

Symphilosophie

International Journal of Philosophical Romanticism

“Introduction” to *Transcendental Philosophy* (1800-1801)

Part II

Friedrich Schlegel

Translated, introduced, and annotated by Joseph Carew*

The translation that follows is the second half of Friedrich Schlegel’s Introduction to *Transcendental Philosophy*, a lecture course that he gave in Jena between 1800-1801.¹ A translation of the first half was previously published in last year’s issue of *Symphilosophie*.² Both installments are part of a project of translating the lectures for the first time in English. Here, in the second half of the Introduction, Schlegel continues the task that he previously sets forth: the development of a distinctively post-Kantian philosophy capable of reconciling the conflicting priorities and interests of metaphysical realism and transcendental idealism—that is to say, the seemingly mutually incompatible systems of Spinoza and Fichte.³

* Instructor, Department of Philosophy, University of the Fraser Valley, Building D, Room D3095, 33844 King Road, Abbotsford, British Columbia V2S 7M8 – jstephencarew@gmail.com

¹ Friedrich Schlegel, *Transcendentalphilosophie*, in *Friedrich Schlegel – Kritische Ausgabe seiner Werke*, ed. Ernst Behler, Jean Jacques Anstett, and Hans Heichner (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1958–), 12: 1-105. The pagination in the body of the translation refers to the critical edition. Each page break is marked by “|.” In notes, the lectures are cited as *Transcendental Philosophy* followed by the pagination.

² Friedrich Schlegel, “‘Introduction’ to *Transcendental Philosophy* (1800-1801): Excerpt,” trans. Joseph Carew, *Symphilosophie* 4 (2022): 451-468.

³ For a breakdown of the historical context surrounding the lectures, including the history of the transcript itself, and their relevance to early German Romanticism and German Idealism, see my Introduction to the previous installment.

The first half of the Introduction broaches the metaphysical and epistemological themes that shall occupy Schlegel, the tropes of early German Romanticism (*Frühromantik*): our consciousness of the absolute; our yearning for it; the relativity of truth; the symbolic nature of knowledge; and the infinity of philosophy—to name but a few. The first half also gives us a taste of the new constructive method that he shall be applying to explore them—one that, taking inspiration from physics and mathematics,⁴ cannot help but recall to mind the efforts of rationalism⁵ and which seem, at least on the surface, quite far from the aphoristic character of the philosophical writings and the suggestive character of the literary achievements that the Romantic movement has become known for. However, although the first half broaches many of the prototypical metaphysical and epistemological themes of early German Romanticism, and furthermore already puts on display Schlegel’s distinctive spin on them, it is in the second that we start to see, in detail, the intentions, ambitions, and originality of the lectures as a truly systematic work that comprises metaphysics, epistemology, moral and political philosophy, and philosophy of religion.

Schlegel’s intentions and ambitions are clear from the very outset of the second half of the Introduction where he discusses the relationship of consciousness and the infinite, namely, the absolute. Schlegel reiterates and expands on the claim advanced in the first half, where it is expressed largely in the register of *Naturphilosophie*, that there is no question of the two being related externally but also adds a pivotal and trailblazing twist. The reconciliation of Spinoza and Fichte is not to come about, so he wagers, by fully committing oneself to the position of transcendental idealism, single-mindedly concerned with consciousness as it is, and thereby contending that the absolute is constitutively out of our cognitive grasp (at which point there would, of course, be no need to reconcile them at all, it being impossible to do so). Nor is it to come about by simply finding some way to bypass Kant’s Copernican revolution so that we may reaffirm a full commitment to the position of classical metaphysics, which abstracts entirely from consciousness so as to move beyond it and catch hold of the absolute in itself. To use Schlegel’s language in the lectures, what we have to seek is, quite to the contrary, the midpoint of the two positions, a new position that he dubs

⁴ “Hence, the *method* according to which we will proceed will be the method of *physics* or *mathematics*.” *Transcendental Philosophy*, 3.

⁵ Cf. Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics*, in *A Spinoza Reader: The Ethics and Other Writings*, ed. and trans. Edwin Curley (Princeton: Princeton University Press), I, Appendix.

“divination.”⁶ This is because, for Schlegel, if the absolute has given rise to us, then our consciousness has to be internal to it—but that requires, in turn, that we revise our conceptions of both consciousness and the absolute, that is, of the human being, nature, and how they relate to one another. Here’s where the aforementioned twist, which will have far-reaching, fateful consequences for Schlegel’s project as well as for the history of philosophy, comes in—a twist that has an anthropological and theological dimension.

Let’s start from the human side. If consciousness is part and parcel of the absolute—neither some epiphenomenon nor some ontological nullity—then, so goes Schlegel’s argument, this forces us to radically rethink what it is to be human. First of all, this entails that the absolute has gone through a long, long journey, a lengthy cosmic development, in order to reach the point of becoming conscious in and through us. But consciousness does not (how could it?) come out of the womb of nature fully formed. Put metaphorically, when the first human being opens its eyes, the absolute does not simply then, at that very same moment, gain self-awareness. Consciousness has to have a history—an education (*Bildung*)—as it, too, goes through a long, long journey of its own, slowly elevating itself above the throes of a merely animal existence, gaining new types of knowledge as it grows, eventually getting to the standpoint of reason. Interestingly, Schlegel does not end the journey of consciousness here. Schlegel’s history of consciousness is not the odyssey of spirit as it returns to itself, finally discovering that it is reason itself, rationality incarnate.⁷ Schlegel is not Hegel, even though his *Transcendental Philosophy* plainly anticipates Hegel’s own 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit*. (Hegel may have attended Schlegel’s lectures, though no one knows for sure.) The last epoch of the history of consciousness for Schlegel is therefore not the epoch of reason, the era of modernity in other words, but the epoch of the understanding, by which he means the coming into existence of “a conscious universe,” something that he relates back to the ancient conception of a cosmic *nous*.⁸

To make the same point in Hegelian parlance, Schlegel’s account of the odyssey of spirit is the odyssey of spirit returning to the absolute, finding its home within it. While the second half of the Introduction does not go into concrete details about what this entails for us, both as individuals and communities, nor for morality and politics, Schlegel does make explicit that

⁶ *Transcendental Philosophy*, 26.

⁷ I am borrowing the phrase “the odyssey of spirit” from the subtitle of the second volume of Harris’ monumental commentary on the *Phenomenology*. See H. S. Harris, *Hegel’s Ladder* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1997), 2 vols.

⁸ *Transcendental Philosophy*, 13n12.

these considerations fundamentally change the vocation of the human being (*die Bestimmung des Menschen*).⁹ They provide us with a new Romantic imperative. In 1797, Schlegel formulates the latter in the following terms: “The Romantic imperative demands the blending of all poetic forms. All nature and science should become art—art should become nature and science.”¹⁰ But now it runs, to expand on what Schlegel says below, thus: *we should, by casting ourselves into the absolute, and in an infinite, never-ending process, live our lives such that we destine ourselves to be a self-expression of the absolute.*¹¹ But that implies, at the same time, that the journey of consciousness is also the journey of the absolute, its own education as it were. The absolute can only fully become itself in and through the consciousness of itself—a consciousness of the universe (in both the subjective and objective genitive) that plays out in philosophy, the sciences, and the arts, as Schlegel here makes clear,¹² but will also play out in morality, political institutions, and religion. As Schlegel puts it, quite strikingly, what is at stake in this process is nothing other than *the realization of the divine*,¹³ indeed its very self-realization, itself an infinite task, that we have been gifted to play a major role in.

