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

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

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

by

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Abstract

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

Schelling tells us that being precedes reflection and, accordingly, the ordinary plane of consciousness, as available in the various discriminations of negative philosophy, cannot attain to *that which is*. In the epistemic collapse of negative philosophy, the anagogic traveler turns to positive philosophy, as vehicled by contemplative *askesis* and orison, wherein discursive thought ultimately yields to the more primordial non-discursive thought in intellectual intuition. Intellectual intuition, which establishes what it intuits, reveals particular *epopteia* to the anagogic traveler; this *epopteia* is evidenced only *a posteriori* intellectual intuition by the resolute manner in which the anagogic traveler gears back into life. The ancient Hellenic mystery teachings, in keeping with the experiences of contemplatives everywhere, admit of two metaphysical insights to which the uncommon anagogic traveler may attain: the lesser, or illuminative, mysteries and the greater, or unitive, mysteries. In the lesser mysteries, the illuminated anagogic traveler comes to know that the entirety of the terrestrial realm is one – that all is a hierophany of the *life*
of life – and in the greater mysteries, the anagogic adept attains to henosis with the divine, indestructible and ever-generative life of life and, in noetic perfection, becomes (consciously in the end) who he already is (unconsciously in the beginning); here, in identification with the life of life that births all that is, the anagogic adept co-creates the world and realizes soteriological redemption and ontological renewal.
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Introduction

“A river flows from Eden to water the garden” (Genesis 2:10) . . . .

That river flowing forth is called the world that is coming – coming constantly and never ceasing. This is the delight of the righteous, to attain the world that is coming, constantly watering the garden and never ceasing.”

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

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1 Matt, The Zohar 3:290b (italics added).
2 Schelling is derided by many readers of his oeuvre as a mercurial thinker; internally inconsistent across his writings and given to redress and desertion of his theoretical models, Schelling presents a notorious hermeneutical challenge to his interpreters [McGrath, P. 2]. And yet, if Emerson rightly states that a foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, the inconsistencies within Schelling’s work, especially given their public character, might be better understood as betraying an uncommonly courageous, authentic and generous mind. One is reminded that Schelling wrote across two philosophical epochs – that of German Transcendental Idealism (Schelling understood German Transcendental Idealism to be a “negative philosophy” which was later to be completed by his “positive philosophy”) and, later, that of the Romantic period; philosophical recognitions, no differently than psychological insights, often can only be claimed from a distance. Schelling’s writings may be seen as emblematic of his philosophical thinking; in their inconsistencies, they witness the very irruptions of life that Schelling proclaims. Schelling, we are reminded, was a thinker “whose philosophy was always underway” [McGrath, P. 2]. Analogously, life, too, is always underway – the old inevitably gives way to the new. “Every kind of life is a succession and concatenation of states” [Schelling, The Ages of the World, P. 43] – and, as this paper wants to claim in part, Schelling was, most deeply, a philosopher of life [Wirth, The Conspiracy of Life, P. 1]. With roots deep in ancient thought, Schelling claims that there is both form and animation to life. Understood in this way, Schelling’s thought, in its inconsistent unfolding, is exemplar of his deeply held philosophical convictions.

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

4 The term, life of life, is taken from The Work of Experience: Schelling on Thinking beyond Image and Concept, a lovely and sensitive reading of Schelling’s thought by Marcia Sa´ Cavalcante Schuback. By her use of this term, life of life, Schuback wants to convey “not a concept but an experience, the experience (or intellectual intuition) of the true life” [Wirth, Schelling Now, P. 69]. This paper similarly wants to express the Schellingian notion of life of life non-conceptually and ontologically as a living force that underlies, animates and sustains all reality; indeed, to the reading of this paper, the life of life is a “river flowing forth . . . coming constantly and never ceasing” [Matt,
that divine,\textsuperscript{5} inexhaustible, ever-generative \textit{fons et origio} of all reality,\textsuperscript{6} and to locate therein the possibility for soteriological redemption\textsuperscript{7} and ontological renewal. Accordingly, this paper reads the Schellingian project to be grounded, in part, on an understanding of the philosophical life as that path of inner transformation and spiritual rebirth in unity with divine principles. This paper understands ontological renewal, occasioned through the spiritual eye of intellectual intuition, as the “regaining of a clear view”\textsuperscript{8} into the underlying nature of reality; said differently, ontological renewal is a restoration within the anagogic wayfarer of the primordial state that is the innermost beginning of all \textit{that which is}. When assimilated to this primordial state, as has been said elsewhere, “. . . you shall know the truth and the truth will make you free.”\textsuperscript{9} In intellectual

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

\textsuperscript{6} “The abode of spirit is total reality” [\textit{Holy Bible. Book of Wisdom} 1:7].

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

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

\textsuperscript{9} \textit{Holy Bible. John} 8:31.
intuition, the anagogic traveler\textsuperscript{10} unifies with the undifferentiated \textit{fons et origio}, the transcendent innermost beginning of all that which is, and awakens to a world transformed; in so assimilating to the cosmological natality, the anagogic initiate may be said to participate in the demiurgic activities of the Dionysian \textit{mundus imaginalis} and to co-create the world. As we hear from Schelling:

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

Like many others within the Romantic period,\textsuperscript{12} Schelling looks to the ancient world for recovery of authentic being; offering a reading of Schellingian intellectual intuition as \textit{mystagogia} (mystagogy), this paper argues that Schelling seeks to reclaim the sacred Hellenic teachings and mysteries of the ancient Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic spiritual traditions\textsuperscript{13} and to inhabit

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

\textsuperscript{11} Schelling, \textit{The Ages of the World}, P. xxxviii.

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

\textsuperscript{13} It is far beyond the scope of this paper to explore and substantiate the lineage of the Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic traditions; this has been ably accomplished by others elsewhere and, accordingly, this lineage is taken as well-established by this paper. We may read a summarizing passages from Uždavinys’ \textit{Orpheus and the Roots of Platonism}: “Although a figure of myth and the preferred name for metaphysical auctoritas in telestic and esoteric
nature^{14} with spirit – as he writes, “the subject [life of life] going through nature is also God, only not as God”;^{15} he harkens back with great empathy, power and sensitivity to the original wholeness of original chaos, the that which is prior to manifestation, and to nature as the offspring of this divine original chaos. As Schelling is of mythological^{16} sensitivities, he understands nature as expressive of the anima mundi, the Dionysian or the mundus imaginalis of the ancients,^{17} as that which, at its most fundamental, reveals a living nomadic force, an elan vital, an incomprehensible and Ungewusst life force that lies beyond reason’s ken. In the Schellingian project, this is the hylozoist life of life within matter, the interpenetration of the manifest things of nature and the hidden spirit; spirit is “this incomprehensible but not

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

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

^{15} Schelling, On the History of Modern Philosophy, P. 133.

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

^{17} “To mythical and religious feeling nature becomes one great society, the society of life” [Cassirer, An Essay on Man, P. 83]. And we read from the Hermetica, “[G]od’s work is one thing only: to bring all into being – those that are coming to be, those that once come to be, those that shall come to be. This is life, my dearest friend” [Copenhaver, P. 40].
imperceptible being, always ready to overflow and yet always held again, and which alone always grants to all things the full charm, gleam and glint of life.”¹⁸ This is the exuberant testimony of life. To this ancient way of thinking, nature itself (*natura naturans*)¹⁹ is “invisible and hidden from empirical view;”²⁰ indeed, a surviving Heraclitean fragment, in accord with the world’s great mythological traditions, proclaims that “nature likes to hide.”²¹

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

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¹⁹ *Natura naturans* may be understand as creative nature, which is “immediately present whole and undivided in each of its innumerable works, in the smallest to the largest, in the last as in the first” [Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol. II, P. 322]. In comparison, Spinoza identified *natura naturata* as created nature. See Grossman, Neal. *The Spirit of Spinoza: Healing the Mind*. ICRL Press. Princeton, NJ (2014).
²⁰ McGrath, P. 85.
²¹ Hyland, P. 171. Pierre Hadot persuasively reads as “what is born tends to disappear” [Hadot, P. 10]. Hadot’s reading of this aphorism “expresses astonishment before the mystery of metamorphosis and the deep identity of life and death” [Ibid, P. 11].
²² Traditional (or traditionalist) philosophy, known preferably by some as *sofia perennis* or perennialism, has as its principal co-founders, René Guénon, Ananada K. Coomaraswamy and Frithof Schuon; while not a procrustean group, *sofia perennis* may be generally understood to claim a fundamental esoteric harmony among the great religions – namely, that the world’s great religious traditions, while assuredly responding to unique cultural and historical contexts, share a singular metaphysical truth. Jonathan Spear, in his article *On Mystical Experiences as Support for Perennial Philosophy*, associates four theses with perennial philosophy: “(1) the phenomenal world is the manifestation of a transcendental ground; (2) human beings are capable to attaining immediate knowledge of that ground; (3) in addition to their phenomenal egos, human beings possess a transcendental Self which is of the same of like nature with that transcendental ground; and (4) this identification is life’s chief end or purpose” [Ibid., Pp. 319-320]. The reader will note in the pages below that these four Traditionalist theses, which are Orphic in character, motor the Schellingian enterprise. Indeed, it could be profitably argued that Schelling, anticipating the thematic of perennialism, is the original Traditionalist thinker. As will emerge, this paper claims that the Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic traditions and the Hellenic mystery traditions deeply inform the Schellingian project.
²⁴ We read from Schelling, “[w]e nevertheless do not doubt that the philosophers of our time will take offense to the philosophical tenor or old that we have sought to resound. But we also know that these things cannot be profaned, that they must subsist through themselves . . . .” [Philosophy and Religion, P. 4].
all in an irreducible remainder – to Schelling’s understanding, the original fall is the formation of manifest reality itself; writes Schelling “[f]initeness is itself the penalty.”26 As the multiplicity of manifest reality represents a fall from (break), and not a creation of, the absolute simplicity of the 

*life of life*, the aspiration of an anagogic traveler is to live “‘another life’ where the self is assimilated to Dionysus,”27 absolutely indivisible and prior to (*prius* of) this multiplicity.

Schelling is adamant that the *life of life* “is an incomprehensible ground and a *nieaufgehender Rest*, an irreducible remainder that cannot be resolved by [discursive] reason even with the greatest exertion”28 – it is solely to be attained to in a moment of intellectual intuition when discursive reasoning yields to the more primordial intuitive reasoning. As will come to be seen, this paper, most fundamentally, reads Schellingian intellectual intuition as the perfection of reason and, as such, the spiritual axis and, by extension, the noetic certainty, around which the *praxis* and cognitive hierarchy of a true philosopher is ordered; moreover, this paper recommends to the reader’s consideration that Schellingian intellectual intuition and its preparatory theurgy29 is a revalorization and retranslation of traditional initiatic elements within the theurgy of Orphic-Pythagorean and Platonic traditions and the Hellenic mystery teachings and their accompanying contemplative *askesis* and orison into the soil of European philosophy.

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

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27 Uždavinys, *Philosophy & Theurgy in Late Antiquity*, P. 7.
29 In this paper, theurgy is understood as the spiritual path and methodology of ascent by the anagogic traveler to *henosis* in intellectual intuition.
30 Writes Schelling in great compliment to Spinoza, “[t]he last echoes of the old, true philosophy were heard from Spinoza” [Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, P. 8].
Sich), which cannot be known, justifies belief in that which transcends human experience.\footnote{Given the rise of secular thought (see, for example, Charles Taylor’s A Secular Age, in which he attempts to articulate the pre-ontological structures, both positive and negative, that replaced the traditional notion of divine immanence by a transcendent account of the divine), it might be persuasively argued that Kant, rather than preserving space beyond the reach of the pragmatic followers of Hume for the application of faith, diminished faith by secluding it beyond reason and the interactive capabilities of humankind.}

Under the Kantian architecture, reason, although funded by the \textit{a priori} categories, is unable to reach beyond the world of the senses. As a result, any Kantian intuition of God, the Absolute \textit{prior} (or, as known in this paper, the \textit{life of life}), finds itself outside of reason and in the realm of faith.\footnote{“[T]h necessary consequence of it laying claim to a knowledge of God was to rob God of all transcendence and draw him into this logical thinking, into merely a logical concept, into an \textit{idea itself}” [Schelling, The Grounding of Positive Philosophy, P. 138].} Kant never addresses intellectual intuition directly and, accordingly, he leaves unexplored its philosophical possibilities; nonetheless, he does employ a hypothetical intellectual intuition, a “knowing in and with the concrete singular, not mediated by abstract universal concepts,”\footnote{Schelling, Bruno, P. 11.} as a foil to define sensory intuition. For Schelling, as will soon emerge in the telling of this paper, this unmediated\footnote{“Unmediated” is descriptive of an intuition unaccompanied by image, sound or other sensual representation.} intellectual intuition becomes the bridge to the divine; Schellingian intellectual intuition is a mode of cognition that permits metaphysical insight of the absolute and that, because consciousness and its object are inseparable in intellectual intuition, establishes what it intuits. Accordingly, contesting the claim of Kantian philosophy that “the boundaries of intelligibility coincide with the bounds of sense,”\footnote{Ibid.} Schelling aspires to develop a science, which he understands, in part, as the application of a logical and practical dialectic (in the reading offered by this paper, the Schellingian higher dialectic is comprised by a theurgic contemplative \textit{askesis} and orison), that connects\footnote{The traditional philosophical notion of the law of correspondences holds that “from one order to another all things are linked together and correspond in such a way as to contribute to the universal and total harmony, which, in the multiplicity of manifestation, can be likened to a reflection of the principal unity itself” [Guenon, The Symbolism of the Cross, P. 4]. The reader is also asked to remember that antique practice and aim of Egyptian philosophy was “to connect the end to the beginning” [Uždavinys, Philosophy & Theurgy in Late Antiquity, P. 21].} the phenomenal world, the realm of ever-
becoming theophanies, to the un-manifested and divine life of life. Schelling, to the reading propounded by this paper, understands science, while assuredly an expression of the ideal dialectic within the domain of reason, as theurgic practice and preparatory to an encounter with the indivisible divine in intellectual intuition; in turn, reason, as the Protean angelic intellect and, as such, symbolic of “the permanent transformation and continuity of theophanies, immersed in the stream of becoming,”37 is the distinguishing mark of the divine within the human being and, in its perfection, the vehicle for noetic unity with the life of life. Most importantly to the purposes of this paper, we will come to see that the highest manifestation of Schellingian reason, and containing in potentia “the forms of all the things in the world,”38 is undifferentiated intellectual intuition, wherein the consciousness of the anagogic traveler breaks from the fragmentation of the becoming world to noetic henosis with the ontological dimension of the Dionysian monad.

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

37 Uždavinys, Philosophy & Theurgy in Late Antiquity, P. 7.
38 Ibid.
39 “The theurgists established their sacred knowledge after observing that all things were in all things from the sympathy that exists between all phenomena and between them and their invisible causes, and being amazed that they say the lowest things in the highest and the highest in the lowest” [Uždavinys, The Golden Chain, P. 300].
40 Schelling, Philosophy and Religion, P. IX.
41 Heidegger, Basic Writings, P. 110.
everything in vain, for vanity is everything that lacks a true purpose . . . [i]t is precisely man that drives me to the final desperate question: Why is there anything at all?"\textsuperscript{42} As this paper, in part, aspires to develop, the Schellingian philosophical project wants to sacralize the cosmos, to consecrate the world with meaningful \textit{being} in order that its hierophanies reveal the absolute center of the \textit{ganz Andere} and that man, who occupies an intermediate position, may reclaim his participation in \textit{being} – otherwise, as has famously been said, life is but “a tale told by an idiot full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.”\textsuperscript{43} Schellingian intellectual intuition, as the pillar of the world, is the spiritual vehicle that sacralizes the world and establishes order from chaos. As Schelling tells us:

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

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

\textsuperscript{43} \url{www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/56964}.
\textsuperscript{44} Schelling, \textit{Philosophy and Religion}, P. 8.
\textsuperscript{45} Like in the Allegory of the Cave, the sun may be understood to be the Absolute – too dazzling to behold directly by the eye of the mind.
\textsuperscript{46} “The splendid German word, ‘imagination’ (\textit{Einbildungskraft}) actually means the power of mutual informing into unity (\textit{Ineinsbildung}) upon which all creation really is based. It is the power whereby something ideal is simultaneously something real, the soul simultaneously the body, the power of individuation that is the real creative power” [Schelling, \textit{The Philosophy of Art}, P. 32].
divine play “rooted in the mystery of the immanent divine self-disclosure.” This implies that cosmic phenomenalization is to be understood for Schelling as the Orphic process of divine artistry and self-realization; indeed, if all derives from the productive imagination of the Absolute, the “entirety of the cosmos can become a hierophany” to he who has the eyes to see and eyes to hear. To this way of thinking the univocity of being, in which a “single voice raises the clamor of being,” the manifest many emerges from a centered, if ruthless, free and un-manifest, one. To Schelling, then, all that is constitutes a hierophany, an eidolon of that Centrum [of the life of life] – the dark Ungrund transcendent to our grasp – that is the fons et origio of the multiplicity, of “the ten thousand things,” that come to present themselves in manifest existence. This dark Centrum is the inexpressible Ungrund, that is, the life of life, or, more commonly available in philosophic thought as Spinoza’s natura naturans or as the Greek zoë – “the progressive natality of nature” and the continual irruption of life. In his notion of the life of life, Schelling might be understood to reassert the ancient meaning of the Greek word, “phusis, that is, of productivity and spontaneous blooming,” which bespeaks of the primal living whole, the “cosmic enigma – the mystery of life that is self-generating and, self-creating.” So, to Schelling, the life of life might be understood as a conflation of the Hellenic zoë and phusis, in-exhaustible, dynamic, mutually implicative and ever-generative of the

47 Uždavinys, Philosophy & Theurgy in Late Antiquity, P. 2.
48 Horn, P. 155.
49 Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, P. 12.
50 “Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear” [Holy Bible, Mark 8:18]?
52 We might read something similar from Plato: “[w]hen Homer speaks of Oceanus, source of gods, and mother Tethys, he means that all things are the offspring of a flowering stream of change” [Plato, Theaeteus, 857:e].
53 A Chinese expression that indicates the indefinite multitude of all things and forms in manifest existence.
54 Wirth, The Barbarian Principle, P. 8.
55 Hadot, P. 274.
57 “What animates the world is anima, Latin for soul and breath (corresponding to the Greek psyche); and if man’s soul is his breath then the world’s soul is God’s breath (ruach elohim in Hebrew), the wind, in fact, the breath of life, pneuma biou. According to Professor Conford (From Religion to Philosophy, 1951, P. 189), the absolutely
innumerable things, that underlies reality; indeed, to this profoundly hylozoist and ontologically hierarchical thought, the primordial principle is not only most alive – it alone is truly alive.\textsuperscript{58}

In its introductory paragraphs, this paper sought to evoke in the reader’s mind the ancient awareness of the presence of a living god that imbues all being – that living god encountered by the sages\textsuperscript{59} of old and by contemplative anagogues within every epoch. Schelling maintains that modern man has largely forgotten his origin in the living divine presence and, as a result, he no longer knows who he is and where he is going; absent theurgic devotion to the divine center, Schelling tells us that “all is vanity”\textsuperscript{60} and without purpose. So Schelling summons modern man to remember his innermost holy beginnings, to recollect himself from fragmented multiplicity and, by availing himself of the grace of intellectual intuition, to assimilate to indivisible Dionysus; it is solely in intellectual intuition, Schelling proclaims, in accordance with Orphic-Pythagorean, Platonic and mystery traditions, that man may find soteriological redemption and ontological renewal – in short, it is only in intellectual intuition that the anagogic wayfarer may be reborn in “the non-discursive anagogic foundation for discursive reasoning itself.”\textsuperscript{61}

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

\begin{itemize}
\item important Greek word \textit{phusis} = Nature (akin to \textit{phusao} = to blow and \textit{phuo} = to grow or generate) was originally understood as the almost liquid energy that animates all things – much like Polynesian \textit{mana} \textsuperscript{[Young, P. 312].}
\item \textit{Ibid.}, P. 120.
\item Schelling notes that “Moses was deemed worthy of a vision of that highest vitality, of that inner consuming yet always again reviving (and in this respect not consuming) fire that is the nature of the Godhead” \textsuperscript{[Schelling, The Ages of the World, P. 53].}
\item \textit{Holy Bible}, Ecclesiastes 1:2.
\item Uždavynys, \textit{Philosophy & Theurgy in Late Antiquity}, P. 255.
\item Mystagogy means “going deeper into the mysteries” \textsuperscript{[www.stisidore-yubacity.org/faqmystagogy]} or “to lead through the mysteries” \textsuperscript{[www.bustedhalo.com/ministry-resources/what-is-mystagogy].} To this paper’s understanding and use, mystagogy refers to an initiatic journey into the mysteries.
\end{itemize}
orison necessary to assimilate to (henosis) the divine Dionysus in positive philosophy and attain to its particular epopteia; in his initiatic journey, the anagogic wayfarer seeks transformation into the unseen breath\(^6\) of the living god – the that which is and that which animates and ever-generates life anew. Indeed, Schelling claims that those without a deep recognition of and reverence for this living spirit have no key to unlock the true secrets of philosophy; in his words, “many are thyrsus-bearers but few are mystics.”\(^64\) For Schelling, philosophy is, most fundamentally, a spiritual\(^65\) enterprise and, as such, the true philosopher must be funded by Dionysus – “the self-lacerating madness [which] is still now what is innermost in all things;”\(^66\) indeed, the true philosopher, whose soul shares simultaneity with the life of life, is “bound by this innermost witness and cannot hold anything for true without the agreement of this witness.”\(^67\) Accordingly, the life of life, the that which is as the divine spark and fire, is most primordial and most alive in the human soul and in the cosmos, respectively; it is both the enlivening spirit and the guarantor of authenticity within the isomorphic Schellingian enterprise.

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

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\(^6\) “Thus what moves the visible world-body, indeed pushes it around, is the invisible world-soul, which is wind, which is pneuma, which is divinity, which is God” [Young, P. xxi].

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

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


\(^67\) Ibid., P. xxxvi.

\(^68\) A participle is a somewhat amphibious literary device, part adjective and part verb; it is understood as a noun that betrays action. Similarly, the Life of life is an absolute identity of all negations and negations of negations and, as such, is more primordial than any opposition between subject and object.
never ceasing.” Accordingly, in imagining the life of life as a participle, this paper, like the author(s) of the Zohar, struggles to articulate the notion that the divine life of life can neither be objectified nor restricted to movement and, as such, subject to the strictures of time and space – indeed, the life of life is the pure and absolute subject, beyond the grasp of contraries and, as the that which is, primordial to all manifest reality that is; the life of life is the dark un-ground, transcendent to comprehension and elusive to the ordinary plane of consciousness, that gives rise to and sustains all that is. It will emerge in this paper that while the anagogic wayfarer may be present to the divine life of life in intellectual intuition, that encounter itself is ineffable – the greater cannot, after all, be possessed by the lesser. As read by this paper, Schelling wants above all to disclose this pre-conceptual and pre-categorical life of life of that which is in intellectual intuition. Just as the living God has been perceived by those anagogic travelers of uncommon courage and subtle intellects throughout the ages, so does Schelling want to attain to an originary revelation of being as non-being and to make it historically available a posteriori to the ordinary plane of consciousness in order to connect the hidden greater to the manifested lesser in answer the riddle of the world. As a guide for his work, Schelling somewhat self-consciously asks:

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

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69 Matt, The Zohar, 3:290b [italics added].
70 Schelling, The Ages of the World, P. xxxix [italics added].
This Schellingian passage foreshadows the trajectory of this paper and discloses the ultimate aspirations within the Schelling’s philosophical inquiry – the “pinnacle and final point of transfiguration” within the Schellingian mystagogy is the liminal and historical moment of intellectual intuition when the anagogic traveler affirmatively encounters that which is and attains to the lesser and greater mysteries – firstly, illumination that all is one in the terrestrial plane and, later, noetic perfection in unification with the supreme principle. To the argument presented by this paper and as Schelling above alludes, noetic perfection within intellectual intuition is the highest aspiration of the true philosopher; in intellectual intuition, the anagogic initiate may attain to noetic henosis and its particular epopeteia, which, as a mystical union and knowing, “is both the highest stage of initiation and the goal of Platonic contemplative philosophy.”

