihilating principle itself? For his is a serenity which illumines with its mild light his whole life and all his writings." I cannot reply except by saying: "Read his writings in just this respect, and you will find the answer to your question yourself."

A natural, an unavoidable deception had made that principle bearable for him and for all those nobler spirits who believed in it. For him, intellec-
*The unconditional in human knowledge*

We all have a secret and wondrous capacity of withdrawing from temporal change into our innermost self, which we divest of every exterior accretion. There, in the form of immutability, we intuit the eternal in us. This intuition is the innermost and in the strictest sense our own experience, upon which depends everything we know and believe of a supersensuous world. It is this intuition which first convinces us that anything is, strictly speaking, while everything else merely appears, and is only inasmuch as we transfer the word being to it. This intuition is distinguished from every sensuous intuition by the fact that it is produced by freedom alone, and that it is foreign and unknown to any whose freedom, overcome by the invading power of the objects, is almost insufficient for the production of consciousness. Yet there is an approximation to this freedom of self-intuition even for those who do not possess it; there are mediate experiences in which the freedom can be divined. There is a certain profoundness of mind [Tiefsinn] of which one is not aware, and which one would try in vain to produce at will. Jacobi has described it. And a complete aesthetics (this word taken in its old meaning) will show forth everything of which one is not aware, and which one would try in vain to produce at will. From experience, indeed; however, because every experience of objects depends on the experience of further objects, at core our knowledge must start from an immediate experience in the strictest sense, that is, from an experience produced by ourselves and independent of any objective causality. Intuition and experience, this principle alone can breathe life into the otherwise dead and inanimate system. Even the most abstract concepts with which our cognition plays depend upon an experience of life and existence.

This intellectual intuition takes place whenever I cease to be an object for myself, when—withdrawn into itself—the intuiting subject is identical with the intuited. In this moment of intuition, time and duration vanish for us; it is not we who are in time, but time is in us; in fact it is not time but rather pure absolute eternity that is in ourselves. It is not we who are lost in the intuition of the objective world; it is the world that is lost in our intuition.

This intuition Spinoza has objectified. When he intuited the intellectual in himself [das Intellektuale in sich], the absolute was no longer an object for him. This was an experience which admitted of two interpretations: either he had become identical with the absolute, or else the absolute had become identical with him. In the latter case, intellectual intuition was intuition of self; in the former, intuition of an absolute object. This latter is what Spinoza preferred. He believed himself identical with the absolute object, and lost in its nonfiniteness.

Believing this, he deceived himself. It was not he who had vanished in the intuition of the absolute object. On the contrary, everything objective had vanished for him, in the intuition of himself. Still, that thought of having merged into the absolute object was bearable for him precisely because it arose from a delusion, and it must have been all the more bearable because that delusion is indestructible. (For, in order to destroy it, one would have to destroy oneself.)

It is not likely that any enthusiast [Schwarmer] would ever have taken delight in the thought of being engulfed in the abyss of the deity, had he not always put his own ego in the place of the deity. It is not likely that any mystic could have conceived of himself as annihilated, had he not always, in his thought, retained his own self as the substratum or the annihilation. This necessity to think oneself in all instances [überall noch sich selbst zu denken], which helped all enthusiasts, also helped Spinoza. When he intuited himself as merged in the absolute object, he still intuited himself; he could not conceive of himself as annihilated without thinking of himself, at the same time as existing.

*According to Spinoza, all adequate, i.e., immediate cognitions are intuitions [Anschauung] of divine attributes, and the main theorem on which his ethics rests, so far as it is an ethics, is the proposition mentis humanae habet adequadam cognitionem aeternae et infinitae essentiae Dei (Ethics, bk. 2, prop. 47). From this intuition of God arises the intellectual love of God, which Spinoza describes as an approach to the state of the highest bliss. He says (bk. 5, prop. 36): Mentis erga Deum amor intellectualis pars est infiniti amoris, quo Deus se ipsum amat. And: Summus mentis conatus summaque virtus est, res intelligere tertio genere, quod procedit ab adequadam idea divinorum attributorum (ibid., prop. 25). And also: Ex hoc cognitione generis summa, quae dari potest, mentis acquiscentia ostitur. (ibid., prop. 27). Further: Clari intelligimus, qua in re salus nostra, seu beatitudo seu libertas consistit, nempe in consensu ei aeterno erga Deum amore (ibid., prop. 36 schol.).

**K. F. A. Schelling’s note: In the first edition.

**We can never get rid of our selves. The ground for this lies in our absolute freedom, owing to which the ego in us cannot be a thing, cannot be an entity capable of objective determination. And that is why our ego can never be comprehended as multiple terms in a series of representations. Preceding every series, it always takes place as the first term, which holds fast the entire series of representations. Hence, also, the acting ego, though determined in every**
Here, my friend, we have the principle of all eccentric fantasy [Schwärmerie]. Whenever such fantastication becomes a system, it arises from nothing but [321] the objectified intellectual intuition, from the fact that one would take the intuition of oneself for an intuition of an object outside of oneself, the intuition of the inner intellectual world for an intuition of a supersensitive world outside of oneself.

This delusion revealed itself in all the eccentricities [Schwärmerieen] of ancient philosophy. All philosophers, even those of the earliest antiquity, seem to have felt, at least, that there must be an absolute state in which we—present to ourselves alone, fully content, and not in need of any objective world and therefore free from its limitations—live a higher life. This state of intellectual being they all located outside of their selves. They felt that their better selves were unceasingly striving for that state, yet could never fully attain it. Consequently, they conceived of it as the final goal desired by what was best in them. However, having located that state outside of themselves, they could not account for their striving as really their own; they had to explain it objectively, historically. Hence the fiction of ancient philosophy concerning the soul, which before its present state was supposed to have lived in that blessed state from which it had been cast out and locked up in the prison of the objective world in punishment of crimes it had committed.*

single case, as yet also not determined, because it escapes every objective determination and can be determined only by itself; thus it is as once determined and the determining.

The necessity to save one's ego from all objective determination and, accordingly, to still think of oneself in every instance, is illustrated by two contradictory yet very common experiences. Now, and again in an experience of death and not-being is connected with agreeable feelings, and for no other reason than this, that we presuppose a pleasure in not-being, that is, we presume a continuation of ourselves even during not-being. On the other hand, we also connect disagreeable feelings with the thought of not-being. "To be or not to be"—this question would be wholly indifferent to me if I could but conceive of a complete not-being. For I could not feel any fear of a collision with not-being if I did not apprehend a survival of my self, so that my feelings would succeed too. Sterne's exclamation would be perfectly correct: "I'd be a fool to fear you, death! As long as I am, you are not, and when you are, then I am not!"—provided I could hope not to be as ill, at some future time. But I am apprehensive of being when I no longer am. Therefore the thought of not-being is a torment rather than a terror, because I have to think of myself as existing in order to think of my not-being, i.e., I find it necessary to think a contradiction. Consequently, when I am afraid of not-being, what I fear is not not-being but rather my subsistence [Dasein] even after my not-being any longer. I'll gladly not be, only I don't want to feel my not-being. I do not want an existence which is not an existence, or, according to Baggenstein, the clever annotator of Sterne's sentence, I fear only the lack of expression of existence, a lack that is indeed also an existence simultaneous with not-being.

*This is another endeavor to make possible the transition from the absolute to the conditioned, from the boundless to the limited, an attempt probably of early origin, and worthy of respect inasmuch as it presupposes, at least, the need felt for an explanation. However, like all the earlier endeavors in philosophy, this one too is satisfied with a merely historical explanation. Yet just this was the question: how did we get from the state of absolute perfection into the state of imperfection or moral crimes? Nevertheless, that endeavor contains truth insofar as it explains this transition morally; the first crime was also the first step from the state of bliss.*

You are likely to understand now, my friend, how Spinoza could speak of that absolute state not only cheerfully, but even with ecstasy. For he could not think of himself as lost in that state; he thought of his personality as expanded into it! Or is there any thought more sublime than the theorem with which he closes the whole of his Ethics, "Beatitude is not the reward of virtue, it is virtue itself!" Every conflict was to end in that intellectual state which he represented from his own self-intuition; every strife was to cease—even the most noble one, that of morality, and every contradiction which sensuality and the reason inevitably establish between morality and beatitude [Glückseligkeit] was to be dissolved.

Mortality itself cannot be the highest; it can only be an approximation of the absolute state, only a striving for absolute freedom which no longer departs from any law, yet which also does not know any law but the unalterable, eternal law of its own essence. If it is to be thought of as morally possible, happiness can be thought of only as an approximation to a beatitude which no longer differs from morality and which therefore can no longer be a reward of virtue. As long as we still believe in a rewarding happiness we also presuppose that happiness and morality, sensuality and reason are conflicting principles. But we ought not to do this. That conflict ought to cease, absolutely.

Happiness is a state of passivity: the happier [glückseiler] we are, the more passive we keep ourselves toward the objective world. The freer we become, and the more closely we approach reasonableness (Vernunftmäßigkeit), the less we need happiness, that is, a beatitude which we owe to ourselves but to luck. The purer our concepts of happiness become, and the more we gradually separate from them whatever is contributed by exterior objects and by sense gratification, the more closely happiness approaches morality and ceases to be happiness.

What, anyway, is the whole idea of a rewarding happiness but a moral delusion, an assignat, for which you, empirical man, are supposed to sell out your sensual pleasures for the time being, an assignat, however, that is said to be payable only when you yourself are no longer in need of payment. You may imagine as much as you like that that happiness [323] is a sum of pleasures fully analogous to the pleasures you now sacrifice. But just dare to conquer yourself now! Take the risk of the first childish step toward virtue; the second will be easier already. And if you go on, you will be astonished to discover that that happiness which you expected as a reward of your sacrifice is no longer of value to you. Happiness (that toy of your empirically affected reason*) has been postponed deliberately until a time when you must be enough of a man to be ashamed of it. To be ashamed of it, I say; for if you never get as far as feeling beyond that sensuous ideal of happiness, it would be better if reason had never spoken to you.

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It is one of the demands of reason that we shall no longer need any rewarding happiness, just as it is demanded that we become more and more reasonable, self-reliant, free. For unless you want to interpret the concept of reward in a way counter to all ordinary use of language, happiness, as long as it can reward us at all, is a happiness not as yet brought to pass by reason itself (how were reason and happiness ever to meet?) — a happiness, therefore, which no longer has any value in the eyes of a reasonable being. An ancient writer said: Should we deem the immortal gods unhappy because they do not possess any capitals, estates, slaves? Should we not rather praise them as the only blessed ones, because they alone, by the very sublimity of their nature, are deprived of all those gods? Evidently, the very highest level to which our ideas can rise involves a nature [Wesen] absolutely free, acting only according to its being [Sein], and whose only law is its own essence [Wesen]. Descartes and Spinoza, whose names are almost the only ones that could be invoked till now, when speaking of this idea! Only a few have understood you, and even fewer understood you willingly.

[324] The supreme being cannot act according to arguments of reason, says Descartes; for if it could, Spinoza adds, its activity would not be absolute but conditioned by its cognition of the laws of reason. Everything not explicable from our pure being, from our absolute essence, is determined passively. As soon as we proceed beyond ourselves, we put ourselves in a passive state. And reason is not intelligible through our absolute being, but only through limitation of the absolute in us. Still less intelligible is a moral law in the absolute. For the moral law as such proclaims itself through an ought [Sollen], that is, it presupposes the possibility of a deviation, it assumes the concept of good together with the concept of evil. And, in the absolute, the latter can be conceived as little as the former.

Even Greek sensuality felt that the blessed gods (gods without capital) would have to be liberated from every fetter of the law in order to be the blessed ones while the poor mortals (aegri mortales) sighed under the coercion of the laws. But the very complaints uttered by Greek mythology about the limits to human arbitrariness paid infinite honor to humanity. Thus moral freedom was maintained for man, while the poor mortals of evil. And reason is not intelligible through our absolute being, but only through limitation of the absolute in us. Still less intelligible is a moral law in the absolute. For the moral law as such proclaims itself through an ought [Sollen], that is, it presupposes the possibility of a deviation, it assumes the concept of good together with the concept of evil. And, in the absolute, the latter can be conceived as little as the former.

Where there is absolute freedom, there is absolute beatitude, and vice versa. But with absolute freedom no consciousness of self is compatible. An activity without any object, an activity to which there is no resistance, never returns into itself. Only through a return to one's self does consciousness arise. Only a restricted reality [Realität] is an actuality Wirklichkeit for us.

Where all resistance ceases, there is infinite expansion. But the intensity of our consciousness is in inverse ratio to the extension of our being. The supreme moment of being is, for us, transition to not-being, the moment of annihilation. Here, [325] in this moment of absolute being, supreme passivity is at one with the most unlimited activity. Unlimited activity is absolute repose — perfect Epicureanism.

We awaken from intellectual intuition as from a state of death. We awaken through reflection, that is, through a forced return to ourselves. But no return is thinkable without resistance, no reflection without an object. We designate as alive an activity upon objects alone and as dead an activity losing itself in itself. Man ought to be neither lifeless nor merely alive. His activity is necessarily intent upon objects, but with equal necessity it returns into itself. The latter distinguishes him from the merely living (animal) being, the former from the lifeless.