So, it goes without saying that the metaphysical stakes become quite high in the second half of the Introduction. But they also have stark epistemological ramifications for the age of idealist system building. Schlegel is, we shall recall, taking inspiration from the constructive method of physics and mathematics, which is already evident in the first half. But now his appeal takes a new and decisive direction. To say that consciousness and the absolute are intimately connected is to say that their identical journey—the journey from the infinite to the finite and the finite to the infinite—is what constitutes nature. As such, “the one and only science is,” as Schlegel argues, “natural science.”¹⁴ The approach that he mobilizes to penetrate nature even leads, so he claims, to a system that is “a scientific whole” and “complete in itself.”¹⁵ Nevertheless, that system, even if self-subsistent and self-contained in a sense, is also open. This is not only due to the fact that the system, the building blocks of which are problems, theorems, axioms, and constructions, is only ever an approximation (*Approximation*) of a truth that constitutively exceeds it. It is also due to the fact that nature is, by definition, open-ended. This is a point worth tarrying with.

⁹ *Transcendental Philosophy*, Addendum, 20.

¹⁰ KA, 16: 134, no. 586.

¹¹ *Transcendental Philosophy*, 20.

¹² *Transcendental Philosophy*, 17.

¹³ *Transcendental Philosophy*, 21, 25.

¹⁴ *Transcendental Philosophy*, Addendum, 21n8.

¹⁵ *Transcendental Philosophy*, 18.

Nature, as a realization of the divine in which we, like all things, participate, is unfinished, Schlegel maintains. As he puts it later in the First Part of his *Transcendental Philosophy*, “The Theory of the World,” “*the world is still incomplete* [...] This proposition [...] is extraordinarily important for everything. If we think of the world as complete, then all of our doings are for naught. However, if we know that the world is incomplete, then it is certainly our vocation to work together on its completion.”¹⁶ As a result, the relationship between nature and history—that is to say, *its* history and *our* history since there is no fundamental difference between the two, a history that is *still in progress* with no guaranteed outcome—becomes center stage in Schlegel’s system. This puts a great cosmic responsibility on our hands, stressing our profound duty towards nature. It also indicates a historical rupture *in media res*, even if Schlegel and his audience could not have been aware of it. Sometimes people refer to Kierkegaard as the paradigmatic case of so-called “post-idealist thought.” After all, he does expressly argue for the impossibility of a system of existence insofar as existence is always in becoming.¹⁷ It has as well become commonplace to refer to Schelling, once the idealist system builder *par excellence*, as the philosopher who caused idealist system building to fissure in his development of positive philosophy.¹⁸ However, we already see here, some 40 years prior to Kierkegaard and almost 30 years before Schelling’s creation of positive philosophy, traces of that fissure in Schlegel’s lecture course. All of this just goes to prove the depth of the originality of Schlegel’s *Transcendental Philosophy*—not just as a moment, perhaps short-lived, in Schlegel’s own philosophical development, as he would soon convert to Catholicism and leave behind much of his Romanticism, or in the history of German Idealism or the history of continental philosophy, but as a unique and compelling system in its own right.

¹⁶ *Transcendental Philosophy*, 42.

¹⁷ “When existence is a thing of the past, it is indeed finished, it is indeed concluded, and to that extent it is turned over to the systematic view. Quite so—but for whom? Whoever is himself existing cannot gain this conclusiveness outside existence.” Søren Kierkegaard, *Journal JJ*, in *Kierkegaard’s Journals and Notebooks*, ed. Niels Jörgen Cappelørn et. al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007-2020), 2: 118-119.

¹⁸ Cf. Walter Schulz, *Die Vollendung des deutschen Idealismus in der Spätphilosophie Schellings* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1954).

Transcendental Philosophy

Friedrich Schlegel

Introduction (Part II)

ADDENDUM CONCERNING THE ELEMENTS OF PHILOSOPHY: *CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE INFINITE.*^{1,2}

| 20

The two elements “consciousness” and “the infinite” can once again be split up into their elements. We take what is given to us—we take, therefore, the *one, positive factor*—and search for *the negative factor* through the opposite.

Concerning the infinite, nothing is more familiar to us than *the undetermined*.

Of the infinite nothing is known to us but *the undetermined*—this is, therefore, the *positive* element. Its opposite is “the determined,” and this is the negative element of the infinite. The formula for this could be a *definition* of the infinite,³ namely, “The infinite is a product of the undetermined and the determined.” A proof for this is not needed, but an explanation is. *If the undetermined is to become actual, then it must go out of itself, and determine itself.* (In application, this could mean that *the divine had created the world in order to present itself.*)

The negative element or *consciousness* consists, once again, of the two elements “I” and “not-I.”

Here we can provide no definition, but we can provide a *deduction*. It goes like this: *the determined keeps on determining itself until it, in determining itself, can destine itself to be the undetermined;*⁴ in this manner, the I arises. The

¹ *Transcriber’s Note:* *The infinite* is the positive element, and *consciousness* the negative.

² The transcript of the lectures places the addendum here, just before Schlegel’s outline of the history of consciousness. The critical edition of Schlegel’s works, however, places it in the middle of his discussion of method below where a reference is made to it in the body of the transcript (see below, *Transcendental Philosophy*, 20). In so doing, it not only changes the original pagination of the transcript but also relegates the addendum to a mere footnote. Given both these considerations, I have chosen to put the addendum back where it originally was.

³ *Transcriber’s Note:* As the positive element, the infinite has to be *defined*; it cannot be *deduced*—in any case, deducing presupposes something.

⁴ *sich zum Unbestimmen bestimmt.* In this context, “*bestimmen*” carries the meaning not only of “to determine” but also of “to destine.” See footnote 5.

vocation of the human being, its determination,⁵ could also accordingly be expressed in the following manner: *the human being shall, by casting itself into the undetermined, determine itself indefinitely⁶ and, in determining itself, shall destine itself to be the undetermined.*

(The different stages of consciousness are the epochs of the return to the undetermined.)

The concept of consciousness that is in the deduction is objective. It makes consciousness intelligible to us even outside of it.

| 21

Now, if we connect the middle term of the two elements, “reality,” with the elements that have been derived, then we obtain the following: *real is the determined in the I and the undetermined in the not-I.* Put differently, this means that *real is the freedom present in nature and the necessity present in the human being.*

The formulas for what we have just stated are: $I = \text{not-I}$, and $a = x$. *And the synthesis: $a = I$. ($x = \text{not-I}$ is the formula for all non-philosophy.)⁷*

Here is what follows from the synthesis: *the freedom present in nature is equal to the necessity present in the human being.*

If we attach the predicate of the infinite to consciousness, or connect consciousness and the infinite, then what arises for us is what we call “thinking.”