This paper, in accordance with the Schellingian reading of the Platonic tradition and in congruence with the sensibilities and teachings of mystical traditions everywhere, reads intellectual intuition as the spiritual axis mundi and, as such, the point of ontological and epistemological intersection between the heavens and the earth. To the reading of this paper, the accessibility of historical revelation, in which the gifted anagogic traveler might avail himself for soteriological redemption and ontological renewal, is also the crux and support for the Schellingian aspiration of a philosophical-religion; indeed, this paper takes seriously (and literally) Schelling’s ambition for the development of a philosophical-religion. Schelling, writing in his final work, Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology, describes what a philosophical-religion might look like:

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

71 Uždavinys, Philosophy & Theurgy in Late Antiquity, P. 10.
religions, and had it no less than the natural and revealed religions have them: only in the manner in which it contained these factors would it have its difference from them – and furthermore this difference could not be other than that the principles that in the one are effective without being understood would be understood and comprehended in this one.”

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

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

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74 “[I]n Neoplatonism, the direct encounter with Nous and with ineffable henadic principles transcends one’s senses and imagination, since the One (to hen) is beyond all image, form and being” [Uždavynys, *Ascent to Heaven in Islamic and Jewish Mysticism*, P. 38].
there is being, but rather, because there is being, there is thinking;” accordingly, symbolic thought, as layered over living existence by productive imagination, is ever unable to provide a full accounting of life, is ever “out-of-joint,” is ever uncanny, and, in Heideggerian language, ever places one in an unheimlich state vis-à-vis primordial being. Of similar sensibility, a Russian poet tells us, “[a] thought, once uttered, is untrue;” that is, analytic expression, in contrast to synthetic thought, is inherently unable to possess and is, indeed, somehow estranged from the richness, depth and breadth of the living experience. So far so good. However, conventional scholarship then tends to make the further claim that Schelling relies on a mystical intellectual intuition as a bridge that somehow permits special internal knowledge of the Absolute prius. Here, this paper departs from conventional scholarship.

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

75 Bowie, P. 14.
76 Belonging to “the realm of the frightening, of what evokes fear and dread” [Freud, P. 123], Freud notes that the German word, unheimlich, is equivalent to the English, uncanny or eerie, “but which etymologically corresponds to ‘ unhomely’ [Ibid., P. 124]. In Arabic and Hebrew the ‘uncanny’ merges with the ‘demonic’ and the ‘gruesome’ [Ibid., P. 125]. Interestingly, Freud draws some correspondence to the Coptic, “A revealer of secrets or the man to whom secrets are revealed’ [Ibid., P. 126]. For a wonderful account of the uncanny within the philosophy of Martin Heidegger, please see Katherine Wityh’s Heidegger: On Being Uncanny.
77 Tyutchev, Fyodor Ivanovich. Silentium. [www.poemhunter.com/poem/silentium].
78 States Heinrich Heine, with some exasperation, “Schelling leaves the philosophical route and seeks by a kind of mystical intuition to arrive at the contemplation of the absolute itself; he seeks to contemplate it in its central point, in its essence, where it is neither thought nor extension, neither subject nor object, neither mind nor matter, but . . . I know not what!” [Wirth, The Conspiracy of Life, P. 106]. It must be noted, however, that recent scholarship is beginning to shift this conventional reading of Schellingian intellectual intuition.
argues that Schellingian intellectual intuition restricts its insight into the thatness of the Absolute—namely, that the Absolute, “which is simple by definition and for which no other expression is available to us than that of absoluteness,”\textsuperscript{79} just is and is, indeed, confirmed to be in its simple manifestation. Moreover, this paper further claims that intellectual intuition is the sole vehicle that makes available instances of metaphysical insight into the thatness of the life of life that just is, hidden beyond the planes of ordinary consciousness. Indeed, Schelling claims that this intellectual intuition of thatness, of that being which just is beyond the world of becoming, is a liminal encounter with “primal chaos itself;”\textsuperscript{80} thus, in attaining to the life of life in intellectual intuition, the anagogic traveler encounters what Schelling imagines as the ceaseless annular rotation and fons et origio of reality, that presides over, gives rise to and sustains the ever-dynamic becoming world that, as a system of open natality, is “capable of integrating unpredictable development.”\textsuperscript{81}

This paper claims that Schelling asserts intellectual intuition as an instance of metanoia— a sudden and transformative metaphysical insight that, because the Augenblick of intellectual intuition\textsuperscript{82} gives rise to a profound conviction of knowing within the illuminated anagogic initiate, reveals man as perfected in henosis with the supra-human noetic realm; this particular epopteia and its accompanying convictions, claims Schelling, represent passing datums of

\textsuperscript{79} Schelling, Philosophy and Religion, P. 18.

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

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

\textsuperscript{82} As will emerge in this paper, Schelling claims intellectual intuition is an a priori science because it transports one to a location prior to the subject – object structure of consciousness.
consciousness *a posteriori* to the instance of intellectual intuition that, because of its certainty, moves toward experience in resolute historical action, grounds positive being in non-being and answers the Schellingian riddle of the world. As implied by this correspondence to *metanoia*, Schellingian intellectual intuition will be seen to emerge only in a sudden liminal encounter when ordinary consciousness collapses, *aporia* (chaos) emerges and the desire (*eros*) for epistemic closure urges the anagogic traveler forward to an encounter with *that which is*. Specifically, to the reading proffered by this paper, Schelling claims that intellectual intuition may be motivated by the collapse of negative philosophy, which Schelling conflates with the ordinary plane of conscious; indeed, thought and the ordinary plane of being are, for Schelling, one and the same – after all, absent the vehicle of symbolic thought, being is available only to intuited immediacy. For insight into Schelling’s claim, we might remember that the governing schema of authentic initiatory rites requires that the *liminal personae* descend to a primordial state of nothingness. . . before he can “raise [him]self to the superior states;” likewise, this paper wants to recommend to the reader’s consideration that the Schellingian philosophical system, in inverse replication of cosmological progression, demands of the initiate an Orphic reversion to the “originary state.” Paralleling traditional initiatory archetypes, the Schellingian initiate is awoken to and, ultimately transforms into, his non-human innermost beginnings in

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

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

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

86 Schelling, Philosophy & Religion, P. 15. “[T]he initiatic process reproduces in all its phases the cosmological process itself” [Guenon, Insights into Islamic Esoterism & Taoism, P. 7].
intellectual intuition. Indeed, the tell-tale characteristic of traditionalist philosophy is the ecstatic overture to an inhuman divine; as Guénon tells us, “initiation must have a ‘non-human’ origin for without this it can never attain to its final end, which extends beyond the domain of individual possibilities.” As we are told elsewhere, “[w]here the beginning is, the end will be.” Accordingly, to this view, Schelling, in unity with German Pietist thematics and the strictures of contemplative orison, approaches his philosophical project as mystagogy; to this reading, negative (inductive) philosophy and its epistemic collapse is necessary to occasion the anagogic traveler’s liminal “pathlessness” and his later heroic initiatic passage to the historical center of positive philosophy – the undifferentiated life of life that just is. Indeed, we shall see that Schelling makes the surprising claim that, in its collapse, negative philosophy contains an inherent demand for the anagogic traveler to turn toward a positive philosophy that stands in ekstasis to thought in order to secure epistemic completion. Just “[a]s the example of Socrates makes clear, consciousness of our ignorance is essential to the maieutic that facilitates the birth of wisdom from a center outside our subjectivity” – that spiritual center is, for Schelling, the primeval life of life to which the anagogic wayfarer assimilates in intellectual intuition.

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

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87 Guénon, Perspectives on Initiation, P. 52. “[S]ince not to take into account the ‘non-human’ element is strictly to misunderstand the very essence of tradition, without which there is nothing left worthy to bear this name” [Ibid., P. 41]. And as directly meaningful to this paper’s reading of Schelling, “all religion in the true sense of the word has a ‘non-human’ origin and is organized so as to preserve the deposit of an equally ‘non-human’ element which it retains from its origin” [Ibid., 50].
88 Meyer, P. 31.
89 “[T]o be in ekstasis was to stand outside oneself (or as we would say, to be ‘beside oneself’), hence to be more or less out of one’s mind (or body), which is to say out of control, destination unknown” [Young, P. 186].
90 The notion of a maieutic is associated with the Socratic elenchus. “Maieutic comes from "maieutikos," the Greek word for ‘of midwifery’” [www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/maieutic].
91 Wirth, Schelling Now: Contemporary Readings, P. 17 (italics in the original).
in the Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic traditions; more specifically, this paper hopes to recommend to the reader’s consideration that the initiatic path, as disclosed in traditional philosophy, deeply informs the Schellingian initiatic ascetic, his understanding of the kairological moment of intellectual intuition and its accompanying metaphysical realizations that may be occasioned by an anagogic traveler of uncommon qualities. We read from Schelling:

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

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

92 Schelling, Philosophy & Religion, P. 15.
mirroring the “absolute breaking away”\textsuperscript{93} of the finite world from the \textit{life of life}, the sacred passage from ordinary sensual reality to supra-sensible intellectual intuition demands an ontological break from the profane world. As recounted by anagogic travelers everywhere, this ontological break is realized by the traveler only after an event of intellectual intuition; after all, if the anagogic traveler was aware of his passage to the more primordial (higher) ontological state, he would be able to map out and communicate the way to others. However, the anagogic initiate is limited to reporting where he has been; the spiritual road taken cannot be shown to another. If accepting of his own cross, each is tasked to journey alone. Visibly marked only to the spiritual (purified) eye, each traveler, through self-immolation and orison, must find his way alone to divine simplicity – as traditionalist doctrine everywhere tells us, like may only be known by like.

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

\textsuperscript{93} \textit{Ibid.}, P. 29.
presentation of the Schellingian project. It is acknowledged that traditionalist doctrine, as any human endeavor, is not of procrustean form but admits of differing strains; however, in order to preserve a coherent hermeneutic viewpoint, this paper employs the thought of René Guénon as exemplar of *sophis perennis*. Moreover, instrumental to its account of intellectual intuition as the initiatic apogee within the Schellingian project, this paper broadly traces the heroic ascent of consciousness in ontogenetic terms as isomorphically, if inversely, repetitive of the cosmic sundering of Absolute being – as the Hermetic code tells us, the earth below is in replication of the heavens above.94 S.J. McGrath95 correctly notes that Schelling anticipates “the birth of the hero in analytical psychology: a being that begins in unconscious unity with the system that produces and initially sustains it, achieves personal consciousness, individuality, and finite freedom by disassociating from that system and establishing a conscious relationship to it.”96 As this paper hopes to later persuade the reader, the anagogic traveler on the initiatic path, far from expressing a mystical passivity, is, in fact, “the source of [his] initiative toward ‘realization’”97 through the ascetic disciplines required for his profound interior work. Indeed, prior to the emergence of *aporia* (chaos) in the collapse of negative philosophy and subsequent illumination by *fiat lux*,98 the higher ontic possibilities within the anagogic traveler exist only as inchoate possibility, as undifferentiated and chaotic *materia prima*; once awakened to his task by the

94 Copenhaver, P. 17. To this traditional way of thinking, there exists a correspondence between the microcosm and the macrocosm; this paper likewise suggests that the phases of initiation correspond to the cosmogonic process [see Guénon, *Perspectives on Initiation*, P. 26].
95 S. J. McGrath, in *The Dark Ground of the Spirit*, reads Schelling, with great affection and nuance, as an early surveyor of the unconscious.
96 McGrath, P. 6. Indeed, Schelling instructs us that “[n]ecessity and freedom are related as the unconscious and the conscious” [Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, P. 30]. McGrath notes that “[p]rototypes for three of the major models of the unconscious in the twentieth Century, the Freudian bio-personal unconscious, the Jungian collective unconscious, and the Lacanian semiotic unconscious, can be traced back to Schelling [McGrath, P. 1].
98 “Let there be light” [www.dictionary.com/browse/fiat-lux]. “’As for the man who is within Adam, the spiritual man . . . I do not know his special name . . . his common name is light.’” Jackson, *Zosimus*, P. 50, points out that *phōs*, the common Attic word for light, is a contraction of *phaos*, the Homeric form, and that *phōs* in Homer is a term for ‘man’” [Copenhaver, P. 109].
epistemic collapse of negative philosophy (that is, his ordinary way of understanding and engaging in the world), the anagogic traveler must attend to the difficult, disciplined and time-consuming interior work of recollection and detachment in his purifying *askesis* in order to have occasion to participate in divine simplicity – after all, the ancients tells us, “like is understood by like”\(^9^9\) which expresses the notion that only those who attain to the image of the divine may assimilate to the divine. “It is not divine nature or substance, but the devouring ferocity of purity that a person is able to approach only with an equal purity. Since all Being goes up in it as if in flames, it is necessarily unapproachable to anyone still embroiled in Being.”\(^1^0^0\) To the argument of this paper, the anagogic traveler, to attain true soteriological redemption and ontological renewal, must ultimately transcend the ordinary plane of consciousness and attain to the simple *life of life*, the primordial origin of all *that which is*, in intellectual intuition. And, as will ultimately emerge in the narrative of this paper, the telling initiatic mark within Schellingian intellectual intuition is decidedly not the restoration of the undifferentiated “Edenic state”\(^1^0^1\) of some lost golden age; rather, it is, ultimately, the attainment to the greater mystery of a supra-human state in which the anagogic traveler, realizing noetic perfection in *henosis* with the supreme principle, participates in the eternal creation of the world. Here, within the Schellingian *mystagogy*, its *askesis* and ascent to intellectual intuition, the Orphic traditionalist, that Jungian, the initiatic and the existential threads to his enterprise are mutually implicative. In his identification of the contrasting ontological moods of *Angst* (anxiety) and *Gelassenheit* (letting be), instrumental to the German mystical tradition, we will notice transports that either discourage or encourage, respectively, the putative anagogic traveler’s reversion to the *life of life* within the Schellingian *mystagogy*. As will emerge in this paper’s account, *Angst* and

\(^{99}\) Copenhaver, P. 41.


\(^{101}\) Guénon, *The Esoterism of Dante*, P. 33.
Gelassenheit mark the two divergent paths of human life – the former, responsive to the demands of the individual conatus, leads to the periphery and the latter, bespeaking of a purified anagoge, leads to the primordial center – the life of life.

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

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102 “We shall be with all the world”[Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces, P. 25].
As will emerge in this paper’s telling, Schellingian thought begins and ends in freedom; the innermost beginning is disclosed as the apogee within intellectual intuition\(^{103}\) – one is revealed in this moment to have become what one already is. As Schelling himself confirms “[t]he whole of knowledge has no status itself by its own power, and there is nothing but that which is real through Freedom. The beginning and the end of all philosophy is – freedom.”\(^{104}\) As we will see, this movement of the spirit, identical with Schelling’s “riddle of the world,” in which the illuminated mind regains a clear view of the source and unconditioned origin of all things, carries an ontological shift as its consequence – a transformation\(^{105}\) of the anagogic traveler causes the world itself to appear as if transformed; one might say that “[t]he world becomes alive only to the person who awakens herself to it.”\(^{106}\) “Ontologically, [Schelling] conceives of ‘being’ as an ongoing process of creative development, which, as a continuous creation, entails the continued emergence of new forms of being” – understood this way, the life of life, as the source, plentitude and exuberance of an ever-overcoming world, is coequal with freedom. As St. Paul might tell us, “in Him [the life of life] we live and move and have our being;”\(^{107}\) Each of us, as poured from the same essence as the life of life is conceived in and oriented toward freedom. Accordingly, each of us must be held equal to the dignity of his existential condition; for to attain to ontological renewal and soteriological redemption in intellectual intuition, each is called to “free oneself

\(^{103}\) “I am the Alpha and Omega,” says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty” [Holy Bible, Revelation 1:7 – 8].

\(^{104}\) Schelling, Philosophical Inquiry into the Nature of Freedom, P. xxviii.

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

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

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

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

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


110 “But most people are frightened of precisely by this abyssal freedom in the same way that they are frightened by the necessity to be utterly one thing or another. And where they see a flash of freedom, they turn away from it as if from an utterly injurious flash of lightening and they feel prostrated by freedom as an appearance that comes from the ineffable, from eternal freedom, from where there is no ground whatsoever” [Schelling, The Ages of the World, P. 78].
practice of the Pietist reform movement are the pre-ontological context for understanding Schelling’s conception and central placement of intellectual intuition within his philosophical project, is the stronger claim, which will be implicitly pursued throughout this paper, that the Schellingian project is a revalorization and reestablishment of the ancient Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic traditions and of the ancient mystery teachings. In the second section, this paper presents a general reading of Schelling’s philosophical project; in particular, this section introduces a cosmological account of the life of life so that the reader is afforded sufficient opportunity to later locate and recognize the central importance of Schellingian intellectual intuition within his broader project. Just as the isomorphism of man underlies the traditional outlook, so too does it imbue Schelling’s thinking – the cosmogonic process is repeated in the ontological dimension within the arc of individual life. This paper then pivots in the third section to examine Schellingian intellectual intuition and its proximate philosophical beginnings in the thinking of Kant, Hume and J. G. Fichte. Having attuned the reader’s ear to shared elements within Pietism and Schellingian intellectual intuition, correspondences to the Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic spiritual traditions and, more specially to the purposes of this paper, to the antique tradition of contemplative askesis and orison are drawn in order to help inform and amplify Schellingian intellectual intuition; in part, this paper claims that Schelling presents a revalorization within his philosophical project of traditional initiatic elements found within the antique tradition of contemplative askesis and orison, which this paper takes as exemplar of the Orphic tradition; indeed, this paper reads Schelling to claim philosophical praxis as mystagogy and as preparatory to the moment of existential death in intellectual intuition. Outlining the

111 “The question of the origin of the world is inextricably interwoven with the question of the origin of man’ [Cassirer, An Essay on Man, P. 8]. Because the human being can only entertain those things that fall within his field of vision, “[i]t is therefore understandable that stories which are supposed to describe the origin of the real world are completely intertwined and mixed-up with factors which we would rather call stories of the preconscious processes about the origin of the human consciousness” [von Franz, Creation Myths, P. 11].
Schellingian mystagogy, this paper will make the rather surprising claim that, for Schelling, negative philosophy and its formal epistemological collapse is a preparatory step in the Schellingian maieutic insofar as it may occasion aporia and, for the heroic anagogic traveler, profound hieratic actions; drawing on the precepts of traditionalist philosophy to amplify the path of Schellingian theurgy, it will emerge that the askesis necessary to purify the anagogic traveler for intellectual intuition of the primordial state requires him to recapitulate the entirety of the human condition; this recapitulation requires, in turn, a renunciation of manifest form by the anagogic traveler; indeed, initiatic practice holds that whoever “fails to free himself from reason at the required moment remains a prisoner of form”\textsuperscript{112} and remains confined to the human dimension. In the fourth section, this paper concludes by gesturing to the profound epopteia that illuminates the adept in henosis with the life of life. Only those who free themselves from the “torment of thinking”\textsuperscript{113} attain to the primordial state of intellectual intuition; here, the celestial mysteries may reveal themselves – the anagogic traveler to intellectual intuition attains to the lesser mystery that all is one and, accordingly, to the metaphysical realization that the entirety of the cosmos is a hierophany of the life of life. From this primordial state, an anagogic traveler of uncommon qualities may ascend to the greater mysteries of the celestial realm – the higher epopteia in which the illuminated initiate identifies with the supra-human life of life as zoë and phusis, the fons et origio of all that was, is and will be – here, the illuminated adept attains to noetic perfection in Orphic assimilation with the supreme principle, is delivered of his earthly bindings and participates as co-creator of all that is. So it is that in intellectual intuition the adept, transformed into pure spirit and in noetic unity with the divine, is said to become who he already is.

\textsuperscript{112} Guénon, Perspectives on Initiation, P. 209.
\textsuperscript{113} Schelling, On the History of Modern Philosophy, P. 167.
A quick housekeeping note: from time to time, this paper will draw correspondences to and concordances with mythology, religious tradition, other philosophical systems and works of literature. These correspondences and concordances are not intended to be read as authoritative appeals and definitive of the Schellingian project *per se*; rather, given that Schellingian intellectual intuition operates in that *thin space* between the conceptual and the non-conceptual and is elusive to rigid academic discrimination, it is hoped that the correspondences and concordances to other human expressions of liminality and to understandings and contexts for disclosing and understanding liminal encounters with the numinous will add richness, depth and interpretative meaning to this paper’s presentation of Schelling’s notion of intellectual intuition.

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

Section 1: German Pietist Pre-ontology

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

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¹¹⁴ Tolkien, P. 67. See also Huston, P. 49, who writes, “[m]ystics endowed with the ‘eye of the heart,’ can intuit this celestial expanse; others must rely on reports or inferences.”
the Schellingian project becomes more alive to the reader. For the purposes of this paper, drawing out German Pietist strands from the pre-ontological background of Schelling’s childhood and precocious academic maturation hopes, in general, to provide insight into his later thought and, more specifically, to begin to frame for the reader’s understanding the central place that intellectual intuition holds in the Schellingian project; to the reading of this paper, the moment of intellectual intuition, which deeply parallels Pietist unmediated encounters with the divine in *Zentralerkenntnis* is the spiritual axis around which the entirety of the Schellingian project rotates. This paper begins to inform its analysis by drawing correspondences to Pietist thought and to the broader contemplative tradition – the existential and theological commitments of these traditions place unmediated encounters with the living God at their spiritual center. What emerges, this paper suggests, is that the Schellingian themes surrounding intellectual intuition resonate with Pietist and contemplative voices and traditions. As the Schellingian account of the Absolute *prius*, the *life of life*, is read by this paper in onto-theistic terms, it is recalled that the themes of living and direct, unmediated encounters with the numinous were deeply and profoundly part of the German Pietist movement into which Schelling was born. What emerges in this paper’s examination of German Pietist thought is a call for the devout to make a profound inner breakthrough, to renounce ordinary planes of understandings of human flourishing and to abandon the accidents of the self in favor of a profound reorientation around a new Centrum – a direct and unmediated encounter with the divine, the Boehemian and Oetignerian *Zentralerkenntnis*, through which the anagogic pilgrim may attain to divine life and become “similar to the whole.” As will soon become apparent, these same Orphic themes echo deeply and broadly within Schelling’s philosophical project.