Intuition [Anschauung] as such is usually explained as the most immediate experience; correctly so, as far as it goes. Yet, the more immediate the experience, the closer to disappearance. Even sensuous intuition, as long as it is only what it is, borders on nothingness. Should I maintain it as intuition I would cease to be I; I must grasp myself with might in order to save myself from the abyss of intuition. Still, as long as intuition is intent upon objects, that is, as long as it is sensuous intuition, there is no danger of losing oneself. The I, on finding resistance, is obliged to take a stand against it, that is, to return into self. However, where sensuous intuition ceases, where everything objective vanishes, there is nothing but infinite expansion without a return into self. Should I maintain intellectual intuition I would cease to live; I would go "from time into eternity."

A French philosopher says that since the fall of man we have ceased to intuit [anschauen] things in themselves. If the dictum is to have any reasonable meaning, he must have been thinking of the Fall of man in the Platonic sense, as stepping out of the absolute state. But in that case he should have put his dictum inversely; since we have ceased intuiting things in ourselves we are fallen beings. For if the term thing in itself is to have any sense [326] it can only signify something that is no longer an object for us, something that offers no resistance to our activity. Now, it is indeed the sight [Anschauung] of the objective world that extricates us from intellectual self-contemplation, from the state of bliss. In that respect, then, Condillac might have said: As soon as the world ceased to be thing in itself for us, as soon as the ideal reality [die ideale Realität] became objective, and as soon as the intellectual world [die intellektuelle Welt] became an object for us, it became clear that we had fallen from our state of bliss.

Strangely, these ideas pervade all the fantastications [Schwärmereien] of the most different peoples and times. In taking intellectual intuition to be objective, perfect dogmatism differs from all the dreams of the cabalists,
of the Brahmans, of the Chinese philosophers, and of the new mystics, in nothing but the external form; in principle they all agree. Though in fact a number of the Chinese sages do differ from the rest, to their own advantage, in their candid way of letting the supreme good, the absolute bliss, consist of nothingness.* For if this nothing signifies what is absolutely not an object, then this nothing must certainly occur wherever a nonobject is supposed, nevertheless, to be intuited objectively, that is, wherever all thought and understanding cease.

I may have reminded you of Lessing’s confession that, for him, the idea of an infinite being was accompanied by a notion of infinite boredom, which would make him uneasy and sick. And there is also his (blasphemous) exclamation: I should not want to gain eternal bliss for anything in the world.

(I cannot see any comfort in philosophy for him who does not feel just this way.**)

Ninth Letter (criticism 9th. 1st. 327.

Your question does not come unexpectedly. It is even implied in my last letter. Criticism can be spared the reproach of [327] fantastication [Schwärmerie] just as little as can dogmatism, if, like the latter, it transcends the vocation of man and tries to represent the ultimate goal as attainable.*** But allow me to review matters a little.

If an activity no longer limited by objects, and wholly absolute, is no longer accompanied by consciousness; if unlimited activity is identical with absolute repose: if the supreme moment of being is closest to non-being; then criticism is bound for self-annihilation just as much as dogmatism is. If dogmatism demands that I vanish in the absolute object, then criticism must demand, on the contrary, that everything called object shall vanish in the intellectual intuition of myself. In either case, every object is lost for me, and therewith also the consciousness of myself as subject. My reality vanishes in the infinite reality. 

These conclusions seem to be inevitable as soon as we presuppose that both systems are intent upon the dissolution of that contrast [Widerspruch] between subject and object, upon absolute identity. I cannot do away with the subject without at the same time doing away with the object as such, and, on the same account, with all consciousness of self; and I cannot do away with the object without also doing away with the subject as such, that is, with all its personality. Yet that presupposition is absolutely inevitable.

*See Kant's treatise “The End of all Things” (1794). ✫

**K. F. A. Schelling's note: In the first edition.

**By the way, a question: to which class of propositions does the moral commandment belong? Is it a problematic or an assertoric, an analytic or a synthetic proposition? According to its form, then, it stands between the two. For if all controversy ceases in the absolute, the controversy between different systems must cease in it too, or rather all systems must terminate in it; they must vanish in it as contradictory systems. If dogmatism

It is inevitable because all philosophy demands absolute thesis as the goal of all synthesis.** Absolute thesis, however, is thinkable only through absolute identity. Hence both systems necessarily strive for absolute identity. There is the difference, though, that criticism is intent immediately upon absolute identity of the subject, and only mediately upon conformity of the object with the subject, while dogmatism is immediately intent upon the identity of an absolute object, and only mediately upon conformity of the subject with the absolute object. Criticism, faithful to its principle, tries synthetically to connect happiness with morality; dogmatism's effort is to connect morality with happiness. The dogmatist says: insofar as I strive for happiness, for conformity of my subject with the objective world, I am also striving, mediately, for the identity of my essence: I act morally. On the contrary, says the critical philosopher, insofar as I act morally I strive immediately for the absolute identity of my essence, and thereby mediately also for the identity of the objective and subjective in me, for bliss. Still, in both systems morality and happiness are two different principles, which I can unite only synthetically (as ground and consequence)** only as long as I am still approaching the ultimate goal, the absolute thesis. If I should ever reach it, then the two lines on which the infinite progressus runs, morality and happiness, would meet in one point; they would cease to be morality and happiness, that is, two different principles. They would be united in one principle which must, therefore be higher than the principle either of absolute being or of absolute beatitude.

[329] If both systems strive for the perfecting of human knowledge by one absolute principle, this must be the point of agreement between both systems. For if all controversy ceases in the absolute, the controversy between different systems must cease in it too, or rather all systems must terminate in it; they must vanish in it as contradictory systems. If dogmatism

*This does not mean as merit and reward. For reward is not the consequence of merit as such, but of a just act which harmonizes both. In both systems, however, happiness and morality must be thought of as each other's immediate ground and consequence.**
is the system that turns the absolute into an object, then it necessarily terminates where the subject ceases to be subject, that is, ceases to be opposed to the object. The original opposition between the two principles of dogmatism and criticism has always been revealed in the particular systems of philosophy. But the point of agreement between the two opposite fundamental systems has not always been grasped. Having grasped it in the result of our abstract investigation, we can now descend to those particular systems; they will confirm our result.

He who has reflected upon Stoicism and Epicureanism, the two most opposite moral systems, has readily found that both meet in the same ultimate goal. The Stoic who strove for independence from the power of objects strove just as much for beatitude as the Epicurean who thrust himself into the arms of the world. One made himself independent of sensuous needs by satisfying none, the other by satisfying all of them.

The one sought to attain the ultimate end—absolute beatitude—metaphysically, by way of abstraction from all sensuality; the other physically, by complete satisfaction of sensuality. But the Epicurean turned metaphysicist because his task of gaining bliss by successive satisfaction of single needs was infinite. The Stoic turned physicist because his abstraction from all sensuality could come to pass only gradually, in time. The one wanted to reach the ultimate goal by regressus, the other by progressus. Still, both of them were striving for the same end, the end of absolute beatitude and total contentment.

[330] He who has reflected upon idealism and realism, the two most opposite theoretical systems, has found by himself that both can come to pass only in the approach to the absolute, yet that both must unite in the absolute, that is, must cease as opposite systems. One used to say that God intuits the things in themselves. If this were to signify anything reasonable, it would mean that in God is the most perfect realism. Yet realism, conceived in its perfection, necessarily and just because it is perfect realism, becomes idealism. For perfect realism comes to pass only where the objects cease to be objects, that is, appearances, opposed to the subject—in short, only where the representation is identical with the represented objects, hence where subject and object are absolutely identical. Therefore that realism in the deity by which it intuits the things in themselves is nothing else than the most perfect idealism, by which the deity intuits nothing but itself and its own reality.

Both idealism and realism are subdivided into objective and subjective. Objective realism is subjective idealism, and objective idealism is subjective realism. This distinction must disappear as soon as the contradiction disappears between subject and object, as soon as I do not posit as merely ideal in myself that which I posit as real in myself, and as merely ideal in the object that which I posit as real in myself, in short, as soon as object and subject are identical.

He who has reflected upon freedom and necessity has found for himself that these two principles must be united in the absolute: [331] freedom, because the absolute acts by unconditional autonomy [Selbstmacht], and necessity, because it acts only according to the laws of its own being, the inner necessity of its essence. In the absolute there is no longer any will that could have reality independently of those acts. Absolute freedom and absolute necessity are identical.

Thus it is confirmed throughout that all contesting principles are unified and all contradicting systems become identical as soon as one rises to the absolute. All the more urgent becomes your question, Wherein does criticism excel dogmatism, if both meet anyway in the same ultimate goal, in the last aim of all philosophizing?

Still, my dear friend, is not your question answered already in that very result? Or does that result not yield quite naturally this further conclusion, that in order to differ from dogmatism criticism must not proceed along with dogmatism as far as the attainment of the ultimate goal. Dogmatism and criticism can hold their own as contradicting systems only while approaching the ultimate goal. On this very account, criticism must regard the ultimate goal merely as the object of an endless task. Criticism itself necessarily turns into dogmatism as soon as it sets up the ultimate goal as realized (in an object), or as realizable (at any particular time).

The absolute, if represented as realized (as existing), becomes objective; it becomes an object of knowledge and [332] therewith ceases to be an object of freedom. And nothing is left for the finite subject but to annihilate itself as subject in order to become identical, through such self-annihilation, with that object. Philosophy is abandoned to all the horrors of ecstasy [Schwärmerei].

*Objective realism (subjective idealism), conceived practically, is happiness [Glückseligkeit]; subjective realism (objective idealism), also practically conceived, is morality. As long as the system of objective realism (of things in themselves) is still valid, happiness can be joined with morality only synthetically; but once idealism and realism are no longer contradictory principles, morality and happiness are no longer opposed either. If objects cease to be objects for me, my aspiration can no longer refer to anything but myself (to the absolute identity of my essence).

**There are many who find the doctrine of Spinoza objectionable because in their minds Spinoza is supposed to have thought of God as of being without freedom. It is not superfluous to remind them that it was precisely Spinoza who, for one, thought of absolute necessity and absolute freedom as identical, Ethics, bk. I def. 7: Ex rebus libera dictur, quae ex sola sua naturae necessitate existit, et a se sola ad agendum determinatur. Ibid., prop. 17: Deus ex sola sua naturae legibus agit unde sequitur, solum Deum esse causam libertatis. It follows that God acts from nothing but the laws of his own nature. It follows that God alone is a free cause.}
And if criticism represents the ultimate goal as realizable, then, though it does not set up the absolute as an object of knowledge, yet it must leave a free hand to the faculty of imagination, which always anticipates actuality [Wirklichkeit], and which, standing halfway between the cognitive and the realizing faculty, takes a hand at the point where cognition ceases and realization has not yet begun. The faculty of imagination, in order to represent the absolute as realizable, must now represent it as realized, thus lapsing into the same enthusiasm [Schwärmerei] which produces the apparent mysticism.

Criticism, therefore, differs from dogmatism, not in the ultimate goal which both of them set up, but in the approach to it, in the realization of it, in the spirit of criticism's own practical postulates. And philosophy inquires into the ultimate aim of our human vocation only in order to be able to answer the much more urgent question as to our vocation [Bestimmung] itself. Only the immanent use which we [333] make of the principle of the absolute in practical philosophy for the knowledge of our vocation gives us the right to proceed unto the absolute. In this matter of the ultimate end, even dogmatism, by its practical intention, is distinguished from blind dogmatism, which uses the absolute as a constitutive principle for our knowledge, while dogmatism uses it merely as a constitutive principle for our vocation.

How do the two systems differ in the spirit of their practical postulates? This, dear friend, is the question from which I started and to which I now return. And this is the result of this whole investigation: quite like criticism, dogmatism cannot attain the absolute as an object through theoretical knowledge, because an absolute object tolerates no subject beside it, and theoretical philosophy is based upon the very conflict between subject and object. Therefore nothing is left for both systems except to make the absolute, which could not be an object of knowledge, an ob-

ject of action, or, to demand the action by which the absolute is realized.* In this necessary action both systems unite.334

This action as such, therefore, cannot in turn distinguish dogmatism from criticism. They can differ only in the spirit of the action and only insofar as this spirit demands the realization of the absolute as an object. Now, I cannot realize any objective causality without abrogating, in turn, a subjective causality. I cannot posit any activity in the object without positing passivity in myself. What I convey to the object I take away from myself, and vice versa. All these are propositions which can be proved most rigorously in philosophy, and of which everyone can give illustrations in the most common (moral) experience.

Consequently, if I presuppose the absolute as object of my knowledge, it exists independently of my causality, that is, I exist as dependent on its causality. Its causality annihilates mine. Whither shall I flee from its power? Only by assuming absolute passivity in myself is it possible to take for real an absolute object of an activity, but then all the horrors of enthusiasm befall me.