If we connect *reality* with *thinking*, and then on top of that connect thinking with consciousness, then we obtain a type of *knowledge*. The latter is a real thinking with consciousness. By contrast, *the infinite being connected with*

⁵ *Die Bestimmung des Menschen*. This fixed phrase is highly significant. It is a slogan for a common constellation of philosophical questions and concerns in the German Enlightenment that address the essence of the human being (its core “determination”) and its intrinsic purpose (its “destiny” or “calling”), playing on the different connotations of “*Bestimmung*.” The phrase first occurs in the title of a short pamphlet by Spalding in 1748, which then undergoes multiple editions in the decades to come. It also subsequently occurs in Fichte’s book of popular philosophy in 1800 of the same name. For these texts, see Johann Joachim Spalding, *Die Bestimmung des Menschen. Die Erstausgabe 1748 und die letzte Auflage von 1794*, ed. Wolfgang Erich Müller (Waltrop: Spenner 1997) and Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *The Vocation of Man*, ed. and trans. Roderick M. Chisholm (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1956); *J. G. Fichte-Gesamtausgabe der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, ed. Reinhard Lauth, Walter Jacobs, Hans Gliwitzky, and Erich Fuchs (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1962–2012), I/6. For a discussion of both and related texts in the context of post-Kantian philosophy, see George di Giovanni, *Freedom and Religion in Kant and His Immediate Successors: The Vocation of Humankind, 1774–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) and Anne Pollok and Courtney D. Fugate, eds., *The Human Vocation in German Philosophy* (Bloomsbury, 2023). The latter contains an English translation of the first edition of Spalding’s pamphlet.

⁶ *ins Unbestimmte*. This can signify both “into the undetermined” and “indefinitely.”

⁷ *Transcriber’s Note*: Synthesis is the best term for this reversal of the poles. The synthesis is: *there is no not-I except the infinite*; and *there is nothing determined for the infinite except consciousness*. The formula for reflection is “ $I = \text{not-I}$.” For speculation, however $a = x$.

consciousness gives us *the pure concept of the divine*. If we once again connect this with reality, then—*nature* arises. Facing thinking stands the divine, and facing knowledge nature. Hence, the proposition “One can only think the divine, but one cannot know it; and one can know nothing except nature.”⁸

Nature is the middle term between *reality* and *the divine*. Its infinite task is that of *realizing the divine*.

[THE HISTORY OF CONSCIOUSNESS:
EPOCHS OF ERROR.]

| 11

Epoch I.

Consciousness at the simplest or lowest position of honor.⁹

Sensation.

If you were to divide sensation, as a phenomenon, into its factors (elements), then the positive factor (or element) would be *desire*, the negative element *anger*, and the point of indifference *fear*.

Infinite progressions take the midpoint as their starting point. The minimum is *envy*, the maximum *wonder*.

Wonder is the root of the *feeling of the sublime*.¹⁰ It can be something very crude, stupid. And I am rather sure that all *striving toward the ideal* takes envy as its starting point.

These passions, affects, or *sensations* that we come across in the first epoch give rise to error, mind you. (They concern merely an individual.) This epoch is, accordingly, an *epoch of error*. The error is—and herein lies the character of the epoch—that one entirely underestimates¹¹ individuals. The categories of causality, quality, and quantity, appear real.

| 12

Epoch II.

Intuition.

This, too, is an *epoch of error*. The distinguishing feature of the error of this epoch is *that one mixes up different spheres*.

⁸ *Transcriber's Note*: Hence, the one and only science is natural science.

⁹ *Dignität*.

¹⁰ Schlegel is playing on a claim, first advanced by Plato in the *Theaetetus* (155d) and then again by Aristotle in the *Metaphysics* (982b), that philosophy begins in the experience of wonder (θαυμάζειν, *thaumazo*).

¹¹ *verkennt*.

Epoch III.

Representation.

Here, too, only errors are committed. *One thinks in a merely formulaic way, without reality.* This epoch is, however, the site of the surface appearance of the understanding. Error is already entirely theoretical.

Now, this epoch, *the last epoch of error*, coincides with the 1st *epoch of truth*, which comes next.

EPOCHS OF TRUTH.

Epoch I.

Insight.

This epoch is the transition to truth. Hence, it could therefore also be described as the “epoch of principles.”

It is through the amalgamation of the epoch of representation and the epoch of insight that *dogmatism* arises. It searches for reality in merely formulaic thinking. It only searches for principles.

There is, in the *epoch of insight*, still a high margin of error, but even so it is the transition to truth. Since this epoch is concerned with principles, it also strives toward a type of knowledge. The character of this epoch is *determinacy*.

| 13

Epoch II.

Reason.

This epoch of truth, the second one, is concerned with the *cognition of the infinite*. It is, therefore, the *epoch of ideas*.

What we come across in this epoch is positive truth. It is also *the epoch of cognition*.

Here, *idealism* is possible. The character of this epoch is *clarity*. In this epoch, error is still possible, but the error is merely a misunderstanding in that one, to wit, depicts anything that exists as “persisting” and dismisses *what is active*; or one accepts *only activity* and dismisses anything that is substantial.

It may seem that, with this epoch, the history of consciousness has come to a close; as consciousness reaches its highest stage, that’s just how it is, and, to this extent, this is the last epoch. But still, the whole has not yet come to a close with this epoch. Consciousness has to return to itself once again, and

it can only then close its sphere. That's why there is yet another epoch that takes place. This is the

Epoch III.
*Of the understanding.*¹²

This epoch is a return of all epochs. It is here that we first comprehend the whole world, the whole, this being not yet the case in the epoch of reason. It is here that we first *interpret* everything. Hence, the character of this epoch is also *distinctness*.¹³

An essential feature of this epoch is that it is the epoch of the symbol.

Critique of idealism.

The fact that there is a history of human understanding follows from the deduction of consciousness. That is to say, consciousness is a return of the determined to the undetermined. The first epoch—*sensation*—is the epoch that is attached to animality. *The epoch of reason* is the highest epoch. But the circle has not yet come to a close with it. It is only with *the epoch of the understanding* that the circle is brought to a close; the latter is also the *highest* epoch.

Each epoch denotes a certain position of honor that consciousness occupies in its return to the undetermined. | 14

Sensation is a merely individual affair.¹⁴ Intuition is already becoming theoretical; abstraction is already occurring. [This] is even more so the case with representation. In general, the following is something to note: error becomes increasingly theoretical, just as much as truth becomes increasingly practical.

The epoch of insight takes, as its starting point, the phenomenon, and strives toward a type of knowledge. Now, since it takes the phenomenon as its starting point, it assumes that the categories of “causality,” “quality,” and “quantity” are real—precisely because it takes, as its starting point, the finite.

¹² *Transcriber's Note:* The understanding is the *highest consummation of the mental and intellectual faculty* [*geistigen und denkenden Vermögens*], that which the ancients used the term “νοῦς” (*nous*) to express. The understanding is a universally embracing [*universelles*] consciousness, or a conscious universe, or something of the like.

¹³ *Deutlichkeit.* To note is that Descartes's notion of clarity and distinctness is translated into German as “*Klarheit*” and “*Deutlichkeit*.” It is related, etymologically, to the word “to interpret” (*deuten*).