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

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

\textsuperscript{116} Matthews, P. 44.
\textsuperscript{117} Erb, P. 3.
seventeenth century and was known as the ordo salutis (order of salvation). The believer is elected (electio), called (vocatio), illumined (illuminatio), united mystically with Christ (unicomystica), renovated (renovatio), and preserved to the end (convervatio) to be glorified with the Son (glorificatio). Not only did Spener place emphasis on the ordo in general, but he accented illumination (directing attention away from the illumination of theological knowledge to direct, inner, psychological illumination in the believer) and conversion and renovation or sanctification.\(^{118}\)

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

\(^{118}\) Ibid., P. 6 [italics added].
\(^{119}\) Holy Bible, Ezekiel 12:2.
\(^{120}\) Matthews, P. 43.
\(^{121}\) Erb, P. 9.
\(^{122}\) Ibid.
The Pietist shift of orientation from mediated structures to unmediated experience\textsuperscript{123} of the divine entailed a shift in epistemological framework to correspond to the ontological shift; in this paper’s discussion of intellectual intuition, it will become evident that Schelling’s project resonates with these mystical Pietist themes. In the Pietist’s reformed orientation and likewise for Schelling, the truth of discursive reasoning is dependent on a more primordial conviction. For the Pietists, “[t]he yardstick for measuring truth thus begins beyond the reach of reason in the bedrock certainty of lived experience”\textsuperscript{124} – a mystical encounter with the divine in *Zentralerkenntnis*. When accessing truth in an originary (unmediated) experience of the numinous, one taps into the immanent transcendence of the divine; indeed, German Pietist thought holds that one taps directly into the living God; similarly, the Schellingian project identifies an instance of intellectual intuition as a privileged and unmediated access to the numinous *life of life*, the *fons et origio* of all that is. Friedrich Christoph Oetinger, a theosophical Pietist philosopher, taught that “the human body is directed toward his perfection in the creation of a new spiritual body and, moreover, that the dynamic movement in man is not reason or being, but ‘life’;”\textsuperscript{125} these same sensitivities and receptivities to the hidden numinous deeply inform and shape Schellingian thought. Indeed, to the Pietist way of thinking, “in the sensus communis [with the surrounding world], one is opened to knowledge of the universe and the Scripture by the Holy Spirit. At the root of man, beyond the division of subject and object, there is a unified Centrum where one can contact wisdom and truth.”\textsuperscript{126} Like the Pietists, Schelling lays claim to

\textsuperscript{123} As Pietist, Nicholas Ludwig, Count von Zinzendorf writes, “[r]eligion can be grasped, without the conclusions of reason . . . [r]eligion must be a matter which is able to be grasped through experience alone without any concepts” \cite[Erb, P. 291]{erbb} and, additionally, “[u]nderstanding arising out of concepts changes with the time, education and other circumstances. Understanding arrived at from experience is not subject to these changes; such understanding becomes better with time and circumstance” \cite[Ibid., P. 292]{erbb}.  
\textsuperscript{124} Matthews, P. 43.
\textsuperscript{125} Erb, P. 19.
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid.
history as divine and continuing revelation and, consequently, the historical world about us is a hierophany of the Absolute; those of subtle and sensitive spirit, awoken to the movements of the hidden divine in the visibilia of the world\textsuperscript{127} and disciplined of character, may make ontological passage to the undifferentiated Centrum, the divine life of life – access that is available to the anagogic traveler only by trespassing the boundaries of discursive reason in intellectual intuition. As such, Schelling lays claim to a deep strain of Pietist thought; that is, to invert the true order of things and to privilege discursive reasoning over an unmediated experience of the numinous “is to engage in a pathology that emasculates life”\textsuperscript{128} and estranges man from that which is most truly alive – the life of life.

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

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

\textsuperscript{128} Matthews, P. 43.
Remove the divine and the chance of real freedom disappears with it.”¹²⁹ Within this system, if Schelling were unable to identify a vehicle to transport the anagogic traveler vertically to the divine, humankind would be consigned to lives of pretense and estrangement – longing for, but never attaining to, wholeness. Bespeaking of the profound religiosity within Pietist thought, we note that “[t]he liberation of man that Hahn calls for occurs through a process of divinization; a process initiated by the divine logos and actualized in life as a process of knowing.”¹³⁰ In common with Hahn’s call for divinization, and as will emerge in this paper’s reading of the Schellingian project, Schelling wants to reclaim and revalorize for mankind the Orphic-Pythagorean and Platonic traditions and, in accordance with the deep truths within the ancient lesser and greater mystery teachings, to bind man to the world in unio mundus and to the supreme principle in unio mysterium – it is in the primordial state of intellectual intuition that the anagogic traveler attains to illuminative and unitive epopteia.

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

¹²⁹ Ibid., P. 59.
¹³⁰ Ibid.
¹³¹ In 1802, Schelling wrote his father requesting “some of the most select philo-theosophical writings of Oetinger” [Matthews, P. 46].
¹³² www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich_Christoph_Oetinger. Importantly to note, however, this paper’s presentation of a correspondence between Schellingian intellectual intuition and certain theosophical thinkers in the contemplative tradition does not lead to an ancillary claim that Schelling is a theosophical mystic. Indeed, as we shall see, Schelling strenuously denies identification as a mystic. See Horn, Friedmann. Schelling and Swedenborg: Mysticism and German Idealism. George Dole, Trans. Swedenborg Foundation. West Chester, PA (1997) for a wonderful study of Swedenborg’s influence on Schelling.
thinking will emerge. For Oetinger, the world might be best appreciated as a theodicy; he writes:

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

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

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

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134 Ibid.
135 Ibid., P. 47.
136 Ibid., P. 47-48.
Zentralerkenntnis, that modality of knowing reality without images and without imagination, as the archetypal modality that permits one to know directly, “lacking the mediation of any discursive ratio or the use of images.”\textsuperscript{137} Akin to a moment of grace as metaphorically envisioned in the descent of the Holy Ghost, an instance of Zentralerkenntnis cannot be willed \textit{per se}, but may arrive unannounced as divine gift in response to the anagogic traveler’s intentional \textit{Gelassenheit}. Moreover, confirming its absolute truth and certainty, “Oetinger [following, in part, Platonic tradition] construed this non-discursive modality of knowing as affecting the individual in his \textit{entirety}.\textsuperscript{138} As Matthews notes, “[i]t was this Zentralerkenntnis that provided the epistemological power and expanse of Oetinger’s system of thought, the goal of which was to structure all the various branches of knowledge to see ‘All in each thing and each thing in the All.’\textsuperscript{139}

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

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{137} \textit{Ibid.}, P. 48.
\textsuperscript{138} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{139} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{140} Horn, P. vii.
\textsuperscript{141} \textit{Ibid.}, P. 3.
\end{flushright}
spiritual world.” While not intending to discount the academic influence of Fichte, Spinoza and others on his notion of intellectual intuition, this paper wants to suggest to the reader’s consideration that the mystical-theosophical milieu of German Pietism, which shaped the aspirations and the realities of Schelling’s childhood, made Schelling receptive to the consideration of spiritual influences and ecstatic instances of supra-human dimensions in his enterprise. In accord with this account, this paper suggests to the reader’s consideration that the Boehmean and Oetingerian Zentralerkennnis is the immediate, if pre-ontological, support and forefather to Schelling’s notion of intellectual intuition. Indeed, with the hope of making the Schellingian project come alive in the pages that follow and with the intention to bring sympathy and depth to the Schellingian project, the reader is urged to hear the echoes of these Pietist voices and their claims of a Durchbruch to unmediated numinous encounters beyond the opposition of subject and object in this paper’s later reading of Schellingian intellectual intuition.

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

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

142 Ibid., P. x.
143 “By way of Oetinger, the stream of Swedenborgian ideas leads to Oetinger’s great spiritual heirs, to Schelling and Hegel” [Horn, P. 9].
This section of the paper hopes to establish Schelling’s claims that the life of life is a primordial state of indifference and absolute identity, and, secondarily, that the phenomenalization of ordinary reality is, as a moiety of the whole, ontologically out-of-joint and, consequently, imparts a nostalgic melancholy,\(^{144}\) which provides much of the work for the anagogic traveler’s reversion to the natality of the life of life and its ontological and epistemological transformations. So this paper attends now to what Zizek recognizes as the noumenal in-itself beyond phenomena\(^ {145}\) and which Schelling identifies as the Absolute prius, as that which vivifies being, and what this paper calls the life of life.

While this paper does not intend to tarry with or delve too deeply into Schelling’s cosmological description of the Absolute prius, his cosmological account of the paradoxical life of life must be attended to long enough to ensure this paper’s later claims about intellectual intuition gain traction with the reader. Within Schelling’s Orphic and isomorphic\(^ {146}\) system, humankind is poured from the same essence as the life of life; that is, insofar as Schelling claims the highest “reason” within the human soul is beyond all distinction and particularization, it is identical with the undifferentiated life of life.\(^ {147}\) In this manner, “Schelling, therefore, identifies the human soul as the ‘bond’ between the two opposites, body and spirit;”\(^ {148}\) accordingly, the traditional triad of earth-man-spirit is foundational to and replicated within the Schellingian project. Schelling tells

\(^{144}\) “For all creation yearns for God” [Boehme, P. 102].

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

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

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

\(^{148}\) Horn, P. 92.
 us that “[t]he mystery of all life is the synthesis of the absolute with limitation.”

To Zizek’s way of reading Schelling, “the problem of the beginning is the problem of ‘phenomenalization’.

. . . the problem is not how to attain the noumenal in-itself beyond phenomena; the true problem is now and why does this In-itself split from itself at all.” Later, of course, this paper is occupied with precisely the inverse of the phenomenological movement in the Schellingian conception of intellectual intuition – the anagogic traveler’s reversion to the indifference of this primordial beginning. Oriented, to his own account, by the sacred mystery teachings, Schelling wants to reconnect those elusive points of liminal contact between the manifest world and the realm of the hidden and most primitive Deus Absconditus in order to solve the riddle of the world – as will emerge, these points of liminal contact are vehicled by the human soul in intellectual intuition. As this paper labors variously throughout its pages to establish, the pillar of the Schellingian project is intellectual intuition for it is there, and only there, that the “Absolute come[s] alive” and is made immediately accessible to human cognition. And as will emerge, “only by surrendering its selfness and returning to its ideal oneness will [the soul of the anagogic traveler] once again arrive at intuiting the divine and producing absoluteness.”

Recalling the mutual dependency between ancient philosophy and hieratic practice, Schelling, to the ultimate reading of this paper, is revealed as the great philosopher of religiosity, implying special intimacies between mortals and gods, religiosity refers to an awakened inner receptivity

149 Schelling, The Philosophy of Art, P. 36.
150 Zizek, P. 14.
151 “The question of the beginning is also the question ‘Whence?’ It is the original and fateful question to which cosmology and the creation myths have ever tried to give new and different answers. This original question about the origin of the world is at the same time the question about the origin of man, the origin of consciousness and of the ego; it is the fateful question ‘Where did I come from?’ that faces every human being as soon as he arrives upon the threshold of self-consciousness” [Neumann, P. 7].
152 Schelling, Philosophy and Religion, P. 16.
153 Ibid., P. 33.
154 “The sacred is equivalent to power, and, in the last analysis, to reality. The sacred is saturated with being. Sacred power means reality and at the same time enduringness and efficacy . . . [t]hus it is easy to understand that religious man deeply desires to be, to participate in reality, to be saturated with power” [Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, Pp. 12-13].
to the divine and not to the performance of religious practice\textsuperscript{155} - the esoteric in contrast to the exoteric. As such, religiosity is available only to those who cultivate the ears to hear and the eyes to see.\textsuperscript{156} Elsewhere, the hieratic virtues of religiosity are described as the Platonic “golden cord” which binds\textsuperscript{157} men and gods. Religiosity, bespeaking of a binding between the human soul and the non-human divine, accordingly carries with it an implication of \textit{ekstasis} to thought, traditionally expressed by verticality, “the vector of mystery and reverence that takes us beyond ourselves”\textsuperscript{158} and, as such, is akin to, and perhaps the greatest expression of, philosophical wonder.\textsuperscript{159} Within the thematics of this paper and the Orphic-Pythagorean and Platonic traditions that underlie Schellingian thought, we note that the theurgic practices of religiosity calls the anagogic wayfarer back to that non-human “innermost beginning” which is most primordial within him and from which he is poured – the \textit{life of life}. To Schelling’s way of thinking, the higher the status that a thing holds, the deeper – the more primordial – must its grounding \[\textit{Begundung}\] be\textsuperscript{160} – the primordial and divine \textit{life of life} is the “innermost beginning” of all that is.

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

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

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

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

\textsuperscript{158} Steinbock, P. 13.

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

\textsuperscript{160} Schelling, \textit{Historical-critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology}, P. 8.
because, in the reversionary transport of intellectual intuition, Schelling claims that the anagogic traveler intuits and ultimately unifies with the undifferentiated and primordial *life of life* in intellectual intuition and, unifying the earthly and heavenly realms, attains to a particular *epopteia*. We take note of the Schellingian definition of the *life of life* as the original and indifferent *Ungrund* from which comes all that is:

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

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

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

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

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

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

\textsuperscript{164} Ibid., P. 8.  
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{166} Young, P. 189.  
\textsuperscript{167} Schelling, Philosophy and Religion, P. 31.
divine and holy madness . . . [and this] self-lacerating madness is still now what is innermost in all things;”

accordingly, this paper begins by gathering in mythological understandings – beginning with Hesiod. Reminiscent of what this paper takes as Schellingian mystagogy, Hesiod, in the Theogony, “announces his intention to look through and behind the Olympian order of the present . . . in order to glimpse the origins of the process.”

Hesiod holds that “before everything there was chaos; etymologically this [word, “chaos”] means the expanse, that which still stands open to everything, that which is unfilled.” Similarly, “the etymology of chaos leads to the verb that gapes open.” As original chaos, God is “the super actual, beyond that which has being, therefore a sublimity beyond Being and Not-Being.” In this sense, original chaos is “that from which everything becomes;” and, as such, is neither the earth nor the heavens “but rather the primordial substance of all becoming, the as-yet unformed foundation of everything that will emerge into being in the future.”

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169 Bussanich, P. 212. The reader will note that, similarly to the announced intentions of Hesiod, this paper claims Schelling wants to “look through and behind” the existing order to things to “glimpse the origins of the process” in intellectual intuition.
170 “First there was Chaos and night and dark abyss and the second Tartarus but earth and air and heaven did not yet exist. In the immense clefts of Erebus – that is, the deeper abyss – night with her dark wings gave birth to a wind egg. From it sprang in the course of time the God Eros, the one who arouses desire and who has golden wings on his back. He is similar to a whirlwind” [von Franz, Creation Myths, P. 228].
171 Schelling, Historical-critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology, P. 30.
172 Young, P. 210.
175 Ibid. Evidencing the Dionysian sensibility that underlies Schellingian thought, we quote Schelling at length: “We see in nature, in the process of its free unfolding, becoming, in proportion to its approach to spirit, every more, so to speak, frenzied. No doubt, all things of nature are found in an insensate state. But we see those creatures that belong to the time of the last struggle between cision and unification, consciousness and unconsciousness, and that immediately precede humanity among the creatures of nature, walking about in a state similar to drunkenness. Panthers or tigers do not pull the carriage of Dionysus in vain. For this wild frenzy of inspiration in which nature found itself when it was in view of the being was celebrated in the nature worship of prescient ancient peoples by the drunken festivals of Bacchic orgies. Furthermore, that inner self-laceration of nature, that wheel of initial birth spinning about itself as if mad, and the terrible forces of the annular drive operating within this wheel, are depicted in other frightful splendors of the primeval customs of polytheistic worship by acts of self-flaying rage. One such act was auto-castration (which was done in order to express either the unbearable quality of the oppressive force or is cessation as a procreative potency). There was also the carrying about of the dismembered parts of a lacerated God, or the insensate, raving dances, or the shocking procession of the mother of all gods on the carriage with iron wheels, accompanied by the din of a coarse music that is partly deafening and partly lacerating. For nothing is more
that, given that Hesiod’s mythopoetic mind identifies chaos as the undifferentiated source from cosmic manifestation begins, “[c]haos represents the limits of the cosmic process, beyond which mythical representation cannot go.”

Accordingly, as it symbolizes the liminal threshold of understanding, Bussanich states that “entrance into chaos signifies nonexistence, reemergence existence.”

In the Schellingian project, the Life of life, as the Absolute prius, bearing poetic identity to the mad god, Dionysius, and eternally supporting and sustaining of reality, is the prima materia of all that was, is and will be; Schelling tells us:

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

To Schelling’s spiritual eye, absolute reality is composed of one essence: the supra-actual life of life; “[t]he absolute in and of itself offers no multiplicity or variety whatsoever, and to that extent it is for the understanding an absolute, bottomless emptiness.”

In his analysis of the numinous, Rudolf Otto discards any moral significance that attaches to the word, ‘holy,’ as of similar to that inner madness than music, which, through the incessant eccentric relinquishing and re-attracting of tones, most clearly imitates that primordial movement. Music itself is a turning wheel that, going out from a single point, always, through all excesses, spins back again to the beginning” [Schelling, Ages of the World, P. 103].

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

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

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

Ibid., P. 36. With similar sensitivities to the reality it seeks to symbolize, traditional philosophy asserts that metaphysical infinity has “absolutely no limits whatsoever,” [Guenon, The Multiple States of the Being, P. 7] is unconditioned and undetermined, and that which contains all. “The zenith of being is Being Unlimited. Being relieved of all confines and conditionings” [Huston, Forgotten Truth, P. 25].
later addition;¹⁸⁰ in its origin, the “‘holy,’ or at least the equivalent words in Greek, Latin, in Semitic and other ancient languages denoted first and foremost only overplus;”¹⁸¹ importantly to our purposes, Otto identifies the holy as “pre-eminently a living force within the Semitic religions.”¹⁸² Schelling’s notion of the life of life, which is available only to those awoken of spirit, bears resemblance to Otto’s notion of the “holy” – both refer to the numinous, ever-fecund, extravagant living force transcendent to human conceptualization and more primordial than ethical schematizations. Challenging to conceive as it lies beyond oppositional thought, the Schellingian life of life carries philosophical equivalence to the traditional notion of the infinite.¹⁸³ The infinite is “absolutely unconditioned and undetermined.”¹⁸⁴ To this traditionalist view, any determination acts, as a matter of logical necessity, to limit that which is determined in so far as it excludes something from itself. In accord with logical requirements, a negation of a negation is understood as an affirmation; accordingly, “in reality, the negation of all limits is equivalent to total and absolute affirmation.”¹⁸⁵ Similarly, Schelling holds that the life of life is “absolute, infinite reality”¹⁸⁶ and, as such, “is by virtue of its own idea;”¹⁸⁷ with this understanding in hand, we might say, if clothing the life of life in theological language, that “God is an infinite affirmation of himself”¹⁸⁸ and, as infinitely unconstrained and infinitely self-determining – absolutely free. Writes Schelling:

¹⁸⁰ Otto, Rudolf. P. 5. Otto further notes that the Hebrew qadosh, the Greek ayios, the Latin sanctus and sacer “all mean beyond all question something quite other than ‘the good’” [Ibid., P. 6].
¹⁸¹ Otto, Rudolf, P. 5 [italics in the original].
¹⁸² Otto, P. 6.
¹⁸³ To the Pythagoreans, the apeiron is the unlimited and infinitely divisible; the apeiron and the peras “constitute the primal archetypal duality subservient to the ineffable One” [Uždavinys, The Golden Chain, P. 290].
¹⁸⁵ Ibid.
¹⁸⁶ Schelling, The Philosophy of Art, P. 23.
¹⁸⁷ Ibid.
¹⁸⁸ Ibid., P. 24.
“God is comprehends himself as infinitely affirming (since he is the affirmation of himself) and as infinitely affirmed for the same reason. Furthermore, since it is one and the same thing that both affirms and is affirmed, he accordingly comprehends himself also as indifference.”

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

189 Ibid.
190 Guénon, The Multiple States of the Being, P. 11.
192 A helpful passage for our understanding of the life of life is the following: “Before Aristotle, Parmenides (Diels fr. 8 preserved by Simplicius) had set forth in the clearest possible terms the doctrine that ‘that which is’, and being Now, is other than things that only seem to be and since they come into being and pass away, cannot be said to be. This indivisible, omnipresent and altogether present One is unoriginated and indestructible; it is complete, unmoving, and endless. Nor was it ever, nor will it be for Now it is, all at once, a continuous One . . . It is all alike . . . without beginning or end, since coming into being and passing away are excluded and far away from it, and true belief rejects them” [Coomaraswamy, P. 63 (italics in original)].
“God is a totality that is not a multiplicity but rather absolute simplicity. God is a unity that itself is not conditioned in contrast to multiplicity; that is, he is not singular in the numerical sense. Neither is he simply the One, but is rather absolute unity itself, not everything, but rather absolute allness itself, and is both of these immediately as one.”

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

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

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

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193 Ibid.
194 McEvillery, P. 51.
195 Ibid., P. 14.
ordinary plane of reality, the *life of life*, mythopoetically imagined as the Dionysian zoé and *phasis*, is more primordial than being itself and is the primal stuff from which manifest reality is composed.

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

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nothing because it wants nothing\textsuperscript{199} and “[i]t is everything because only from it as eternal freedom comes all force and because it has all things under it, rules everything, and is ruled by nothing.”\textsuperscript{200} Most primordially, then, the Absolute \textit{prius} is pure, unmanifested spirit for only spirit may enter everything and yet be nothing. Analogously, then, the \textit{life of life} is nothing from the vantage of ordinary reality in so far as it abides in, morphs into and animates everything yet transcends ordinary apprehension. As Schelling states in encapsulation, “[w]e have expressed the Highest elsewhere as pure equivalence (indifference) that is nothing yet everything.”\textsuperscript{201} Again, we hear from Schelling:

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

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

\textsuperscript{199} Similar to the beatitude, “[b]lessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” [Holy Bible, \textit{Matthew} 5:3], which, for the purposes of this paper, may be taken to mean that those who are detached (poor) from desire (spirit) are positioned to receive the kingdom of heaven in mystical vision.
\textsuperscript{200} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{201} \textit{Ibid.}, P. 25.
\textsuperscript{202} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{203} Zizek, P. 14.
continuance, in the will that wills nothing. In the greatest restlessness of life, in the most violent movement of all forces, the proper goal is always the will that wills nothing.” So, foreshadowing of our way, it is to this “will that will nothing” that the anagogic traveler seeks reversion in intellectual intuition.

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

\(^{205}\) From the vantage of formal cause, the Aristotelian unmoved mover is distinct from Schelling’s life of life, which Schelling positions as the fons et origio of all that is. However, seen from another perspective, the Aristotelian unmoved mover is a similar attempt to describe the incomprehensible Absolute prius; similar to the unmoved mover, which is an expression of the immutable center of all things, the life of life is envisioned to contain an identity of motion and rest, an exhalation and an inhalation, a willing and a not willing, and a yes and a no.
\(^{206}\) Ibid.
\(^{207}\) Ibid., P. 107.
\(^{208}\) Ibid.
“It is necessary to acknowledge this as the personality of God, as the being in itself and for itself of God. Already in ancient philosophy, personality is explained as the ultimate act or the ultimate potency by which an intelligent being exists in an incommunicable fashion. This is the principle that, instead of confusing God with the creature, as was believed, eternally divides God from the creature. Everything can be communicated to the creature except for one thing. The creature cannot have the immortal ground of life in itself. The creature cannot be of and through itself.”

