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# ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house!’ (Gen. 12:1): Schelling’s Boehmian redefinition of idealism

## 1 Introduction: Schelling’s ‘analyticity-principle’

‘A is A’. – This is surely the fundamental thesis underlying Schelling’s Philosophy of Identity,<sup>1</sup> which is not merely – at least not only – a *theoretical* statement but rather one with an eminently *practical* meaning, primarily concerning *practical* life. This is the thesis that I would like to explore in what follows (see also Quero-Sánchez 2019c, Chap. 2). It is surely not easy to determine what Schelling is telling us by such a statement (‘A is A’). I will try to explain it by analysing a crucial passage in the so-called *Würzburg Lectures*, from 1804, in which Schelling himself explains this sentence in terms of the ‘Analyticity-thesis’, according to which only analytical or identical statements – that is to say: statements of the form ‘A is A’ – tell us how the world *really* is. Let me quote the crucial passage in this context:

In the case of common [or vulgar] knowledge (*Im gemeinen Wissen*) we find – for instance with Kant – the following opposition: *either* my knowledge pertains to the objective, *real* world – it is then not true in an absolute manner, but it is only a synthetic knowledge – *or* my knowledge is true in an absolute manner, but it then does not pertain to the objective world, having only a [merely] subjective meaning, because in this case I am not experiencing anything about the world itself but only about my own thought. If knowledge pertains to reality, it is then not an absolute knowledge; and if knowledge is absolute, it then does not pertain to reality. This is the way the common [or vulgar] logic (*die gemeine Logik*) – which is the point of view of Kant and his entire philosophy – argues, looking for reality only through a [merely] conditional, synthetic knowledge. But this sort of knowledge really is rather – considered from the higher point of view of *true* philosophy – a knowledge without any reality at all.

(Schelling 1860, 150,3–14)

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Schelling 1860, 145, 25–7: ‘The fundamental law of reason as well as of any knowledge (provided that it is rational knowledge) is the Law of Identity, i.e. the sentence “A = A”’. All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated (see the Bibliography below, 239–41).

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Schelling is here describing – and criticising – Kant’s position, according to which analytic statements do not tell us what the world is like. The statement, for example: ‘A whole is bigger than each of its halves’, tells us nothing about how the world *really* is, since it is true no matter what is *actually* or *factually* the case. By contrast, a synthetic statement of the form ‘A is B’, for example: ‘That swan there is white’, or its generalisation: ‘All swans are white’, describes what is *actually* or *factually* the case. According to Kant’s ‘common logic’, if we want to know what the world is actually like, we have to look at it: we must sustain our knowledge upon experience, that is to say: we always need to look for some kind of ‘empirical mediation’ supporting our ‘knowledge’. This is the position – the ‘vulgar’ position, as he calls it – which Schelling is inverting in the passage that I have just quoted. Of course, as the reader has already probably noticed, by stating that only analytical or identical statements of the form ‘A is A’ tell us how the world *really* is, Schelling cannot be using the terms ‘analytic’ and ‘synthetic’ in the same way as Kant did. Now, what is an analytic statement, what is a synthetic one according to Schelling? Moreover: to what extent can one say that an analytical statement describes what *really* is?

My favourite example in this context is of a judge (*J*) who has to decide about the innocence or guilt of some accused person; let’s call him ‘Peter Smith’: Is Peter Smith innocent or guilty of killing his neighbour? Assuming now that both Mr. Smith did actually kill his neighbour and *J* knows it, *J* can act – at least – in two different ways: *Either* he declares Mr. Smith guilty of killing his neighbour – just because he has killed his neighbour – *or* he declares him innocent, maybe because there is *a certain* political power pressing him to do so, or because Mr. Smith belongs to *his own* political party, to *his own* circle of friends or perhaps to *his own* family, or maybe because *he* has been bribed. In the latter case, there is, as Schelling himself would express it, some ‘mediation’ acting as a fundament or a ground for a statement of the form ‘A is B’; a fundament namely for the following statement (uttered under the assumption that both Peter Smith did actually kill his neighbour and *J* knows it): ‘Mr. Smith is innocent (of killing his neighbour)’, actually meaning: ‘This *guilty* man here (A) is an *innocent* man (B)’ (‘A is [not A but] B’). By contrast, in the former case, there is no such a ‘mediation’ but *J*, by stating that ‘Mr. Smith is guilty (of killing his neighbour)’, is expressing an ‘unmediated’ knowledge (see Quero-Sánchez 2014, 212–9), i.e. a knowledge letting things be as they themselves – or by themselves – are: ‘This *guilty* man here (A) is a *guilty* man (A)’ (‘A is A’). An ‘identical or unmediated knowledge’ is thus practical *on its own*, whereas a ‘non-identical knowledge’ always includes some kind of ‘mediation’ functioning as a particular motivation for a certain kind of practical behaviour in some particular context.

Now, let me raise the question that I posed before again: to what extent can one say that an analytical statement describes what *really* is? I think it is not difficult to answer this question by using the example I have just given you: By (under the assumption that both Peter Smith did actually kill his neighbour and *J* knows it) saying: 'Mr. Smith is guilty (of killing his neighbour)', meaning thereby: 'This *guilty* man here (A) is a *guilty* man (A)' ('A is A'), *J* is undoubtedly describing the world as it *really* is; and by contrast, in saying: 'Mr. Smith is innocent' ('A is B'), meaning thereby: 'This *guilty* man here (A) is an *innocent* man (B)' ('A is [not A but] B'), he is not doing so. Schelling's Philosophy of Identity is thus establishing some kind of (particularly but surely not only *moral*) 'integrity' as the fundamental criterion of both 'being (*really*)' and 'knowing what is (*really*) the case'.