In dogmatism my vocation [Bestimmung] is to annihilate all free causality in me; to let absolute causality act in me, but not to act myself; to narrow more and more the limits of my freedom in order more and more to widen those of the objective world; in short, my destiny is the utmost unlimited passivity. While dogmatism solves the theoretical conflict between subject and object by [335] demanding that the subject cease to be

*If the author has correctly understood the interpreters of [Kant's own] Criticism, most of them do not mean, by the practical postulate of the existence of God, (the demand to realize practically the moral implication of the idea of God). They mean merely the demand to assume the existence of God theoretically, [immutable] for the sake of moral progress and therefore in a mere practical intention. Since to believe, to take to be true, etc., is obviously an act of the theoretical faculty, their assumption is really theoretical [not practical] and they presuppose God objectively. Thus God would not be the immediate but only a mediate object of our act of realizing, and yet he would be an object of theoretical reason (which, however, they do not seem to admit). On the other hand, these same philosophers assert: a complete analogy of both practical postulates, the postulate of the existence of God, and the postulate of immortality. Yet, it is evident that immortality must be the immediate object of our realizing. We make immortality real through the nonfiniteness of our moral persistence. Accordingly, they ought to admit that the idea of the deity is also the immediate object of our actualization, 'that we can realize the very idea of the deity only through the infinity of our moral progress (and that it is not merely our theoretical belief in a deity which we thus realize). Otherwise we should be sure of our belief in God earlier than of our belief in immortality; it sounds ridiculous, but it is the true, and evident conclusion! For belief in immortality comes about only through our infinite progress (empirically).' The belief itself is as infinite as our progress. But our belief in God would have to come to pass a priori dogmatically, and it would have to be always the same if, indeed, this belief were not itself the object of our progress and were not realized more and more, endlessly, through our progress. To most of my readers I ought to apologize for reverting so repeatedly to the same matter, but there are some readers who need to be taken from all sides. If I fail from one side, I may succeed from another.
subject for the absolute object, that is, that it cease to be something [implicitly or explicitly] opposed to it.** Criticism on the other hand must solve the conflict of theoretical philosophy by the practical demand that the absolute cease to be object for me. This demand I can fulfill only through an infinite striving toward the realization of the absolute in myself, only through unlimited activity. Now, every subjective causality does away with an objective one. Whereas I determine myself through autonomy, I determine objects through heteronomy. In positing activity in myself, I posit passivity in the object. The more subjective, the less objective!

Hence, if I posit all in the subject, I thus deny all of the object. Absolute causality in me does away with all objective causality as objective for me. In widening the limits of my world, I narrow those of the objective world. If my world as mine no longer had any limits, then all objective causality as such would be annihilated for me (by mine).* I should be absolute. However, criticism would deteriorate into Utopianism if it should represent this ultimate goal as attainable at all (even though not as attained). Therefore it makes a mere practical use of the idea for the determination of the moral being. If criticism stops there, it is certain to be eternally distinct from dogmatism.

In criticism, my vocation is to strive for immutable selfhood, unconditional freedom, unlimited activity. Bel is the supreme demand of criticism.**

Tenth Letter

You are right, one thing remains, to know that there is an objective power which threatens our freedom with annihilation, and, with this firm and certain conviction in our heart, to fight against it exerting our whole freedom, and thus to go down. You are doubly right, my friend, because this possibility must be preserved for art even after having vanished in the light of reason; it must be preserved for the highest in art.

Many a time the question has been asked how Greek reason could bear the contradictions of Greek tragedy. A mortal, destined by fate to become a malefactor and himself fighting against this fate, is nevertheless appallingly punished for the crime, although it was the deed of destiny! The ground of this contradiction, that which made the contradiction bearable, lay deeper than one would seek it. It lay in the context between human freedom and the power of the objective world in which the mortal must succumb necessarily if that power is absolutely superior, if it is fate. And yet he must be punished for succumbing because he did not succumb without a struggle. That the malefactor who succumbed under the power of fate was punished, this tragic fact was the recognition of human freedom; it was the honor due to freedom. Greek tragedy honored human freedom, letting its hero fight against the superior power of fate. In order not to go beyond the limits of art, the tragedy had to let him succumb. Nevertheless, in order to make restitution for this humiliation of human freedom exerted by art, it had to let him alone even for the crime committed by fate. As long as he is still free, he holds out against the power of destiny. As soon as he succumbs he ceases to be free. Succumbing, he still accuses fate for the loss of his freedom. Even Greek tragedy could not reconcile freedom and failure.** Only a being deprived of freedom could succumb under fate. It was a sublime thought, to suffer punishment willingly even for an inevitable crime, and so to prove one's freedom by the very loss of this freedom, and to go down with a declaration of free will.

Here too, as in all instances, Greek art is standard [Regel]. No people has been more faithful than the Greeks to the essence of humanity, even in art.

As long as man remains in the realm of nature he is master of nature, in the most proper sense of the word, just as he can be master of himself. He assigns to the objective world its definite limits beyond which it may not go. In representing the object to himself, in giving it form and consistency, he masters it. He has nothing to fear, for he himself has set limits to it. But as soon as he does away with these limits, as soon as the object is no longer representable, that is, as soon as he himself has strayed beyond the limit of representation, he finds himself lost. The terrors of the objective world befall him. He has done away with its bounds; how shall he now subdue it? He can no longer give distinct form to the boundless object. It is indistinctly present to his mind. Where shall he bind it, where seize it, where put limits to its excessive power?

What people are more natural than the Greeks, as long as Greek art remains within the limits of nature? Yet, as soon as it leaves those limits, what people are more terrible!* The invisible power is too sublime [338] to be bribed by adulation; their heroes are too noble to be saved by cowardice. There is nothing left but to fight and fall.

*The Greek gods were still within nature. Their power was not insusible, not out of reach of human freedom. Human shrewdness often won a victory over the physical power of the gods.

The very bravery of Greek heroes often terrified the Olympians. But for the Greeks the supernatural realm begins with fate, the invisible power out of reach of every natural power, a power upon which even the immortal gods cannot prevail. The Greeks are all the more natural themselves, the more terrible we find them in the realm of the supernatural. The more swiftly a people dream of the supersensuous world, the more desirable, the more unnatural it is itself.

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[336] PHILosophical Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism

[337] PHILosOPHICAL LETTERS ON DOGMATISM AND CRITICISM

The natural realm begins with fate, the invisible power out of reach of every natural power, a power upon which even the immortal gods cannot prevail. The Greeks are all the more natural themselves, the more terrible we find them in the realm of the supernatural. The more swiftly a people dream of the supersensuous world, the more desirable, the more unnatural it is itself.
But such a fight is thinkable only for the purpose of tragic art. It could not become a system of action even for this reason alone, that such a system would presuppose a race of titans, and that, without this presupposition, it would turn out to be utterly detrimental to humanity. If it were really the destiny of our race to be tormented by the terrors of an invisible world, would it not be easier to tremble at the faintest notion of freedom, cowed by the superior power of that world, instead of going down fighting? In fact, the horrors of the present world would torment us more than the terrors of the future. The man who would obtain his existence in the supersensuous world by begging, will become the tormentor of humanity if fortunate were he to be lulled in the arms of that world to the point of becoming a mere moral child in this.

It is the highest interest of philosophy to awaken reason from its slumber, by means of that unchangeable alternative which dogmatism offers to its confessors. If reason can no longer be awakened by this means, then at least one can be sure of having tried the utmost. The trial is all the easier, since that alternative proves to be the simplest, most intelligible, most genuine antithesis of all philosophizing reason, when we try to render to ourselves an account of the last foundations of our knowledge. "Reason must renounce either an objective intelligible world, or a subjective personality; either an absolute object, or an absolute subject, freedom of will." This antithesis once definitely established, the interest of reason demands also that we watch with the utmost care that it be not obscured again by the sophistries of moral indolence, in a veil which would deceive humanity. It is our duty to uncover the whole deception, and to through new deceptions which keep reason in constant ignorance and hide it the into which dogmatism must inevitably fall as soon as it proceeds to the last great question, which is, to be or not to be.

Thus the result of our investigation is that dogmatism is irrefutable theoretically because, on its own account, it leaves the theoretical realm in order to complete its system practically. Hence it is practically confutable if one realizes in oneself an absolutely opposite system. It is still irrefutable for him who is able to realize it practically, for him who can bear the thought of working at this own annihilation, of doing away with all free causality in himself, and of being the modification of an object in whose infinity he will find, sooner or later, his own (moral) extinction.

What, therefore, is more important for our age than to bring into the open these results of dogmatism, not to disguise them any longer in weeding words, in the delusions of an indolent reason, but to expose them as distinctly, as obviously, as frankly as possible. In this alone lies the last hope for the deliverance of humanity. She has long carried all the fetters of superstition, and she might after all find in herself what she has sought in the objective world. She might thus return, from a boundless straying in an alien world, to her own, from lack of self to selfhood, from the vacancy of reason to the freedom of will.

Specific delusions have vanished by themselves. The age has seemed to wait only for the disappearance of the generic basis of all those delusions. It had corrected individual errors; now the last center on which everything hinged was to fall. The disclosure seemed to be expected. Then others interfered. At the very moment when human freedom was to complete its last work, they invented new delusions in order to blunt the keen resolve even before the execution. The weapons slipped from the hand, and the valiant reason which, by itself, had annihilated the delusions of the objective world, whined childishly at its own weakness.

Why do you who believe in reason indict it for being unable to work at its own destruction, for being unable to realize an idea the reality of which would destroy everything you yourself have so laboriously erected? What the others do, who have always been at variance with reason and whose interest demands its indictment, does not surprise me. But that you yourself should do it, you who praise reason as a divine faculty in us! How could you conceivably maintain your reason over against that highest reason, which evidently could leave only the most absolute passivity for limited, finite reason. Or again, if you assume the idea of an objective God, how can you speak of laws brought forth by reason from itself, whereas autonomy can pertain only to an absolutely free being? In vain you imagine that you can save yourself by postulating that idea merely practically. Because you assume it merely practically it threatens your moral existence all the more certainly with extinction. You indict reason for not knowing anything of things in themselves, of objects of a supersensuous world. Has it never occurred to you, ever so dimly, that it is not the weakness of your reason but the absolute freedom in you which makes the intellectual world inaccessible to every objective power, that it is not the limitation of your knowledge but your unlimited freedom which has relegated the objects of cognition to the confines of mere appearances?

Forgive me, my friend, if, in a letter addressed to you, I speak to strangers who are quite foreign to your spirit. Let us rather return to the view which you opened before us at the end of your last letter.

[340] Let us rejoice in the conviction of having advanced to the last great problem to which any philosophy can advance. We feel freer in our spirit if we now return from the state of speculation to the enjoyment and exploration of nature, without fear that an ever recurring anxiety of our unsatisfied spirit might lead us back into that unnatural state. The ideas to
which our speculation has risen cease to be objects of an idle occupation that tires our spirit all too soon; they become the law of our life, and, as they themselves change into life and existence and become objects of experience, they free us forever from the painful enterprise of ascertaining their reality by way of speculation a priori."

We shall not complain, but be glad finally to have reached the crossroad where the parting of our ways is unavoidable, glad to have penetrated the mystery of our spirit, by virtue of which the just becomes free by himself, while the unjust trembles by himself in fear of a justice which he did not find in himself and had to assign to another world, to the hands of an avenging judge. Henceforth, the wise man will never have recourse to mysteries wherein to hide his principles from profane eye. It is a crime against humanity to hide principles which are universally communicable. But nature herself has set bounds to this communicability. For the worthy she has reserved a philosophy that becomes esoteric by itself because it cannot be learned, recited like a litany, feigned, nor contained in dead words which secret enemies or spies might pick up.)

This philosophy is a symbol for the union of free spirits, a symbol by which they all recognize each other, and one that they need not hide, since for them alone it is intelligible, whereas for others it will be an eternal riddle.

Translator's Notes

1. In April 1787, in the preface to the second edition (B) of *PuR* (xxx) Kant wrote, "The dogmatism in metaphysics, that is, the prejudice that one can get along without a critique of pure reason, is the true source of that foe of morality, that kind of unbelief which is always so very dogmatic." When on that same page he said, "I had to do away with knowledge in order to make room for faith," he did not intend to give license to pseudo-Kantian dogmatism. It may sound like Kant to say that our knowledge is restricted to worldly objects and that the otherworldly must be grasped by faith. But what Kant meant by knowledge is scientific knowledge of phenomena, and his faith is faith in the moral authority of practical reason, an authority that is no otherworldly, heteronomous power but is obligatory for autonomous responsibility only. The so-called faith of the pseudo-Kantians demands slavish submission and the sacrifice of the intellect. The old and true faith instead proclaimed—to be sure, in poetic not in philosophical language—that its truth makes free (John 8:32, and, mythologically identifying the truth with the Son, 8:36 and 14:6). This is why Schelling says the old system would be preferable, provided, of course, that philosophy had no clearer insight. What he attacks is the pernicious system of the pseudo-Kantians.

2. The Stoics had such a moral god, Zeus, creator and owner of the universe, with his double order of laws: laws of nature permitting all kinds of engineering, physical, medical, and psychological, and so-called moral laws suggesting that man take the safe way and align himself with the heteronomous will of the celestial boss. The Stoics saved the dignity of man by leaving him the choice of taking the consequences of disobedience, or even by letting him resign from the universe, by suicide. Conformists still seem to be in the majority. They want to play it safe and are profoundly shocked by any Promethean protest. Schelling's sarcasm is directed at the Christian conformists in Tübingen.

3. Spinoza's intellectual love of God "is part of the infinite love with which God loves Himself" (*Ethics*, pt. 5, prop. 36). Man surrenders himself to God in much the same way in which we surrender ourselves to a work of art, whose forms say much better what we are at the moment than anything we could say on our own. The proper principle of aesthetics lies in the seeing of the vision, and the identifying of oneself with it. Moralism would have us reduce the vision to a commodity.