¹⁴ *individuell.*

But, in the end, it realizes that it has taken something false as its starting point, and, in this manner, the error is annihilated.

Striving toward some kind of knowledge is a *universal dualism*.

Dualism concerns some kind of knowledge, whereas realism¹⁵ wishes to have truth.

Dualism only deals with the *empirical approach*; realism, in contrast, only deals with *theory*. Its character is *identity*, just as the character of dualism is *duplexity*. There exist, in *dualism*, only *two activities*, and no substance. The only thing to be found in *realism* is a *single, indivisible substance*. Now, dualism and realism are *the two elements of idealism*. Dualism is the *negative element*, realism the *positive element*. What actually stands in opposition to *idealism*¹⁶ is *dogmatism*.¹⁷ It arises when the *epoch of insight* does not begin in the spirit of truth. That which is just the negative is taken for the one and only thing that is real, and what is truly real is not taken into account. Now, dogmatism is concerned with searching for principles. For it, the categories come forward as real. It, too, can be brought to a higher stage.

Dogmatism—since, in its view, principles are what is highest—can indeed unify these principles and subordinate them to one principle *qua highest* and *ultimate*, but it also can adopt multiple principles as first principles just as consistently; and that being so, we see how *dogmatism* borders on *mysticism*. That is to say, mysticism believes that multiple principles have been

| 15

¹⁵ *Transcriber's Note*: Here, there is no question of this being some type of empirical realism. This realism is entirely transcendent. It deals with *one indivisible whole*, the *infinite*. When it appears in isolation, realism can only be absolute skepticism. It has no core meaning [*Gehalt*], no content, at all because it is something absolutely positive; its form could be nothing but absolutely indirect or negative.

¹⁶ *Transcriber's Note*: Idealism will always clash with dogmatism because dogmatism often impinges on idealism. As for the ranks of the dogmatists, one can take Jacobi and Kant as representatives of its system.

¹⁷ Schlegel is intervening in a then-ongoing discussion about dogmatism vs. criticism, herein “criticism” is synonymous with “transcendental idealism,” as the two main systems of philosophy. The distinction was first introduced by Kant in *The Critique of Pure Reason*. According to Fichte in the First and Second Introduction to *An Attempt at a New Presentation of the Doctrine of Science (Wissenschaftslehre)*, these are the only two logically consistent systems. Schelling, too, weighed in on the battle in his *Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism*. See Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. and trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 117; *Kant's gesammelte Schriften*, ed. The Royal Prussian (later German) Academy of the Sciences (Berlin: Georg Reimer, later Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1900-), 3: B xxx; Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Introductions to the Wissenschaftslehre and Other Writings (1797-1800)*, ed. and trans. Daniel Breazeale (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1994); *GA*, I/4. Friedrich Wilhelm Schelling, *Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism*, in *The Unconditional in Human Knowledge: Four Early Essays (1794-1796)*, trans. Fritz Marti (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1980; *Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schellings sämtliche Werke*, ed. K.F.A. Schelling (Stuttgart: J.G. Cotta, 1856-61), 1.

revealed to it as originary principles. However, it is quite easy to realize that the presupposition of multiple principles kills all method.

The elements of dogmatism are empiricism and egoism.

Dualism refers to the *empirical approach*. *Realism* is concerned with *theory*.¹⁸ They relate to one another like the spirit and the letter.

Now, if one connects dualism and theory, then the outcome is a science that does not take phenomena but rather the elements as its starting point. This is *mathematics*. The latter is, as it were, a type of *a priori dualism*.

Mathematics is supposed to take *elements* as its starting point, and everything else has to be produced from them. The elements for geometry would be the point (.) and the straight line (—). The elements for arithmetic would be 1 and 0.

If one, however, connects *realism* and *the empirical approach*, then the science that is the outcome of this operation has to be the science that is the furthest removed from mathematics; this will be *historiography*.¹⁹ It is a type of *empirical realism*. Since, however, realism here is transcendent, then this *historiography* will only deal with *what is absolutely empirical*. It only refers to ὄντως ὄντα (*ontos onta*, real beings or what is truly real).²⁰

Dualism is concerned with *elements*, *realism* with *substance*. The character of dualism is *duplexity*. The character of realism is *identity*.²¹

If one connects once again the *elements* and *identity*, so that therefore the two activities have to be made identical, have to be integrated into one, then the outcome is what is called a “sphere.”

If one connects, however, *substance* and *duplexity*, then the outcome is the *individual*.

Realism is concerned with substance or *persistence*, dualism with elements or *changeability*.²² Now, if one connects the *sphere* with *persistence*,

¹⁸ *Transcriber's Note:*

dualism — realism
 empiricism — theory

¹⁹ *Historie.*

²⁰ This phrase is used by Plato to make a distinction between ultimate reality and what comes and ceases—that is to say, between the unchanging, eternal world of Forms and the changeable, temporal world discovered by the senses. The phrase originates from the *Phaedrus* (247e).

²¹ *Transcriber's Note:*

elements — substance
 duplexity — identity

²² *Transcriber's Note:*

| 16

then the outcome is what one understands by a “schema.” However, the individual connected with *changeability* gives us *education* or a *becoming*. *Schemas* are the products of *mathematics*. Education is the content of all *history*. The *condition of history* is an *ideal*; the latter is what it refers to.

The condition of mathematics is a *symbol*. (Those four elements of mathematics [that I just mentioned] are symbols.)

Mathematics and *history* are now to be reconsidered as two elements the point of indifference of which is *physics*.

Physics lies between mathematics and history. It will therefore be possible to find evidence in physics for what we discover in mathematics and history.

The *features of mathematics* are *schemas*, its *conditions—symbols*. *What it deals with* are: *spheres*. *Its method* is—*constructing*.

History.

Its *features* are: *education*.

The condition: *the ideal*.

What it deals with: *the individual*.

The method: *characterizing*.

Now, if one connects *schema* and *individual*, then the outcome is a *phenomenon*. But connecting *education* and *sphere* gives us *epochs* (periods).

Furthermore, if you connect *the ideal* and *constructing*, then you obtain a type of *approximating constructing* or *experimenting*.

And if one draws yet another connection between *symbol* and *characterizing*, then what we subsequently get is a type of *interpreting*.²³

Now, all these concepts are applicable to *physics*.

It is easy to realize from the foregoing that physics is ranked the highest among the sciences since it is the point of indifference of mathematics and history, just as idealism lies in the point of indifference of dualism and realism, and mathematics and history are derived from dualism and realism. What we have said earlier also follows from the foregoing, namely, that physics is the first of the sciences *because all science is natural science*.

sphere — the individual
changeability — persistence

²³ *Transcriber’s Note*: We therefore get:

schemata — education
spheres — the individual
symbol — the ideal
constructing — characterizing

If we had the desire to apply this scale of the sciences that we have derived to the *arts* as well, we would therefore have every reason to do so: *we are supposed to be constructing philosophy*, but this happens *by developing the consciousness of humanity*; now, however, the fine arts belong to consciousness, naturally.

But this application would put us here far afield. We will restrict ourselves to the following comment: *the visual arts* correspond to *dualism*, *music*, however, to *realism*.