Schelling is telling us at the same time that we have to avoid experience in order to know how things – maybe not *factually* or *actually* but nevertheless – *really* are. By showing us how things *factually* are, experience is preventing us from knowing what they *really* are. Of course, we also have to understand the word 'experience' here in the sense which is characteristic of (particularly German) Idealism. The underlying tacit premise here is that the world, as it *normally* appears – that is, as it *factually* is, or as it merely 'exists' – is not *real* (at least not *really*). But what does this mean? What is the *normal* case that experience is – maybe 'daily' – confirming? Well, one would say that experience 'daily' shows a world dominated by any kind of 'mediation' establishing any form of inequality.<sup>2</sup> Experience shows us the dominion of the 'Inequality-Principle'. Everything needs some 'mediation' for it to 'be', that is, for it to 'keep existing' or, if we are talking of living beings, to 'survive'. *Generally* speaking – and, as is well known, experience loves speaking *generally* – things keep existing or just 'are (there)' because (or in virtue) of some kind of 'mediation'. Experience shows us, again and again, lots of things disappearing because they are lacking any kind of 'mediation'. This is the way things 'are'. *C'est la vie*. Or, in German: *Das Leben ist ungerecht*. Acting in virtue of some kind of 'mediation' – for example, having been bribed – *J*'s statement declaring Mr. Smith innocent would (under the assumption that both Peter Smith did actually kill his neighbour, and *J* knows it) be a 'particular' or just 'empirical' judgement, that is: a judgment empirically mediated by some kind of particularity: a concrete or particular instantiation of the 'Inequality-Principle' as the principle dominating the world as it *factually* – but not *really* – is. By contrast, by declaring Mr. Smith guilty, *J* is not grounding his judgement upon any empirically mediated experience but upon an empirically non-mediated or 'intellectual intuition'

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2 For the use of the expression 'daily' in this context see below, p. 228.

(*intellektuelle Anschauung*).<sup>3</sup> Concisely: Neither ‘existence’ nor ‘particularity’ play a role in Schelling’s definition of those things which *really* are,<sup>4</sup> although both – namely ‘existence’ and ‘particularity’ – are crucial, of course, for *factual* existing, *empirically* knowable things. In Schelling’s Philosophy of Identity, the Absolute or God – who is nothing else but the Absolute itself (Schelling 1860, 148,19f.) – lacks as such particular existence. What *really* is, is as such – that is, considered as something that *really* is – not an empirically knowable thing existing in a particular way.

## 2 Schelling’s ‘analyticity-principle’ as mystical *Entbildung*

We surely have to see this concept of ‘Analyticity’ constituting Schelling’s Philosophy of Identity as a (at least to a certain extent) ‘mystical’ one. No mystic has ever, as far as I can see, used this term, though some use similar terms for expressing the ‘Analyticity-thesis’. In this context, the concept of *entbildung* is particularly relevant, meaning a process in which any *bilde*, that is, any ‘representation’ telling us what things *factually* – *generally*, i.e. *in the common or vulgar way* – are like, ceases to be in force. *Bilder*, that is to say: ‘images’ or mere ‘representations’, are (merely) telling us how reality usually or in the normal case – factually or actually – ‘works’, namely by showing us a whole of particular things needing some kind of ‘mediation’ to ensure their survival or viability. Meister Eckhart (d. 1328) actually identifies both concepts, ‘mediation’ and ‘image’, in his *German Sermon 70*: ‘I can only see God if I do so without image and without any mediation (*âne bilde*

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<sup>3</sup> See Schelling 1860, 151,16–21: ‘God or the Absolute is the only unmediated object of knowledge, all other objects can only be known in a mediated way. The opposition between Dogmatism and true philosophy can adequately be expressed as follows: the former anywhere merely admits a mediated knowledge of the Absolute, whereas the latter admits a thoroughly unmediated knowledge [of it].’ See *ibid.*, 153,23–8: ‘The characteristic form of knowing the Absolute is thus [...] a *contemplative* one. Any unmediated knowledge is = intuition (*Anschauung*), and also any form of contemplation is as such intuition. Since we are now speaking of the knowing of reason, we have to call such an intuition an “intuition of reason” or, as it is usually called, an “*intellectual intuition*”’.

<sup>4</sup> See *ibid.*, 502,20f.: ‘Everything which exists is necessarily something individual’; *ibid.*, 156,28–33: ‘[...] the aspect establishing a difference [...] does not constitute the essence or true *esse* but rather the *non-esse* or the non-being of things. Such an aspect [i.e. the one establishing a difference] does not characterise things considered as *being* things (since considered as *being* things, things are just *one*) but just things considered as *non-being* things.’