The title of § 2 of Kant's *Cr* furnishes a brief definition of the proper principle of aesthetics: "The satisfaction which determines the judgment of taste is disinterested" (Cass. 5:272; Bernard 38). Kant points out that, with regard to the question whether a thing is beautiful, "we do not want to know whether the existence of the thing is of any interest or even could be of any interest for ourselves or for anyone else; instead we want to know how we judge it when we observe it, by eyesight or by reflection" (ibid., translation). "Taste is the faculty of judging an object or a method of representing it by an entirely disinterested satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The object of such satisfaction is called beautiful" (Cass. 279;
Bernard 45). Disinterestedness is incompatible with the idea of a moral God. But is that idea compatible with sublimity? Kant’s aesthetics goes beyond the beautiful. In a way, the sublime cringingly bent head, with crushed, contrite and fearful demeanor and voice, seems to be the higher degree of the aesthetic. “We call that

reasons for fear in his culpable disposition... is not in the frame of mind to admire the divine greatness... Only if he is conscious of an upright disposition pleasing to God... can the idea of the sublimity of this Being awaken in him, for then he recognizes in himself a sublimity of disposition conformable to His will” (§25, Cass. 335; cf. Bernard 102). But then he has outgrown his own interest in “gaining a gracious God,” Luther’s interest. The idea of a moral God is afflicted with that interest. And so, even with regard to the sublime, “the ideal of a moral God has no aesthetic side at all,” as Schelling says, two paragraphs further.

4. Kant said that we do not have any intellectual intuition of things, for it would pertain only to an “intellect through whose self-awareness the manifold of intuition would be simultaneously given, hence an intellect through whose imagination [Vorstellung] the objects of this imagination would immediately exist” (PuR 138 f.). Such an intellect “would be intuitive [würde anschauen, i.e., it could see things directly without need of our senses]; our intellect can only [hink and must seek intuition in the senses]” (PuR 135). Our intuition needs what is given to it and is sensuous “because it is derivative (intuitus derivatus) not spontaneous (intuitus originarius). Therefore it is not intellectual intuition, for which the reason just mentioned would seem to pertain only to the Original Being [Urwesen] but never to a being which is dependent with regard to both its existence and its intuition, and which relates its existence to given objects” (PuR 72).

Our sense intuition of objects is indeed derivative, but our moral autonomy is original. And our awareness of that fact does not come by argument but by intuition. The word intuition derives from the verb intueri, to behold, and it means literally in-sight. Augustine spoke of that “highest teacher, the truth that teaches inwardly” (De libero arbitrio 2.4.2). I have no evidence that Kant ever knew the Augustinian formulations. But Kant himself wrote in PuR: “The moral law is given, as an apodictically certain fact, as it were, of pure reason, a fact of which we are a priori conscious, even if it be granted that no example could be found in which it has been followed exactly. Thus the objective reality [objective in this sense of obligatory, not in the sense of objective things] of the moral law can be proved through no deduction, through no exertion of the theoretical, speculative, or empirically supported reason” (Cas. 5:55; Beck 48. Cf. n. 80 of §25). “The consciousness of this fundamental law may be called a fact of reason, since one cannot ferret it out from antecedent data of reason...” (Cas. 56; Beck 51). But then, apparently guided by a desire to be consistent in his terminology—in this case a misplaced consistency—Kant continues his sentence, saying “and since it forces itself upon us as a synthetic proposition a priori based on no pure or empirical intuition” [emphasis added]. Sticking to his definition of intellectual intuition as an immediate insight to objects, he does not realize that here the term, used in a new sense, can precisely express this fundamental fact or, as Fichte would say, this act of reason. It is this second, post-Kantian meaning of intellectual intuition which Fichte and Schelling adopt.

Earlier in the same year of 1795 in which he wrote Dogm., Schelling had written, “Wherever there is an object there is sensuous intuition, and vice versa. Therefore wherever there is no object, that is, in the absolute 1, there is no sensuous intuition, therefore no intellectual intuition at all, or the intellectual intuition. Therefore the 1 is posted [bestimmst] for itself as pure 1 in intellectual intuition” (Of 1 181).

In 1797 Fichte wrote, “The intellectual intuition of which Wissenschaftslehre speaks does not touch any being [ein Sein] at all, but an action instead, and Kant has no name for it except, if you wish, his phrase pure apperception. However, in the Kantian system the spot can be shown very percursorily where it should be mentioned. According to Kant we are surely aware of the categorical imperative. What kind of awareness is that?... No doubt it is an immediate awareness though not sensuous; therefore it is precisely what I call intellectual intuition” (Second Introduction to Wissenschaftslehre, 1: 472; cf. Heath 46).

In fact, Kant had said as much in PuR (425): “In the consciousness of myself, in sheer thought, I am the essence [Wesen] itself.” And in PuR (Cas. 5:49; cf. Beck 44) he said more specifically that it is the moral law that “provides the form of a world of reason, i.e., of a supersensuous nature. The sensuous nature of rational beings as such is their existence under empirically conditioned laws; hence, for reason, it is heteronomy. The supersensuous nature of these very same beings however is their existence according to laws which are independent of every empirical condition, laws therefore which belong to the autonomy of pure reason. Thus, supersensuous nature, as far as we can conceive it at all, is nothing but a nature under the autonomy of pure practical reason. One could call it primal nature (natura archetypa), and since its ideas furnish the motive for the will and its possible effect in sensuous nature, the latter could be called copied nature (natura exacta).”

Since Kantian autonomy means that I myself am the only one who can make me truly responsible, my intellectual intuition of my responsibility could be called subjective. In 1806 Schelling stressed that there is not only this introspective or subjective intuition. “If the aesthetic intuition is nothing else but intellectual intuition turned objective, then it is obvious that art is the only true and eternal organon of philosophy and the very documentation of philosophy, documenting again and again what philosophy cannot outwardly represent, namely, the incomprehensible in all action and production, and its original unity with the conscious. On this very account, for the philosopher art is the highest because he knows it opens the holy of holies where, like a flame, there shines in eternal and original union whatever is severed from nature and from history, and what forever must part company with life and action as well as with thought. The view of nature that the philosopher gains artificially is for art the original and natural view. What we call nature is a poem locked up in a secret and wondrous script” (last page but one of the System of Transcendental Idealism, 3:627 f.; cf. n. 97 to Goethe’s “Analogia” of 1804. Schelling analogizes between art and nature with its origin in Kant’s introduction to Cl).
reason, though this determines nothing about His existence, theoretically" (Cass. 5: 537; 4: Bernard 507). In Kant's language, to determine something theoretically means to establish it as an object. Those Kantians who wanted to retain an objective God read the phrase "practical use" as if it meant the trite pragmatic truism that many people refrain from doing wrong merely because they fear the legislative Creator's retribution. For them the moral law is heterogeneous, while Kant shows that autonomy alone can bring about any moral obligation. On Epiphany (January 6) 1796 Schelling wrote to Hegel from Tübingen, "All imaginable dogmas have been stamped as postulates of practical reason and wherever theoretical and historical proofs are lacking the practical Tübingian reason cuts the knot. You can see with glee the triumph of these philosophical heroes. It is a pleasure to watch them pull the string of the moral proof. Before you know it, the deus ex machina pops up, that personal individual being who sits up there in heaven!" (See also p. 290f. and n. 13 below.)

6. "All synthetic principles of reason allow only of an immediate employment; and in order to have knowledge of a supreme being we should have to put them to a transcendental use, for which our understanding is in no way fitted" (PrR 664; Smith 528).

7. Kant said: "One sees things change, come about, and vanish. Consequently things, or at least the condition of things, must have a cause. But so must every cause ever given in any manifestation, and the inquiry goes on from cause to next higher cause. Where, then, are we to posit the uppermost causality more appropriately than in the spot of the highest causality, that is, in the being that originally contains the ability to produce every possible effect?" (PrR 617 f.; cf. Smith 499). But the latter notion is one of those which "consider all knowledge of experience as determined by an absolute totality of conditions" and which are "transcendent and go beyond the limits of every experience" (PrR 584; cf. Smith 519). The category of causality is one of the constitutive concepts of objectivity; it is a transcendental concept. It is not causal in an object. And to posit an absolute causality means to posit a transcendental object, which, for Kant, is a contradiction in terms since, by definition, objects are objects of experience, not entities beyond all possible experience.

8. Kant spoke of "the primacy of pure practical reason" (PrR, Cass. 5:130; Beck 124) although he did not remind us explicitly that, in distinction from daydreaming, thinking is an act of autonomous responsibility.

9. Kant reminded us that "for the divine and for any holy will there are no imperatives, since such a will is autonomically [von selbst] and necessarily in line with the law; therefore it is out of place to speak of an ought in the case of such a will" (Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, Cass. 4: 271, my trans.; cf. Beck 51). No autonomous decision is needed. However, "the autonomy of the will is the sole principle of all moral laws and of the duties conforming to them; autonomy of choice, on the other hand, not only does not establish any obligation but is opposed to the principle of duty and to the morality of the will" (PrR 8; Cass. 5:38; Beck 33). In un-Kantian language, God is not a moral agent in need of a free decision for good in preference to evil; God is essentially good, or, in Schelling's phrase, he is essentially "in conformity with the moral law." For us, God's will—if we were philosophically permissible to speak of God's will as of the will of Somebody—would be a foreign will commanding us to conform with his decrees. His "predominance" would annihilate our autonomy and therefore our morality. This is the hidden logic of Kant's doctrine that God, who is surely not an object of experience, is but a postulate, albeit a necessary postulate. As such a will is autonomically [von selbst] and necessarily in line with the law, therefore it is out of place to speak of an ought in the case of such a will") (PrR 617 f.; cf. Smith 499). But the latter notion is one of those which "consider all knowledge of experience as determined by an absolute totality of conditions" and which are "transcendent and go beyond the limits of every experience" (PrR 584; cf. Smith 519). The category of causality is one of the constitutive concepts of objectivity; it is a transcendental concept. It is not causal in an object. And to posit an absolute causality means to posit a transcendental object, which, for Kant, is a contradiction in terms since, by definition, objects are objects of experience, not entities beyond all possible experience.

10. Schelling says "ursprünglicheres Wesen," an expression which reminds one of the Critique of Pure Reason (429) where Kant says that "in the awareness of myself, in sheer thinking, I am the essence itself" (bin ich das Wesen selbst).

11. Philosophically untutored common sense will easily be swayed by the "fascination" of so-called revelation said to issue from an objectively existing God. The man of common sense will prefer religious imagery to the abstractions of dogmatic theology. Like Pascal, he prefers the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob to the God of dogmatists philosophic. And on his own ground he is right. For he is a man of good will, which, he rightly feels, is no contingent quirk in the human mind, no illusion. Religious imagination tells him not only that a really good will desires to do what the Will of God, but also that we can have a good will only "by the grace of God." He has never heard of Kant's primacy of practical reason, but he feels the reality of the freedom by which he adheres to God, a freedom "not of this world." His tutors have not helped him to distinguish between the ostensible philosophy of those minds who try to explain everything by the contingencies of "this world," and real philosophy, whose topic is the cogency of the supersensuous. For him, abstract thinking can set up nothing but a house of cards built by "weak" human reason. To be sure, religious imagination can build a house of cards too, which the sceptical dogmatism of a Hume can blow down. At that moment real philosophy must come to the rescue of common sense.

12. Schelling's word is Spielwerk. Perhaps it should be translated as "mechanical toy." A little over 1400 years earlier Augustine wrote: Cui (aetermittati) si nondum possumus inhaerere, obiurgamus saltem nostraephantasmatam, et tam nugatorios et deceptorios ludos de spectaculo mentis eiiciamus. "If we cannot yet inhere in what is truly eternal, let us at least refrain our phantasmas, and eject from the spectacle of our mind such nugatory and deceptive games" or playthings (De vera religione 50.8b. ca. A.D. 589 - 591). For the un tutored mind, 1400 years do not count. Dogmatism has not listened to Augustine and it does not listen to Kant and Schelling. It likes its toys too much. Schelling's phrase "a reason which desires to know of an objective God" may refer to § 46 of Kant's Prolegomena: "It will be well for the human understanding not to be blamed for its inability to know the substance of things...but rather for demanding to know [zu erkennen verlangt] substance, which is a mere Idea, as though it were a given object" (Cass. 4:86; Beck 81). Schelling says "erkennt nicht." For Kant erkennen usually means to know an object.

13. David Hume had the merit of overthrowing dogmatic philosophy. It was he who awakened Kant from dogmatic slumber (Prol., Cass. 4:8; Beck 8.) But he remains a dogmatist. (PrR 795 f.; Beck 611.) So did Kant, insofar as he still needed a thing in itself.

14. In the Epiphany letter quoted above in note 5, Schelling, still at the seminary in Tübingen, wrote to Hegel in Bern: "Here there are Kantians in droves. Out of the mouth of infants and sucklings [Matt. 21:16] philosophy has perfected its own prayer. After much travel all philosophers have found that to one may safely proceed with 

15. A year later in 1796 Goethe and Schiller wrote their joint collection of distichs, Xeniem. Among them are nineteen by Schiller, which he later had printed in his poems under the title The Philosophers, some of whom he named while giving mere numbers to others. To The Eighth (presumably the Kantian professor K.C.E. Schmid in Jena, 1761 1819) he attributes the lines: In the philosophical fields nothing further exists.