The duplexity of the *visual arts* is: *sculpture* and *painting*.²⁴

In light of what has been previously said, one can see *the energy of idealism*. It towers above all *as the highest sum total of truth*, and extends to everything; everything is conditioned through it.

The sciences were derived from the elements of idealism. It seems as if *idealism* and *physics* coincide. How do they differ? Since all *reality* is a result of *consciousness* (as pure form) and of the *infinite*, so *consciousness* is to be regarded as the *negative* or *minimum* of reality; the infinite, by contrast, is the *positive* or *maximum* of reality.

Consciousness is the originary reflection on the infinite, a reflection that is, however, unconscious.

The perception of the minimum as the originary root of the universe (of the maximum) is *intellectual intuition*.

Now, the difference between idealism and physics is as follows:

The philosopher (idealism) deals with the minimum and the maximum, and physics deals with the finite terms that lie between reality and the elements in an infinite progression of proportions.

We took *consciousness* and the *infinite* as our starting points. We then sought the *subjective conditions* that are necessary in order to arrive at the consciousness of the infinite. These are things that we had to construct, and in so doing we came to *the history of human understanding*. All of this then

²⁴ *Transcriber's Note*: If one lumps together all the epochs of error—for instance, under the umbrella term “sensibility”—and if one synthetically posits them with idealism (or the highest sum total of truth), then one gets the concept of poesy. (This is how Fichte establishes the concept.)

resulted in a *critique of idealism*, and here we were led to an *encyclopedia of the sciences*.

| 18

Concerning method.

How does *method* differ from *system*? Method is the *spirit* and system is the *letter*.

System is the *organization of philosophy*, method its inner life force.

Philosophy is a mathematics of consciousness, a history of the cosmos, and a physics of the understanding (which one could call “logic”). *Method* and *system* refer to the physics of the understanding.

System. One can say nothing more about it than this: *it is a scientific whole that is complete in itself*. It is based on *matter* and *form*. *Principles and ideas are the matter of philosophy; form is its unity*, the negative factor of which is *harmony*, and the positive factor *consistency*.

Now, if one connects the negative factor of matter (ideas) and the negative factor of form (harmony), no feature of the system here ensues; the exact same thing is the case when one connects the two positive factors, *principles* and *consistency*. But if one connects the positive factor of the one and the negative feature of the other—for instance, connecting *consistency* and *idea* gives us what we are to understand by “symmetry.” The idea comprehends the whole, and consistency is concerned with a purpose. And *harmony* connected with *principles* gives us *continuity*.

Therefore, the continuity of principles and the symmetry of ideas are the characters of a system.

The principle that expresses the relationship of the whole to its parts and of parts to their whole is what one has to search for in art. It is this that is the architectonic. That is to say, there lies between *the visual arts* (*qua* negative element) and *music* (*qua* positive element) nothing else but *architecture*.

The system should present a whole of philosophy. The *method* should bring forth this whole.

To this end, we have, in order to bring forth the whole, *four elements* as well. That is to say, philosophy begins with *skepsis* and *enthusiasm*. Furthermore, there is a tendency in philosophy for it to be concerned with *the absolute* and with *reality*. Thus, *skepsis*, *enthusiasm*, *something absolute*, and *reality* are the four elements that the *method* of philosophy will emerge from for us. That is to say, if one connects *skepsis* and *reality*, then we obtain nothing other than what one understands by the term “experimenting.”

The *method* of philosophy is, therefore, first of all a type of *experimenting*, | 19
but what direction does it take? This is what we get as a result when we connect
the two other elements, *enthusiasm* and *something absolute*.

What we get as a result from this cannot be summed up in a single
word. It is the fact that: the *direction that the method takes is circular; to be more*
specific, it takes the center as its starting point, and refers back to the center.

Furthermore, we discovered these as elements of the method:

Analysis synthesis abstraction.

Now, if we transpose abstraction into analysis, then we acquire the
concept of “the discursive” (*raisonnement*). If we, by contrast, transpose
analysis into abstraction, then we get the concept “intuitive.” Now, let’s
connect these two concepts with the medial concept (synthesis). Thus, the
concept “discursive” connected with [the concept] “synthesis” gives us
reflection. And the concept “intuitive” connected with [the concept] “syn-
thesis” gives us *speculation*.²⁵ If one connects once again *reflection* and
speculation, then one gets *allegory*.

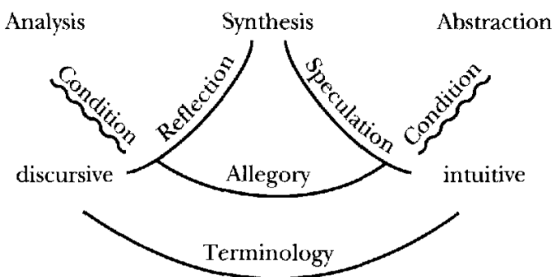
The matter of all speculation is the *ideal*. Reflection presupposes a
phenomenon. Allegory is the appearance of an ideal.

Reflection and speculation are the forms of all *thinking*; merely allegory,
therefore, issues from thinking.

Furthermore, if we connect *discursive* and *intuitive*, then we obtain
terminology. Here the task is *to render visible what is discursive*. (However, one
should not here think of “terminology” in terms of how we normally
understand the word. It denotes here concepts that contain, as it were, some
kind of contradiction. Take, for example, *intellectual intuition, transcendental*
standpoint, objective free will,²⁶ and so on.)

Now, if we look once again at abstraction, then the one character that
it has is *producing*. The other, opposing character is *demonstrating*. If we | 20
combine this once again with what we got earlier (refer to the example

²⁵ *Transcriber’s Note:*



Analysis is the condition of *reflection*, *abstraction* the condition of *speculation*.

²⁶ *Willkühr*.

[discussed in] the addendum). To be specific, we gave a *definition* of the *infinite*, and a *deduction of consciousness*.

Now, if we combine *producing* with *deducing*, then *constructing* is the medial concept.

(This is the method of *mathematics*.)

By contrast, if we combine *demonstrating* and *defining*, then *characterizing* is the medial concept. (This is the method of *history*.)

The method of physics is *experimenting*. (It arises by combining skepticism and reality). And in this manner, we are once again back where we started—thus, at our destination.

The character of the synthetic method is that it strives toward the midpoint.

| 21 The method of idealism is a type of *combinatory experimenting*; its direction is either *centripetal* or *centrifugal*, meaning that it moves towards the center and from the center.

(*Remark*: It would be better said if one called philosophy “experimental” or “central” philosophy than transcendental philosophy because doing so simultaneously takes its method into account; [and] since, moreover, this term is tautological, all true philosophy being transcendental philosophy.)

Method is the negative of philosophy, *system* the positive.²⁷ The conditions of a system are *continuity* and *symmetry*. The method used is a type of experimenting, and the direction it takes is centripetal and centrifugal.

| 22 Every middle term is to be considered as an infinite progression to both elements. We always encounter, therefore, a *minimum* and a *maximum*.

Now, we had *analysis* and *abstraction* as the two elements whose middle term is *synthesis*. Now, were we to seek the minimum of synthesis, this would be *reduction* (where multiple phenomena are referred to a single one). The maximum is something that we can only reach through approximation. The maximum itself is, therefore, only *approximation*.