*und âne allez mittel*)' (Meister Eckhart 1973–1976 [repr. 1999], 194,11f.). This is the reason why you can only see God or the Absolute by being – paradoxically enough – blind, as Eckhart himself points out in his *German Sermon 72* by interpreting John 1:5 ('The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it'): 'What does this "darkness" mean? It means first that man should not be dependent nor hanging upon anything; he should be blind, without knowing anything of any creature. As I have sometimes already said: You should be blind if you want to perceive God' (ibid., 250,5–8). And in his *German Sermon 70* Meister Eckhart states in a similar way: 'I have sometimes quoted Saint Augustine saying: "As Saint Paul did not see (*dô sant Paulus niht ensach*), he then saw God". I would now like to invert these words in a pointed way, and so I say: "As he saw nothing (*dô er sach niht*), he then saw God (*dô sach er got*)"' (ibid., 189,3–190,1). This is nothing but the crucial thesis constituting Schelling's Philosophy of Identity as I have explained it above: we must avoid experience in order to know in an unmediated way or by means of 'intellectual intuition' how things – maybe not *factually* or *actually* but nevertheless – *really* are (Quero-Sánchez 2016, 149–54). Actually, Schelling has read some German sermons of Meister Eckhart, which some passages in his *Erlangen Lectures Initia philosophiae universae* and in the different extant versions of the *Weltalter*, are clearly presupposing (Quero-Sánchez 2018, 132–61). These are works composed by Schelling after having arrived in Munich in 1806, particularly after September 1810. In a recent paper, I have argued that Schelling, precisely at this time, also by the end of 1810 or the beginning of 1811, became acquainted with the Basle Tauler-print of 1521 (particularly the reproduction of a year later), which, as is well known, contains more than 60 Sermons by Eckhart, who is there mentioned by name, among them some sermons which are important for Schelling: *Sermon 52* (the so-called *Speech on Poverty*) as well as the *Sermons 2, 3, 69, 71 and 114* (Quero-Sánchez 2018, 173–7; for a more comprehensive discussion see also Quero-Sánchez 2019e). Surely crucial to the development of Schelling's Philosophy of Identity, was Spenser's translation of Tauler's sermons, which Schelling had demonstrably known, probably at a very early stage of his career, in the Tübinger Stift, or perhaps even earlier. This translation contains not only an edition of the Pseudo-Taulerian *Book of Spiritual Poverty*, which Schelling highly valued (Quero-Sánchez 2015), but also some important German sermons by Eckhart, here erroneously presented as Taulerian works: *Sermons 1, 68, 69, 70, 101, 102, 103, 114, etc.* (Quero-Sánchez 2018, 131, 176; for a more comprehensive discussion see also Quero-Sánchez 2019e). It is important to emphasise, however, that I am not thereby claiming that Schelling's philosophy is based upon some sort of irrationalistic ground, but rather that mysticism – at least if one understands it in the way Schelling did (and I think this is actually the right way to understand it) – itself presents a rational structure, especially a particular conception of reason, which, strictly speaking, cannot be called

‘a particular’ one, since ‘absolute reason’ as a revitalisation of what I would like to call ‘mystical reason’ is presupposing the neutralisation of ‘particularity’ *as such*.

### 3 Schelling’s ‘analyticity-principle’ as Platonic ‘logification’ of existence

The ‘mystical’ position which characterises Schelling’s Philosophy of Identity was already present in his early papers on Plato, which he composed at the Tübinger Stift, particularly – but not only – in his Commentary on Plato’s *Timaeus* from 1794 (see Quero-Sánchez 2019c, including further bibliographical references). As scholars have long since noticed, Schelling is very often using Kantian terminology for his explanation of Plato here (Krings 1994). Now, the metaphysical position that he is expressing with Kantian terminology is *not* a Kantian one, but he is rather defending the ‘mystical’ theses which will years later emerge with his Philosophy of Identity, particularly the ‘Analyticity-Principle’. Especially important in this context is a note which Schelling wrote at the beginning of the commentary. He describes here, as he explicitly says, ‘what you can daily see’, that is, the world as it – normally, factually or generally – *appears*. We daily see, Schelling says, that what is accepted to be true is ‘often’ not the result of ‘conviction arising from true arguments but it is dependent upon [a certain] political supremacy, which, after having privileged a certain opinion, forces the dissenting voice to keep silent or at least to speak so low that it cannot really be heard’ (Schelling 2016a, 152,14–7). What you daily see is, as Schelling further writes, ‘the triumphing scoffing of privileged teachers at dissidents, who have no other power on their side but the power of truth (or at least the power of the conviction [arising from argument])’ (ibid., 152,18–21). The ‘power of truth’: that is the power of reason or the power of ‘Analyticity’ stating ‘A is A’ – just because A is A (and precisely not B). This is, of course, not the common (or vulgar) way that you can – daily – see, since daily experience merely shows us different instances of ‘Syntheticity’ (‘A is [not A but] B’), depending upon some political supremacy as a certain empirical ‘mediation’ which functions here as the empirical ‘reason’ establishing a relation between A and B that does not exist *by* or *in itself*. Not an empirically mediated experience but only an unmediated intellectual intuition shows us how things are ‘in themselves’.

Also, Schelling’s differentiation between ‘physical’ and ‘logical’ existence, which he develops as one of the central theses of the commentary on Plato’s *Timaeus*, is to be understood in the light of the ‘Analyticity-Principle’. We have to distinguish, Schelling says, physical existence, as the characteristic way

in which 'particulars' – factually – are, that is to say: the world that 'you can daily see', from logical or pure existence, as the characteristic way in which things – maybe not *factually* but nevertheless – *really* are (ibid., 168,12–30). A thing existing in a merely physical sense is something which is not dependent upon its own concept but which has been brought into a 'particular' form of existence by some 'mediating' merely empirical cause – say: by means of some sort of 'political supremacy' destroying Analyticity as it is defined by the pure concept or (Platonic) Idea alone. Because of its dependence upon such a 'mediation', the thing needs a temporal beginning for 'being (-merely-there)'; and it will be gone when its mediation ceases to support it: for it is not *by itself*. Such a merely 'mediated' being is nothing by itself but just something 'being-merely-there' *in virtue* (= because of the virtue) of something else. Because of its being-dependent-upon-some-mediation, a thing is a (merely) temporal thing. By contrast, a thing existing in a logical sense has never begun to be and will never be gone: it is eternal, having nothing to do with temporality at all. Because of its 'unmediated' being, its being *by itself*, such a thing happens or exists 'immediately', that is to say: in a timeless way. 'Eternity' ('being *immediately*') therefore means nothing but 'absoluteness' ('being *unmediated*'). Of course, such an *eternal* being can also *appear in a certain time*, but it is nevertheless 'timeless', i.e. something fully independent of time as from any kind of 'mediation': it exists – it is-there – in virtue of its own being which is as such – as being by itself – fully 'indifferent' with regard to particular, empirically determined existence as such.