In accord with ancient sensibilities that identify two equally archaic principles that govern in simultaneity, Schelling posits similar personality to the life of life; it is composed of a centrifugal force and a centripetal force or, said otherwise, an expansive (Yes) potency and a contracting (No) potency or, as most ancantly understood, as an exhalation and an inhalation of breath. “[T]herefore, two principles are already in what is necessary of God: the outpouring, outstretching, self-giving being, and an equivalently eternal force of selfhood, of retreat into itself, of Being in itself. That being and this force are both already God itself, without God’s assistance.”

In accordance with his characterization of the life of life as an indifferent “will that wills nothing,” Schelling presupposes that these two forces are equal in stature and primacy within the Absolute prius. Indeed, the perfectly balanced union of the two principles is realized only in the supra-actual primordial state.

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209 Ibid.
210 Ibid., P. 6. Arguably, the forces of contraction and expansion may be perceived in the psychic processes of the self; for instance, the Jungian notion of abaissement du niveau mental, which implies a weakening of consciousness as psychological energy is drawn away by the unconsciousness, is “[o]ften observed just before creative work or during those incubation periods when the unconscious prepares a new stage of growth” [www.terrapsych/jungsdefs.com]. Accordingly, psychic expansion follows, and is dependent upon, an earlier psychic contraction.
211 Guénon, The Symbol of the Cross, P. 137. “The perfect equilibrium constitutes (or reconstitutes) the primordial Androgyne” [Ibid., P. 59].
“But the original equivalence (equipollence) between both of them now appears between them. Since each, by nature, is equally originary and equally essential, each also has the same claim to be that which has being. Both hold their own weight and neither yields to the other.”\textsuperscript{212}

Schelling envisions primordial reality as continuous annular motion. Between the two primal forces, one elevates itself over the other only, in turn, to be equally opposed by the other; a unity\textsuperscript{213} of force is then re-established only for the same process of elevation and opposition to be reinitiated – a spontaneous, continual and indifferent circulatory motion. These notions of contraction and expansion may be likened to the notions of rest, procession and reversion common to the great religious traditions.\textsuperscript{214} However and importantly, the life of life should not be imagined as divided among these three aspects of the two primordial principles; rather, Schelling instructs us that the Dionysian life of life is undivided and whole – it is absolutely simple:

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

\textsuperscript{212} Ibid., P. 9.
\textsuperscript{213} “But in equally eternal manner, God is the third term or the unity of the Yes and the No” [Schelling, The Ages of the World, P. 11].
\textsuperscript{214} “In late Neoplatonic thought, both procession (proodos) and reversion (epistrophe) are required before actuality (energia) is achieved, because the cyclic process of rest in the higher principle, procession (“descent”) from it, and reversion (“ascent”) to it, is the structural model which governs all activity within manifested reality, be it noetic, psychic or physical” [Uždaviny, Ascent to Heaven in Islamic and Jewish Mysticism, P. 1].
Accordingly, simultaneously a whole and its parts, simultaneously an inhalation and an exhalation and the identity of both, the primordial nature of the *life of life* cannot be contained by the inherently oppositional structure of human language or thought. We read from Schelling:

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

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

\(^{217}\) Ibid.
\(^{218}\) Ibid.
\(^{219}\) Ibid.
Schelling tells us, “[i]t is clear that first nature [the Absolute prius] was since all eternity and hence, equiprimordially a movement circulating within itself, and that this is its true, living concept.”221 While challenging to visualize, the mutually implicative circulation within the unmanifested life of life occurs in simultaneity in an eternal present;222 that which is excludes succession for it is only in the manifested world, subject to the strictures of time and space, that relationships are arranged successively. Wirth notes that “the system of freedom, the ceaseless circulation of spontaneous energies, is a divine system. It is the system of God in love with the productive tensions of its own Wesen [Being].”223

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

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

220 “The perfection of that which rests in itself in no way contradicts the perfection of that which circles in itself. Although absolute rest is something static and eternal, unchanging and therefore without history, it is at the same time the place of origin and the germ cell of creativity. Living the cycle of its own life, it is the circular snake, the primal dragon of the beginning that bites its own tail, the self-begetting [uroboros]”[Neumann, The Origins and History of Consciousness, P. 10]. As will emerge below, this symbolic notion of the mythical heavenly serpent, the uroboros that both begets and destroys, foreshadows the thinking of Friedrich Schelling; similar to the ontological conceptions of early humankind, the Schellingian conception of individual coming-to-be is imitative of cosmological emergence. In alchemy, the uroboros “was the symbol of the prima materia, of the original matter of the world” [von Franz, Creation Myths, P. 3].
222 “In the circle out of which everything becomes, it is no contradiction that that through which the One is generated may itself be in turn begotten by it. Here there is no first and last because all things mutually presuppose each other, no thing is another thing and yet no thing is not without another thing. God has in himself an inner ground of his existence that in this respect precedes him in existence; but, precisely in this way, God is again the prius [what is before] of the ground in so far as the ground, even as such, could not exist if God did not exist actu” [Schelling, Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Freedom, P. 28].
223 Ibid., P. xxviii.
begetting and conceiving, devouring and giving birth, active and passive, above and below, at once.”

This paper early introduced a correspondence between the life of life and the universal symbol of the uroborus; remember that the uroborus “is dominated by the symbol of the snake, standing for total non-differentiation, everything issuing from everything and again entering into everything, depending on everything and connecting with everything.”

The uroborus, understood most often as an image of mutual material implication, may be more profoundly understood to symbolically convey not substance but the primordial and undifferentiated Dionysian life force – the life of life. As such, this paper suggests to the reader’s consideration that an understanding of the annular drive might be approached through the mythological uroborus; as such, the rotary movement of the annular drive is also metaphorically the mythological cosmic wheel – the center (the one) representative of indifferent eternity from which all emerges and to which all tends and the infinite points along the wheel’s periphery, connected by radii to the centrum, representative of manifest reality (the many).

How then, asks Schelling, is “life redeemed from this annular drive and led into freedom?”

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

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225 Neumann, P. 10.  
226 Ibid., P. 276.  
227 “As the Weltalter continues, Dionysus emerges as a symbol of the ongoing poem of cosmic time” [Schelling, The Ages of the World, P. 139, fn. 33].  
that the annular drive is “pure actus”) between “nothing,” the uroboric Ungrund, and something in order to become an object to itself – so begins the self-realization of God in a free act.

Schelling tells us that “God is pure actus . . . . the Godhead is wholly pure consciousness [spirit] and is nothing whatsoever and everything wrapped up in its being.”^230 Importantly to the balance of his project, this objectification of the pure subject of the life of life is “tainted with contingency” and, as such, inauthentic. Accordingly, this objectification is “always in the sense of ‘something extra, something additional, something foreign/put on, in a certain respect something contingent.’”^231 As Schelling tells us, “[f]or either it remains still (remains as it is, thus pure subject), then there is no [manifest] life and it is itself as nothing, or it wants itself and becomes another, something not the same as itself (sich selbst Ungleichliches) sui dissimile.”^232

As emerges in this paper’s reading, the primordial act by which the nothing becomes something is determinative of the Schellingian project in its entirety. Indeed, Zizek argues that “Schelling entire philosophical revolution is contained, condensed, in the assertion that this act which precedes and grounds every necessity is in itself radically contingent – for the very reason that it cannot be deduced, inferred, but only retroactively presupposed.”^233 Be that as it may, from Schelling’s vantage, it is precisely because this original cision, this primordial falling-away, cannot be either deduced or inferred that it is indicative of the Absolute’s free actus^234 and, as the reader will later notice, this original election^235 of phenomenalization by the life of life is inversely repetitive of that moment of grace within intellectual intuition when the anagogic traveler attains sui generis to that which is. Moreover, as this paper is soon to argue, the

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^230 Ibid., P. 26.
^231 Zizek, P. 44.
^233 Zizek, P. 45 (italics in the original).
^234 In another tradition, this free actus might be symbolic of metaphysical zero.
^235 Indeed, the radical contingency of this first act within Schellingian cosmology is phylogenetically and ontologically replicated in the emergence of human consciousness.
precedence of being over thought and the limits of negative philosophy are revealed in this same mythical instant. Accordingly, this very first wanting “involves a primordial, radical and irreducible alienation, a distortion of the original balance, a kind of out-of-jointedness.”

Reading again from Schelling, “[t]his whole construction therefore begins with the emergence of the first contingency – which is not identical with itself – it begins with a dissonance, and it must begin this way.” Just as it was for Plato so too for Schelling; Zizek correctly claims that “[t]he implications of this [original dissonance] are very radical and far-reaching: fake is original, that is, every feature, every ‘something’ that we are, is ultimately ‘put on’.”

Accordingly, for Schelling, the eventual aim of human life, decidedly Orphic in understanding, is to recover one’s authentic identity by moving from image to reality and to restore the noetic perfection of the primordial state. Schelling, in some accord with mystics everywhere, claims the doctrine of possession and reversion; these doctrines imply an existential yearning for authenticity and contain an inherent call to the itinerant initiate to return to restful repose in the primordial real self, the harmonious and indifferent life of life, located at the eternal beginning to attain to soteriological redemption and ontological renewal. As will soon emerge in this paper’s telling, creation’s original dissonance, its melancholic “out-of-jointedness,” which is replicated most vividly by the emergence of symbolic thought in man, prompts the anagogic traveler’s reversion from the periphery to the center; the peripheral life of conatus, too, is ontologically dislocated and is mere pretense of the nomadic life of life. As Zizek rightly notes,

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236 Ibid.
238 Plato’s “view of the world knows of his belief that everything we encounter in this world of experience, all reality, truth, good, is image – that is, it points to a prototype which is not directly encountered” [Pieper, P. 83].
239 Zizek, P. 45.
“[t]he relationship between the divine ‘ages of the world’ and human history is that of repetition: first, the rotary motion of contraction and expansion, this ‘divine madness’, is released by the intervention of the divine word – that is, the act of creation; however, on account of man’s Fall, this shift from the timeless-eternal rotary motion to the progressive-temporal line repeats itself within human history.”

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

“As Schelling writes:

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

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

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

241 Schelling, Philosophy and Religion, P. 12.

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

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

244 “That state of unconscious, natural happiness, the original placidity of earth, has been preserved by the legends of all peoples in the myth of the Golden Age, wherein the second human race immortalized the guardian spirits of its childhood in the images of those heroes and gods with whom, according to its earliest and oldest peoples, its history began” [Schelling, Philosophy & Religion, P. 46].
condemned to confront the terror of a ceaselessly becoming world – a world in which life and death are inevitably conjoined. Indeed, Dionysus, who represents the comings and goings of ordinary reality in cosmic time, “punishes by revealing the absolute terror of his reality.” For Schelling, Dionysus is symbolic of “the self-lacerating madness [that] is still now what is innermost in all things.” Schelling tells his reader that “the true prime matter of all life and existence is precisely what is horrifying.” One is reminded of Goethe, who identifies nature with the Ungeheures – the prodigious and the monstrous. Writes Goethe, “[w]e are terrified by the silent gravity of Nature, and by her silence.” Similarly, Schelling tells us, “[w]hat is frightening about nature is that nothing lasts; that inner necessity that in the end destroys everything – a necessity that is all the more hideous the quieter it is.” Indeed, when confronted by the Dionysian monstrosity of nature, the human tendency is to look away. However, to Goethe’s understanding of the human condition and likewise for Schelling, “[t]o be fully human means having the courage to become aware of what is terrible, unfathomable,

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

246 Ibid., P. 96.
248 Ibid., P. 104. A “religious man can only live in a sacred world, because it is only in such a world that he participates in being, that he has real existence. This religious need expresses an unquenchable ontological thirst. Religious man thirsts for being. His terror of the chaos that surrounds his inhabited world corresponds to the terror of nothingness. The unknown space that extends beyond his world – an uncosmicized because unconsecrated space, a mere amorphous extent into which no orientation has yet been projected, and hence in which no structure has yet arisen – for religious man, this profane space represents absolute nonbeing” [Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, P. 64].
249 Hadot, P. 279.
250 Ibid. We might also read from Schelling, “[i]f we take into consideration the many terrible things in nature and the spiritual world and the great many other things that a benevolent hand seems to cover up from us, then we could not doubt that the Godhead sits enthroned over a world of terrors. And God, in accordance with what is concealed in and by God, could be called the awful and the terrible, not in a derivative fashion, but in their original sense” [Schelling, The Ages of the World, P. 49].
252 “How purely the ancient doctrine of true philosophy argues for the nothingness of the I-ness as the principle of the world, and what a contrast to the unphilosophy, which shudders at the thought of this nothingness . . . “ [Schelling, Philosophy and Religion, P. 32].
and enigmatic in the world and in existence, and not to refuse the shudder and the anguish that seize human beings in the face of mystery.”

To Schelling’s way of thinking, “a re-acquaintance with our primitive selves can make us more human rather than less.” Indeed, Schelling demands that the dignity of man be equal to its task; he writes:

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

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

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

254 Young, P. xxix.

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

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

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258 Keating, P. 78.
259 Pan’s death has been variously interpreted throughout the years; not unsurprisingly, two prominent interpretations connect the death of Pan to Christianity – one interpretation claims the death of Pan expresses, mutis mutandi, the death of paganism and the second interpretation holds that the death of Pan (that is, the “all”) heralds the death of Christ (who is, the “alpha and the omega”). The latter interpretation is directionally concordant with that reading forwarded by this paper.
Jason Wirth, a preeminent contemporary Schellingian scholar, understands intellectual intuition as “an intimation, an *Ahnung*, of the abyss of freedom.” In some contrast to Wirth, this paper reads Schellingian intellectual intuition much more robustly; to the reading offered by this paper, the anagogic traveler attains by purposeful effort and deep sacrifice – via the initiatic path of contemplative *askesis* and orison – to the primordial annular drive in a flash of intellectual intuition and thereby connects the least to the greatest. Indeed, to this paper reading of Schellingian intellectual intuition, the anagogic wayfarer, in accordance with the ancient notions of traditionalist doctrine, may attain to supra-human state in identification with the supreme principle of the *life of life*. Yet, even in the telling of this paper, the anagogic traveler cannot say what “the abyss of freedom” is; he can only know *that* it is and, as we shall see, even this bare declaration of *thatness* can be known by the anagogic traveler only *a posteriori*. No one, even an anagogue of the most subtle spirit, can attain to insight into the nature of *that which is*; precisely because no Archimedean point exists from which the *life of life* may be conceptually approached; one can only become present to the *life of life* in intellectual intuition and, accordingly, it forever remains the dark *Ungrund* and the absolute *prius* to all. In opening oneself to the divine domain of Pan, the *liminal personae* becomes present to a inhuman wisdom outside of the self – “the indispensible birth of philosophy.”

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

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261 Ibid., P. 115. We might also read from Heidegger, “[o]nly when the strangeness of beings oppresses us does it arouse and evoke wonder. Only on the ground of wonder – the revelation of the nothing – does the ‘why?’ loom before us” [Heidegger, P. 109].
be read as the fulcrum moment of finite freedom and, simultaneously, the first step of reflection and, thus, philosophy; after all, were man not to discover himself as foreign to nature, no need for philosophy would arise. Accordingly, this moment of disassociation bifurcates the world from the individual and, even more crucially to our discussion of Schelling’s distinction between being and thought, separates the individual from himself. We will again encounter this notion of disassociation in the epistemic collapse of negative philosophy – there, Schelling tells us, the putative anagogic traveler is awoken from the confines of ordinary consciousness and, prompted by the demand for epistemic closure in the bewilderment of *aporia*, is made receptive to an ecstatic encounter with the divine *that which is* in intellectual intuition. Inverting the primacy of existence over thinking, the individual doubles himself by separating himself into object and subject as the act of reflection elevates one part of his being over the others.262 So separates man from the absolute Centrum and takes residence on the periphery in his own conatus.263

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

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

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

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

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

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

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265 As Coomaraswamy tells it, we must “distinguish the accidental simultaneity of things in time from their essential simultaneity apart from time” [Coomaraswamy, P. 80].
Schellingian thought; thereafter, because Schelling’s Orphic inspired enterprise recognizes a shared quintessence of the soul and the cosmic life of life (and, for that reason, a penetration of the soul is a journey into the cosmic life of life), this paper sought to provide a general cosmological account of the life of life. This paper now augments that introduction by locating and conceptually funding Schellingian intellectual intuition through discussion of his immediate philosophical mentor, J. G. Fichte and their philosophical predecessors, Descartes, Hume and Kant.

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

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

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

\textsuperscript{267} Shear, On Mystical Experiences as Support for the Perennial Philosophy, P. 336. As this paper variably claims throughout, soteriological redemption and ontological renewal in the Schellingian architecture are only available in intellectual intuition. As McGrath writes: “The primordial decision at the ground of the Schellingian self is much
minded Hume counters that introspection fails to reveal any “quality or perception corresponding
to this notion of the self.” Hume argues that because the self is that to which perceptions
appear, the self must be separate from perceptions and “therefore unperceivable as well as
unperceived.” Given these structural insights, Hume concludes that the Cartesian self cannot
be empirically confirmed. Taking these two opposing positions in hand, Kant paradoxically
concludes that Descartes and Hume each identifies an important aspect of the self; so, to Kantian
thought, the self must be envisioned as simultaneously “(a) single, simple, and abiding and as (b)
completely vacuous and empirically unintelligible.” As Shear nicely describes it:

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

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

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

268 Ibid.
269 Ibid., P. 337.
270 Ibid.
271 Ibid.
regard to their particular qualities. Logic then recommends that the self can have no qualities of its own; if the self carries its own qualities, it would be incompatible with and thus unavailable to some of its own possible perceptions. Accordingly, Kant concludes that the self “can only be a ‘pure consciousness,’ a ‘bare consciousness’ having nothing in it to be experienced and ‘known’ only as an empty, merely logical, empirically nonsignificant ‘object = x.’” This Kantian notion of the self as pure consciousness, which this paper hastens to add is supported by the experiences of contemplatives everywhere, and transcendent to the polarities of discursive thought is instrumental to Schellingian intellectual intuition and its accompanying maieutic.

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

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272 Ibid.
273 Frank, P. 78.
275 Schelling, Philosophy and Religion, P. 8.
276 Shear, On Mystical Experiences as Support for the Perennial Philosophy, P. 324.
condition to be valid. This type of unconditioned knowledge has “no opposition between the grounded (Begrundeten) and the ground (Grund) or the knowing (Erkennenden) and the known (Erkannten);” effectively, the knower is identical with the known and the ground is identical with that which is grounded. Jacobi’s epistemological claim of unconditioned knowledge carries symmetry with Kant’s ontological claims of the self as pure consciousness; both, in the Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic traditions, may be understood to express aspects of the perfection of the human dimension as later claimed in Schellingian intellectual intuition.

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

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

277 Ibid.
278 Schelling, On the History of Modern Philosophy, P. 150.
279 Ibid., P. 5.
280 www.merriamwebster.com
certainty. The act was called intellectual intuition because in this case, unlike in sensuous intuition, subject and object were not different from each other but the same.”

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

281 Schelling, On the History of Modern Philosophy, P. 150 [italics added].
282 Ibid., P. 5.
283 Ibid.
284 Schelling, Philosophy and Religion, P. 31.
286 Fromm, P. 27. “The Hebrew text says EHEYEH asher EHEYEH . . . the importance of the Eheyeh lies in the fact that it is the imperfect of the verb ‘to be’” [Ibid., Pp. 26-27].
Schelling constructs a somewhat different version of intellectual intuition than Fichte. Unlike Fichte’s notion of intellectual intuition which is grounded immediately in a particular “I am”, Schelling claims that his universal notion of intellectual intuition removes the subject-object dichotomy in its entirety; that is, Schelling claims that intellectual intuition is the indifferent common ground prior to any subject-object distinction whatsoever. “In intellectual intuition, a subject is no longer distinguishable from its object. This is not an “I am” enjoying an immediate grasp of the essence of an object, for what the I ‘sees’ in the intuition is that it is identical with its object.”287 Accordingly, the Schellingian intellectual intuition is universalized and without any particular determination. There is no “I am.” As is readily apparent, Schellingian intellectual intuition loses its Fichtean claim to immediate certainty;288 as Schelling acknowledges, “there is immediate certainty in the ‘I am’ - but is there also in the ‘it is’ which is the universal subject-object? All power of immediacy is lost here.”289

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

287 McGrath, P. 97.
288 Ibid.
289 Ibid., P. 151
290 Ibid., P. 6.
291 Ibid., P. 151.
object opposition; as such, Schelling claims, with echoes of Kant, that intellectual intuition “can only be a matter (Sache) of pure thought.” Accordingly, Schelling contends his formulation of intellectual intuition, removed from the subjective particularities inherent in the Fichtean “I am”, is the objective ground, the condition precedent, of thought itself. Schelling terms this objective ground the “absolute” ground because it designates that ground prior to any distinction between subject and object – a ground that is neither subjective nor objective but simultaneously neither and the negation of both. Schelling asserts that intellectual intuition, as the absolute ground to thought, is the only legitimate “beginning of an objective philosophy which is freed from all subjectivity.”

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

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

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292 Ibid., P. 150.
293 Ibid.
the occasion of intellectual intuition, “shows at the end what already was at the beginning.”

Yet, Schelling tells us:

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

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

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

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

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298 Ibid., P. 128.
299 Ibid., P. 127.
One would be remiss not to remind the reader that Schelling's notion of intellectual intuition parallels his portrayal of the cosmic life of life: each, as will be recalled, carries no predicates and, as such, is free to go through everything and yet be nothing; as Schelling tells us, “[c]omplete revelation of God only occurs where in the reflected world itself the individual forms resolve into absolute identity, and this occurs only within reason. Reason is thus within the All itself the full reflected image of God.”

Said otherwise, intellectual intuition is the replication in the succession of thought, that is, as the nothingness of that which precedes thought, of the originary chaos of the cosmic life of life – just as the life of life is the undifferentiated absolute ground of existence, so too is intellectual intuition the absolute and undifferentiated ground of consciousness; after all, the knower and known depend “upon the division in the Absolute that gives rise to a manifest world by splitting subject and object.”

Accordingly, given the Orphic underpinnings to the Schellingian project, the dissolution of thought into that which is prior to thought parallels the “totality and absolute unity of forms,” the divine life of life, that is precedent to manifest reality.

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

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300 Schelling, The Philosophy of Art, P. 27.
301 In Schellingian thought, replication is to be understood as simultaneity and not in the more traditional manner of imitation of a preexisting prototype.
303 McGrath, P. 98.
nothing that ordinary consciousness can seize upon; prior to any cision between subject and object, intellectual intuition can be neither defined, experienced nor apprehended. As the prima materia of thought, “the life of life cannot relate to thinking as an object of thought.” Indeed, consistently with the experiential character of intellectual intuition, Schubeck notes that “[t]he cision between subject and object, the de-cisional character of consciousness, is not a presupposition but rather what necessarily comes after, a moment in which the life of life exposes itself in its negativity as nothingness;” in other words, the anagogic traveler who returns to the world from the undifferentiated bliss of intellectual intuition experiences the break between the ontological planes (the recognition of the German Pietists’ Durchbruch) only in his transition back to ordinary consciousness.