Practical truth though is this: you can really do what you ought.
And Schiller lets The Apprentice retort:

That's what I thought: if they know nothing further in reason.
Quick they are ready to blame your or my conscience instead.

Achter. Auf theoretischem Feld ist weiter nichts zu finden; Aber der praktische Satz gilt doch: Du kannst, denn du sollst!

Lehrling. Dachfisch's doch! Wissen sie nichts Verunmiscßes mehr zu erwiedern.
Schieben sie's einem geschwind in das Gewissen hinein.


16. The positive refutation came, at least implicitly, in 1785 with Kant's Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals and in 1788 with Prz and the latter's fundamental "fact of reason." See n. 4 above and also n. 101 of O.f 1.

17. Schelling's phrase "das Heraustreten aus dem Absoluten" may puzzle the reader by its abrupt appearance. Let him not look for any objectified entity called the absolute, anything like Berkeley's God or Royce's supreme Self. In the Eighth Letter, Schelling calls such objectifications the very principle of every eccentricity (Schwärmerie). Also see the last paragraph of his reply to a criticism (reprinted at the end of his essay Of I, 243 f.). Schelling wrote in the Intelligengblatt zur Allgemeinen Literaturzeitung that one should have "learned from Kant that ideas are not at all topics for a dawdling speculation but objects of objectifications the very principle of every eccentricity (Schwärmerie)."

Instead of objectifying absoluteness, said Schelling in 1802, we should follow "the only true method, that is, the method of philosophy according to which everything is absolutely, but there is no Absolute" (4: 406). This is to be understood that one should have "learned from Kant that ideas are not at all topics for a dawdling speculation but objects of objectifications the very principle of every eccentricity (Schwärmerie)."

There is no Absolute as an objective entity that could be designated by a noun like the Absolute. To be sure, some philosophers have written about that Absolute which they felt they needed as a term for their theorizing. Also, of course, the extrovert, popular mind imagines God to be an entity "somewhere out (or even up) there." Metaphysically speaking, such an Absolute would absorb everything else, as it does for Parmenides and Schleiermacher when asking for Being in all there is, everything but being only illusion. Theologically speaking, an objectified God would already be "all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28), as in the beginning. We should no longer be he in time and therefor could have no responsibility. Morally speaking, Kant's categorical imperative is a peremptual challenge that evokes our free decisions, not a dead rule that annihilates our spiritual life. Grammatically speaking, the categorical imperative has the meaning of an adverb, not a noun or an adjective. It is absolutely, challenging our autonomy. It is no heteronomously tyrannical imposition. Psychologically speaking, it is no incubus, no dead and therefore death dealing Absolute. The true God gives life.
human mind. In this respect the cognitive faculty of man appears contingent and, as Schelling says at the end of this same paragraph, "it is in turn an object of the cognitive faculty," to be studied psychologically and epistemologically. That kind of study may fail to show a necessary relation between the cognitive faculty and the essence of the subject as well as the object.

20. In the Review of Aeneasidemus Fichte refers to a retort which Reinhold often made to his critics, "that one cannot think about the laws of thought except "in line with these laws" (1:5).

21. One of the basic tasks of what Kant called theoretical philosophy was the distinction between (a priori) form and (a posteriori) content. Here we are confronted with the most basic distinction between any given manifold that is to be unified and the form of unity as such. For an illustration take the simplest sentence: This paper is white. Parsed, the sentence is this: Not all paper is white nor, of course, is paper whiteness. And not all paper nor, of course, is whiteness some kind of matter like paper. Yet the sentence "synthesizes" the subject, this paper, and the predicate, white. The synthesis marks their empirical unity: This paper is white. The copula is expresses the (a priori) form of unity. If *immanence* or *being* were a word without meaning, there could be no meaningful empirical sentences. The word *absolute* in the phrase *absolute unity* invites the reader to abstract from the content of any given illustration, and to reflect on the pure form of unity. However, *reflection* always establishes distinctions or, to put it the other way around, reflection starts from a synthetic unity in which distinctions can be made. It: "cannot rise to the absolute unity." Still, "the complete system" (Dogm. 297) cannot do without the form of "absolute unity." "Theoretical reason necessarily seeks the unconditional" (297, 299), which must be fulfilled by an act (299). It is the act of reflecting, for example, that act of reflection thinking: In fact, this paper is white. The fact that it is white remains unknown as long as there is no act of some self, yours or mine, which says (even without words) "indeed, it is white." And this is an actual act, not a dead fact like the whiteness of this paper that lacks awareness.

Without words even a baby can be aware of the color (later called white) of this object (which we call paper).

Schelling rightly asks for the reader's patience (Dogm. 298). We must read this Fourth Letter as a whole, and read it twice, in order to find out what it is aiming at.

The logical unity of subject and predicate in a sentence inevitably leads to the ontological unity of knowing subject and known object (Dogm. 298). Our legitimate desire for an illustration may be satisfied, in a way, if we turn to what Fichte said half a dozen years later, in his 1801 *Dissertation der Wissenschaftslehre*. He said that what we desire is a "strictly immediate knowledge", a being that is strictly knowing, a knowing that is strictly being; one that is therefore isolated in itself [in sich abgesehen] and is discrete; that is determined in every way as original fact [ursachtisch]. . .in a word, that which language appropriately designates as *feelings* (Gefühle) in the plural like red, green, and so on. Next comes the explanation that feelings are the result of the mutual interchange between individual and universe. But nothing can say how the forces of nature manage to manifest themselves in just this peculiar manner, according to what rule and law? (2: 193). "If the material feeling (red, war, and the like) is regarded from the one side as an affection of the I, from the other as a quality of the thing, then this twofoldness is already a consequence of reflection, which is divisive. In actual knowing, which is beyond reach of reflection, it is neither the one nor the other, but both, however both undivided and as yet without this distinction. And on account of this absolute identity even reflection, which does distinguish, must stall both as inseparable: no subjective feeling without an objective quality, and vice versa. Transcendental idealism, in its fight against dogmatism, may say that what is inward is projected outwardly onto the object. But strictly speaking this is not what happens. Nor does what is objective enter into the mind [Gemüte], for in fact both are strictly one. The mind, taken objectively and as experience [fühlt] is nothing else than the world itself, and the

world, in the sense in which we are here speaking of the world, is nothing else than the mind itself" (2: 125 f.). In his popularizing formulation of the same year, 1801, *Sunclear Statement for the General Public Concerning the Real Essence of the Newest Philosophy: an Endeavor to Force the Reader to Understand*, Fichte says with regard to the oneness of the mind and its content: "The ordinary human sense [der gemeine Menschenverstand] does not find that fact to be otherwise. It only finds the thing the and the awareness of it together. And it always talks about the unity [Vereinigung] of both. Only the philosophical system of dualism finds it different. This dualism believes that it is thinking very sharply and thoroughly, when actual thinking has already slipped away from it" (2: 400; cf. n. 8 to Poss.).

Fichte's phrase "awareness and thing together" would seem to be the most concise formulation possible of what Kant meant when he spoke of phenomena.

Schelling's second condition stresses that the thesis that posits a phenomenon is "the end, not the origin, of the synthesis." Experience cannot furnish its own basis, as the dogmatism of empiricists will not see. A consistent empiricist would have to assume revelatory transcendental experiences, and that is why Kant said "my place is the fertile Bathos of experience" of real things, not of things in themselves. The reader may wish to look up the amusing footnote in the *Prologomena* (p. 141:8: Beck 122 f.).

In *PhR* (94) Kant said: "The functions of the understanding can all be found if one can completely present the functions of unity in judgments." And (104 f.): "The same function which, in a judgment, gives unity to the respective notions [den verschiedenen Vorstellungen] also gives unity to the sheer synthesis of distinct notions in an intuition (Anschauung) [or image], which in general is called the pure concept of understanding [or category]" (cf. Smith 106 and 119).

Although Kant simply accepted the validity of formal logic, we must not forget that it was he who recognized the egocentric and productive nature of that intuition which is required for all knowledge, and which he called pure apperception. Formulations in the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* are particularly significant. "All images [or intuitions] [Anschauungen] are nothing for us and no concern of ours at all, if they cannot be received in consciousness... through which alone knowledge is possible. We are a priori aware of the persistent identity of ourselves with regard to all notions [Vorstellungen] that can ever belong to our knowledge, and are thus aware of the identity as a necessary condition of the very possibility of all our notions" (A 116; cf. Smith 141 f.). "Therefore the transcendental unity of apperception rests on the pure synthesis of the imagination as an a priori condition of the possibility of every composition of a manifold in knowledge" (A 116; cf. Smith 142).

22. Of course the word *thesis* is not meant in the sense of a thesis chosen by a debater, of a thesis written by a candidate for the Master's degree. In 1794 Fichte had said: "A *thetic* judgment [emphasis supplied] would be one in which something is asserted, not to be like anything else or opposed to anything else, but simply to be identical with itself: thus it could presuppose no ground of conjunction or distinction at all. Instead, since the logical form of a judgment presupposes something, in this case [where there is neither a ground of relation, nor a ground of difference] there must be a third kind of presupposition which would be an [essentially moral] task in lieu of a [logical] ground. The original and supreme judgment of this kind is "I am." . . . All judgments which can be subsumed under this, that is, under the absolute positing of the self, are of this type (even if they should not always happen to have the I for their logical subject); for example, man is free" (1: 116; cf. Heath 114). Cf. n. 99 of Id 21-23.

As a logician, Fichte has the merit of having pointed out the difference between merely correct logical form and concrete and therefore interesting sense. A reader not familiar with this distinction will want examples, and they must be concrete. Formal logic distinguishes between affirmative and negative judgments, e.g., "A is A" is affirmative; "A is not B" is negative. Now, if I claim in front of a class that I am going to give an affirmative example, and then say "A lion is a lion" the class will dismally laugh at me. But if I say "A lion is a
feline," they will nod assent though saying to themselves: everybody knows that. The first example is formally correct, but it is ridiculous because it lacks a ground of distinction (Unterscheidunggrund). The second example is concrete and meaningful because it is not only formally correct (L = L) but also contains a ground of distinction which can be expressed by the negative judgment: "Not all felines are lions." A formally correct negative example would be, "the equilateral triangle is not married." It has only a ground of distinction (the triangles have nothing to do with marriage. The equilateral triangle, for example, the merely figurative "triangle" of husband, wife, and interloper), yet it lacks a ground of relation (Beziehungssatz) between the two terms triangle and marriage. One cannot call a purely formal judgment true. It is only correct, and any fool can think up innumerable examples. A meaningful and therefore genuinely true example would be: "A whale is not a fish." A child might argue: "But it looks like a fish!" And that is the ground of relation. The biologist will desire to dilate on the ground of distinction. I owe these examples to my teacher Fritz Medicus (1876-1956), the editor of Fichte’s works (Leipzig: Fritz Eckardt Verlag, 1908-12) and author of the searching and instructive book Fichte Leben, 2d rev. ed. (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1922).

24. The I is not an object. See n. 101 to Of I. Augustine said it must not seek itself as if it were absent. It is present to itself. See below, n. 51. Even to say it is misleading. The only appropriate word is I.

25. See pages 154-55 of Schelling’s Preface Of I. It is the I which, for everything derivative, furnishes "the form of being and of reality, of unconditionality and of unity" (Of I, 189).

26. PuR (661f.) says "since there are practical laws which are absolutely necessary, that is, moral laws, it must follow that if these laws are not unified, if they are not one single system of all philosophic knowledge, this would be misleading. The only sufficient reason for the existence of moral obligation is the I which, for everything derivative, furnishes "the form of being and of reality, of unconditionality and of unity."

27. This is the popular interpretation of the oft-quoted statement of Kant who, in the preface to the second edition (B) of PuR (xxx), said: "I had to do away with knowledge in order to make room for belief. . . . . Such interpreters would not even read as far as the end of Kant’s sentence, and they forgot that the knowledge of which Kant speaks is knowledge of objects of what he calls Erfahrung and what we ought to translate as "scientific experience." That experience, of course, can "not take away from us our intellectual presuppositions, nor a belief held for the sake of our practical concerns; these however we could not sort out under the title of knowing and with the pomp of knowledge" (498f.; 4, Smith 427). And Kant says specifically what he himself means by "speculative knowledge": "properly speaking [it] meets no other object than that of experience." If we go beyond the boundaries of experience and seek insights independent of it we have "no substratum of intuition upon which alone [synthesis] can be exercised." (499). This, of course, is a flat denial of the intellectual intuition by which alone we can know the autonomy of our moral responsibility. Thus Schelling is quite right in saying that this opens the door to moral dogmatism. In 1788 Schelling wrote about people who are "under the illusion that tenets which are theoretically most unreasonable can yet be very reasonable practically. One wonders what they are thinking. One would ask in vain as to their reasons. Since they do wish to be up to date, their only reason is their belief that the essence of Kantianism consists in letting in by the back door of [practical postulates] what has been evicted by the front door. Among such underhandliy imported contraband is the peculiar concept of revelation which such would be philosophers harbor." (Ubert Offenhanger

28. In The Vocation of Man (1800) Fichte wrote: "Our entire thinking is determined by our urge; and as the individual’s urges are, so is his knowledge. The philosopher, as long as we are not aware of the coercion: the coercion vanishes as soon as seen. . . . I ought to open my eyes; I ought to know myself thoroughly; I ought to see that coercion; this is my task. Consequently I ought to shape my own form of thinking" (2: 198). In 1797 Fichte had written: "What kind of a philosophy one choses depends on what kind of a man one is" (First Intro. to WL, 1: 454). And in 1795, in his First Letters, Fichte was arguing about "dogmatism and criticism. One of their two which we choose depends on the freedom of spirit we ourselves have earned" (1: 598).