According to Schelling – and I think that here he is interpreting Plato's *Timaeus* in the right way – Plato establishes a relationship between time and the (physical) existence of a concrete or particular reality, that is, of a 'ground' or 'substratum' (*hupokeimenon*, *subiectum* or *suppositum*) as the 'requirement' or 'condition' characterising the world as it 'is (merely) there'. Let me quote the crucial passage in this context: According to Plato, Schelling writes, 'Temporal succession begins together with the beginning of a ground [or "substratum"]'; [...] [therefore] we can say that [according to Plato's *Timaeus*] there was no time at all before there was a world or a ground [or 'substratum'] whatsoever' (ibid., 170,3–7; see Plato, *Timaeus*, 37d5–e3).

'Temporality' means for Schelling therefore nothing but 'conditionality': it is the sort of (physical) existence characterising those things which are in a merely *hypothetical* way, that is, not in virtue of their own concept as of their own power, but just because of the 'mediation' of some sort of external power. By contrast, those things which *really* 'are' have nothing to do with time – nothing at all: they are lacking any 'ground', any 'substratum', any 'requirement' or any 'condition' (any *hupokeimenon*, *subiectum* or *suppositum*). What *really* 'is', that is, what exists not in a merely physical but in a logical sense, is 'ground-less' and it has

thereby nothing to do with any kind of temporal succession. Logical existence is thus nothing but ‘groundless’ existence, that is, existence lacking both particularity and (physical, empirically knowable) existence *as such*.

## 4 Jacobi’s attack

As is well known, the later development of Schelling’s philosophy, particularly from 1809 onwards, can, and maybe should, be seen as an attempt to philosophically recover the value of particular or physical existence, which in the context of the Philosophy of Identity was, as I have said, a very problematic one. He is now trying to present a conception of God or the Absolute – or generally speaking: of anything which *really* is – as including particular, not merely logical existence (see Schelling 2017, 106,11–4). Clearly, Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi played a role, maybe *the* crucial one, in such a development by Schelling (see Ciancio 1975, and Weischedel 1969, on the relationship between Jacobi and Schelling). In his treatise *Description of the System of My Philosophy*, that is to say, in 1801, we already find some passages in which Schelling is reacting to some passages by Jacobi, particularly to his *Letters on Spinoza*, from 1785 (with a second edition in 1789). Schelling paraphrases here some passages by Jacobi concerning the concept of ‘immediacy’,<sup>5</sup> but presenting a characteristic understanding of this concept, which is clearly influenced by mysticism, particularly by the aforementioned *Book of Spiritual Poverty* (Quero-Sánchez 2014, 212–9; 2015, 257–62). When Schelling came to Munich, in 1806, he came to know Jacobi in person, who was at that time the President of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences, of which Schelling had even become a member himself. Jacobi wrote, as is well known, a treatise entitled *On Divine Things and Their Revelation*, primarily directed against Schelling’s Philosophy of Identity, but, of course, forgetting to mention him by name. Schelling reacted against this writing in a very belligerent manner, with a work of 1812, entitled *Schelling’s Monument to Mr. Jacobi’s Writing on Divine Things* (see Jaeschke 1999). We find in the work by Jacobi, mentioned above, a passage that best expresses the kind of critique to which Schelling was reacting in his philosophical development from 1809 onwards. Of course, he is not just reacting to *this* passage, but his later philosophy can be best understood as a reaction to a critique, such as the one Jacobi is expressing here. We have to keep in mind that Jacobi’s attack appears in 1811 (Jacobi signed his Prologue [*Nothwendiger Vorber-*

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<sup>5</sup> Schelling had also quoted Jacobi in his treatise *Vom Ich als Princip der Philosophie*, of 1795 (Ciancio 1975, 3).



cht] on the 5th of October 1811), although he had been working on it since the end of 1807. We also need to keep in mind that Schelling's first wife, Caroline, has died in September 1809. Jacobi first asks:

Is it possible that any knowledge, virtue or beauty appear to us without presenting any particular form at all? [...]. Would such a concept in us be something capable of making us a living being which were, in addition, capable of living in relationship with some other living beings?  
(Jacobi 2000, 51, 8–14)

And Jacobi adds to this:

Maybe these considerations are still not near enough for an understanding. Let me raise, to get closer to you and more sternly [to bring these considerations near to you], the following question (*Ich frage, um näher zu treten und eindringlicher zu werden*): is it possible to conceive a person having a friend and maintaining that he loves his *concept* [i.e. *the concept of the friend*] but not the particular person with a singular name; because the particular person with the singular name is not the person *really*, but precisely the aspect which, because it contains some imperfections in itself, is damaging this person? If it were possible to find someone thinking this way, he would have to see with indifference – the more indifferent the more truly – how his friend is brought unto his grave. Because he would still retain the concept and would yet be able to think of another possible friend presenting even better qualities than the defunct one, yet without any defect at all, which would be as such immortal!

But this is not the way we, common people, think. We love in a friendship the particular person with a singular name: this person himself, in the particular way he is.