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

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

304 Wirth, Schelling Now, P. 69.
305 Ibid.
materia of all thought, cannot be what is really thought, not be what is thought in the sense that the single formation is.⁹³⁰⁷

As a naked consciousness empty of all discernable qualities, there is no what to intellectual intuition; accordingly, the whatness from which thought arises is not available to thought; at best, the thatness of thought’s parentage can be located in intellectual intuition. We might recall that conscious thought is a latter addition to the human experience;⁹³⁰⁸ and so, prior to the emergence of symbolic thought, human life resided in intuitive unity, participation mystique, with its surroundings – to the reading offered by this paper, this primordial state, know otherwise in varied traditions as the golden age, is disclosed within intellectual intuition. Schelling tells us that early man was originally monotheistic and that only through spiritual crisis (that is, by accretions to, enlargements of and shifts within man’s symbolic understandings), did man descend into polytheism.⁹³⁰⁹

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

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⁹³⁰⁷ Ibid., P. 152.
⁹³⁰⁸ Traditionalist thought claims that in the gold age man was porous to the divine; Today, however, but for moments of intellectual intuition experientially available only to those of uncommon qualities, the nothingness of the life of life remains largely imperceptible to the ordinary plane of consciousness. This devotion within the human spirit, however, is not to be equated with Darwinian evolution. Schelling disfavored evolutionary notions; he writes, “we have shown that the almost general opinion that man only gradually raised himself up from the dullness of animal instinct to reason is not our own” [Schelling, Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom, P. 76. Rather, it would seem that for Schelling, as a psychological compensational-ist, each enlargement of consciousness simultaneously divests its holder of receptivity to its unconscious complement – thus pressing it further into the unconscious.

⁹³⁰⁹ In A Secular Age, Charles Taylor writes of the gradual dis-embedding of the human self from the cosmic structure; the individual is newly constituted by a buffered self and, as such, remote from the world. To this view, the world, once enchanted, is now disenchanted, and the gods, once immanent, have been lost. The individual is now condemned to increasingly suffer the world alone.
B. The Schellingian Mystagogy: Negative Philosophy as Preparatory to Theurgic Positive Philosophy

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

This paper proposes and labors, in greatest part, to support the argument that intellectual intuition is the central axis around which the entirety of the Schellingian project rotates; it is here in the unmediated encounter with the *life of life* that the anagogic adept bridges the earthly and celestial realms in noetic perfection and attains to soteriological redemption and ontological renewal – it is here, in intellectual intuition, that the greatest connects to the least. As Evelyn Underhill tells us, “*[t]he common ground that unifies us with the world, this identity that locates the starting point of all thinking and deliberation is that which is the condition of reflexive thinking, namely,
the intuitive realm of unmediated certainty.”\textsuperscript{310} Like mystics everywhere, the primordial point of epistemological certainty and ontological reality for Schelling is intellectual intuition of the “non-human” origins of all that is.

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

\textsuperscript{310} Ibid., P. 22.  
\textsuperscript{311} Schelling, \textit{The Ages of the World}, P. xxxix.  
\textsuperscript{312} Ibid., P. xxxviii.
Sofia perennis, careful to reserve space for the inexpressible, resists any pretense of complete systemization. Writes René Guénon, “[t]his is what makes all modern Western philosophical systems impotent from the metaphysical, that is, the universal point of view, and this is precisely to the extent that they are systems . . . they are in fact only restricted and closed conceptions, which can have a certain validity in a relative domain” – it might be said that the pretense of these philosophical systems are revealed “as soon as, taken as a whole, they pretend to be something more and, try to pass themselves off as an expression of total reality.” Similarly, Boehme notes that “[r]eason thinks it is a prophet. And yet it is only in itself and moves in its own desire.” Sympathetic to the inclinations of traditionalist philosophy, Schelling, as this paper wants to establish over the next few pages, seeks to make a place for the inexpressible by demonstrating how the reach of apodictic thought may be exhausted and how its collapse prompts a movement to the non-discursive realm. During much of Schelling’s career, the Hegelian school and its conflation of reason and reality cast a shadow over European philosophy. Accordingly, the emphasis of Schellingian project on the nomadic force of the life of life as the dark and mad Ungrund ought to be read not only as affirmation of the Pietist sensibilities inculcated during his formative years and not only as recovery and revalorization of ancient sacred teachings; in addition, the Schellingian project’s ecstatic orientation toward soteriological freedom and ontological renewal in the non-human life of life stands in direct defiance and rebuttal to the closed system of the Hegelian dialectic then prevailing in intellectual circles. In short, Schelling maintains that breadth and richness of Hegelian philosophy represents the

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313 Etymologically, “[i]t is the inexpressible (and not, as commonly believed, the incomprehensible) that was originally designated by the work, ‘mystery’” [Guenon, The Multiple States of the Being, P. 24, ft. 8] for the Greeks.
315 Ibid.
316 Boehme, P. 101.
pinnacle and, consequently and concurrently, the spiritual exhaustion, of negative philosophy; said otherwise, because the circularity of Hegel’s rationalism cannot account for its own origin and is detached and abstracted from manifest existence, Schelling persuasively argues that the lifelessness of Hegelism inevitably terminates in nihilism.

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

317 Pseudo-Dionysius, P. 283.  
318 Wirth, Schelling Now, P. 69.  
encounter with the divine in unmediated intellectual intuition. Said otherwise, a moment of intellectual intuition is seen as nothingness from the perspective of the world and, inversely considered from the perspective of an originary revelation of the life of life, the world is seen as nothing. Indeed, this paper wants above all to demonstrate that intellectual intuition is the governing principle of the Schellingian philosophical project; accordingly, intellectual intuition is the spiritual axis mundi for human life and, more particularly to this needs of the instant discussion, the point of instantaneous inflection between negative and positive philosophy – in this paper’s telling, the liminal moment of intellectual intuition, which establishes what it intuits, is the immediate identity of thought and being. Like the Roman god Janus who presides over liminal experiences, the anagogic traveler turns inward to encounter the mysteries and ineffable thatness of the Absolute life of life and, once having attained to the originary revelation of the non-conceptual and con-categorical life of life, he turns outward again to ratiocination and demonstration.

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

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320 “[T]he god Janus who is depicted with two faces, yet has only one, which is not either of those that we can touch or see” [Guenon, The Symbolism of the Cross, P. 141]. Consistently with this paper’s reading of Schelling’s thought, one face of the god Janus turns inward and the other outward to the world; the third countenance, which cannot be seen from the plane the ordinary consciousness, corresponds to the moment of intellectual intuition when one regains the primordial whole.
322 Ibid.
oldest of all beings].” And yet, while negative philosophy can arrive at an abstract comprehension of the “oldest of all beings,” it cannot confirm the existence of the primordial life of life – for this confirmation, this paper claims that positive philosophy, representative of the gnosis obtained through intuited revelation, must be employed. To help us begin to untangle these notions and to continue to draw, in part, on the spiritual sensibilities and strains within the Platonic project identified by Shear and Schelling, we recall Socrates’ famous claim that “I do not think that I know what I do not know.” In so professing ignorance, it is important to note that Socrates does not disclaim all knowledge; rather, Socrates maintains only that the knowledge others boast of having is not true knowledge – such knowledge is merely a pretense of true knowledge – and, consequently, Socrates “was the better for it since he knew that he knew nothing.” Schelling thus contends that Socrates funds his insistence of ignorance on an ironic presupposition of “a profound and even exceptional knowledge;” after all, Schelling suggests, “without a profound knowledge that precedes it, the pronouncement that one knows nothing is merely ridiculous.” Schelling encourages us to consider that the type of knowledge “common with the other types of knowing, but which he regarded as ignorance” is the science of reason, “a science that occurs solely in thought” – this is what Schelling recognizes as negative philosophy and, in keeping with our Socratic reading, is understood as a kind of pretense. In contrast to these “other types of knowing,” Socrates then posits a different science, “a science that must be a knowing, that is, a positive science,” which, although it may

323 Wirth, Schelling and the Future of God, P. 3.
324 Plato, Apology, 21:d
326 Ibid.
327 Ibid., P. 158.
328 Ibid.
329 Ibid.
330 Ibid.
331 Ibid.
be intimated or glimpsed indirectly by negative philosophy, cannot be possessed by negative philosophy. Indeed, one might here suggest to the reader’s consideration the age old distinction between mind (nous) and reason (logos), which in Schellingian extension is witnessed as a distinction between intuition and ratiocination – “only the former, a special gift from God, leads to saving knowledge (gnosis); the latter, shared by all men, implies both discursive reasoning and the expression of reasoning in speech.”

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

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

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332 Copenhaver, P. 133.
333 Plato, Apology, 20:e.
335 “This, I take it, gentlemen, is the degree, and this the nature of my advantage over the rest of mankind, and if I were to claim to be wiser than my neighbor in any respect, it would be in this – that not possessing any real knowledge of what comes after death, I am conscious that I do not possess it” [Plato, Apology, 29:b].
supersensible, incomprehensible and inexpressible quality of *that which is* – it is hubristic overreach for a mortal to know the gods. We read from Schelling:

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

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

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

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

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

In begin to make sense of this, we might consider the example of language; Schelling suggests “[l]anguage as the infinite affirmation that expresses itself in a living fashion is the ultimate symbol of chaos eternally residing in absolute knowledge.”³⁴¹ The many and varied languages contain different tones and sonorities, and yet, “those differences are all blended into human language, which accordingly does not particularly resemble any one sonority or tone, since all reside within it.”³⁴² To this view, although each language may be a universe to itself, it nonetheless shares underlying elements common to all language. So said, “[l]anguage viewed absolutely or in itself is unified or one, just as [discursive] reason is unified or one.”³⁴³ Anticipating Cassirer, who avers that “[p]hysical reality seems to recede in proportion as man’s symbolic activity advances,”³⁴⁴ we read from Schelling that “the real world is no longer the living word, the speech of God himself, but rather only the spoken – or expended – word.”³⁴⁵ To

³³⁹ Shear, On Mystical Experiences as Support for the Perennial Philosophy, P. 324.
³⁴² Ibid.
³⁴³ Ibid. (italics in the original). Interesting, Schelling notes that, for painting, the color of flesh is chaotic; “[f]lesh is the true chaos of all colors and for just that reason resembles none in particular, but is rather the most indissoluble and beautiful admixture of them all” [Ibid., P. 141].
³⁴⁵ Schelling, Philosophy of Art, P. 101.
further assist our unpacking of what Schelling has in mind, it is may prove helpful to introduce the notion of the “whole” from the Scholastic tradition. As earlier mentioned in this paper, “[a] true whole is logically anterior to its parts and independent of them” and, as such, “contains a real principal of unity superior to its parts.” In comparison to a true whole, a whole might also be “conceived as logically posterior to its parts, or which it is merely the sum, . . . the ens rationis, whose existence as a ‘whole’ depends upon the condition of actually being thought of as such.” Accordingly, this latter way of envisioning a whole, because its putative unity is only an attribute of thought, presents only a pretense of a true whole. For the purposes of this paper, we might understand the former true whole as analogous to positive philosophy and the latter pretense of a whole, or the ens rationis whole, as analogous to negative philosophy. So, anticipating the Heideggerian project, this paper reads Schelling to claim that the prospective initiate is prompted to his anagogic journey by the recognition that the putative unity and of discursive reasoning is but a pretense of the wholeness of the hidden life of life – a life of life that is beyond the capability of negative philosophy, limited as it is to the manipulations of concepts, to confirm. Helping point our way forward, we read from Schelling:

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

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347 Ibid.
348 Ibid.
349 Ibid., P. 21.
Negative philosophy offers a *via negativa* to the divine *that which is*. In keeping with this paper’s reading of negative philosophy as preparatory to the contemplative *praxis* of *askesis* and orison to motivate an encounter with the divine, negative philosophy provides the spiritual energy for positive philosophy; writes Schelling, “*e*very philosophy that does not keep its basis in the negative, and wishes to reach the positive, the divine in an immediate manner, without the negative, finally dies of spiritual exhaustion.”\(^{350}\) This being so, Schelling suggests that the negative philosophy may be seen as a sufficient, but not necessary, condition precedent to positive philosophy insofar as it wants a completion that it is unable to attain on its own.\(^{351}\)

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


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

\(^{352}\) Because Schelling, like all those of an initiatic strain, strenuously denies identification with mysticism, some might want to claim that this paper’s reading of Schellingian intellectual intuition is misplaced. After all, might go this claim, the transmissions available to contemplative *askesis* and orison are, to the contemporary mind, of a mystical character; moreover, continues this argument, if Schelling disavows mysticism, it would seem inappropriate to read Schellingian intellectual intuition through the lenses of the Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic Traditions and the mystery teachings. While a surface understanding of this argument appears to carry persuasive weight, we must be carefully unpack Schelling’s notion of mysticism. Indeed, Schelling recognizes the possibility of this misunderstanding arising and, consistent with traditionalist initiatic doctrine, contrasts his notion of intellectual intuition from mysticism; indeed, when Schelling sometimes employs the term mysticism, he does so within this initiatic framework. This paper follows a similar template; when used herein, mysticism bespeaks of an initiatic encounter with the divine. Schelling draws a distinction between formal and material meanings of the word “mysticism,” writing: “The word mystical has in scholarly contexts always initially meant only a *formal* distinction.
If one wanted to extend this concept to the material, then rationalism in its highest objective form would, e.g., have to be called mysticism, for both are in accordance with each other in terms of material, of content, both know only substantial movement” [Schelling, The History of Modern Philosophy, P. 184 (italics in original)]. In this passage, Schelling acknowledges that intellectual intuition is materially consonant with mysticism; that is, intellectual intuition makes available to the anagogic traveler the same metaphysical realizations as an occasion of mystical transport. Accordingly, Schelling tells us, “[n]obody, then, is a mystic because of what they assert, but rather because of the manner in which they assert it” [Ibid. (italics original)]. Thus, while acknowledging that mysticism and intellectual intuition share the same substance, Schelling wants to assert a clear and formal distinction between mysticism and science. As has become evident in this paper’s telling, Schellingian thought aligns with the initiatic elements of traditionalist thought; in contrast, mystical experience, which is of passive and spontaneous nature, is, both to Schellingian thought and to perennialist doctrine, of an inferior ontological dimension.

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

This now steps us into the second thread within Schelling’s above quote. Theosophical thought, similarly to the interpretation of Schelling forwarded by this paper, holds “that there is a deeper spiritual reality and that direct contact with that reality can be established through intuition, meditation, revelation, or some other state transcending normal human consciousness” [www.britannica.com/topic/theosophy]. In so far as this paper has established that intellectual intuition is reason’s most distinctive act, Schelling asserts that no one can deny the “elevation of the powers of the mind to vision” [Schelling, The Ages of the World, P. xxxviii]. Moreover, in noting that the uneducated call “everyone who believes in Revelation at all, even if it were to happen in the most historical sense, a
consider apophatic\textsuperscript{353} and, its epistemic counterpart, cataphatic,\textsuperscript{354} ascents to the divine as practiced by mystics everywhere. Both apophatic and cataphatic ascents, similarly funded by the precept that is no “access to the invisibilia of God except through the visibilia of creation,”\textsuperscript{355} ultimately lead to collapse in the face of the unknowability of God; indeed, “apophasis is a mystic.”[\textit{Schelling, The History of Modern Philosophy}, P. 183]. Schelling implies that he in no way wants to deny instances of revelation. After all, Schelling maintained an affectionate relationship with Emmanuel Swedenborg. Undoubtedly having in mind the Swedenborgian spirit world, Schelling understands theosophy to contain paranormal contacts with spirits; as such, he acknowledges that “[t]heosophy is much ahead of philosophy in depth, fullness, and vitality of content in the way that the actual object is ahead of its image, and nature is ahead of its presentation” [\textit{Schelling, The Ages of the World}, P. xxix]. While for his part, however, Schelling “rejects any conjuring up of spirits,”[\textit{Horn, P. 14}]; he does allow for the possibility of visitations from the \textit{mundus imaginalis} at an intermediate location in the anagogic descent to the primordial state; Schelling writes, “[o]nce the relationship to the body has become extinct enough, the soul begins to \textit{dream} that is, receive images from the non-real and ideal world” [\textit{Schelling, Philosophy and Religion}, P. 55 (italics in original)]. However, in contrast to the initiatic mentality, mystics “stop short at ‘vision,’ and the entire extent of the angelic worlds separate them from Deliverance.” [\textit{Guénon, Initiation & Spiritual Realization}, P. 48].

The notion of theology as an acquired ignorance or, as Nicholas of Cues termed it – a \textit{docta ignorantia}. The Latin tradition within Christianity understood apophasitic as the \textit{via negativa}.

\textsuperscript{353} The opposite of apophatic, cataphatic emphasizes the definition of the divine through positive statements; in Greek, \textit{kataphasis} means affirmation, from \textit{kata}, an intensifier and \textit{phanai}, meaning to speak [http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/cataphatic].

\textsuperscript{354} Turner, Denys. P. 253.
Greek neologism for the breakdown of speech.” As Turner points out, “we must encounter, and then transcend the last differentiation of all: the difference itself between similarity and difference . . . [t]herefore, only way in which we can attest to the absolute transcendence of God is by transcending the language of similarity and difference altogether.”

As noticed in Schellingian thought, negative philosophy is envisioned as preparatory to the theurgic ascent to the absolute life of life in contemplative askesis and orison; yet, because negative philosophy is inherently apodictic in character, Schelling asserts that it, like apophatic and cataphatic speech, ultimately collapses when one, urged to uncover epistemic completion in actual existence, recognizes a chasm between reason’s contents, “which are mere abstractions and thus nothing real” and “actual, present existence.” Writes Schelling, “[o]f itself, reason cannot realize or prove any actual, real being even in the sensible world; it cannot realize or prove any present existence.”

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

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356 Ibid., P. 20.
357 Ibid., P. 45.
358 Schelling, The Grounding of Positive Philosophy, P. 211.
359 Ibid., P. 210.
360 Ibid. (italics added).
361 Ibid., P. 22.
362 Ibid.
“In the same way as the static concept relates to productive intuition, the unbounded productive activity of natura naturans is the positive yet undetermined ground of the resulting product, whose articulation as natura naturata occurs through a limiting and thus negative force.”

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

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

363 Ibid.
364 Ibid., P. 23.
For similar reason, affirmative terms may be applied only analogically to the Absolute – that is, positive terms might be said to be more accurate than their opposites. Freedom, the Schellingian divine, is the non-ground primordial to the oppositional realm of subject and object and, accordingly, is a pure indifference; as Schelling likes to say, the Absolute is both A and –A; as such, the Absolute is simultaneously both manifested and non-manifested form. As Bowie writes, “[f]reedom in this view is the ground of the world’s being disclosed in ways which we cannot attribute to the activity of our consciousness. What we know is determined in reflexive terms; the fact that we know cannot be.”

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

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366 Huston, Pp. 54-55.  
368 Ibid.  
369 Ibid.  
370 Ibid., P. 179.  
371 Ibid., P. 178.  
372 Ibid., P. 179.
absolutely free and, if it moves into being, it does so as a free act, an act incapable of a priori comprehension and knowable in the world of experience only a posteriori.

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

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

373 Ibid.
374 “The Orphics describe Dionysus as a child playing with a ball, a mirror, and a pair of dice, and randomly arbitrating world events as he does so” (McEvilly, P. 39).
375 Schelling, On the History of Modern Philosophy, P. 27.
376 Ibid.
377 Ibid.
the surface the water; what can be known is only the reflection cast. Reflective thought, as implied by this analogy’s isomorphic imagery, cannot attain to more than the inverted image. In keeping with a maxim of traditionalist philosophy, the greater (the Absolute prius in this instance) cannot be known by the lesser (individual consciousness). 378 Reflected thought, as the lesser, can know only the natura naturata, that which is produced by the life of life; it cannot know the greater, the natura naturans, itself.

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

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380 One might remember the words of Frithjof Schuon, “[t]he role of the sage is not – as in the radically mistaken view of the Europeans – to explain things from zero and to construct a system, but to firstly ‘see’ and secondly to ‘cause to see,’ that is, to provide a key” [Huston, P. 50, quoting Islam and the Perennial Philosophy, P. 149].
381 Aporia means “impasse, difficulty of passing, lack of resources, puzzlement” [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aporia].
382 Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces, P. 221.
character, are intellectual intuition and the life of life, respectively, and, consistent with this paper’s reading of the Schellingian project, intuitive reason and the spark of the divine life of life within the anagoge “are one and the same.” Accordingly, harmonious with this paper’s narrative, Schelling claims that intellectual intuition is the restoration of the primordial state, in which the fallen world attains salvific redemption; intellectual intuition, to this reading, is the point of inflection, the Heraclitean joint, between the exoteric and the esoteric. This notwithstanding, it is clear that within intellectual intuition, all distinctions disappear, resolving into simple unity.

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

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384 Ibid.
385 For this reason, “Allah, just as He is ‘the First and the Last’ (al-Awwal wa al-Akhar)”[Guenon, Insights into Islamic Esterism and Taoism, P. 13] and, in Revelations 22:13, Jesus says: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”
386 Ibid., P. 209.
387 Ibid.
388 Ibid., P. 211.
simple One. “He is, this means, this one who is not, who is the sheer totality of all possibility, and who is the cause of being, for the very reason that he is this.”

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

389 Ibid., P. 211.
“completely transcendent being,” the life of life, which “has no necessity to move itself into being.”

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

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

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

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392 Ibid., P. 179 (italics in the original). “If that being from which positive philosophy proceeds were also merely relative, then the necessity of passing over into being would inhere within its principle. Thus, through this principle, that being would be subordinated to the thought of necessary movement and, consequently, the positive philosophy would fall back into the negative” [Ibid.].
393 Ibid.
394 Ibid., P. 179.
395 Ibid.
396 Ibid.
that negative and positive philosophy share common ground as both go toward experience. Notwithstanding that each are a priori sciences and tend toward experience, experience adjudicates the claims of negative philosophy and positive philosophy much differently; because negative philosophy, tautological in character, “has its truth in the immanent necessity of its movement,” experience is merely confirmatory. However, for positive philosophy, which is available only to the intuition, experience provides both meaning and force of proof. Schelling identifies his positive philosophy as an a priori science because it originates from the Absolute prius (life of life) that is before and above all experience. Marking its difference from negative philosophy, Schelling writes:

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

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

397 Ibid.
398 Ibid.
399 In Latin, the literal meaning of a priori is “from what comes first” [www.dictionary.com/browse/a priori].
401 Ibid., P. 171.
than what allows itself to be discerned in mere thought”—a free action is discernible in history. To this claim, intellectual intuition “can only be the consequence of a free act . . . and only known *a posteriori*.” Accordingly, Schelling insists that “from this *prius*, positive philosophy derives in free thought and in evidentiary sequence that which is *a posteriori* or that which occurs in experience, not as what is possible, as in the negative philosophy, but as what is real.”