29. In PuR Kant said: "By system I understand the unity of manifold knowledge under an idea which is reason’s conception of the form of a whole" (860; cf. Smith 653). "Now the system of all philosophic knowledge is philosophy. One must take it objectively if one understands by philosophy the very model [Urmodell] for judging all endeavors to philosophize, for judging every subjective philosophy, whose constructions are often so manifold and so changeable" (866; cf. Smith 657). "Reason reserves the right to investigate the sources of those endeavors and to confirm or reject the endeavors. Unless this is done, the concept of philosophy is schoolshaul," seeking mere logical consistency. "Yet there is always a universal concept [conceptus cosmicus] underlying the term philosophy, which the imagination might try to personalize and prefix as a model, in the hope of philosophically leading the science of the relation of all knowledge to the essential purposes of human reason [teleologia rationis humanae], and the philosopher is no mere manipulator of reason [Vernunftkünstler] but the legislator of human reason. In this sense it would be very boastful to call oneself a philosopher and to pretend having reached the model, which is contained only in the idea" (866 f.; cf. Smith 657 f.). "Essential purposes are either the final purpose or else subaltern purposes which serve as means for the final one. The latter is none else than the total task of man [die ganze Beschimmung des Menschen] and the philosophy concerned with it is called morals." Thus "moral philosophy predominates all other endeavors of reason" (868; cf. Smith 658).

30. In our time we might prefer to say "by commitment." See n. 24.

31. The semantic disagreement with Fichte is significant. When in 1794 Fichte introduced his word Wissenschaftslehre, he said this new technical term made it possible to lay aside the old name philosophy, which the discipline bore "owing to a not inappropriate modesty, the name of being-in-the-know [Kennerei], of a hobby [Liebhaberei], a dilettantism" (1: 44). For Schelling, philosophy is no mere academic doctrine nor dilettantish dallying but personal commitment, which is, as he says, precisely what Fichte stressed.

32. In 1794 Fichte wrote (1: 284): "Wissenschaftslehre is a doctrine of the kind that can be communicated only by the spirit and not at all by the letter because, in everyone who studies it, the fundamental ideas must be produced by his creative imagination." On the same page Fichte says "this imagination most certainly has been bestowed on all men for, without it, they could not have a single presentation [Vorstellung]." And in the footnote (1: 284 n.): "It is the task of Wissenschaftslehre to comprehend the whole human being exhaustively, and thereby the man can comprehend it only with the totality of his faculties. It cannot become a universally valid philosophy so long as so many men schooling kills one faculty for the sake of another, imagination for the sake of rationalism, or vice versa, or even kills both for the sake of memorization. Just so long will Wissenschaftslehre remain restricted within a small circle, and it is as awkward to tell this truth as it is disagreeable to hear it, yet so it is" (cf. Heath 250 f.). In 1883 Nietzsche spoke of the kind of man who is "a cripple in reverse [ein
umgekehrter Krüppel], who has too little of everything yet too much of one thing" (Zarathustra, pt. 2, "Of Salvation," Taschenausgabe 7: 205). Fichte in 1797 saw in the identification of self and individuality the fundamental reason for man. A self is free, in distinction from anything that is not self. An individual is one self among others. Every human individual should discover his self and behave as a free self. Fichte says many claim that they "cannot think this concept and, indeed, we must believe they say, that Not they lack the reality of this concept"—for they have a mind and reason—"otherwise, like any block, they could not make any objection to what we say. But what they lack is the awareness of this concept. They have selfknowledge but they do not know it. . . . For them, the self is only their individual person which is the ultimate purpose of their actions and therefore restricts their clear thinking. For them their person is the only true substance, and reason is only an accident thereof. Their person does not exist as a specific manifestation of reason. In their opinion reason exists so that they can get along in this world. And if this person could be at ease without reason, we could dispense with reason, and there would be no reason at all. . . . They are quite right as far as their person is concerned. But they should not pass off as objective what is valid only subjectively. Wissenschaf selbere reverses the relationship. For here reason is the only reality, and individuality is accidental. Reason is the purpose, and the person the means. The latter is only a particular way of expressing reason. . . . Only reason is eternal; individuality must ceaselessly die. Whosoever cannot adjust his will to this order of things will never truly understand Wissenschalf sele" (1: 504 f.). In 1801 Fichte wrote: "Wissenschaftslehrer is an object and a goal only for him who does not yet have it. . . . Strictly speaking, one does not have it, one is it, and no one has it before he has come to be it" (2: 10) However, in 1806 Fichte explains that "man does not fashion his own scientific view by freedom and choice, in this manner or that, but instead it is fashioned for him by his life, and it is really the inner root of his own life which, though unknown to himself, in this view comes into sight, What you really are is such a distortion, that comes forth to be seen, and you can never see anything else" (7: 360). This is still in line with the formulation of 1797: "The choice of one's philosophy depends on the kind of human being one is, since a philosophical system is not dead furniture of which one can dispose or which one can acquire at will, but it is animated by the soul of the man who has it" (1: 434).

55. Schelling says grundlos. For the abstract logician that means ohne Gründe, that is, without a reason from which to draw a conclusion. In the second Meditation Descartes wrote: statandum sit hoc pronunciatum ego sum, ego existo quoting a me profiteretur vel mente concepi, necessario esse rerum. The cogito ergo sum occurs only in Descartes' reply to the Second Objections, but in the same sentence Descartes immediately points out that one does not infer one's existence by any syllogism—neque per syllogismum deduct, sed quamvis from per se non simplex mensis intuitus agnoscit. In De Trinitate (10. 12. 10 see n. 37 below) Augustine said of the mind: Non itaque velut absentee se quasatur cererene, sed praeentiumse curit discernere. Nesci se quasi non norit cognoscat, sed ab eo quod alterum novum dicitiscer. "Let it not then seek to discern itself as though absent, but take pains to discern itself as present. Nor let it acquire knowledge of itself if it did not know itself, but let it distinguish itself from that which it knows to be something other." (An Augustine Manuscript, edited by Erich Przywara, S.J. [Leipzig: Hegel. 1938. 352 pages.] 9. J. [New York: Sheed and Ward. 1945]. Now available as Harper Torchbook TB 35, pp. 7-9. See those entire pages). In the first edition of the Critique of Pure Reason (A 355; Smith 157) Kant wrote: "what is referred to as the Cartesian inference, cogito, ergo sum, is really a tautology, since the cogito (sum cogitans) asserts my existence immediately." Of course one should not translate cogito as "I think" but as "I am aware." It is significant that, in distinction from the (child of uneducated people, or people who have not tutored themselves) is dogmatistic. It sees all reality as objective and thus, for instance, takes God for "a great Somebody." as Augustine says in the Confessions (1:14): case magnum aliquem. (See also Medicius and Marcel, n. 54 0/1.) None of us is ever entirely free of the natural mind for which grundlos can mean abysmal. Kant says (PuR 641; cf. Smith 513): "Unconditional necessity, which we so indispensably require as the last bearer of all things, is for human reason the veritable abyss" (Abgrund). This leads me to translate grundlos as groundless.

54. In 1805, in his Aphorism 159 (7: 174) Schelling said: "In reply to the question raised by a rationalization that is perplexed when it stands at the abyss of infinity: Why is there not something, why is there anything at all? the valid answer is not Something but only the All or God. The All is that for which it is strictly impossible not to be, just as it is strictly impossible for the Nothing to be. The absolute contrast to the Nothing (which is eternally impossible, eternally Nothing) is the All." Cf. the beginning of the Seventh Letter.

55. See n. 21 above. Aristotle said in the Nicomachean Ethics (1. vii. 20, Rackham trans.): "Nor again must we in all matters alike demand an explanation of the reason why things are; in some cases it is enough if the fact that they are so is satisfactorily established. This is the case with first principles." And he goes on to say pithily (1098b5): ei d' paideia nodov sev yopdov. I translate this clumsily as: "For the fact that there is a first THAT is also a first principle." For Fichte and Schelling the first THAT is the I. Then the enigma arises. See n. 38 below.

56. PuR had shown that the world of experience consists of objects which are categorically conditioned. Unconditioned, not finite, is the Kantian autonomy, which alone can bring about any obligation. In Pos. 97 Schelling stressed the nonfiniteness of the I, writing in Fichtean language: "The I is simply posited; its position is not determined by anything outside itself; it posits itself (through absolute causality). It is posited not because it has been posited but because it is what is doing the positing." (Cf. Dogm. 320.) The last phrase of this letter speaks of "his own practical decision." In ecstatical language that could be called an "act of faith."

57. Schelling quotes verbatim what here follows after the colon, but he omits the quotation mark. Apparently for emphasis he puts only the last sentence in quotation marks: "Consequently [Spinoza] rejected every transition of the nonfinite into the finite." However, he replaces the period by a mere comma in order to continue in his own words. He is quoting from Jacob's book of 1785, Über die Lehre des Spinoza, in Briefen an Herrn Moses Mendelssohn, which Jacob republished in 1789 with additions. (Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, Werke [Leipzig. 1819. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft. 1968. 4.56].

58. See nn. 21 and 55 above, and Dogm. 310: "this unintelligibility is insidious theoretically, for criticism as well as for dogmatism."

59. For instance PuR 334, where Kant speaks of "the secret of the origin of our sense awareness" and says "it relates to an object, and the transcendental ground of this unity undoubtably lies too deeply hidden" (cf. Smith 287). Again, of the sense forms he says: "The nonconscious cause of these images [Vorstellungen] is entirely unknown to us" (PuR 522; cf. Smith 441). It is significant that Schelling gave his essay of 1836, published posthumously, the title Der Vorläufer des Philosophischen Empirismus, Presentation of Philosophical Empiricism (10. 225-286).

60. PuR made it clear that all objects are conditional and therefore point beyond themselves. And, Kant says, "the absolute totality of the series of these conditions... is an idea which, though it can never be conceived in empirical use, yet serves as a rule how to proceed with regard to it, meaning that, in the regresses of the explanation of given phenomena, we should proceed as if the series itself [an sich] were infinite, i.e., we are to proceed in indefinitum" (PuR 715; cf. Smith 559).

61. Unfortunately, Schelling sticks to the habit of using the word infinite [unendlich] without distinguishing between its two meanings. As Hegel did twenty years later. Let the reader be guided by Hegel's distinction between the "bad" infinite [die schlechte Unendlichkeit] of endless regress mathematical infinity and the "truly" infinite [das Nichtendliche] with which philosophy is concerned (Lecte § 94, in Encyclopedia of the
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Philosophical Sciences, Werke, 6: 184 ff.; 1817 ed. §47, p. 41). With that guidance the reader can steer clear of the mystifying implication that "to become identical with the infinite and to merge into unité" (Bekken in the definition of the absolute object) means to lose one's identity and to drown in a kind of endless ocean. I had to retain the word *infinite* in this sentence because Schelling refers to Spinoza. But Spinoza had already distinguished what is *absolute infinitum* from what is infinite only in suo genere. In his explanation of def. 6 ("By God I understand Being absolutely infinite") of the first part of the Ethic he said, "of whatever is infinite only in its own kind [in suo genere], we can deny infinitive attributes; but to the essence of that which is absolutely infinite pertains whatever expresses essence and involves no negation" (John Wild, ed., Spinoza. Selections. [New York: Scribner's, 1950], p. 95). In the same part, prop. 14 says: "Besides God, no substance can be nor can be conceived" (ibid., p. 197). And def. 3 declares: "By substance, I understand that which is in itself and is conceived through itself; in other words, that, the conception of which does not need the conception of another thing from which it must be formed" (ibid., p. 94). On February 4, 1795, Schelling wrote to Hegel: "Meanwhile I have become a Spinozist! Do not be astonished. Here is how: For Spinoza, the world (the object as such in contrast to the subject) was *ali*; for me, the *I is *Ali* (Plitt 1: 76; cf. nn. 25 and 55 to Of. I. Fichte had taught him to see that Spinoza's definition of substance as what is in itself and is perceived by itself (id quod in se est et per se percipitur) expresses the very form of a, i.e., the form of unity and of logical cogency to which, so Kant had taught him, alone can bestow reality on phenomena. Therefore Schelling can tell Hegel: "For us, there is no suprenatural world other than the world of the absolute I. God is nothing but the absolute I, the *in se* as it has annihilated everything theoretically and therefore, in theoretical philosophy [which, according to Kant, deals only with objects], it is itself equal to zero [since the I is no object at all]. Personality comes about through the unity of consciousness. But consciousness is not possible without an object. For God, however, that is only for the absolute I, there is no object at all; otherwise it would cease to be absolute. Therefore there is no personal God." (Plitt 1: 77) And this tallies with Spinoza's identification of God with nature. Of course, that identification is perfect dogmatism insofar as God becomes an absolute I, although Spinoza's definition of substance would require God as absolute I. Since objects are finite, an absolute object must appear to rationalism in the form of a "bad infinity." Every dogmatist, tied as he is to ratiocination, will tell you that God is so infinite as to be able to comprehend the entire universe. Kant pointed out much later. "God in his truth can only be the All of reality omnitudo realitatis", to a "transcendental ideal" (PuR 604; Cf. Smith 490). The Critique at once confirms the agnostic assertion of dogmatism and the nonfinite suprenatural object of criticism. The God of dogmatism (and of Spinoza) must be called finite. But the "true God" is nonfinite and therefore distinguishable from the merely "real God," as Schelling pointed out much later. "God in his truth can only be known, but a blind relationship is possible with God in his mere reality" (Werke 11: 190).