(*ibid.*, 51,15–28)

Now, what kind of problem could anyone have with such an – as Jacobi calls it – ‘individual, *positive* friendship’? Jacobi himself explains this in the continuation of the passage just quoted:

Surely, it is possible to criticise this form of [...] friendship from a rigorous point of view, in a similar way as you can criticise [...] a particular political constitution from the point of view of [pure] virtue and [pure] freedom. You will hear the following objection: Do we not have to say that by you defining friendship as a relation between individualities you are adulterating the real thing by mixing it with particularity; you are adulterating what is unconditional by mixing it with conditionality? Are you not essentially corrupting these things? Is not by such a friendship the [mere] opinion defiantly prevailing over the understanding, not the biased judgement over the healthy and unbiased one, not reputation over reason, not love over justice [or righteousness]?  
(*ibid.*, 52,6–21)

I think, this is actually the position characterising Schelling's Philosophy of Identity. Now, Mr. President was unwilling to give up his system *grounding* upon an ‘incomprehensible’ friendship-structure. Let me quote his response to the questions he himself had just raised:

All this could be true, and yet it would not make false the fact that only such a positive friendship, which is related to individuals and is therefore an exclusive one, that is, one which is biased – if you will: blind and superstitious –, in a nutshell: such an *incomprehensible* friendship [...], has ever been seen – all along and wherever men have been talking about friendship – as authentic and true friendship. (ibid., 52,28–34)

Schelling's attempt to philosophically recover the value of particular existence – 'Schelling's "Delogification" of Idealism' – will now be quite different from Jacobi's defence of such an 'incomprehensible' friendship-structure. He undoubtedly took the fundamental basis for his new position from Boehme,<sup>6</sup> as I will try to show in what follows.

## 5 Schelling's Boehmian 'delogification' of idealism

Probably, Schelling came to know Boehme's positions in the summer, or the autumn, of 1799, in house of August Wilhelm Schlegel. It was Ludwig Tieck who brought to Jena the interest for Boehme's writings, which he had previously 'rediscovered' in Berlin. Friedrich Schlegel, Novalis and Fichte were also present at these 'philosophical-theological' conversations in Schlegel's house (Plitt 1869 [repr. 2003], 245–7). Hegel also came into contact with Boehme's writings in Jena, after having arrived there in 1801 (Magee 2013, 224–7). However, there are some passages in a previous work by Schelling, namely in his *Survey of the Most Recent Philosophical Literature* (November 1796–July 1798) which seem to suggest a previous lecture on Boehme by Schelling (Schelling 1988, 121,25–34, 122,11–4). I am not going to discuss this question of when exactly Schelling first encountered Boehme's positions in my paper, but just demonstrate the extent to which Boehme's thought was crucial for Schelling's attempt to philosophically recover the value of particular existence.

Scholars have often noticed and discussed how important Boehme was for the development of Schelling's thought from 1809 onwards. He is actually present in the works composed by Schelling at this time, particularly in the *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom* and the *Stuttgart Private Lectures*, the *Erlangen Lectures*, as well as in the different extant versions of the *Weltalter*. In fact, most of the aspects in Schelling's Philosophy at this time which one could relate to

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<sup>6</sup> Not only Boehme, but also Philipp Matthäus Hahn, Friedrich Christoph Oetinger and Franz von Baader were crucial in this context (see Quero-Sánchez 2019a; 2019b; 2019d).

Meister Eckhart, Johannes Tauler and the Pseudo-Taulerian *Book of Spiritual Poverty* (see Quero-Sánchez 2018, 132–61), can also be found in Boehme, particularly – but not only – the concept of ‘equanimity’ (*Gelassenheit*) (see Quero-Sánchez 2020).<sup>7</sup> Surely, Boehme himself had read the mentioned authors. This is demonstrably the case with regard to ‘several of Boehme’s closest followers’ (Penman 2013, 66–71), for example Benedikt Hinckelmann (d. 1642), at whose Dresden home Boehme stayed for a while in 1624. An inventory of Hinckelmann’s collected manuscripts is extant, containing some entries on Johannes Tauler (see Anonymous 1692, 259, 260, 264, and 274). The same is the case with Abraham von Franckenberg (1593–1652).<sup>8</sup> In addition, both Boehme and his circle of friends were very familiar with the works of Valentin Weigel who, for his part, often quotes from Meister Eckhart.<sup>9</sup>

I do not think that Schelling took his Analyticity-Principle from Boehme; nevertheless, we also find it in Boehme’s works, here expressed by means of the concept of ‘meekness’ (*Sanftmut*; or, as the adjective, ‘meek’, in German: *sanft*). It is surely not by chance that Schelling himself uses this Boehmian concept in his *Stuttgart Private Lectures* from 1810, by speaking of a ‘meek unity’ (*eine sanfte Einheit*) (Schelling 2017, 144,4–6). The eternal, original and uncorrupted nature is ‘meek’ insofar as it does not know any kind of violence or externally determining compulsion. This is the case, to return to my example in section 1 of this paper, with *J* disregarding any attempt of some political power pressing him to act in a

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7 As is well known, Boehme wrote a short treatise with this title (*De æquanimitate oder Von der wahrer Gelassenheit* [Of True Resignation or Dying to Self]), which he included in his printed book *Christosophia oder Der Weg zu Christus* (*The Way to Christ*, Görlitz: Johann Rambau, 1624) (see Böhme 1957a). Some Eckhartian motifs that we find in Schelling – I particularly have in mind Schelling’s distinction between ‘God’ and ‘that what God is’ – are surely to be traced back to a direct reading of Eckhart’s *Speech on Poverty*.