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

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402 Ibid., P. 171
403 Ibid.
404 Ibid., P. 180.
405 Ibid.
philosophy, which, as will be remembered, suffers epistemic collapse when it is unable to confirm the existence of the divine. While negative philosophy can establish and develop the concept of God, it is incapable of stepping outside of conceptual abstraction in order to confirm the historical existence of God. To the thread of this argument, “since the Absolute prius, by definition, cannot be known a priori, knowledge of the Absolute prius is available only through its consequences [per posterius”406]. It will be remembered that the collapse of negative philosophy is occasioned precisely by its incapacity to attain to epistemic closure. Schelling argues that if the governing concept of the absolute life of life includes the capability, but not the necessity, of such a consequence being derived from an instance of intellectual intuition and “the existence of such a consequence is a datum, a fact of experience . . . then the prius [life of life] also exists in the way that we have conceived it, that is, that God exists.”407 In this way, we resurrect Zizek’s earlier claim that the life of life is radically contingent insofar as it is retroactively presupposed; an experience of intellectual intuition is presupposed by a later datum of conscious experience. Schelling’s argument a posteriori may be extended; it might be further claimed that the illuminated anagogic traveler’s realignment of his life around a new spiritual axis following intellectual intuition is testament to his divine encounter in intellectual intuition. Accordingly, Schelling claims that the experience of a “religious” (epopteia) conviction after an otherwise mute event of intellectual intuition is testament of an encounter with the divine life of life in intellectual intuition. Writes Schelling in summary of his claim:

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

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

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

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

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408 Ibid. P. 181 (italics in the original).
409 Ibid., P. 177. The reader can draw similarities to the Aristotelian unmoved mover.
410 Ibid.
411 Ibid.
413 Ibid., P. 202. One might suggest that if the final idea of negative philosophy is the concept of God, this concept too must be discarded in order to confront the nothingness in intellectual intuition.
414 Ibid., P. 153.
its entirety, demands, in Schellingian language, a positive science in order to find epistemological closure. Positive philosophy is thus understood as complementary to negative philosophy’s rationalism, which “is familiar only with pure essential relations”\(^{415}\) and is tautological in nature. Because of its tautological nature, negative philosophy can arrive at a concept of the *life of life* but cannot know that it actually exists; only the actual experience of positive philosophy can ascertain *that* something exists. Accordingly, in the Schellingian *mystagogy* as presented herein, the recognition of the limitations of negative philosophy – its epistemic collapse – motivates the anagogic traveler’s epistemic desire for a positive encounter with *that which is*. Indeed, under this schema, Schelling seems to claim that the arc of negative philosophy must be exhausted before a countervailing movement to positive philosophy can commence.

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

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415 Ibid., P. 177
417 Ibid., P. 204.
418 Ibid., P. 153.
philosophy itself contains the demand for the positive.” 419 In essence, Schelling claims that negative philosophy is exoteric and confined by its inductive mechanics to the discursive realm; the inductive nature of negative philosophy is its greatest strength (it is needless to point out that mankind’s increasing differentiation of consciousness has produced wondrous gifts) and, yet, its inductive strength masks its weakness – the inversion (and, ultimately, the reification) of reason over being. The rectification of negative philosophy’s exoteric structure thus requires acknowledgment of its esoteric counterpart, namely, positive philosophy, to bind man to that which is. Were negative philosophy not counterbalanced by an affirmative encounter with being (positive philosophy), philosophy would empty of meaning and be constituted by a self-enclosed formalism. 420 To this paper’s reading of Schellingian metanoia, the recognition of reason’s collapse into empty formalism triggers a moment of aporia, when the anagogic traveler finds himself dislocated from familiar surroundings and in ontological contradiction to the world – in the bewilderment of aporia, the anagogic traveler, unmoored from his accustomed context for understanding the world in reason’s collapse, is made available to an illumination (fiat lux) that a wisdom must be sought “from a center outside of his own subjectivity.” 421

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

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

419 Ibid.
420 Writes Schelling, “[w]hen the dialectic has become only form, it is this [inner dialogue that is the authentic mystery of the philosopher] conversation’s empty semblance and form” [Schelling, The Ages of the World, P. xxxiii].
421 Wirth, Schelling Now: Contemporary Readings, P. 17 (italics in the original).
422 Pieper, P. 62.
then you will receive.’ What is to be received bears the same name in modern psychology as in Plato’s: purity, *katharsis.*” At the beginning of Hesiod’s *Theogony,* the muses deride the poets as “[s]hepherds of the wilderness, wretched things of shame, mere bellies, we know how to speak many false things as though they were true; but we know, when we will, to utter true things.” The muses thus draw a correspondence between human appetites and untruths; as this profound wisdom of ancient lineage reveals, immortal truths cannot be seen except by those who are freed of the appetites and accidentals of self – or, in Schellingian terms, freed of the particularities of *I-ness* and released into the universal. The absolute *life of life* “is necessarily unapproachable to anyone still embroiled in Being.” In the Schellingian project, the putative anagogic traveler must, to commence his journey, rid himself of the domesticating bindings of reason – God cannot be known by analytic reason. Accordingly, this desertion of reason, as will be recalled, occasions an ontological dislocation which, in the demand for epistemic certainty, prompts a receptivity to and movement toward a positive encounter with the divine in intellectual intuition. As has been said elsewhere, “[t]his very abandonment of critical sovereignty may bring him an abundance of insight, of light, of truth, of illumination as to the nature of reality which would otherwise remain completely out of his reach.” Illumination for Schelling must be a matter of spiritual insight because primordial spirit is the vivifying force to life.

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423 Ibid., P. 61.
424 www.sacred-texts.com/cla/hesiod/theogony
426 Pieper, P. 56.
427 “[S]pirituality, which has the mode of being of psyche, of breath, pneuma. When we grandly talk about the ‘psychic,’ about ‘spirituality,’ or the ‘pneumatic’ character of mind, we are doing nothing but repeating variations of the word breath. What is meant, then, is the ‘breath of life,’ non-corporeal and vivifying at once” [Pieper, P. 74 (italics in the original)].
Having come to the realization that negative philosophy cannot account for its own origin, the way is prepared for the anagogic traveler to seek epistemic and ontological closure in an encounter with the divine *life of life* in intellectual intuition (positive philosophy). Possible only for the hardy few, the initiatic way that lies before him is rough and untraveled by common men and demands profound and enduring sacrifice; it is to the *via contemplativa* as template for the anagogic work of the Schellingian initiate that this paper now turns.

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

In this section, this paper shifts its attention to provide an account of the antique contemplative tradition of *askesis* and orison. As indicated in this paper’s introduction and foreshadowed in the above sketch of the German Pietist movement that prevailed during Schelling’s formative years, this paper claims in part that contemplative orison is revealing of the shape and substance of Schellingian intellectual intuition. Accordingly, once the reader is availed of a description of contemplative orison, this paper’s account of Schellingian intellectual intuition will no longer give the impression of unfamiliarity; to this point, a persuasive line of thought is recommended to the reader’s consideration that Schellingian intellectual intuition is, by intention of its author, deeply ensconced in the antique lineage of contemplative silence. Indeed, but for a handful of passages within *Philosophy and Religion*, nowhere in his writings does Schelling provide either rich instruction or descriptive account of the hieratic preparations and methodology required of the anagogic traveler to intellectual intuition; accordingly, this paper claims that Schelling leans on a preexisting ontological archetype to provide both structural and explanatory support for his
notion of intellectual intuition – namely, the theurgic and hieratic practices within contemplative askesis and orison are taken as exemplar of the Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic traditions and the mystery teachings. As earlier discussed, the Pietist movement privileges the unmediated access to the divine “beyond the reach of reason in the bedrock certainty of lived experience;”\textsuperscript{428} as the reader will remember, this “lived experience” is, for the Pietist anagogue, the Boehmean and Oetingerian Zentralerkenntnis, that modality of knowing reality “lacking the mediation of any discursive ratio or the use of images.”\textsuperscript{429} In order to help locate this paper’s understanding of Schellingian intellectual intuition as an instance of the Pietist Zentralerkenntnis, this paper argues that both the Boehmean and Oetingerian Zentralerkenntnis and Schellingian intellectual intuition are best appreciated as moments within the antique Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic contemplative traditions that aspire to imagelessness intuition; as such, Pietism and Schellingian intellectual intuition are in privity with the hieratic practices and virtues of contemplative askesis, the body of practices that prepare the anagogic traveler for higher spiritual development, and orison. Accordingly, to help develop this line of reasoning, this paper offers a brief sketch of the antique contemplative tradition through which the devout may be transported beyond the plane of ordinary consciousness and attain to an unmediated living encounter with the divine.

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

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

\textsuperscript{428} Matthews, P. 43.
\textsuperscript{429} Ibid., P. 47-48.
higher teachings – either through the wisdom of earlier philosophers or through the mysteries – back to the birthplace of the ideas, namely, the Orient.”

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

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

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

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430 Schelling, The Philosophy of Art, P. 5.
431 Schelling, Philosophy and Religion, P. 36.
432 Ibid.
soteriological. Conveying the notion that ancient philosophers sought transformative and salvific *epopteia* in the Dionysian realm, Uždavinys informs us:

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

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

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

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433 Troth, as the Egyptian god charged with preserving and transmitting tradition, is best understood as “the principle of spiritual inspiration” [Guenon, *Traditional Forms & Cosmic Cycles*, P. 74].
434 Uždavinys, *Philosophy & Theurgy in Late Antiquity*, P. 15.
435 Ibid., P. 14.
436 The god, Osiris, is the Egyptian equivalent of Dionysus.
437 In support of the notion that the Platonic tradition represents a repackaging of more ancient traditions, Frithjof Bergmann levies the argument that, in his philosophical project, Plato translates the older, natural values that contain their own justification into values more suitable to the polis [see, Bergmann, *On Being Free*, University of Notre Dame Press. Notre Dame, IN (1982)].
rid of the body and contemplate things by themselves with the soul by itself.” And developing the manner in which the soul is purified of bodily contamination and rehearsed for existential death, Plato prescribes contemplative \textit{askesis}: “purification . . . consists in separating the soul as much as possible from the body, and accustoming it to withdraw from all contact with the body and concentrate itself by itself, and to have its dwelling, so far as it can, both now and in the future, alone by itself, freed from the shackles of the body.” With this short reading of Platonic thought in hand, it becomes evident why the true Orphic philosopher, in laboring to emancipate his soul from the body, is said to be in preparation for death; as is said elsewhere, “[f]or whoever loses his life . . . . will save it.”

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

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

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

\footnote{\textit{Holy Bible}, \textit{Mark} 8:35.}

\footnote{The lower form of “[d]ialectic is, after all, nothing but the use or practical application of logic” [Guénon, \textit{Initiation and Spiritual Realization}, P. 8].}
In the well-known passage from *Republic* known as “the Divided Line,” the Platonic four-tiered ontological and epistemological structure is concisely set forth. Socrates instructs Glaucon to draw a line bifurcating an area and to then again partition both areas, giving four sections in total. These four sections together represent the Platonic ontological hierarchy, which, taken from highest to lowest, are (1) something called the ‘Forms,’ supposed to be innately known universal archetypes, (2) objects of thought, especially those of mathematics and deductive reasoning, (3) physical objects, and (4) the shadows, reflections, and other insubstantial, ‘unreal’ objects.”\(^{443}\) Socrates then tells us that:

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

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

\(^{443}\) Shear, *The Inner Dimension*, P. 12 [in Shear’s account, these appear in inverted order].  
\(^{444}\) Plato, *The Republic*, 511:d.  
notion of dialectic and its employ in the Platonic dialogues; however, he identifies another, little understood sense of the Socratic dialectic that implies direct experience and has nothing in common with the usual Socratic question and answer elenchus. We turn to Shear’s own words for assistance:

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

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

Returning to the dialogue, Socrates tells Glaucon that “all this procedure of the arts and sciences that we have described indicates their power to lead the best parts of the soul up to the contemplation of what is best among realities.” Bewildered, Glaucon asks Socrates, “Tell me, then, what is the nature of this faculty of dialectic? Into what divisions does it fall? And what are its ways? For it is these, it seems to me that would bring us to the place where we may, so to speak, rest on the road and then come to the end of our journeying.”

Indicating that “the dialectic is something radically different from the kind of discursive, philosophical reasoning that occupied the preceding pages of the Republic,” Socrates responds “You will not be able,

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446 Ibid., Pp. 13 – 14 [italics in original].
447 Plato, The Republic, 532:d.
448 Ibid., The Republic, 532:e. The reader is urged to note that Glaucon intimates the twin notions of anagogic journeying and ultimate repose, which this paper will understand as Schellingian indifference, in his questions to Socrates.
449 Shear, The Inner Dimension, P. 15.
dear Glaucon, to follow me further, though for my part there will be no lack of good will. And, if I would show you, *no longer an image and symbol of my meaning, but the very truth, as it appears to me.*"^{450} Indeed, Socrates, in his elliptical response, betrays the underpinnings of his thought in the Orphico-Pythagorean tradition and the Hellenic mystery teachings; in part, Socrates indicates to Glaucon that the way, because it is deeply experiential, cannot be shown discursively but must be lived singularly and profoundly. And in other part, Socrates offers the gentle revelation in this exchange that “the very truth as it appears to me”^{451} lies beyond image and symbol in an unmediated encounter with the divine. As this paper hopes to later persuade the reader, the thematics surrounding Schellingian intellectual intuition and its demand for an experiential *positive* and unmediated encounter with the divine *life of life* are disclosed in this Socratic exchange. According to Shear’s account, “Plato indicated repeatedly that the dialectic, his procedure for gaining transcendental knowledge and insight, had an essential experiential component and was contrasted sharply with discussion and reason – involving different faculty, having different objects, leading the mind in an ‘opposite’ direction, and producing a radically different kind of knowledge.”^{452} Supportive of Shear’s reading and further drawing out this distinction between negative and positive philosophy, we read from Uždavinys:

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

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451 Ibid.
452 Shear, *The Inner Dimension*, P. 31. Further supporting this reading, it is noted that “[f]or Plotinus, it is dialectic which constitutes the contemplative path upward to Intellect. . . . Since wisdom (*Sophia*) is an intellectual, purificatory, and anagogic activity which turns away from the things below, the dialectical wisdom (or the science of the dialectic) enables the soul, when it is purified, to become an *eidos* belonging to the plentitude of God” [Uždavinys, *Philosophy & Theurgy*, P. 47].
only transition from subject to predicate, but even language itself, and which
noetically contemplates and apprehends all that is as a *totum simul*.”

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

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

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

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453 Uždavinys, Orpheus and the Roots of Platonism, P. 76 (underline added).
454 Shear, The Inner Dimension, P. 19.
456 The last and highest level of spiritual education asserted by Plato within *The Republic*; “[w]e shall require them
to turn upward the vision of their souls and fix their gaze on that which sheds light on all” [Plato, Republic, Book
VII, 540 a]. We might read, too, from *Phaedo,* “[b]ut when it [the soul] investigates by itself, it passes into the
realm of the pure and everlasting and immortal and changeless, and being of a kindred nature, when it is once
independent and free from interference, consorts with it always and strays no longer, but remains in that realm of the
absolute, constant and invariable, through contact with beings of a similar nature. And this condition of the soul we
call wisdom” [Plato, Phaedo, 79 d].
457 Uždavinys, Philosophy & Theurgy in Late Antiquity, P. 25. “Let us remember that the Greek word theoria
initially meant contemplation of the gods at their festivals, before it started to mean the beholding of the well-
ordered Pythagorean cosmos or the Platonic Ideas” [Uždavinys, Orpheus and the Roots of Platonism, P. 21].
of a genuinely spiritual life and hence is open to all;"\textsuperscript{458} this notwithstanding, the contemplative life demands certain natural qualifications and, importantly to this paper’s later claims, a spiritual discipline in order to attain to metaphysical realizations. Indeed, as will emerge, the act of contemplation is rightly understood as an intentional passage from one ontological plane to another. “No wonder that philosophy, as enterprise of raising (\textit{anagein}) the soul to the level of the divine \textit{eidos} and uniting (\textit{sunagein}) it to the divine, is . . . . tantamount to prayer.”\textsuperscript{459} As will emerge, contemplative orison (\textit{theoria}) within the Platonic tradition is an initiation into the terrestrial or primordial state and, once attained by those anagogic travelers of uncommon qualities, a higher initiation into the celestial, supra-human realms. The contemplative, yielding to the non-discursive reason, engages in a disciplined practice of \textit{askesis} and orison in the hope of opening himself to spiritual influences; accordingly, this paper understands contemplative \textit{askesis} and orison as theurgy insofar as it both motivates the movement toward the divine and opens one to spiritual influences from the divine. Indeed, similar to Uždavinys’ apprehension of the non-discursive Platonic dialectic which may be imagined as “a dialogue between ‘the-one-who-loves-knowledge,’ and a deity, ‘He-who-praises-knowledge (and, in fact, reveals knowledge),” \textsuperscript{460} contemplative \textit{askesis} may be likened to the acquired receptivity to the divine voice – silence. This theurgic movement of a non-discursive dialectic makes available \textit{theoria}:

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

\textsuperscript{458} Keating, \textit{Open Mind Open Heart}, P. 26.
\textsuperscript{459} Uždavinys, \textit{Philosophy & Theurgy in Late Antiquity}, P. 25. “He used to say that when the soul is in holy prayer (\textit{en tais hierais euchais}) facing the mighty ocean of the divine, at first, disengaged from the body, it concentrates on itself; then it abandons its own habits, withdrawing from logical into intuitive thinking (\textit{apo tton logikon ennoion epitas to no sungeneis}); finally, at a third stage, it is possessed by the divine and drifts into an extraordinary serenity befitting gods rather than men” [Ibid., quoting Phil. Hist. 22].
\textsuperscript{460} Uždavinys, \textit{Orpheus and the Roots of Platonism}, P. 74.
Theoria is more related to the realm of sacred liturgies and mysticism, because its gaze is synthetic rather than analytic, inclusive and integrative rather than exclusive and scattering.”

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

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

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

461 Uždavinys, Philosophy & Theurgy in Late Antiquity, P. 27.
462 Guénon, The Esoterism of Dante, P. 33.
463 Ibid.
464 In an interesting passage, and profoundly reflective and expressive of the Schellingian enterprise that funds this paper, Marie-Louise von Franz writes, “[I]f we could see through all our projections down to the last traces, our personality would extend to the cosmic dimensions” [von Franz, Projection and Recollection in Jungian Psychology, P. 14].
the anagogic traveler must detach himself from these physic traces in order to sufficiently purify himself for noetic union with the supreme principle in intellectual intuition.

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

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

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

465 Guénon, The Esoterism of Dante, P. 27.
466 Schelling, Philosophy and Religion, P. 31.
467 “[T]his is why Hell is represented symbolically as situated in the interior of the earth” [Guenon, The Esotericism of Dante, P. 33].
468 Ibid., P. 52.
469 Ibid.
of the sphere as the primordial state of the life of life and the sphere’s periphery as manifest reality. Accordingly, the anagogic wayfarer descends (recapitulates the terrestrial plane) from the periphery to the “innermost beginning,” the primordial state, located at the center of the sphere. Once attained to the center in intellectual intuition, the anagogic traveler, if he is to attain the celestial realm of unitive knowledge of the life of life, must ascend. After all, “[t]he center of the earth represents the extreme state of existence . . . from which a change of direction occurs.”

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

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470 Guénon, The Esoterism of Dante, P. 52.
solely attends to the sacred in the simple presence of quiet. a contemplative would claim that his devotion to divine nothingness is the highest form of worship. Indeed, for the contemplative, we might rightfully say that the hieros logos is silence.

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

To attain to this simple presence before the divine, all traditions claim that the contemplative must withdraw his attentions, both those conscious and unconscious, from the external world and turn inward; as has been said elsewhere, “the Kingdom of God is in the midst of you.”

The commencement of the contemplative askesis always calls for a decision by the anagogic traveler

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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


recollect himself into one by mortification of his multiplicity. The Orphic myth\(^\text{479}\) of Dionysus is the “central metaphysical axis of all Platonic theology and dialectic.”\(^\text{480}\) It will be remembered that the Orphic Dionysus is rent asunder by the Titans and scattered about.\(^\text{481}\) When fragmented into multiplicity, “we are Titans, but when we recover that lost unity, we become Dionysus and we attain to what can be truly called completeness.”\(^\text{482}\) Accordingly, “[t]he final goal for the

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

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

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

\(^{482}\) Ibid., quoting Damascius. “Myth is a directing of the mind and heart, by means of profoundly informed figurations, to that ultimate mystery which fills and surrounds all existence” [Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces, P. 228].
contemplative philosopher is to remember and rediscover Dionysus in himself, the Monad united with the superior principles.\footnote{Ibid., P. 60.}

Simplicity, as discussed above, characterizes the life of life and, accordingly, the anagogic traveler’s reversion to the primordial state likewise demands that he attain to simplicity. As stated elsewhere, “whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.”\footnote{Holy Bible, Mark 10:15.} In the Gospels, simplicity and childhood are synonymous with spiritual poverty; Matthew 5:3 reminds us: “[b]lessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”\footnote{Holy Bible, Matthew 5:3.} If spiritual poverty is the realization of one’s complete dependence on the divine, outside of which nothing exists, then the anagogic traveler who has attained consciousness of this dependence detaches from all manifested things “for thenceforward the being knows that these things too are nothing, and that their importance is strictly nothing with respect to absolute Reality.”\footnote{Guénon, Insights into Islamic Esoterism & Taoism, P. 18.}

Guidance from another tradition carries a similar refrain:

“According to Islamic esotericism, this ‘poverty’ (in Arabic, al-faqru) leads to al-fanā, that is, to the ‘extinction’ of the ego [moi]; and by this ‘extinction’ once attains the ‘divine station’ (al-maqāmul-ilahi), which is the central point where all distinctions inherent in outward points of view are surpassed, where all oppositions have disappeared and are resolved in a perfect equilibrium.”\footnote{Ibid., P. 20.}
“‘Self recollection,’ writes Jung, ‘is a gathering together of the self.’” As the reader might imagine, unconscious projections are typically animated by emotions. Accordingly, recollection of an unconscious projection requires an identification of its emotional funding. Once the emotion invigorating an unconscious projection is identified, its emotional strength dissipates and the previously untamed unconscious projection is reduced to the order of consciousness permitting its willful release; it might be said that the emotion detaches from the projection, thereby releasing the anagogue from the projection’s enchantment. “The usual bond of feelings . . . always contain projections that have to be withdrawn if one is to attain to oneself and to objectivity.” Accordingly, conscious and unconscious detachment are touchstones to successful contemplative *askesis* and orison. As we see, the contemplative experience obligates the anagogue to an ascetic practice; ultimately, the anagogue either dies to the self or dies to the quest. As Underhill tells us:

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

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490 “[A]n interior fire must consume what the Kahhalists would call the ‘shells’ that is to say it must in effect destroy everything within us that is an obstacle to spiritual realization” [Guenon, *Initiation and Spiritual Realization*, P. 102].
491 Meister Eckhart tells us, “[t]he first is ‘shed everything which is yours and take possession of God, then God will belong to you as he belongs to himself, and he will be your God, as he is his own God, no less’” [Eckhart, P. 127].
492 Underhill, *Mysticism*, P. 364. “‘We must,’ says Dionysius the Areopagite, ‘be transported wholly out of ourselves and given unto God.’ This is the ‘passive union’ of Contemplation: a temporary condition in which the subject receives a double conviction of ineffable happiness and ultimate reality” [Underhill, *Mysticism*, P. 333].
Thus, introversion asks for the return to a stillness of mind, a recollection, by which is intended “a voluntary concentration . . . or gathering in of the attention of the self to its most hidden cell” from its dispersed interests – an inward turn implies that “the ‘world’ must be overcome and hence the struggle with the passions that fetter man to the ‘world.’” So this is the price of the contemplative experience: “a stilling of that surface mind, a calling in of all of our scattered interests: an entire giving of ourselves to this one activity [of orison], without self-consciousness, without reflective thought.”