What lies between system as the positive element and method as the negative, as their middle term, is *syllogism*.

“Syllogism,” as it is to be here understood, expresses something whole, something complete in itself. A whole of the functions of the understanding. *But the smallest possible whole*. In addition, a system is also a whole, but it can

²⁷ *Transcriber’s Note*: The matter of philosophy is discovered in its method. Its form, namely, *unity*, is discovered in the features of a system—thus, in continuity and symmetry.

contain a whole complex of syllogisms. (A *syllogism* is, as it were, a small system, and a system a big syllogism.)

Since syllogism is the intermediate between system and method, so it has to be possible to also locate a minimum and a maximum of it. We discover these, namely, (1) the *minimum* if we connect philosophy's tendency [to be concerned with the absolute] and its matter in such a way that we obtain *real principles* and *absolute ideas*; taken together, these give us *the transcendental standpoint*; this is the *minimum or the conditio sine qua non of a syllogism*. 2) The *maximum*, by contrast, we will discover when we connect what philosophy begins with and its form, namely, *skepsis*, enthusiasm and consistency, harmony. — When consistency and enthusiasm, harmony and *skepsis*, are connected, taken together this gives us *pure understanding*; this is the maximum. Thus, this amounts to the following:

System syllogism method.

The minimum is the transcendental standpoint, the maximum pure understanding.

General comment: Concepts will be proven; no concept is used, or at least is only used provisionally, until we have discovered its reality. “To prove” means “to show the reality of something.”²⁸ Every proof is, accordingly, *historiographical*. There is no such thing as a *logical* proof because nothing real emerges from a rational discourse.²⁹ Now, just as *concepts* require *proof*, so *propositions* require an *explanation* and no proof. A proposition consists of two concepts; now, if the concepts are proven, then the proposition needs no proof, but certainly does need some explanation of how the two concepts are connected. One discovers concepts in more ways than one, and one can therefore also prove them in more ways than one. (This claim goes against what one typically says:

| 23

²⁸ *Sache*.

²⁹ This comment, made some 16 years before Hegel would publish the second part of his *Science of Logic*, anticipates the late Schelling's critique of the latter and even aspects of his distinction between positive and negative philosophy, as do other parts of Schlegel's *Transcendental Philosophy*. According to Schelling, Hegel's absolute idealism fails precisely because it attempts, from within the register of the concept, to deduce the existence of nature as the necessary externalization of the Absolute Idea. For Schelling, however, the existence of nature is a brute fact (a mere *that*, as he puts it); philosophy must, therefore, take raw existence as something given and primary, which requires idealism to radically reorient itself and challenges its rationalist proclivities. This then leads to his so-called positive philosophy, which first and foremost concerns itself with the history of existence, both natural and human, as a history of the divine in its becoming. Schlegel performs a similar move in turning to historiography construed as the “absolutely” empirical study of history of the divine in the process of being realized.

“Truth is one.”) Spinoza and Fichte do this often. In addition, this is something that is very natural and already follows from the concept of the experimental method. In this manner, there must be, for instance, an infinite number of proofs of the infinite.

We encounter *three moments* in philosophy.

- 1.) *Objective free will.*
- 2.) *Intellectual intuition.*
- 3.) *The transcendental standpoint.*

Objective free will and intellectual intuition are the two elements, and the transcendental standpoint is the point of indifference.

*Objective free will*³⁰ is the *conditio sine qua non* of philosophy. What arises from it is intellectual intuition, and through the continuation of both arises the transcendental standpoint.

We attained the solution of Problem II only through approximation, namely, through *abstraction*.

Originary abstraction is the business of free will, but free will is purely and simply objective because it is concerned with all that is the condition of anything objective. The highest unity is searched for; anything subjective is removed.

We should abstract from everything that cannot be the midpoint of philosophy. Now, since philosophy is concerned with the absolute and reality, we should abstract from all relative reality. This happens *by us positing absolute reality*. If we, however, posit absolute reality, then we are still left with ourselves. Now, we can, and indeed have to, also once again abstract from individual consciousness; but the originary form of consciousness is something that we cannot abstract from. What is, therefore, left over, outside of the infinite, is still consciousness, *which encompasses consciousness as a whole*.

Result of the originary abstraction. The absolute elements of reality are *consciousness* (not construed empirically, but rather as the consciousness that makes empirical consciousness possible in the first place) and *the infinite*. All elements are invisible; thus, this is even more so the case with the absolute elements. The recapitulation of originary consciousness as a whole—when the latter comes to consciousness, that is, when the originary consciousness *intuits* and *understands*—is *intellectual intuition*.

³⁰ *Transcriber's Note:* Objective free will is the action of originary abstraction.

The absolute thesis of all philosophy cannot be proved; there is purely and simply nothing that goes beyond it; it contains its proof in itself. And because of this, the *first* and *ultimate* thing in philosophy is not a faith of any kind, as is usually assumed, but *a type of knowledge pure and simple*, albeit admittedly *a type of knowledge that is of an entirely sui generis sort, a type of infinite knowledge*.

All faith contains something uncertain—the opposite can still be possible; but this is not at all the case with the absolute thesis of philosophy. When viewed intrinsically,³¹ it is absolute; its certainty cannot be increased or decreased. Anyone who has seen the truth just once can never lose it again.

But when viewed extrinsically,³² this inner intuition of the truth cannot be presented in such a way that it, as it were, can be learned. One cannot prove it, or one can infinitely prove it. A philosopher only has *faith in themselves*. But this is no postulate. To have faith in oneself means to have faith in one's ideal. Whoever has faith in themselves is someone who forms an ideal of themselves and makes this into the focus of their life, its midpoint.

Faith is the *intermediate* between *knowledge and what stands in opposition to it*. The *minimum* of faith would be *having an opinion*, the maximum—*cognition*. Cognition is the highest. One can only cognize *one thing; thinking and knowing are here one thing*. What one thinks is also what one knows, and what one knows, one thinks. *Cognition is knowing's and thinking's highest position of honor*.

The reality of the infinite can only be cognized, not proven.

Through abstraction, we solved Problem II.

The action of the abstraction is *objective free will*. This is the *conditio sine qua non*, the formal, the negative. The positive, the material, is *intellectual intuition*. *The latter is the consciousness of the consciousness of the infinite*. Understanding and intuition are contained in intellectual intuition. The transcendental standpoint is the midpoint between the two. This is the point that elevates us above anything individual. *We move out of ourselves* if we elevate ourselves to this point.

(Our *self* is a reverberation of the infinite.)

Through *intellectual intuition*, we have discovered that one cannot abstract from *consciousness* and *the infinite*. These, therefore, are the two elements that we, from a transcendental standpoint, can experiment with. One could call the experiments “transcendental experiments” because they

³¹ *Innerlich*.

³² *von außen*.

are only possible at such a point; their tendency is completely and utterly synthetic.

The elements that we are experimenting with are therefore:

Consciousness *reality* *something infinite.*

Consciousness is, in a manner of speaking, + a – a ... a zero in the process of becoming and vanishing.