8 See Bruckner 1988, A 2 (p. 4), A 40 (p. 33), D 36 (p. 100) and D 25 (b) (= Johannes Tauler, *Predigten* [Leipzig: Conradus Kachelofen, 1498] [this print contains, as is well known, some German Sermons by Eckhart: Steer 101–104]) (p. 98). Von Franckenberg also possessed the Pseudo-Taulerian *Book of Spiritual Poverty* (in the edition by Daniel Sudermann [Frankfurt a.M.: Lucas Jennis, 1621] (*ibid.*, D 37 [p. 101])).

9 See Pektaş 2006, 195–206, particularly 195: ‘il s’agit du seul auteur auquel Böhme renvoie sinon expressément: Valentin Weigel’; *ibid.*, 196: ‘Il s’agit du petit traité, très symboliquement intitulé: *Von Armut des Geistes oder wahrer Gelassenheit*, composé en 1570, dont le troisième et le cinquième chapitre ne sont qu’un patchwork composé des Sermons allemands 12 et 52 [of Meister Eckhart], choix qui n’est pas seulement dû à une préférence marquée de Weigel, mais renvoie aussi à la source dont celui-ci dépend, ainsi identifiée: [...] l’édition bâloise de 1522 les contient.’ Interestingly, the inventory of Hinckelmann’s collected manuscripts contains the mentioned work by Weigel (see Anonymous 1692, 264: ‘Anonym. aus Tauleri Schriften gefertigte zwey Tractat. [1] Von der Bekehrung des Menschen. [2] Von Armuth des Geistes anno 1570’; *ibid.*, 265: ‘Val. Weigel. von der Bekehrung der Menschen. [2] Von Armuth des Geistes anno 1570 geschrieben’).

certain or precisely *particular* way. The meek unity of nature concerns therefore things being by themselves, or in virtue of their own power or inner force. There was in those original times, Boehme says, nothing but an eternal ‘Being without a Why’ or a ‘why-less Being’: a dominion (!) of ‘true righteousness’ as the characteristic (but not *particular*!) way of God (see Boehme 1958, 874,2–4 [English by J. Sparrow, in Boehme 1772, 497,12]). Eckhart of Hochheim had masterfully expressed such a fundamental philosophical position in his Latin *Commentary on John’s Gospel* (a work which Schelling admittedly did not know): *suave est quod sua vi nos trahit*, that is, ‘meek’ (or ‘gentle’) (*suave*) is what attracts us just ‘in virtue of its own power’ (*sua-vi*) (Meister Eckhart 1936–1994, 287,11f.).

Such an original, uncorrupted nature is, as Boehme again and again points out, the one related to the concept of God as a ‘merciful God’, according to *Deuteronomy*, 4:31 (‘For the Lord your God is a merciful God’). Now, we also read in *Exodus* 20:5 that God is ‘a jealous God’, which Boehme normally refers to by using the adjectives ‘angry’ (*zornig*), ‘wrathful’ (*grimmig*) and ‘zealous’ (*eifrig*): your God is thus, so it seems, also an angry, a wrathful and a zealous God. To Boehme’s concept of divinity belongs therefore not only ‘meekness’ but also ‘anger’, or ‘wrath’, that is, *der Zorn* or *die Grimmigkeit*. God’s ‘wrath’ characterises or ‘forms’ the world as it merely *seems to be*, that is, the world merely *existing* under the dominion of the Principle of Particularity or Inequality, which is really nothing but a creation of man existing in a merely particular, corrupted or corrupt way. Being originated by man’s corruption, God’s ‘wrath’ ‘forms’ the world as you can ‘daily’ see it; the world, for instance in which, what is accepted to be true is ‘not the result of conviction arising from true arguments but dependent upon a certain political supremacy’ (see above, p. 228f.). Schelling is surely presupposing such a Boehmian conception of God’s wrathfulness when he, in his *Stuttgart Private Lectures*, speaks both of a ‘dreadful’ and an ‘awful reality’: *eine schreckliche Realität; eine furchtbare Realität* (Schelling 2017, 100,24–102,2). A degenerated or corrupt world is actually, I would say, a ‘dreadful’, an ‘awful reality’. The following passage in Schelling’s *Erlangen Lectures Initia philosophiae universae* is also to be taken into consideration in this context:

Even all the oldest doctrines agree in this point: that everything that now appears as being captured (or “biased” [*befangen*]) by particular existence has before sunken down (or “degenerated” [*herabgesunken*]) from an original freedom in this dreadful world of particular existence. It is natural to see this in connection with an immemorial culpability, through which the eternal freedom sunk into such a state of particular being.

(Schelling 1969, 69,5–9)

There are some similar passages in the different extant versions of Schelling’s *Weltalter* (Schelling 1946 [repr. 1979], 14,15–15,8). Of course, God’s wrath is not what