41. Schelling slightly shortened his quotations. In John Wild's translation of Spinoza: (2: 47). "The human mind possesses an adequate knowledge of the eternal and the essence of God." 5: 36: "The intellectual love of the mind towards God is part of the infinite love with which God loves himself." 5: 25: "The highest effort of the mind and its highest virtue is to understand things by the third kind of knowledge, . . . which proceeds from an adequate idea of certain attributes of God to an adequate knowledge of the essence of things." 5: 27: "From this third kind of knowledge arises the highest possible peace of mind." (Instead of peace, Spinoza said *quietus*, "blessedness," but the word precisely expresses the mood which Schelling emphasizes. The word *peace* does not.) 5: 36, schol.: "Hence we clearly understand that our salvation, or blissfulness, or liberty consists in a constant and eternal love towards God." 5:50: "Our mind, in so far as it knows itself . . . under the form of eternity, necessarily has a knowledge of God, and knows that it is in God and is conceived through Him.

42. Schelling must be thinking of Plato's Theaetetus 184b-85e, where the problem is how we can be aware at all of anything and specifically of a thing of sense. Anyone who doubts the impossibility of a *sense*, of the *blessedness, or liberty consists in a constant and eternal love towards God.* (A 118; cf. Smith 142).

43. Schelling says "in der intellektuellen Welt", not intellektuellen. Perhaps I should more freely translate: in the world of ideas.

44. Schelling means the thinking of Plato's Theaetetus 184b-85e, where the problem is how we can be aware at all of anything and specifically of a thing of sense. Anyone who doubts the impossibility of a *sense*, of the *blessedness, or liberty consists in a constant and eternal love towards God.* (A 118; cf. Smith 142, 184b)
47. On February 4, 1795, Schelling wrote to Hegel: "Our highest endeavor is the annihilation of our personality, the transition into the absolute sphere of being, which, however, is not possible in eternity—hence only practical approximation to the absolute, and therefore—immortality." (Plitt 1:77).

48. PuR says (151, 16): "The 'I think' must potentially accompany all my notions" (cf. Smith 152).

49. Lawrence Sterne (1713-1768).

50. Baggesen belonged to the Königsberg group around Kant. "In his old age, Kant found a wide circle of admirers and friends for whom he was the celebrated head of the rapidly increasing critical school. The most extravagant praise came from those for whom the new philosophy was a kind of new religion, among them Baggesen who, for a time, looked at Kant as at a second Messiah" (Willy Moog, Friedrich Ueberwegs Grundzüge der Geschichte der Philosophie, pt. 5, in Die Philosophie der Neuzeit bis zum Ende des XVIII. Jahrhunderts, 18th ed. [Berlin: F. E. S. Münster, 1924], p. 508.

51. The not only descriptive but explanatory formula for the I as "present to itself" was already used by Augustine, who says of anyone desirous of knowing himself: "Let him not seek to ascertain what he is as if he were absent but take care to grasp himself discerningly as present" (De trinitate 10. ix. 12: Non itaque velut absentem se quaerere certaret, sed praeassertum se certum discernere). There is overwhelming evidence that Augustine is as clear about the self as Fichte. So it is Plotinus. As for the earliest ancient philosophers, Hegel says, "philosophizing properly speaking started with Parmenides" (Lectures on the History of Philosophy, Werke 15: 396 f.). Hegel sees the main point in Parmenides' sentence: "Thinking and that wherefore thought is, are the same" [Diels, fragm. 8, line 54] (cf. n. OF 1. 100. παντισσαργος δωροτελεία το θεωρήματος το οποίον Παρμενίδης) The wherefore of thought is cogency, which is what "being" (étai) means, strictly speaking. Hence the fragment quoted by Diels, Clement, Plotinus, Proclus, and Simplicius: "The same is thinking and being" (Diels, fragm. 5). Kirk and Raven (The Presocratic Philosophers [Cambridge: The University Press, 1962] p. 277) would seem to make Parmenides a skeptic, unbelievably translating their fragment 552: "What can be thought is only the thought that it is." I believe that Hegel is right and Parmenides stands closer to Plotinus. At all events, some of the ancients have not only felt but thought the I, as strictly not an object.

52. The much older Schelling will say: "consciousness does not come to God; its very first move is away from the true God... consciousness, as soon as it moves at all, moves away from God" (11: 186).

53. Seligkeit means beatitude, glückselig blessedly happy. In English good "happ" is luck. Schelling plays with the word Glück which, like its English cognate, may mean either luck, as in Glückspiel, game of luck. Thus, one might say in English, happiness comes upon us by happenstance. In 1784, in his Idea for a Universal History in a Cosmopolitan Sense, Kant said: "Man, having worked his way up from greatest crudeness to greatest skill... and thus to happiness, should alone have the merit," as if nature had planned not "his well-being but rather his reasonable self-appraisal," not having intended "his comfort, but his being worthy of it." (Cas. 4: 154, prop. 5).

54. On December 24, 1794, the repeal of price control made the assignats of the French Republic depreciate still more. Inflation led to bread riots in Paris on April 1 (12 germinal). 1795. On July 21, 1795, Schelling wrote Hegel that the treatise (Leiters) was about to appear in Niethammer's philosophical journal.

55. Kant said: "All moral value of acts lies essentially in this— that the moral law alone has determined the will" (PV.R. Cass. 5: 79; Beck 74). Aristotle said: "acts done in conformity with the order of existence [einai] or in dignity, but secondary and begotten [genomenon]. Primary is the Good, which draws the thinking unto itself, once it has come about. Thus drawn, it sees."

56. Six years later, in the Exposition of My System of Philosophy (1801), Schelling declared: "I call reason absolute reason, that is, reason insofar as it is conceived as total indifference of the subjective and the objective" (4: 114) Thus defined, "reason is the absolute. But this proposition is valid only with regard to that definition" (4: 115) "The absolute is unchangeably determined as identity [totale Indifferenz] of knowing and being as well as of subjectivity and objectivity. Therefore, difference can be posited only with regard to whatever becomes separated from the absolute, and insofar as it gets separated" (4: 127). Obviously, when Schelling speaks of the absolute, he does not speak of a transcendent object. In the Further Expositions from the System of Philosophy (1802) he says: "It is now easy to see... what is the only true method, that is, the method of philosophy according to which everything is absolute but there is no Absolute" (4: 406: nach welcher alles absolut und nichts Absolutes ist). Cf. n. 17.

I have no evidence of any Plotinian influence on young Schelling, yet one could compare passages in Plotinus, for instance, Ennead 5. 6. 5: "The act of thinking is not first, either in the order of existence [einai] or in dignity, but secondary and begotten [genomenon]. Primary is the Good, which draws the thinking unto itself, once it has come about. Thus drawn, it sees."

57. At the core of mental illness, the Swiss psychiatrist Balchazar Staehelin found the loss of what he calls the original trust (Urvertrauen). Such an alienation from the real being brings with it the loss of freedom and therefore of the integrity of the individual. Mental healing means finding one's way back to the original unity, to a love that really unites. In that sense Staehelin speaks of human finality. In Der finale Mensch (Zürich: Theolobischer Verlag, 1976) he writes: "The unconditional, the being, wants to become a conditional, existing, individual naturalness" (178). "Every meeting with a you invariably brings with it the unconditional summons of nature to manifest the decisive meaning of such human meeting" (179).

The meaning is found in the uniqueness of the manifestation. What Staehelin reminds me of Martin Buber's talk of the you, the you in distinction from any merely objective it. "Realities (Wesenheiten) are experienced in the present, objectivities in the past" (Ich und Du [Köln: Jakob Hegner, 1966], p. 20). "All real life is a meeting. My relation to the you is immediate. Between I and You there stands no purpose, no greed, and no anticipation" (18). However, says Buber, the interdependence of the I and you alone does not yet create human life. Only a third thing is: "the central You, received in the present" (57).

Staehelin speaks of the meeting of two yous, "you always taken in the sense of things, plants, animals, human thoughts, feelings, of anything that is, but also" in the sense of every manifestation of "the great One." And in such a meeting, "every time there arises something quite new, something existing for the first time. The decisive character of every genuine meeting is that it makes possible an entirely new manifestation of the metaphysical great One" (Der finale Mensch, p. 170). Staehelin adds that again and again his own psychiatric observations have confirmed this fact, to the point where he dares to speak of "a universally valid law of nature." He winds up his enumeration of various kinds of such meetings with the question: "Is it presumptuous to assume that the manifestation of the great One occurs most penetratingly in man's meeting with dying and death?... Perhaps in death there happens really and without restriction what Plato said of the rare moments of illumination" (176 f.).

In the beautiful book of prayers Worte ins Schauen (9th ed. [Innsbruck: Felizian Rauch, 1865]), Karl Rahner speaks in Augustinian terms of God as "the innermost center of my heart" (cf. above, nn. 21 and 56 to Of I). He says: "My love wants you as you are, ... not your mere image in my own spirit, ... yourself with whom my love becomes one, so that you yourself, not merely your image, belongs to the lover in the very moment when he ceases to own himself" (12). "Then, when in death everything will be silent, ... the great silence will begin in which you alone sound" (90).
58. In his summer lectures On the Vocation of the Scholar, given during his first semester at the University of Jena and published in the fall of the same year 1794, Fichte had said: "What would that be which is genuinely intellectual [geistig] in man, the pure I, purely as such, isolated, and without any relation to anything outside of it? This question is unanswerable and, considered with precision, it is self-contradictory. To be sure it is not true that the pure I is a product of the not-I. I call not-I everything conceived as outside the I, distinguished from and set in opposition to the I. I say it is not true that the I is a product of the not-I. To say it is would be a transcendental materialism which is entirely against reason. But it is certainly true that the I never becomes aware of itself, nor can become aware of itself, except in its empirical conditions, and that these empirical conditions necessarily presuppose something outside the I" (6: 294 f.).

59. In his Systematic Ethics (Das System der Sittenlehre) of 1798, Fichte wrote: "I posit myself as active does not mean I attribute to myself activity merely as such: it means my activity is specific, this and no other" (4: 6) "What does this mean, a specific activity? And how does it become specific? By this alone, that it meets with a resistance... Wherever you see activity, there you necessarily also see resistance; for otherwise you see no activity" (4: 7) "What occurs in the apperception of activity is the synthesis of our activity with a resistance" (4: 96). The dozen pages of the introduction to that book may well be the most lucid exposition of the fundamental conceptions of Wissenschaftslehre that Fichte has written.

56. Aus der Zeit in die Ewigkeit is a formula used in announcements of death and on tombstones. Kant used it in the first sentence of his 1794 essay The End of All Things (Cass. 6: 411. See p. 326 n.).

61. In the Lectures on the Vocation of the Scholar (1794) Fichte said: "The ultimate goal of man is to dominate everything that lacks reason, and to rule it freely under his own law. This ultimate goal is entirely beyond reach and will forever be beyond reach, if man is not to cease being man, and is not to become God. The very concept of man implies that his last goal is a beyond reach, and that the way to it is endless. It is not the vocation of man to reach this goal. But he can and he ought to get ever closer to it, and therefore the endless approximation to this goal is his true vocation as man, that is, as a rational but finite, as a sensuous but free being" (6: 299 f.).

Schelling's phrase die Bestimmung des Menschen, already used by Kant (PuR 492), furnished the title of Fichte's book of 1800 (2: 165-319) which, for too long a time, was the only writing by Fichte readily available in English (as The Vocation of Man).

62. See second half of note 57.

65. In 1794 Fichte wrote about logical cases which imply "a task in lieu of a reason. The original and highest judge of this kind is the 'I am,' in which nothing is predicated of the I, and the place of the predicate is left empty so that the determination of the I is possible and infinite" (1: 116). "Quite correctly, Kant and his successors called such judgments infinite, though, as far as I know, none has explained them clearly and definitely. Thus no reason can be furnished for any specific ethical judgment; but the procedure of the human mind in ethical judgments rests on the positing of the I by itself" (1: 117 f.). Fichte's word ethetical means positing, as in positing a thesis. Cf. n. 99 of Of I and n. 23 above.

66. In an Augustinian vein one might comment that God's will simply annuls the will of the naughtful devil, whom it is naught as opposed to God's fullness of being. Augustine says that, for God, "the universe is perfect even in its wrong part." (Solit. 1.12) Deus per quem universitas eiain cum sinistra parte perfecta est. Deus a quo dissonantia usque in extremum nulla est. cum deteriorea melioribus concinuit. "God for whom no dissonance goes to the extreme which the worse is consonant with the better." (Cass. 5: 141; cf. Beck 141).