The infinite is a 1 raised to a limitless power or potency³³ every which way. If these elements are also actually elements, then one will have to be able to transition from one to the other.

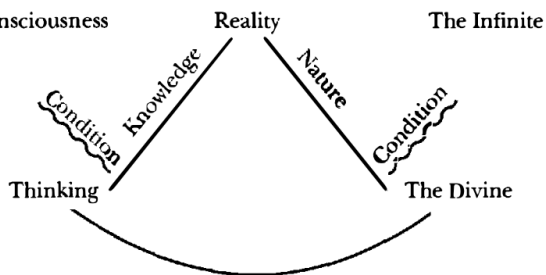
Consciousness arises from *the infinite if the infinite becomes infinitely finite. And if in the consciousness of the I and of the not-I [...],*³⁴ *and the unification of both has been achieved, the infinite* arises. The first attempt to obtain new concepts from these two first concepts is made by us transposing one into the other. If we, therefore, transpose the infinite and superimpose it on consciousness, then we obtain a new concept, namely, “an infinite consciousness” or the concept “thinking.” If we, however, transpose consciousness into the infinite and superimpose it on the latter, thus [obtaining] *a conscious infinite*, then this is the concept of “the divine.”

Now, if we connect these new concepts with the first *medial concept* “reality,”³⁵ so that we are therefore connecting 1) *thinking* with *reality* under the condition of the one primordial element, *consciousness*, then we obtain a type of *real thinking with consciousness* or a type of *knowledge*. 2) If we connect *the divine* with reality and center this connection through the *infinite*, then we obtain a *real divinity with infinity* or, which is the same thing, *nature*.³⁶ Were

³³ *eine gränzenlos potenzierte 1.* Schlegel is drawing on the language of Schelling’s *Naturphilosophie*, which describes nature as a creative process of becoming in which its underlying, dynamic forces, what Schelling refers to as “potencies” (*Potenzen*) are continually raised to a higher power in a quasi-mathematic manner (*potenziert*)—such that, ultimately, there is no radical qualitative distinction between the inorganic and the organic, in that the latter is just a quantitatively larger expression of what is already, inchoately but in principle, in the former.

³⁴ The transcript unfortunately lacks the rest of the clause.

³⁵ *Transcriber’s Note:*



³⁶ *Transcriber’s Note:* *Nature* is, as it were, *a divinity that has become actual.*

we to summarize this concept in a proposition, it would run: “It is the infinite task of nature to realize the divine.”

What comes about as a result of the combination is the fact *that one is incapable of thinking of anything other than the divine*. No further concepts can be derived from thinking of the divine. If you wish to designate it with a single word, then I would wager that there is certainly no more fitting word for it than “divination.”

Furthermore, one can see from the derivation of the connection between the concepts *that one can know nothing but nature*. *That’s why every science is a natural science, and natural science invisibly begins with divination and ends with it*.

In addition, the concept “divination” still refers to two other concepts. That is to say, if we connect *consciousness* and *nature* with one another, *with knowledge centered*, then we get the concept “reflection.” Furthermore, if we connect *knowledge with the infinite, with nature centered* (put differently, where nature is the condition or what is only possible through nature), then we obtain the concept of “speculation.”

Reflection and *speculation* stand opposed to one another; lying between the two as the midpoint, and as the Alpha and Omega of natural science, is *divination*.

If we were going to stray from the midpoint and cling to one or the other, then we would obtain the standpoint of *reflection* or, on the other side, the standpoint of *speculation*, and, in this manner, we obtain *the Fichtean system* or *that of Spinoza*.

Now, we have to, in order to obtain new concepts, go back to the method. The first thing we began with was *analysis*. (Breaking a phenomenon down into its elements.) Therefore, we also should resolve the two phenomena, *consciousness* and the *infinite*, into their elements.

The familiar element of the infinite is the *undetermined*. What comes about as a result of it through opposition is the second element, *the determined*. The infinite therefore consists of the undetermined and the determined. The infinite goes out of itself, and determines itself. This is a *definition of the infinite*.³⁷ We have to define it because it is the positive. The definition is genetic.

Consciousness, as the negative, is something that we will have to deduce. The elements of consciousness are *I* and *not-I*.

³⁷ *Transcriber’s Note*: The *idea of principles* is contained in the definition.

The *deduction*³⁸ [goes like this]: the determined keeps on determining itself until it, in determining itself, destines itself to be the undetermined and, by casting itself into the undetermined, determines itself indefinitely; in other words, this means that *consciousness is a history of the living organism up to the highest pinnacle of human sophrosyne*,³⁹ *of the understanding*.

Should we *define* or *deduce* reality? We can neither define nor deduce it; rather, we [have to] search for an intermediate. This intermediate can be called a “criterion.” It is a definition of what it is not and a deduction of what it consists of or a specification of what it is deduced from. In order to acquire real concepts, we have to now connect the elements of consciousness with the elements of the infinite, and indeed in such a way that we connect the positive element of the one with the negative elements of the other—*thus, the undetermined with the not-I, and the determined with the I*. Now, what comes about as a result of this is the fact that *real is what is free* in nature and what is *necessary in the human being* (that is to say, what is necessary in the human being is what *persists* in it; and what is free in nature is what is *living* in it). This stands in stark opposition to dogmatism.

Knowledge is broken down into *theory* and *the empirical approach*. *Theory* is concerned merely with *ideas*; what is missing here are *principles*, but it has to proceed according to *a principle*. *The empirical approach* is concerned with *principles*. What is missing here are *ideas*. If it is to actually be an empirical approach, then it has to proceed according to *an idea*.

The results with regards to theory that we have now obtained through transcendental experiments are: *the first originary concepts are consciousness and the infinite*—these are *a priori* concepts.⁴⁰ Everything has to be derived from these two concepts. The connection between these two concepts can be summed up in a single proposition: “The positive and the negative are one thing.” This is the law of identity, which we will name “the ultimate truth.”

The way the proposition is formulated is *so* indeterminate because it also means so many different things. That is to say—*we should connect the two concepts* (in this manner, the proposition becomes a rule); then, *they are connected*; all separation is relative, is a delusion; *they have to be connected, their connection has to be completed. This is the content of idealism*.

³⁸ *Transcriber’s Note*: The *principle of ideas* is contained in the deduction.

³⁹ *Besonnenheit*.

⁴⁰ *Transcriber’s Note*: These are the ideas that theory is concerned with. The empirical approach takes dualism as its starting point, but its end result is identity.

(The first concepts for dogmatism are *quantity* and *quality*; the highest basic, foundational principle is *causality*. For idealism, by contrast, the first concepts are *consciousness and the infinite*, and the highest *basic, foundational principle is the law of identity*.)

As for the middle term “reality,” *the minimum is reflection* (the combined effect of consciousness and the infinite). *Reflection is different from consciousness due to the fact that it is an actual consciousness, whereas the latter is only form.*

The *maximum* of reality is the *universe*. The infinite is only the form. It can only gain reality via consciousness. If we abstract from the four concepts, then we obtain a new middle term—the *understanding* (“νοῦς” [*nous*], as the ancients put it).

| 28

The understanding is an infinite consciousness, a conscious infinite, a reflected universe, a universally embracing reflection.