God is in himself – for He is essentially meekness or love – but what *man himself* brings into existence through *his* corruption, that is, because of *his own decision* for particularity or inequality. Now, to what extent has such a Boehmian position anything to do with Schelling's attempt to philosophically 'recover' the value of particular existence? The crucial point here is that Boehme considers the fighting or struggle of men – and, generally speaking, of nature as a whole – against the dominion of particular or 'mediated' existence, against degenerated being, or against such a dreadful, corrupt reality as the necessary *condition* for absolute Being to become a *particular living or really existent being*. That is to say: Absolute being, which is as such or by definition *unconditional* ('unmediated'), needs – paradoxically enough – a *condition* (a 'mediation') for it to become a *particular living or really existent being*. This is a position we find almost everywhere in Boehme's works, who points out – again and again – that wrathful reality is as fundamental for *life* as for *particular existence*. Let me quote just a passage: if everything were 'in a sweet Meekness [...] where would be the Mobility, Kingdom, Power, and Glory? Therefore, we have often said, Anger is the Root of Life' (Boehme 1960, 451,28–31 [English by J. Sparrow, in Boehme 1764, 274,37–9]; see also *ibid.*, 9,24f. [English in Boehme 1764, 19f.]; *ibid.*, 364,1–3 [English in Boehme 1764, 224,24–6]; Boehme 1957, 80,22–5 [English in Boehme 1781, 50,37–40]). Of course, Boehme is here thinking of his own experience with the world of strict orthodoxy as he found it represented by Gregor Richter, the Lutheran Pastor in Görlitz, his chief antagonist. We find in Schelling's *Stuttgart Private Lectures* a similar statement: 'Life', he says, 'necessarily presupposes opposition ["contrast", "contradiction", "antithesis", "antagonism", "conflict" (*Gegensatz*)]' (*Ohne Gegensatz kein Leben*) (Schelling 2017, 98,32). A year before, Schelling had written something similar in his *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*: 'for, where there is no struggle [or "no fighting"], there is no life' (*denn wo nicht Kampf ist, da ist nicht Leben*) (Schelling 1860, 400,3–6 [English by J. Love and J. Schmidt, in Schelling 2006, 63]). Precisely in this context, Boehme defines a concept of 'Revelation' or 'Manifestation' (*Offenbarung*) that Schelling will incorporate as one of the central aspects of his late philosophy:

For the Eternal Nature has produced nothing in its Desire, except a Likeness out of itself; and if there were not an everlasting Mixing, there would be an eternal Peace in Nature, but so Nature would not be revealed and made manifest, in the Combat it becomes manifest; so that each Thing elevates itself, and would get out of the Combat into the still Rest, and so it runs to and fro, and thereby only awakens and stirs up the Combat.

(Boehme 1957, 9,14–21 [English by J. Ellistone, in Boehme 1781, 12,27–32])<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> See Schelling 1860, 373,15–374,2 (English by J. Love and J. Schmidt, in Schelling 2006, 41): 'Since it is undeniably real, at least as general opposite, there can indeed be no doubt from the outset that it was necessary for the revelation of God; exactly this results from what has been

The Absolute is not something being *really* in a merely *abstract* way, but by its particular fighting against a particular instantiation of particularity, as against a particular form of corruption, a thing *becomes* a particular *really* existent or living thing. This is how God, or the Absolute, is revealed and made manifest: ‘in the combat’. A condition, that is to say, a ground or fundament (*hupokeimenon*), is therefore required for something to be a particular, *really* existent or living – revealed or manifested – thing. This is Schelling’s ‘Boehmian’ correction of his original idealistic position in order to avoid a typically realistic critique as the one we have found in Jacobi. The condition ‘is merely the ground of existence’ (*das Wesen, sofern es bloß Grund von Existenz ist*), which we have to distinguish from the *really* existent or living thing itself (*das Wesen, sofern es existiert*) (Schelling 1860, 357,17–20 [English in Schelling 2006, 27]). However, Schelling is thereby not giving up his original idealistic position: not at all. Why? Because the ‘ground’ as the condition is here needed just as something *to be negated or denied*. The particular *really* existent or living Absolute as the negated or denied ‘ground’: this is the Absolute as ‘non-ground’ or as ‘abyss’ (*Ungrund*), which is actually the characteristic Bohemian expression which Schelling uses at the end of his *Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom* (ibid., 406,15–22 [English in Schelling 2006, 68]). One could best express this position by quoting Hegel: its negation – namely the negation or denying of particular existence as such – is its being, that is, the (not merely *real* but *really*) particular existence or life of the Absolute: ‘the Non-Being of the finite is the Being of the Absolute’ (Hegel 1978, 290,7f.). You could therefore with Hegel state: ‘Being’ and ‘Non-Being’, that is ‘Nothing’, ‘are the same’ (see ibid., 44,20–56,2). By denying its *merely given* particular existence a thing – particularly, though not only, a man – is *performing* what is *really* its (his/her) particular existence: it (he/she) is *really* existing and not merely being-there as such and such particular, merely physically existent as well as empirically knowable ‘thing’. To return again to my example from section 1, any particular judge, for example *J*, is both denying his *merely given* particular existence and precisely thereby *performing* his *true* particular existence by (under the assumption that both Peter Smith did actually kill his neighbour and *J* knows it) uttering the following (analytical or identical) sentence: ‘Mr. Smith is guilty (of killing his neighbour).’ This becomes especially clear *in the certainly extreme case*

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previously said as well. For, if God as spirit in the inseverable unity of both principles, and this same unity is only real in the spirit of man, then, if the principles were just as indissoluble in him as in God, man would not be distinguishable from God at all; he would disappear in God, and there would be no revelation and mobility of love. For every essence can only reveal itself in its opposite, love only in hate, unity in conflict. Were there no severing of principles, unity could not prove its omnipotence; were there no discord, love could not become real.’

that Plato masterfully discusses in his *Euthyphro*, namely if (in a *similar* situation) Mr. Smith were the father of *J*, with the neighbour being a hired workman of Mr. Smith, who – I mean: this workman – had probably murdered a slave of Mr. Smith (Quero-Sánchez 2015a, 43–5; see Plato, *Euthyphro*, 4A–E).