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

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493 “The whole of this process, this gathering up and turning ‘inwards’ of the powers of the self, this gazing into the ground of the soul, is that which is called introversion” [Ibid., P. 303].
494 Ibid., P. 314.
495 Berdyaev, P. 161.
496 Underhill, Mysticism, P. 302.
497 Ibid., P. 302.
498 Ibid., P. 306.
499 Keating, Open Mind Open Heart, P. 14.
500 Ibid.
501 Boehme, P. 33 [italics added].
creature dwells” is an ineffable darkness absent “mental activities such as thought, imagination, and feeling.” Admonishing the anagogic traveler to ascetic discipline, Boehme writes:

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

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

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

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

502 Ibid., P. 29.
503 Ibid., P. 107.
504 Gelassenheit or yieldingness has a long history within German mystical tradition; it “connotes equanimity, inner calm, and serenity” [Boehme, P. 30].
505 Ibid., P. 30.
506 Ibid., P. 34.
507 Underhill, Mysticism, P. 308.
will perish save His Countenance.”  

The anagogic traveler, however, is not of sufficient constitution to withstand the holy outpouring of the divine for more than an instant. As Underhill tells us, the

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

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

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

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508 Qur’an 28:88.
509 Underhill, *Mysticism*, P. 331 [italics in original].
510 In similar fashion, we may read a passage from Henry Corbin, who, in discussing *mundus imaginalis*, writes: “when [the *mundus imaginalis*] is separated from this world it can continue to avail itself of active imagination. By means of its own essence and this faculty, the soul is thereby capable of perceiving concrete things who existence, as actualized in knowledge (cognition) and in imagination, constitutes *eo ipso* the very concrete existential forms of these things. In other words, consciousness and its object are ontologically inseparable here. After this separation all the soul’s powers are assembled and concentrated in the sole faculty of active imagination. Because at that time imaginative perception ceases to be scattered across the various thresholds of the physical body’s five senses, and because it is no longer required for the care of the physical body, which is exposed to the vicissitudes of the external world, imaginative perception can finally display its true superiority over sense perception” [Corbin, P. 9].
Again, consistently with the contemplative tradition and most startlingly emphatic and pointedly to our purposes, Schelling tells us:

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

Schelling repeatedly asserts that “only by surrendering its selfness and returning to its ideal oneness will [the anagogic traveler] once again arrive at intuiting the divine and producing absoluteness.”

As Augustine describes his moment of metaphysical insight, “[m]y soul went on and in the twinkling of an eye (I Cor. 15:52) attained to that which is.”

As ekstasis to thought, these encounters with the divine that which is are always left un-described by the anagogic travelers. Although these encounters with the life of life do not provide knowledge ens rationis, it cannot be concluded that these encounters provide no epistemological assistance. Foreshadowing of our discussion of negative and positive philosophies, we will learn that Schelling contrasts an-sich essence or whatness (“what something is”) and phenomenal thatness (“that it exists”). “[T]he essence, logical structure or ‘whatness’ (Was) of the universe – and even of God himself – is, in principle, a bare possibility, which could either exist

512 Ibid., P. 15 [italics added].
513 Ibid., P. 33.
514 Augustine, P. 153 [italics added].
515 Ibid., P. 159.
516 Ibid.
or not exist." In contrast, *thatness* is “the transcendent cause of existence and therefore standing at the pinnacle of the universal chain of being;”

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

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

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518 Ibid.
519 Bowie, P. 159.
“It is said that reflection is hostile to the idea [Idee]; but it is exactly the highest triumph of truth that it may emerge victorious from the most extreme division and separation. Reason is in man that which, according to the mystics, the primum passivum [first passivity] or initial wisdom is in God in which all things are together and yet distinct, identical and yet free each in its own way. Reason is not activity, like spirit, nor is it the absolute identity of both principles of cognition, but rather indifference; the measure and, so to speak, the general place of truth, the peaceful site in which primordial wisdom is received, in accordance with which, as if looking away toward the archetype [Urbild], understanding should develop. On the one hand, philosophy receives its name from love, as the general inspiring principle, on the other hand, from this original wisdom which is her genuine goal.”

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

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522 Schelling, Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Freedom, P. 76 [italics added].
523 Guénon, The Multiple States of the Being, P. 78.
524 Forman, P. 118.
525 Ibid.
526 Guénon, The Multiple States of the Being, P. 79. “She participated for an instant in the Divine Life; knows all and knows naught. She learnt the world’s secret, not by knowing, but by being: the only way of really knowing anything” [Underhill, Mysticism, P. 342].
Accordingly, descending from intellectual intuition, which as the most primordial state corresponds to the highest form of reason, lower forms of reason, as layered over the primordial state, are “out-of-joint” with the primordial state and, accordingly, ontologically less real. In contrast to intellectual intuition, in which the anagogic traveler attains to the free life of life, discursive reason, as a reason of necessity and a mediate knowledge of merely symbolic and representational value, is less ontologically primordial than intellectual intuition, which, in its display of indifference to subject and object contraries, is an absolute convergence of freedom and necessity. Importantly, as will later become clear, discursive reasoning is unable to provide existential certainty; the manifest world connects to the realm of the divine life of life only in intellectual intuition. Schelling, then, consistent with traditionalist thought, requires reversionary transport of the anagogic traveler to the primordial state prior to any ascension to a supra-human state. Accordingly, Schelling tells us that “[c]omplete revelation of God only occurs where in the reflected world itself the individual forms resolve into absolute identity, and this occurs only within [intuited] reason.” On such an occasion, the anagogic traveler, emptied of self, is transported to the life of life in humility and anonymity and yields to unitive numinous possession; after all, “only a god can provide meaning.” It is precisely for this reason of profound numinosity that an occasion of intellectual intuition is experienced a posteriori by the anagogic traveler as a religious event – the anagogic wayfarer is seized at the core of his being.

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

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527 Schelling, The Philosophy of Art, P. 27.  
528 Ibid., P. 11.
that may be attained to in meditation (contemplative orison); he calls these peculiar states of pure consciousness trophotropic states. Trophotropic states are “hyper-aroused states, marked by low levels of cognitive and physiological activity; here we find Hindu *samadhi, mushingo in zazen*, the restful states associated with the Cloud of the Unknowing’s ‘cloud of forgetting,’ or Eckhart’s *gezucket.*” To this extent, “[m]ysticism describes a set of experiences or more precisely, conscious events, which are not described in terms of sensory experiences or mental images.” In keeping with this paper’s contemplative narrative, Meister Eckhart, describing the state of *gezucket*, maintains it is attained:

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

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

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

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529 Forman, P. 4 and see Forman, P. 7.
530 Ibid., P. 5-6 [quoting Ninian Smart, Interpretation and Mystical Experience, P. 75].
531 Eckhart, P. 102. “The more you are empty of self and are freed from the knowledge of objects, the closer you come to him” [Ibid., P. 225].
532 “For we must be One in ourselves and must seek it in ourselves and in Oneness and must receive it in Oneness. . . One with One, one from One, one in One and one in One in all eternity” [Eckhart, P. 107-108]. Along similar lines, we might also note the following quote from the *Phaedo*, “[f]or one who is not pure himself to attain to the realm of purity would no doubt be a breach of universal justice” [Plato, *Phaedo*, 67 b].
and as long as she possesses intermediaries, she will not have unity or simplicity. As long as she lacks simplicity, she does not truly love God, for true love depends upon simplicity. Therefore your soul should lose all her mental nature and should be left non-mental, for it you love God, as ‘God,’ as ‘Spirit,’ as ‘Person,’ as ‘Image,’ then all this must be abandoned. You must love him as he is a non-God, a non-Spirit, a non-Person, a non-Image. Indeed, you must love him as he is One, pure, simple and transparent, far from all duality.”

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

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

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

533 Eckhart, Pp. 238-239.
534 Forman, P. 15.
this, for Schelling, is the spiritual axis of the world. In close proximity to Schelling’s intellection intuition, we read Delacroix’s description of a contemplative’s psychological character:

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

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

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

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535 Ibid., P. 330 [Italics added].
536 Underhill, Mysticism, P. 53-54.
in the metaphysical instant of intellectual intuition, provides a posteriori testimony of his historical encounter with the life of life.

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

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

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537 Guénon, Insights into Islamic Esoterism & Taoism, P. 8.
538 McGrath, P. 96 (quoting Schelling, 1804a: 143). Interestingly, McGrath makes the Jungian claim that intellectual intuition is somehow hidden away in the “undifferentiated unity that unconsciousness has already left behind but that continues to make possible everything that that ego knows” [Ibid.]. “Whatever reason there was in human experience received its ultimate sanction solely from the solitary majesty of the sovereign ego knowing itself in intellectual intuition” [Ibid., P. 45].
539 Guénon, Initiation and Spiritual Realization, P. 172.
540 Guénon, The Symbolism of the Cross, P. 12 “‘Universal Man’ (in Arabic al-Insān al-kāmil) is at the same time ‘Primordial Man’ (al-Insān al-qadīm); it is also the Adam Qadmon of the Hebrew Kabbalah; it is also the ‘King’ (Wang) of the far eastern tradition (Tao Te Ching, Chapter 25)” [Ibid., Ft., 1].
541 Ibid., P. 13.
Schellingian thought too allows for a metaphysical hierarchy or “preparations for attaining the highest truth;”\textsuperscript{542} Within the Schellingian architecture, the first preparatory stage is spiritual askesis and consists of the “weakening and, wherever possible, the extinction of sensate effects and anything that disturbs the placid and moral organization of the soul.”\textsuperscript{543} In the second preparatory stage, broadly conceived, emerges, Schelling writes, “[o]nce the relationship to the body has become extinct enough, the soul begins to dream, that is, to receive images from the non-real and ideal world.”\textsuperscript{544} At this preparatory level of the mundus imaginalis, Schelling claims that certain consolations of the spirit figuratively reveal “the history and destiny of the universe are represented figuratively;”\textsuperscript{545} yet, these consolations, as contemplatives everywhere tell us, must also be discarded if one desires unity with God. However, those anagogic travelers of rare refinement, endurance and valor, “who penetrate the shell and reach the meaning of the symbols and have proven themselves through moderation, wisdom, self-conquest and devotion to the non-sensate world will pass to a new life and, as adepts, see the pure truth for what it is, without the mediation of images.”\textsuperscript{546}

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

\textsuperscript{542} Schelling, Philosophy and Religion, P. 54.
\textsuperscript{543} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{544} Ibid., P. 55.
\textsuperscript{545} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{546} Ibid.
Section D: *Epopteia* within Intellectual Intuition and the Hellenic Lesser and Greater Mysteries

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

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547 “They may be satisfied with their superficial understandings of these mysteries, but as regards their deeper meaning: ‘Don’t move, goat! Or you’ll get burned’” [Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, P. 5].
548 Ibid., P. 5.
549 Ibid., P. 7.
550 Ibid.
551 Ibid., P. 8.
552 Ibid., P. 7.
claimed these singular themes for itself, turned outward and, as an exoteric and increasingly profane power, lost touch with its originary revelation and is earlier receptivity to the living truth. Certain cultural and individual dispositions, if no longer sensitive to spiritual realities, might be said to conceal those very aspects from observed reality; accordingly, if Schelling rightly identifies a deterioration of philosophy and religion from their ancient esoteric and intuitive source, then it follows that the location of this spiritual realm is likely to become increasingly distant for the larger number of men as spiritual culture solidifies into the material. As this paper wants to make clear, Schelling, who cultivates deep sensitivities to sacramental realities and spiritual influences, aspires to revalorize the ancient teachings by returning philosophy and religion to their original, true and “common sanctuary;”\textsuperscript{553} so, commencing with dialectical and theurgic practices, which ultimately give way to a non-discursive \textit{epopteia} in which religiosity grips the soul, Schelling seeks to make available the \textit{Deus Absconditus} and, through the theurgic mediation of the anagogic traveler, to reconnect the least to the greatest in a revalorized philosophical - religion.

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

\textsuperscript{553} Schelling, \textit{Philosophy and Religion}, P. 7.
describes these early sacred doctrines, which are decidedly Orphic in their trajectories and which descriptively govern the Schellingian philosophical project, as follows:

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

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

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554 Ibid., P. 36.
As we have seen, Schellingian thought calls for conscious self-conquest through the reversal of consciousness from outer to inner things; “access to the spiritual life always entails death to the profane condition, followed by a new birth”\textsuperscript{555} into the divine. Indeed, it might be said that it is from the relative truth of the profane world that the anagogic traveler wants liberation. In this introversion of ascetic renunciation, spiritual discipline, recollection and contemplative orison, the anagogic traveler becomes available to reversionary descent to the primordial state wherein he ultimately obtains to the metaphysical possibilities of celestial ascent; as Schelling somewhat differently, but with similar intent, tells us, his mystagogy requires negative philosophy (discursive dialectic) and its attendant epistemological crises as “preparations for attaining the highest truth”\textsuperscript{556} in synthetic intellectual intuition. Schelling tells us that “those who penetrate the shell\textsuperscript{557} and, after the work of many years, reach the meaning of the symbols and have proven themselves through moderation, wisdom, self-conquest, and devotion to the non-sensate world will pass to a new life and, as adepts, see the pure truth as it is, without the mediation of images.”\textsuperscript{558} Accordingly, while a full discussion of the ontological and epistemological considerations that become available to the anagogic traveler in \textit{henosis} with the supreme principle exceeds this paper’s scope, this paper nonetheless hopes to gesture to the metaphysical hierarchies and accompanying \textit{epopteia} available to the Schellingian anagogic traveler who successfully attains to the primordial state in intellectual intuition.

\textsuperscript{555} Eliade, \textit{The Sacred and the Profane}, P. 201.
\textsuperscript{556} Schelling, \textit{Philosophy and Religion}, P. 54.
\textsuperscript{557} In Islamic esoterism, there are two ways of life: “these are the \textit{sharī’ah}, literally the ‘great way,’ common to all, and the \textit{haqīqah}, literally the ‘inward truth,’ reserved to an elite” [Guenon, \textit{Insights into Islamic Esoterism & Taoism}, P. 1]. In his use of the term, shell, and in his employ of the notions of center and circumference (which, admittedly, are of almost universal application), it may be that Schelling evidences a familiarity with Islamic esoterism; “[t]o express their respective ‘outward’ and ‘inward’ natures, exoterism and esoterism are often compared to the ‘shell’ (\textit{qishr}) and the ‘kernal’ (\textit{lubb}), or to the circumference and its center” [\textit{Ibid.}].
\textsuperscript{558} Schelling, \textit{Philosophy and Religion}, P. 55. “[O]nce the shell has been penetrated, one finds oneself in the domain of esoterism, this penetration, by its relationship to the shell itself, being a kind of turning about, of which the passage from the exterior to the interior consists” [Guenon, \textit{Insights into Islamic Esoterism & Taoism}, P. 12].
In intellectual intuition’s momentary tear of the metaphysical fabric, it is said that “the twinkling of the eye is not a moment of time, but a production of the rotary movement of time”\(^{559}\) and, as this paper repeatedly notes, a restoration of the originary chaos – the \textit{thatness} – of the primordial condition. So, in intellectual intuition, transcendent to ordinary contraries, “[i]t is not a question of not seeing something in particular . . . [i]t is a question of not being able to see \textit{per se}. “\(^{560}\) In not being able to see, the \textit{liminal personae} might be said to be suspended between the extremes of two chaos-es: the chaos that accompanies an anagogic traveler’s emancipation from his individual condition as he holds himself “out into the nothing”\(^{561}\) on the one side and, on the other, the intellectual intuition’s state of primordial chaos; indeed, the anagogic traveler is held suspended until that instant of illumination in intellectual intuition whereupon a new ontological hierarchy establishes and ontological order is re-claimed from primordial chaos. Yet it is to be remembered that the transformative reversion within intellectual intuition only appears as a “return to chaos” from the perspective of the ordinary consciousness; similarly, the reappearance by the anagogic wayfarer from intellectual intuition “takes on the appearance of ‘emerging from chaos.’”\(^{562}\) In the liminal encounter with chaos (the Pietist \textit{Durchbruch}, which implies that sudden discontinuity between the profane\(^{563}\) and the sacred planes of consciousness), the edges of the ontological planes become perceptible to the \textit{liminal personae} upon emergence from intellectual intuition.

\(^{559}\) Schelling, \textit{The Ages of the World}, P. xviii.

\(^{560}\) Wirth, \textit{The Conspiracy of life}, P. 111.

\(^{561}\) Heidegger, P. 103. “This is what properly speaking constitutes ‘transformation’, conceived as implying the return of beings in modification into unmodified Being” \cite{Guenon, The Symbolism of the Cross, P. 132}.

\(^{562}\) Guénon, \textit{Initiation & Spiritual Realization}, Pp. 149-150.

\(^{563}\) It is important to remember that nothing is profane by its nature because all comes from the life of life; rather, there is only a profane point of view \cite[see, Guénon, \textit{Initiation & Spiritual Realization}, P. 44].
In his analysis of the *Symposium*, Jonathon Shear reads Socrates, in the doctrine of Diotima to which he gives voice, to maintain that the form of beauty at the pinnacle of the heavenly ladder is disclosed in two stages. In the first stage, the anagogic traveler attains to a vision of pure beauty as an “open sea.” As we read:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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565 Ibid., 211:a-b.
the true goal of all initiation and that is called the ‘final deliverance’ or the ‘supreme identity’. "

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

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

As we have seen, Schelling claims intellectual intuition, the nicht denkendes Denken, is more primordial than the subject-object dichotomy and shares the same essence with the undifferentiated life of life. To this point, Guénon maintains that “the being must above all identify the center of his own individuality . . . with the cosmic center of the state of existence to
which this individuality belongs, and which it takes as a base from which to raise itself to the higher states.”

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

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

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571 Guénon, The Esoterism of Dante, P. 47.
572 Ibid.
573 Ibid.
574 Ibid.
575 Ibid., P. 33.
surrenders the authority of its discursive *logismos* and the anagogic wayfarer attains to the primordial state that he sees the world as if transformed by a sense of eternity and he opens to a profound alterity. As is said elsewhere, “[t]he kingdom of heaven is spread out upon the earth;” it reveals itself only to those who have the eyes to see. Accordingly, in the dawning of this particular *epopteia*, Schelling claims positive philosophy proceeds not only to the “particular kind of experience” found within intellectual intuition, but to “the entirety of experience from beginning to end.” Schelling “insists that existence precedes reflection in the same way that the immanence of intuition precedes the concept.” Concepts arise through the act of separating the result of intuition from its productive activity – the intuition provides access to the positive undifferentiated material. Here we find the crux of this claim, namely, “[t]he common ground that unifies us with the world, this identity, locates the starting point of all thinking and deliberation in that which is the condition of reflexive thinking, namely, in the intuitive realm of unmediated certainty.” So we may read Schelling to claim that the anagogic traveler who, attains to the primordial state (lesser mystery) in intellectual intuition, unifies with the entirety of the terrestrial paradise. This sense of “oneness” that illuminates and pervades the anagogic traveler who attains to the lesser mysteries is precisely that described by Plato as an “open sea” and what others call the sense of eternity; this “possession of the ‘sense of eternity’ is linked to what all traditions call, as we mentioned above, the ‘primordial state’, the

577 “This teaching of philosophical catharsis as a way of release from the wheel of rebirth and entry to everlasting noetic bliss – the privilege of ruling the whole cosmos with the gods (moving in the barque of Ra or following the chariot of Zeus) – is based on ‘a religious doctrine, which Plato took over from Orphics or Pythagoreans, a doctrine of sin, purgatory, reincarnation, and eventual purification’ [Uždavinys, *Orpheus and the Roots of Platonism*, P. 77].
578 Meyer, P. 65. “The kingdom is inside you and outside you” [Ibid., P. 23].
580 Ibid.
581 Ibid.
582 Ibid., P. 22.
583 In the primordial state, it may be said that “all things are contemplated under the aspect of eternity” [Guénon, *The King of the World*, P. 28]. McGrath suggests that intellectual intuition is “[t]he intellect’s act of seeing the part in the whole and the whole in the part” [McGrath, P. 96].
restoration of which constitutes the first stage of true initiation, as it is the preliminary condition for the effective conquest of the supra-human states.”

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

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

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

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

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585 Ibid., P. 262.
586 Ibid., P. 273.
“gradually from a simple initiatic affiliation up to identification with the ‘center’, and not only, as at the completion of the ‘lesser mysteries’, with the center of the human individuality, but further, at the completion of the ‘greater mysteries’, with the very center of the whole being, that is to say the realization of the ‘Supreme Identity’.”**587**

For the anagogic traveler, intellectual intuition is simultaneously a movement toward soteriological redemption and toward ontological renewal. In the ordinary world, absolute freedom can only be realized by those anagogic travelers who, emancipated from the confines of manifest existence, attain via the greater mystery to supra-human identity with “non-being” in intellectual intuition – only they, transcendent to multiplicity and unified with the undifferentiated and free _that which is_, may co-create the world in absolute freedom. As traditionalist philosophy tells us, the metaphysical instant “surpasses Being and is co-extensive with total Possibility itself”**589** because the _life of life_, with which the anagogic traveler identifies, “is manifestly exempt from constraint.”**590** Universal possibility, it will be remembered, is co-extensive with absolute freedom. Traditional philosophy conceives of ontological transformation “as implying the ‘return of beings in modification to unmodified Being,’”**591** that is, the purification of the anagogic traveler into spirit, and results in absolute and complete release from the limiting conditions of all modalities and all states**592** – or, said otherwise, a delivery into the _life of life_. Accordingly, redeemed from the constraints of manifest time and space in the non-

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587 Ibid., P. 278.
588 In the manifested world of multiplicity, only relative freedom is available [See Guénon, _The Multiple States of the Being_].
589 Guénon, _The Multiple States of the Being_, P. 93.
590 Ibid.
591 Guénon, _The Symbolism of the Cross_, P. 132.
592 Ibid., P. 133.
being of intellectual intuition, the anagogic traveler is not unlike the prodigal son of the gospels who returns home; at this moment, the adept becomes who he already is – absolutely free.

Under the Schellingian cosmology, the life of life gives rise to and sustains all that is; accordingly, the anagogic traveler, vehicled by intellectual intuition, is obliged to become conscious of himself as the intermediate link between the supreme principle and manifestation. The answer to the Schellingian riddle of cosmic phenomenalization, that is, how to link the golden chain from the divine to the manifested world, is only fully realized when the Universal Man re-descends to the earthly plane of consciousness; indeed, it is only following the adept’s re-descent to the manifest world that the universality of the greater mysteries is realized in all its plentitude. The underlying notion is this: when the adept succeeds to the greater mysteries and realizes his authentic identity in anamnesic henosis with the supreme principle, the fons et origio of all that is, the adept becomes who he already is – the supra-human life of life.