One can refer to philosophy as “the doctrine of the limits of human cognition.” The law of identity is the *ultimate truth*, the *infinite* and *consciousness* are the *first concepts*.

First concepts are what theory takes as its starting point, and *the ultimate truth* is what every *empirical approach* ends with. Theory is the treatment, the presentation, of ideas. It has two concepts in its possession (one can call them elementary ideas), and it is from the latter that it derives everything.

The two concepts are the principle of ideas, and the ultimate truth is the idea of principles.

Every empirical approach is concerned with principles; what is usually missing in it is a *guiding idea*. The basic, foundational principle of identity can be the lodestar because it tells each empiricist what the result of their investigations will be.

Now, what comes about as a result of this is the following corollary for philosophy:

“Philosophy is complete when all concepts are transcendent and all propositions are identical.” (This is, however, only the ideal pursued by philosophy, something that is never achievable.)

“Transcendent” specifically [applies here] because, in order to grasp these concepts, one has to not only go out of oneself, but rather one also has to go out of all experience. *The concept of the infinite is transcendent.*

The infinite consists of the elements of the *undetermined* and the *determined*. The *undetermined* goes out of itself, and determines itself. *It has the tendency to determine itself.* Now, the determined, as what stands in opposition to the undetermined, therefore also has the opposed tendency—

consequently, *the determined has to tendency to return to the undetermined*. It only expresses this tendency through the determinability of the determined. This determinability itself has to be, once again, undetermined, since the determined has the tendency [to] return to the undetermined, hence to determine itself indefinitely by casting itself into the undetermined. *The character of all things determined is therefore an undetermined determinability*. Now, from the tendency of the determined to keep on determining itself and return to the undetermined, there arises *self-determination, the essence of consciousness*.

| 29

If it is verified that the reality of the finite is a delusion, then the question of the subjective conditions for the opposite crops up. What clutter must be removed so that the human being can be restored to its originary state?

It is impossible for us to assume that any *common sense*—an *understanding* that one could qualify as *sound*⁴¹—exists outside of philosophy. Ordinary common sense, so-called sound understanding, is merely concerned with the finite, hence with delusion, with error, with the mother of all prejudices. Any such understanding is therefore not sound, but rather completely and utterly sick and corrupt. It does not rub shoulders with philosophy at all. It has no point of contact with the latter, period. What we refer to as claims of sound understanding are, at best, the cross-section of an era. And if one now compares this spirit [with that of] different countries, or different ages, it often stands in direct contradiction. How is that possible if this is a claim made by *sound* reason? Evidence can be found in the history of consciousness to the effect that sound understanding takes error as its starting point and that it is, as such, not sound but rather sick and corrupted.

But the human senses can also be made sound—not, however, through the path of understanding, but rather through another path. That is to say, they can be through the path of art. The highest expression of the force of the senses is art, and *the correspondence of idealism and art is perfect*. It is just not possible to point out an artwork where the two concepts of bringing the infinite to consciousness and carrying consciousness forward into the infinite are not established as the ultimate, basic, foundational principle.

(According to dogmatism, we can never reach the point where we can show artists their true value.)

⁴¹ *gesunden Verstand*. Schlegel is playing with this fixed phrase, which denotes “common sense” but literally means “healthy understanding.”

And on that note, the *Introduction*, which constitutes a self-subsistent whole, has come to a close, and we may now transition to building the system. However, since we have to, by virtue of the method specified in the Introduction, connect the philosophy of reflection and the philosophy of speculation, we should, since Fichte and Spinoza have established these two philosophical systems, preface this by saying a few things about these two philosophers. We shall, in the course of our investigations, find ourselves sometimes adopting the standpoint of one and sometimes adopting the standpoint of the other. But, since there exists such symmetry,⁴² and parallelism, between the two, we can also often take them together. This symmetry also validly applies to their outward appearance.⁴³

Both, no matter how independent and original they may have been [as thinkers], had their predecessors. Fichte had a Kant, and Spinoza a Descartes.

Now, what is purely theoretical in their systems—and thus what in them is valid, what in them contains the spirit of each—can be roughly expressed by the following propositions.

The spirit of the Fichtean system is: “The object is a product of the creative power of imagination, and everything in consciousness is an unconscious reflection occupying different positions of honour.”

The spirit of the Spinozist system is contained *in the doctrine of the infinite and the two spheres, attributes, or modifications of the infinite, namely, of extension and thinking.*

What is subjective, an individual affair, in their systems, or really the letter of them (albeit admittedly the letter the richest in spirit)—in short, what does not pertain to the essence of the [respective] system is: in the case of Spinoza, *his view of love*; and, in the case of Fichte, *his view of self-sufficiency*.

Both emerge from the spirit of the systems and are intimately connected [to them]. What can be ranked higher in a system where the highest state achievable by a human being is *peace [of mind]* than *love*?⁴⁴

What can be ranked higher than *self-sufficiency* if, in a system, activity is ranked the highest? Self-sufficiency consists, in Fichte’s view, in the degree to which one is self-determining. *A human being is only whatever they themselves determine themselves to be.*

⁴² *Transcriber’s Note:* The symmetry between both philosophers is the symmetry of genius. It does not detract from either’s independence [of thought].

⁴³ *Äußern.*

⁴⁴ Schlegel is referring to the notion of “*animi acquiescentia*” that, so Spinoza argues, the intellectual love of God leads to. See Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics*, Vp42s.

Among the ranks of the ancients, only Plato and Aristotle provide us the data for a history of philosophy, and, among the ranks of the moderns, only Spinoza and Fichte do.⁴⁵ Plato searched for a way to unify a Heraclitus with a Parmenides. Heraclitus was committed to dualism and Parmenides to realism, taken in terms of how we earlier specified these systems. But Plato was more favourable to realism all the same. In the practical domain, he searched for a way to transpose the Socratic system into a Pythagoras.

A philosophy can endorse others and be thoroughly original all the same, as holds true, for instance, in Plato's case.

Concerning the writings of Spinoza and Fichte.

The *Ethics* is written clearly and distinctly. It was first published posthumously by one of his friends, but he had already finished it several years before his death. As for his other writings, there is only one more worth mentioning: *On the Method and the Improvement of Understanding*,⁴⁶ which, although indeed unfinished, is nevertheless good for a warm-up.

The essentials of the *Ethics* are already wrapped up in the first Book. The last four Books can be regarded as a history of consciousness. It is natural, in accordance with his system, that he begins with matter, and that being so, the Introduction—that is to say, to be precise, the history of consciousness—only comes afterward. *His system is a type of knowledge of the infinite.* The Introduction also contains what is an individual affair, what is subjective, namely, *love for the divine.*

End of the Introduction.

⁴⁵ *Transcriber's Note:* Between Spinoza and Fichte there lies, in the middle, Leibniz, such that he, as it were, touches on both. So, we see that the history of philosophy, as well as its method, also consists [in the synthesis of opposites].

⁴⁶ Schlegel or the transcriber gets the title slightly wrong. For the text, see Baruch Spinoza, *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*, in *Complete Works*, ed. Michael L. Morgan, trans. Samuel Shirley (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2002).