Both Meister Eckhart and Boehme had constantly insisted on this requirement of denying any merely *given* particular existence *as such* in order to perform – precisely thereby and paradoxically – that which *really* constitutes the particular existence of any particular man (and, generally speaking, of any particular being): the *true* particular existence of any particular man. And both had done this by quoting some biblical passages which are actually crucial in this context: *Matthew* 23:9 ('And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven'); *ibid.* 10:35 ('For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'); *Ephesians* 5:31 ('Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'). After having quoted these three verses in his *Latin Sermon no. 29*, Meister Eckhart states: 'Hence, the Holy Scripture always calls on you to leave this world, to leave yourself, to forget your own house as well as the house of your own family, to leave your own country and your own relatedness' (Meister Eckhart 1936–1994, 270,11–5; see also *id.*, *Latin Sermon* 25, *ibid.*, 242,1–9; 1936–1994, 284,5–285,2; see on this Quero-Sánchez 2004, 118–23). For his part, Boehme continually points out that 'Man is not at Home, in the elementary Kingdom of this World. For Christ said: "My Kingdom is not of this World." And to his Apostles he said: "I have called you out from this World"; also: "Flesh and Blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God"' (Boehme 1960, 237,44–238,4 [English by J. Sparrow, in Boehme 1764, 146,35–8]). Boehme particularly quotes in this context Paul's *Epistle to the Philippians* 3:20 ('Our citizenship' – or, as the *King James Version* says, 'our conversation' – 'is in heaven') and *John* 18:36 ('My kingdom is not of this world') (see, for instance, Boehme <sup>2</sup>1996, 376,12–23 [English by J. Sparrow, in Boehme 1772, 219,23–30]; Boehme 1966, 98,33–41 [English by J. Rolleston Earle, in Boehme 1930, 155,19–32]). His favourite passage is, however, *Genesis* 12:1, when God says to Abraham: 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house' (see, for instance, Boehme <sup>2</sup>1996, 364,1–18 [English by J. Sparrow, in Boehme 1772, 212,35–44]). For 'kindred', the Vulgate version of the Bible says *cognatio*; the Septuagint, *suggeneia*. Both expressions trace back to the word we find in the Hebrew Bible: *molædæt*, which actually means 'kindred' or 'kindredship'; but also 'affiliation', 'relationship', 'relatedness'. The German ecumenical Bible translation, the so-called *Einheitsübersetzung*, uses here rightly the word *Verwandschaft*. Boehme quotes the passage, of

course, according to Luther's translation, which is here very interesting: 'Gehe von deiner Freundschaft', that is, 'Go from your friendship'.<sup>11</sup>

No; Schelling had not seen with indifference how Caroline was brought unto her grave in September 1809 – surely not. Idealistic philosophy is not to be seen as an inhuman one, as Jacobi seemed to be presupposing by his critique of Schelling in 1811. But any *decent* idealist would surely want people to forget their own *given* particular existence, that is to say: any kind of friendship *molædæst*, in the *public* sphere, refusing or perhaps precisely opposing any form of 'friendship' which were presented by anyone as if it were a sort of indispensable 'ground' for rightly functioning politics. 'Yes, Mr. President', Schelling could have said to Jacobi – and I think this is precisely what he actually said with the later development of his philosophical Idealism – 'with your appeal to *positive, exclusive* and *incomprehensible* friendship you are actually adulterating the political constitution', in as much as 'by such a friendship [mere] opinion were actually defiantly prevailing over the understanding, the biased judgement over the healthy and unbiased one as well as reputation over reason, and – precisely – friendship over justice or righteousness'. We all probably know that such an idealistic 'indifference' with regard to any kind of 'friendship' is a really *dangerous* thing. Jacob Boehme surely knew it. The idealist philosopher – if you like: the Boehmian, as the one whose 'conversation is in heaven' – 'can only live', as he explicitly says in his *Aurora*, 'in the greatest peril in this world' (*lebed in grosser gefehrlichkeit in diser welt*) (Boehme 1963, 112, 4–7 [English by A. Weeks, in Boehme 2013, 335, 2–6]).<sup>12</sup> So what? As he himself points out in his *Mysterium magnum* (and there are two similar passages in Eckhart's German Sermons): 'if thou [namely God who is nothing but righteousness or justice itself] bringest me into *Hell*, I will go along' (*Führest du mich in die Hölle, so will ich auch mit*).<sup>13</sup>

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**11** The word *Freundschaft* ('friendship') also means in the Middle Ages and even today in some German dialects *Verwandschaft* ('kindred'), also *Blutsverwandschaft* ('blood-relationship'). See the German Dictionary (*Deutsches Wörterbuch*) by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, the 3rd acception of the *vox* *Freundschaft*: *verwandschaft, blutsfreundschaft, geschlecht* (I thank Freimut Löser for this reference).

**12** See also *ibid.*, 279,39–280,2 [English in Boehme 2013, 741,28–31]; Boehme 1958, 735,2–14 [English by J. Sparrow, in Boehme 1772, 420,12–9]

**13** See Boehme 1958, 735,15–23 (English by J. Sparrow, in Boehme 1772, 420,20–5): 'For he says very inwardly to God, Lord, wilt thou have me in Prison and in Misery, that I shall sit in Darkness, then I will willingly dwell there; if thou bringest me into Hell, I will go along, for thou art my Heaven; if I have by thee, I enquire not after Heaven and Earth, and if Body and Soul should fail, yet thou art my Comfort; let me be where I will, yet I am in thee, and thou in me; I have fully enough when I have thee, use me for what thou wilt.' See Meister Eckhart, *German Sermon* 47, in *id.* 1971 (repr. 1988), 401,3–5; *id.*, *German Sermon* 112, in Sturlese, Löser 2008, 120,23–5.



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