Accordingly, when the adept, who is reconciled in noetic perfection to the life of life, re-descends into the manifested world, his re-descent might be said to be synonymous with the formation of the world; indeed, the adept may be said to succeed to “the very process of universal manifestation,” that is, the adept attains to the archetypal of the cosmic Schellingian Einbildungskraft which establishes what it intuits and through which the manifested dimension

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

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

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

596 Ibid., P. 176.
comes-to-be. Accordingly, it is in his sacrificial re-descent to the manifested world that this paper claims the Schellingian adept participates in the eternal creation of the world.

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

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

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

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

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


599 Schelling notes that “the dramatic form is the most suitable for the esoteric representation of religious doctrines. Those who penetrate the shell and reach the meaning of the symbols and have proven themselves through moderation, wisdom, self-conquest and devotion to a non-sensate world will pass into a new life and, as adepts, see the pure truth for what it is, without the need for the mediation of images” [Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, P. 55]. Laden with the mutual implication of life as context, Schelling’s appreciation of dramatic tragedy may be approached with new sensitivity to this paper’s purposes. Speaking of dramatic tragedy, Schelling writes, “[t]his is the most sublime idea and the greatest victory of freedom: voluntarily to bear the punishment for an unavoidable transgression in order to manifest his freedom precisely in the loss of that very same freedom, and to perish amid a declaration of freedom” [Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, P. 254]. To Schelling’s way of thinking, “misfortune obtains only as long as the will of necessity is not yet decided and apparent” [Ibid]. That is, once the protagonist understands what fate, of necessity, awaits him, any hope for its avoidance collapses. At this moment of insight, the protagonist’s “moment of greatest suffering” [Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, P. 254] is revealed, namely, when the protagonist recognizes that, inevitably and inescapably, he faces a catastrophic ending; in the Dionysian vocabulary, he, like the bull-god himself, will be dismembered and rent asunder. Whether of guilt or innocence matters not, suffering comes to all – all are torn apart in the maw of time; “[g]uiltlessness does not remove the
knows not by faith but by cognitive confrontation with truth and evidence within the divine life of life, which, transcendent to the ordinary plane of consciousness, is singularly absolute. Schelling asserts that “I call only that knowledge authentic which is decided, not through mere thinking, but rather by an actus.”\textsuperscript{600} In intellectual intuition, which is a simultaneity of knowing and actus, Schelling describes a certitude that “seizes the entire person at his core.”\textsuperscript{601} We turn to Schelling for assistance: “[t]hat which is true can only be recognized in truth; that which is evident, in evidence. But truth and evidence are clear in themselves and must therefore be absolute and of the essence of God.”\textsuperscript{602} Accordingly, because cognition of the absolute life of life is only available in intellectual intuition wherein one attains to the thatness of the Absolute prius, Schelling argues that intellection intuition makes available to the anagogic traveler a unique cognition and testimony of truth. Indeed, he writes, “[t]hose who experience the evidence – which lies in and only in the idea of the Absolute and which any human language is too weak to describe – will regard as entirely incommensurate any attempts to reduce or confine it to the individuality of the individual.”\textsuperscript{603} By this account, the illuminated anagogic traveler attains to a profound, if ineffable and mute, cognitive conviction in intellectual intuition. Purified of the ego through existential death, the anagogic traveler, now emptied of self and thus an anonymity, is

\textsuperscript{600} Ibid. Schelling also points out that “[f]or Aristotle, God is the pure incessant actus of thought (but of no thought without content)” [Ibid., P. 163].
\textsuperscript{601} Ibid., P. 108.
\textsuperscript{602} Schelling, Philosophy and Religion, P. 16.
\textsuperscript{603} Ibid.
available to join into unitive knowledge of the divine. As Schelling puts it, metaphysical
realization cannot be an act of particular individual because, after all, the particularities attendant
to an individual ego were purified in favor of the universal nous; Schelling tells us, “[n]ot I
know, but only totality knows in me.”

Given the verticality of this intuited knowledge, it is clear that duty and obligation have no role
to play in religiosity – they, the offspring of discursive thought, are the conscious impositions of
will to direct behavior; if either duty or obligation must be consulted, it is proof that religiosity
fails to grip the soul. So religiosity originates in that intuitive plane on which the anagogic
traveler is in simultaneity with the divine. As we know, the anagogic traveler catches in
intellectual intuition a flash\(^{604}\) of the gold of the life of life that “[l]ies concealed within all the
things of this world and which . . . glimmer[s] among dark matter.”\(^{605}\) As intellectual establishes
what it intuits, only an intuited encounter with the numinous could engender such deep
conviction; as Schelling tells us, religiosity “does not permit any choice between opposites . . .
but rather only the highest resoluteness in favor of what is right without any choice.”\(^{606}\) It
follows that the religious man acts as he does “because he could not at all have acted
otherwise.”\(^{607}\) Religiosity, a knowing in simultaneity with the life of life, possesses and operates
on the anagogic traveler without coercion – after all, [a]bsolute power, precisely because it is

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


\(^{606}\) Schelling, Philosophical Investigations into the Nature of Freedom, P. 57.

\(^{607}\) Ibid.
what it is, is also ultimate serenity.“ As is written elsewhere, “the will of Zeus . . . persuades without effort.”

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

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

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608 Schelling, The Philosophy of Art, P. 42.
609 Hyde, P. 223 [citing The Homeric Hymn to Hermes]. In the Hindu tradition, Manu, “’he who makes the wheel turn,’ which is to say, he who placed at the center of things, directs their movement without himself participating therein” [Guénon, The King of the World, P. 10].
610 “The true sūfī is therefore the one who possesses the Wisdom, or, in other words, he is al-‘ārif bi Llah, that is to say ‘he who knows through God,’ for God cannot be known except by Himself; and this is the supreme or ‘total’ degree of knowledge or haqīqah” [Guénon, Insights into Islamic Esoterism & Taoism, P. 3]. A similar thinking runs through the Schellingian enterprise wherein Schelling approvingly quotes from Spinoza, “God loves Himself with infinite intellectual love” [Schelling, Philosophy and Religion, P. 50].
611 Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, P. 171.
supreme principle, attains to eternity. “True knowledge of [superior states] implies their effective possession and, inversely, it is by this very knowledge that the being takes possession of them, for the two acts are inseparable one from another, and we could even say that fundamentally they are but one.”

Said otherwise, insofar as the anagogic traveler identifies with the unbegotten life of life, “he himself necessarily can only be uncreated.” In attaining to the greater mystery, the anagogic adept, mortified of self-interest, identifies in entirety with that which is and unifies with its cosmic law and, in so doing, “[w]hat is only virtually realized at the start of the cycle is effectively realized at its end.” As Campbell suggests to our consideration, “[h]is personal ambitions being totally dissolved, he no longer tries to live but willingly relaxes into whatever may come to pass in him; he becomes, that is to say, an anonymity. The law lives in him with his unreserved consent.”

Identifying with the life of life, the elan vital that lies beyond our ken, the illuminated adept, abiding in the fons et origio of all that is and all that will be, is transcendent to death – viewing the comings and goings of the world from the perspective of eternity, he abides in equanimity.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

619 McGrath, P. 96 (quoting Schelling, 1804a: 143). Accordingly, Nauen tries to make the case that, for Schelling, the free man, similar to an artist, is he who works to make concrete that which he “sees” in intellectual intuition. “Whatever reason there was in human experience received its ultimate sanction solely from the solitary majesty of the sovereign ego knowing itself in intellectual intuition” [Ibid., P. 45].
Section 4: Conclusion

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

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620 Wirth, Schelling and the Future of God, P. 3.
621 Taylor, P. 309.
divine forces.” In the Schellingian philosophical-religion, being is revealed as grounded in the ever generative non-being and man is reborn in courageous amor fati.

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

622 Wirth, Schelling and the Future of God, P. 6 (italics in original).
623 “Just as Dionysus in the mystery religions brought the real back to its soul, the Pauline retrieval of the esoteric dimension is the revelation of the present as grounded not in any particular thing or event, but abysmally rooted in the still creative depths” [Wirth, Schelling and the Future of God, P. 9 (italics in original)].
624 Schelling, The Grounding of Positive Philosophy, P. 7. Indeed, the last two decades of his academic career were spent on mythological themes; during those years, Schelling wrote his Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology.
625 Schelling, The Ages of the World, P. xxxv. One might recall that in Sufi mysticism the anagogue becomes suffused with “the divine love that conceals itself from this world . . . and accordingly follows the dīnibrahim, that is, the original and primordial Islam” [Uždavinys, The Ascent to Heaven in Islamic and Jewish Mysticism, P. 13].
Accordingly, in so setting forth its narrative, this paper aspires to honor “the philosophical tenor of old that [Schelling] sought to resound”\textsuperscript{626} and to approach Schellingian themes from the deep vantage of authorial intent. With this in mind, this paper introduced a reading of the Schellingian project as a descendent of the Orphico-Pythagorean and Platonic spiritual traditions and the Hellenic mystery teachings insofar as Schelling sought to educe the esoteric elements of these traditions for his philosophical project; after all, Schelling, in display of his Orphic sensibilities, tells us that “the ultimate goal of the universe and its history is nothing other than the complete reconciliation (\textit{Versöhnung}) with and re-absorption (\textit{Wiederauflösung}) into the Absolute.”\textsuperscript{627}

Consistently with this Orphic reading, this paper turns to traditionalist philosophical doctrine and to René Guénon as its prophet exemplar, which is understood to preserve and to transmit the perennial “old, sacred doctrine”\textsuperscript{628} that Schelling holds close, as the key to unlock, inform and to amplify the thematics surrounding Schellingian intellectual intuition. In keeping with this understanding of Schelling’s sympathies, this paper reads the Schellingian project as a \textit{mystagogic} journey into these ancient sacred teachings to reveal esoteric \textit{sophia perennis} contained within; specifically, for the purposes of this paper, the anagogic traveler of uncommon qualities would, through intellectual and moral purifications, transcend the confines of ordinary consciousness and, yielding to synthetic reasoning, attain to an unmediated and immediate encounter with the primordial \textit{life of life} in intellectual intuition – there, the adept, whose valor

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{626} Schelling, \textit{Philosophy and Religion}, P. 4.
\item \textsuperscript{627} Ibid., P. 31.
\item \textsuperscript{628} Ibid., P. 35. Schelling identifies this “old, sacred doctrine” as follows: “it says that souls descend from the world of intellect into the sensate world, where they find themselves tethered to a physical body, as if incarcerated, as a penalty for their selfness and for offences committed prior (ideally, not temporally) to this life. While they bring along the memory of the unison and harmony of the one \textit{true} universe, their apprehension of it is distorted by the cacophony and dissonance of the senses just as they are unable to recognize truth in that \textit{is}, or what appears to be, but only in what (for them) \textit{was} and in that to which they strive to return – the life of the intellect” [Ibid., Pp. 35-36 (italics in original)].
\end{itemize}
and purposeful labor befit his destiny, may assimilate to the divine, attain to supra-human *epopteia* and answer the Schellingian riddle of the world.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

633 Schelling, Philosophy and Religion, P. 18.

634 Holy Bible, I Corinthians, 15:52.

635 Schelling, Philosophy and Religion, P. 16.
To Schellingian genealogy and perennialist doctrine, “[w]hat is living in the highest science can only be what is primordially living, the being that is preceded by no other and is therefore the oldest of all beings”\(^\text{636}\) – the non-human life of life. Schelling insists that while discursive reason can conceive of and move toward the irreducible life of life, negative philosophy cannot confirm its existence because that which is is more primordial than analytic thought – from this vantage, it might also be said that existence precedes the conscious recognition of essence and, accordingly, the heroic anagogic traveler must undertake an initiatic journey of self-discovery to bring into cognitive clarity that which he already is. Negative discursive philosophy, because it is arises within, is subject to and is co-extensive with the human condition, cannot attain to the sacred wisdom of non-human origin. Anticipating Cassirer, who avers that “reality seems to recede in proportion as man’s symbolic activity advances,”\(^\text{637}\) we read from Schelling that “the real world is no longer the living word, the speech of God himself, but rather only the spoken – or expended – word.”\(^\text{638}\) So, the constructed unity of discursive reasoning is but a pretense of the living reality, a pretense that the anagogic traveler must overcome to attain to the living word of that which is.

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

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\(^{636}\) Ibid., P. 75.

\(^{637}\) Cassirer, An Essay on Man, P. 25.

\(^{638}\) Schelling, Philosophy of Art, P. 101.
negative philosophy culminates in epistemic collapse; this collapse, in turn, occasions *aporia*,
which, as a chaotic irruption comparable to the undifferentiated simplicity of the originary *prima
materia*, places the anagogic traveler in an *unheimlich* dislocation and, in so doing, opens him to
spiritual awakening by the vibration of *fiat lux* and makes him susceptible to spiritual influences.
Prompted to a wisdom originating outside the self, the paladin anagogic traveler, desirous of
epistemic completion, is receptive to the call to “deny himself and take up his cross”639 in
contemplative *askesis* and orison so as to be “reborn” in a positive encounter with *that which is*
in intellectual intuition – that originary state transcendent to ordinary consciousness. As mystics
everywhere tell us, the “*mysterium tremendum et fascinans* will not be ‘known of the heart’ until
we acknowledge that it is ‘unknown of the intellect.’”640 The liminal primordial state, we are told
by perennialism, is “situated in the plane that separates it into its upper and lower halves, that is,
at the limit between Heaven and Earth.”641 Accordingly, to attain to this liminal state, the
anagogic traveler must first traverse the terrestrial realm to attain to the lesser mysteries; to the
ontological hierarchy articulated by traditionalist philosophy, “the heavens are the superior states
of being; the hells, as the name indicates, are the inferior states.”642 For this reason,
contemplative tradition envisions the anagogic path to the primordial state as attained by descent
through all states of existence prior to the wayfarer’s current state; in keeping with traditionalist
thought and consistently with Schelling’s reliance on the pre-existing contemplative archetype,
this paper has likewise read Schellingian intellectual intuition as the anagogic vehicle to the
primordial state. Perennialist doctrine tells us that this spiritual descent is accomplished by the

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641 Guénon, *The King of the World*, P. 71, nt. 16.
anagogic traveler, who, in unifying the powers of his being through theurgic self-recollection, *gnosis, askesis* and detachment from the concerns of the world, attains to a spiritual poverty and so becomes simple as a child. As the Gospels tell us, “[t]ruly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.” The anagogic traveler, once purified of being and attained of spiritual simplicity, may dislocate from the ordinary plane of consciousness and, for the span of a lighting flash, temporarily inhabit the primordial state of Osiris *redivivus* – the originary world egg which is the embryonic state containing all cosmic and ontological possibilities. Akin to the ontological demands within contemplative *askesis* and orison, the anagogic traveler to the Dionysian noetic realm is obliged to overcome the world through introversion whereby his scattered normative commitments are recollected, his ego mortified, the surface of his mind is stilled and he is given in entirety to an orison of internal silence. In so surrendering self-centeredness (I-ness) to an *ekstasis* beyond being, the uncommon anagogic traveler, if of sufficiently sensitive, subtle and courageous spirit, is transformed into glory (spirit) and activated by the hieratic virtues of the *vita contemplative* – a life of religiosity that re-aligns his ontological commitments around a new spiritual *axis*

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643 Guénon, Insights into Islamic Esoterism & Taoism, P. 19.
644 We might remember Socrates description of the primordial state of purity: “But those who are judged to have lived a life of surpassing holiness – these are those who are released and set free from confinement in these regions of the earth, and passing upward to their pure abode, make their dwelling upon earth’s surface. And of these such as have purified themselves sufficiently by philosophy live thereafter altogether without bodies, and reach habitations even more beautiful, which it is not easy to portray” [Plato, *Phaedo* 114:c].
646 Muhammad is miraculously carried from Mecca to Jerusalem by Baraq. The name of this mythical beast derives from the Arabic word baraga, “to flash” (in the sense of a flash of lightening)” [Uždavinys, Ascent to Heaven in Islamic and Jewish Mysticism, P. 22].
647 See, for example, Marie-Louise von Franz, Creation Myths, Erich Neumann, The Origins and History of Consciousness, and Rene Guénon, The King of the World, P. 69, nt. 9.
648 The reader is asked to remember that, for Schelling, being and discursive reason are one and the same.
649 Etymologically, transformation entails “‘passing beyond form’ and hence all that belongs to the order of individual existence” [Guenon, The Symbolism of the Cross, P. 15].
mundi, the intellectual intuition of thatness, which, as the transcendent cause of cosmological existence, grounds being in non-being and is the way of freedom and peace.

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

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650 “At the center-point of the [heroic] journey there occurs an atonement with the Father, a recognition that power lies outside of himself, and an abandonment of attachment to the ego. As Campbell as written, ‘One must have faith that the father is merciful, and then a reliance on that mercy’” [Father Roger Joslin, Sermon 1-22-17].
651 Forman, P. 118.
and Heideggerian reading of this aspect of Schellingian intellectual intuition, the new and resolute manner in which the adept gears into his life *a posteriori* is testimony of his holy intellectual intuition *a priori*.

The Orphic wayfarer in noetic reversion to the Dionysian monad in intellectual intuition, which as the liminal threshold between heaven and earth, answers the governing Schellingian riddle of the world as mediator between the greatest and the least; indeed, as read by this paper, Schellingian intellectual intuition is the central link within the Hermaic chain between transcendence and immanence and, as such, may be likened to the ternary Sephirothic tree in which, as Heraclitus elsewhere tells us, "the way up and the way down is one and the same." “Proceeding from the unconscious existence of the eternal, science guides it up to the highest transfiguration and into divine consciousness. The most supersensible thoughts now receive physical power and life and, vice versa, nature becomes ever more the visible imprint of the highest concepts.”

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

652 The Sephirothic tree synthesizes the “tree of life” and the “tree of knowledge of good and evil.” In essence, the Sephirothic tree may be said to “depict the process of universal manifestation: everything starts from unity and returns to unity; in the interim there is duality, the division or differentiation from which manifested existence results; the ideas of unity and duality are thus combined here” [Guenon, *The Symbolism of the Cross*, P. 58, ft. 21].
653 Hyland, P. 165.
655 As Pico Iyer suggests in the forward of his lovely and whimsical, *The Year of the Hare*, “[t]here is a sense in which he has thrown his arms around impermanence now, a freedom from routine, and can cheerfully become one with the events that whiz by as zanily as in some animated or graphic novel” [Paasilinna, P. x].
upon his return to the world, he is “one who knows” that all of manifested reality is one and bound together in love; the anagogic traveler, illuminated by the salvific *epopteia* of this lesser mystery, sees the world as if transformed – to his newly spiritual eye, the world is transformed into a hierophany of the *life of life*; the world is the indifferent self-realization of the divine, “which *Spinoza* aptly expressed with the following sentence: ‘*God loves Himself with infinite intellectual love.*’” If he is of rare spiritual gifts and bold and persistent of character, our traveler might continue on his anagogic way and successfully ascend to the celestial mysteries (otherwise known to the Hellenic sacred teachings as the “greater mysteries”); there, the anagogic traveler attains to noetic perfection amid transformation into the unmodified and primordial *life of life*, true being, which, as the simultaneity of all states of being, is the *will that wills nothing* – the absolute freedom of the *prima materia* of all *that which is*; the perfected adept, assimilates in spiritual *henosis* with the sap of life and, in so doing, becomes the *life of life*. So, to the reading of this paper, Schellingian intellectual intuition, understood as noetic perfection, assuredly does not dissolve into a sentimental glorification of a lost undifferentiated and primordial Edenic origin, but, in the anagogic identification with the *life of life* as the *fons et origio* of all that which was, is and will be, points toward life as continual overcoming and being as ever-present natality: in the words of the *Zohar*, “the world that is coming – coming

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657 There is great consolation in myth and related tales. As we may read from Tolkien, “[b]ut in God’s kingdom the presence of the greatest does not depress the small. Redeemed Man is still man . . . [t]he Christian has still to work, with mind as well as body, to suffer, hope, and die; but he may now perceive that all his bents and faculties have a purpose, which can be redeemed. So great is the bounty with which he has been treated that he may now, perhaps, fairly dare to guess that in fantasy he may actually assist in the exfoliation and multiple enrichment of creation. All tales may come true; and yet, in the last, redeemed, they may be as like and as unlike the forms what we give them as Man, finally redeemed, will be like and unlike the fallen that we know” [Tolkien, P. 73].
659 Bowie, P. 179.
660 Ibid.
constantly and never ceasing.”661 And so Schelling insists that in unitive consciousness with the supreme principle, the adept, as mediator between heaven and earth, “regain[s] a clear view”662 of that which is in intellectual intuition, “summon[s] up fresh power”663 and, in liberating the creative force664 and productive imagination (Einzahlungskraft) of the life of life, manifests the formation of the world in his re-descent and participates as co-creator665 in the continual cosmological and ontological renewal of the world. The anagogic traveler is “‘the source of life’ flowing into itself.”666 Indeed, in henosis with the supreme principle of the will that wills nothing, the un-begotten, indestructible, undifferentiated and inexhaustible life of life, the perfected adept, figuratively reposed at the center of the cosmic wheel,667 is soteriologically delivered from the comings and goings of the phenomenal world and, so redeemed, becomes the clear mirror668 of the equanimity, absolute freedom and expansive love of the life of life.

Attained to the noetic perfection of the celestial Jerusalem,669 this paper reads Schelling to claim that the transformed adept is revealed to be what he already was in his innermost beginnings –

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661 Matt, The Zohar, 3:290b.
662 Tolkien, P. 57. It might otherwise be said that the adept gains a “sense of eternity” [Guenon, The Symbolism of the Cross, P. 146].
664 Wirth, Schelling Now, P. 17.
665 Nauen tries to make the case that, for Schelling, the free man, similar to an artist, is he who works to make concrete that which he “sees” in intellectual intuition (Einbildungskraft).
666 Pseudo-Dionysius, P. 281.
667 And, as Guénon tell us, “the ideal . . . consists of the indifference [or rather the detachment in activity that is non-action] of the superior man who allows the cosmic wheel to turn” [Guenon, The King of the World, P. 60].
668 He “leaves the world of illusions for the world of Reality and when his journey is complete he becomes himself the mirror in which Truth and its cosmic manifestation is reflected [Uždavinys, Ascent to Heaven in Islamic and Jewish Mysticism, P. 112]. We read also from Schelling, “[w]e demand for every single thing a particular and free life” [Schelling, The Philosophy of Art, P. 37].
669 “In the case of the Celestial Jerusalem, the circle is replaced by a square, indicating accomplishment of what the Hermeticists designated symbolically as the ‘squaring the circle’: the sphere, representing the development of possibilities through the expansion of the primordial central point, is transformed into a cube when this development is completed and the final equilibrium for the cycle under consideration is attained” [see Guénon, The King of the World, P. 71 and see Guénon, The Reign of Quantity & the Signs of the Times, P. 141]. “Now the form of the ‘Terrestrial Paradise,’ corresponding to the beginning of the cycle, is circular, whereas that of the ‘Heavenly Jerusalem,’ corresponding to the end, is square” [Guénon, The Reign of Quantity & the Signs of the Times, P. 141].
the inexhaustible, indestructible and non-human *life of life*; as such, Schelling might claim that the adept is aptly and succinctly described by these words from the *Gospel of Thomas*:

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

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