67. See Of I pp. 235-36.

When, in 1798 and 1797, Schelling wrote the Essays to Explain the Idealism of the Wissenschaftslehre, he referred back to those same pages (235-36) and added: "In order to explain the free will as a fact of common consciousness, we need the idea of absolute freedom; without it we cannot understand any freedom of choice; with it alone we do not understand how there can still be any choice at all in us, nor why the original law in us has not turned into necessity. Here we must remind ourselves that arbitrary choice [Willkür] or the liberty to take our stand for or against the law belongs exclusively to the phenomenon [Erscheinung] and that we may not in any way use the concept of freedom in order to determine or define the supersensuous in us. Instead, what must be shown is that we cannot become aware of all the supersensuous in us, that is, of freedom [Freiheit], except through arbitrary choice [Willkür] which, therefore, though it does not pertain to the supersensuous in us, yet necessarily pertains to our finiteness, that is, to the awareness [Bewusstsein] of the supersensuous. Just as it is necessary that, for ourselves, we become finite, so it is necessary that the absolute freedom in us appear as arbitrariness. Though it belongs merely to our finiteness and is therefore mere phenomenon [Erscheinung], arbitrariness is not on that account mere seemingness [Schein]. It belongs to the necessary limitations of our nature, which we forever endeavor to overcome, but without ever being able to do so entirely and thus, from this otherwise so dark spot of practical philosophy, a new ray of light falls back upon our theoretical idealism, whose significance only now becomes entirely clear. We can now ascertain the transcendental place, as it were, whence the intellectual in us passes into the empirical" (1: 439 f.).

68. The endlessness of the challenge is already implied in what Kant wrote 1786, in the Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals: "The question is not whether this action or that actually occurs. Rather, reason as such and as independent of all phenomena commands what ought to occur. Ineradicably the challenge of reason demands actions of which no example may yet have been given in the world" (Cass. 4:265; cf. Beck 24). Presumably in 1786-81, in his Lectures on Ethics, Kant had already said very concretely: "An objective rule states what ought to happen, even if it were never to happen in fact" (New York: Eine Vorlesung Kants über Ethik, ed. Paul Menter [Berlin: Pan Verlag Rolf Heise, 1924], p. 2; cf. Harper Torchbook TB 105 [New York: Harper and Row, 1963], p. 2.)

69. There is no English word for Schwärmerie. The noun Schwärmer means the same as the English word bumble bee. The verb schwärmen can mean the same physical event as when we say the bees swarm, either when they fly to and fro around the hive, or when a new colony swarms, following the young queen. Said of butterflies, schwärmen means that they flutter around the flowers. Said of a young man, it means that his mind flutters around his absent idea. A similar fluttering occurs in a mind that begins to be attracted by God. If this religious love becomes steady, the lover can say with Rainer Maria Rilke that his mind "keiert um Gott wie um einen alten Turm," that itbounces around God, as a falcon might circle around an old tower, almost without wingbeat. But that would not be schwärmen, which always retains the meaning of unstable roving. The dictionary is right in telling us that the noun Schwärmer also means hawk moth or sphinx, an insect that flies in a hectorish, tumbling way. Figuratively a Schwärmer means a firecracker which jumps hither and yon. In
Switzerland we say of a young man in love "ä hält en Schwärm," he has a Schwärm, and that manly noun can mean both his affection and his really quite feminine girl. When he is ready to propose marriage he is beyond mere Schwärmerei. It seems obvious that God cannot really be an object of mere Schwärmerei. But that word can designate and therefore can be translated as enthusiasm, in the original Greek sense of being possessed by a god. Thus possessed the mind is beside itself, in the literal Greek sense of ecstasy. And it is that state of irresponsibility which Schelling means here. Instead of enthusiasm I could also translate ecstasy. Sound religion is basically quiet. But the unsound religionistic lacks that security and therefore becomes a fanatic, in some way a child of the Devil. The dictionary is wrong when it translates Schwärmerei as fanaticism. The latter is a curved form of the former. Therefore Schelling can speak of the potential errors of Schwärmerei.

70. In C. F. 49, Kant says: "The imagination is very powerful in creating, as it were, a second nature" (Cas. 5:389, Bernard 157). And in 57, n.1, "An aesthetic idea cannot become known as a rehearsal [Ausschauung der Einbildungskraft] to which no concept can ever be adequate" (Cas. 5:418 cf. Bernard 187).

Schelling's footnote points in the direction of his System of Transcendental Idealism of 1800. See n. 97 to Of I.

71. In 1805 Schelling started his Aphorism no. 48 with the sentence: "Reason does not have the idea of God, it is that idea and nothing else" (7:149).

72. In the Critical Fragments of 1805-6, Schelling says: "The existence of God is an empirical truth, nay it is the ground of all experience" (7:245). Schelling adds: "He who has grasped this and thoroughly understood it, has acquired a sense for Naturphilosophie." Cf. N.R., n.9.

73. To think systematically at all is a responsible act. See n. 121 to Of I.

74. As autonomous, the responsible subject is opposed to the absolute object, at least implicitly if not in explicit rebellion. The rebellion takes its cue from dogmatism's conception of God.

Dogmatism considers God as absolute object. If the dogmatist reads the words "God is spirit" (John 4:24) he thinks of "a spirit and he turns spirit into an object by declaring that it is absolutely transcendent, essentially inscrutable, unintelligible to the responsible rational being. Therefore, "in dogmatism my vocation is to annihilate all free causality in me" (534).

In our civilization this takes two forms, theological and scientific. The dogmatist theologian must deny moral autonomy and must demand unconditional obedience to God's revealed laws, into whose meaning and validity man has no right to inquire. The dogmatistic scientist must endeavor to explain every human awareness of autonomy as an illusion caused by chemical changes in the brain. For this scientist, of course, the laws of nature take the place of God. By the same deterministic logic, the dogmatistic theologian would demand "that the subject cease to be subject for the absolute object," in plain language that, for God, man has no more dignity than a rock. To be sure, such a demand could not be reconciled with the notion that God is our loving Father, a notion which could not explain any total lack of human dignity. On account of such theological inconsistencies, many dogmatistic minds prefer quite dogmatic scientific explanations to theological dogmas.

The dogma of Original Sin tries to account for the autonomous subject's being "something opposed to God." The old Schelling gives a philosophical account. Between 1828 and 1845 he wrote, "the very first movement of consciousness is not a movement by which consciousness seeks God but a movement by which it deviates from God. Therefore, prior to all real movement of consciousness, God inheres in it as a priori, essentially. Those thinkers who start from an explicit concept of God will never be able to explain how any mythology can result from this concept. What is more, they do not seem to have considered that, no matter how they explain the origin of the concept, be it through man's own mental activity or else by revelation, in either case they implicitly claim an original atheism of consciousness, an atheism in which they object in other respects" (12:120 f.).

[74-80] PHILosophical letters on dogmatism and criticism

Young Schelling's Fichtean criticism must postulate "an infinite striving toward the realization of the absolute in myself" (Dogm. 335). Schelling is strictly in line with Kant when he insists on "a mere practical use of the idea for the determination of the moral being." However, he soon saw the precariousness of posting sheer "passivity in the object." In line with the basic trend of the Critique of Judgment, he began to look for the life that is in nature.

In Fichte's System of Ethics of 1798, in section 12 on a "viable ethics" (4:1471), there are significant pages on a morality that considers case by case. Here is a condensation. "Every possible purpose seeks to satisfy some natural urge. All real vocation is empirical. A pure will is not a real will but a mere idea." To be sure, it is not "the natural urge as such which evokes a vocation. I will; nature does not. Yet, materially, I cannot will anything but what nature would will if it were capable of vocation" (148). Still, I cannot abolish my pure moral inclination as a cause; it alone posits "me as an I." This inclination "seeks complete liberation from nature," but the desired "independence never takes place." Therefore my moral actions form a series by whose continuation the I would become independent. Thus "the final purpose of the rational being necessarily lies in infinity" (149). Some people "speak of infinity as if it were a thing in itself." In that manner of speech one could say, "there must be a series" of moral actions "whose continuation could be conceived as an approximation to absolute independence... . And we must state the principle of ethics as follows: In each case make good your vocation" (150). However, "what precisely is my vocation?... At no time can we make good our total vocation. (It is the error of the mystics that they imagine what cannot be attained at any time as attainable in time. To be sure, the total annihilation of the individual and its fusion in the absolutely pure form of reason, its fusion in God, is the ultimate goal of finite reason: but it is not possible in time.) The possibility of making good one's vocation in each specific case lies in nature itself and is given by it. The relation of our natural urge to the principle sanctified is this: At every moment there is something in conformity with our moral vocation, and this something is at the same time demanded by the natural urge (provided it be natural and not an artifice produced by a spoiled fantasy). However, it does not follow that everything the natural urge demands conforms to the moral principle" (151).

75. In 1783, in the preface to Prof. Kant wrote: "I freely confess that it was the reminder by David Hume that, many years ago, first interrupted my dogmatic slumber," a condition he himself lamented in 1766 in his Dreams of a Ghoosier Explained by Dreams of Metaphysics, presumably after reading Hume (Cas. 4:8 Cf. Beck 8). Beck mistranslates as "my recollection of David Hume," which in German would be "meine Erinnerung an," not "die Erinnerung des," as Kant writes. The alternative offered by dogmatism is moral childhood, heteronomous obedience.

76. Those Kantians who found in Kant's terminology a means for the resuscitation of moral heteronomy and theoretical dogmatism.

77. At this point, Schelling's diatribe against the Kantians turns against Kant himself, who taught that the existence of God is a practical postulate. "For the purely speculative use reason the highest Being remains a mere ideal, though free from error" (PuR 669; cf. Smith, 531). "A free interest of pure practical reason decides for the assumption of a wise creator... on the ground of a maxim to assume something as true in behalf of morals. The assumption is pure, practical, rational faith [Vernunftglaube]." PrR, Cat. 5:158; cf. Beck 151).

78. Schelling spent his two years at the University of Leipzig, 1796-98, largely in studying natural science.

79. A paragraph like this should make the reader pause when in a textbook he comes across the tale about the alleged pipe dreams of so called German idealism. The latter is a curdled form of the former. Therefore Schelling can speak of the potential errors of Schwärmerei.

80. In 1797, in the First Introduction to the Wissenschaftslehre, Fichte wrote: "One's choice of a philosophy depends on the kind of man one is, for a philosophical system is not dead furniture which one can acquire or dispose of at will, but is animated by the soul of the man who holds it. A character cannot rise to idealism if it is flaccid by nature or intelle...
tual slavery, or is twisted by erudite luxury and by vanity" (1:434). John Lachs translates somewhat differently (Heath 16).

81. The joy of such a union of free spirits had been experienced by the three friends and fellow students at Tübingen, Hegel, Hölderlin, and Schelling. As a final note I translate four lines of the long poem Eleusis, which Hegel wrote for Hölderlin in August 1796. (See Gustav Emil Müller, *Hegel. Denkgeschichte eines Lebensjahres*, [Bern and Munich: 1959], p. 72.) Müller’s book is a treasure trove of insights into the life and thoughts of Hegel.

Our old agreement found still riper, firmer our old trust.
No need of oath for our determination
to live for the free truth alone, and never to make peace
with feelings and opinions bound by custom, never, never.

... des alten Bundes Treue fester, reifer noch zu finden,
des Bundes den kein Eid besiegelte,
der freien Wahrheit nur zu leben, Frieden mit der Satzung,
die Meinung und Empfindung regelt, nie nie einzugehn.

In his book on *La filosofia politica di Schelling* (Bari: Laterza, 1969, p. 114) Claudio Cesa states that the *New Deduction of Natural Right* was written right after the *Philosophical Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism*. On March 23, 1796, Schelling wrote to Niethammer in Jena that he would stop in and perhaps bring along some aphorisms written while, as their private tutor, he was teaching natural right to the two young barons von Riedesel, who were going to study law at Leipzig. Schelling told Niethammer: "I would like to send [these aphorisms] if I had a clean copy. I would not like it if another published [his own writings on the topic] before me and if people then thought I had followed his steps" (Horst Fuhrmans, ed., *F. W. J. Schelling. Briefe*, [Bonn: Bouvier, 1962], 1: 67,77). Fuhrmans notes that this other author is surely Fichte who, as Schelling knew from Hölderlin, had lectured on natural right for the first time in the winter of 1795/96. Gabler in Jena published the first part of Fichte’s lectures at Easter 1796. (The lectures are now in Fichte’s works, 3: 1-385.) On May 8, 1796, Schelling sent Niethammer the rest of the manuscript. Niethammer published that completed work in the belated April issue of his *Philosophical Journal*.

The essay looks like a study of Rousseau's distinction between the general will and the will of all, with emphasis on the decisive function of the individual will.

Schelling’s convincing logic flows freely, like lucid music, at least in the first half. No introductory explanations seem to be needed. An abridged outline of some of the main points may suffice.

The individual will is restricted by the general will only inasmuch as the restriction by the latter makes the former absolute (§44). The general will demands justice. All are to be free. The form of the individual will is autonomous freedom. But that is impossible without the "matter" of the general will, which is the just freedom of all (§44).