The Poetic Imagination in Heidegger and Schelling

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THE POETIC IMAGINATION IN HEIDEGGER AND SCHELLING

a dissertation

by

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The Poetic Imagination in Heidegger and Schelling
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Abstract

This dissertation investigates the importance of the imagination in the thought of F.W. J. Schelling and Martin Heidegger, and argues that Heidegger’s later philosophy cannot be understood properly without appreciating Schelling’s central importance for him. It is increasingly recognized today that Schelling, who had long been overlooked, is an important figure in post-Kantian German Idealism. However, his significance for Heidegger’s concentration on the creative character of thought remains undervalued. I argue that, by tracing the theme of imagination in these thinkers, the milieu of Schelling’s absolute idealism and that of Heidegger’s hermeneutic phenomenology may be understood as distinct discourses that nevertheless share in a profound impulse to overcome sensible-intelligible and subject-object dualisms and retrieve and refine the productive and projective character of reason.

This impulse is first evident in both thinkers’ attention to the role of imagination in Kant’s critical project (for Schelling, cir. 1800; for Heidegger, cir. 1929). It then proves inseparable from Schelling’s treatments of intuition, identity, ground, and freedom; and it becomes still more evident in Heidegger’s 1936 lecture course on Schelling and his affiliated inquiries into the essence of art and poetry. Even as Heidegger labors to deconstruct the alleged visual and subjectivist bias of metaphysics, he remains preoccupied with Schelling’s ontological treatment of the law of identity and intent on translating Schelling’s aesthetic emphasis into a poetic paradigm for philosophical inquiry. By focusing on how, alongside his engagement with Schelling, Heidegger endeavors to recover the imagination as a poetic (as opposed to reductive and willful) basis for reason, we attain a decisive rubric for understanding his later thought.
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Introduction

*There is a type of mind which thinks about things, and another which seeks to know them in themselves, according to their pure necessity.*

-F.W.J. Schelling

*Concerning the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature* (1807, 1809n)

*I wish to increase and keep awake philosophy’s need to be ever turning upon preliminary questions, so much so that it will indeed become a virtue.*

-Martin Heidegger

*The Phenomenology of the Religious Life* (1920)

In 1920 Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) begins a lecture course on *The Phenomenology of the Religious Life* by announcing that philosophical concepts are “vacillating, vague, manifold, and fluctuating.” He then declares that it in fact belongs “to the sense [Sinn] of philosophical concepts themselves that they always remain uncertain.”¹ Some twenty-five years later, at the outset of a course entitled “Introduction to Philosophy: Thinking and Poetizing,” he observes that “historical humans always already stand within philosophy because they do so essentially.”² Together these statements say that the human being, in spite of his rational perspicuity or blithe indifference, stands within a domain of thought in which the purported markers of illumination are necessarily kinetic and provisional – one could say, essentially preliminary. But this account is a descriptive reckoning, not a concession to relativism, skepticism, or nihilism. It bears witness to the sojourn of reflective human dwelling and evokes something of the ‘virtue’ exercised in remaining awake and attuned to those basic questions which, following Friedrich Schelling (1775-1854), seek to know things – be they entities or matters – in accordance with their own necessity. To behold such questioning in the

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² Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Philosophy—Thinking and Poetizing* (1944-45), trans. Phillip Jacques Braunstein (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2011) 1/90. The translation follows Gesamtausgabe Bd. 50. Hereafter TP. Pagination appears as English/German. Heidegger continues: “We believe we know in which realm and space building’s stand and in which realm the trees grow. We barely think about which realm philosophy, thinking, is in and in which realm art is, and what they are. We do not even think about the fact that philosophy and art could themselves be the realms of the sojourn of the human” (2/91).
terrain of its inevitable standpoint is to glimpse what poet Paul Valéry calls the “Image of a thinking mind/ Where the spirit spends itself/ To be increased by what it gives.”

I. Task and Methodology

This dissertation is one attempt to keep watch with Heidegger and Schelling as they remain alert to the dynamic potential and elemental standing of a matter that is as much in question for philosophy as it is in practice for poets and artists: the imagination. It is a project that concerns the poetic imagination in these thinkers – in their field of conceptual navigation and in the manner of thinking they bring to this domain. The phrase ‘poetic imagination,’ though a necessary heuristic, denotes something different from a hard and fast conceptual matter that these thinkers will chisel and polish with the ready instruments of rational command. Perhaps, alternatively, we hear the phrase in the same register we hear the conjunction appending the title to Schelling’s 1809 treatise, *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom and Matters Connected Therewith* (*. . . und die damit zusammenhängenden Gegenständen*), as though the poetic imagination denoted a semblance of secondary concerns. But what is true of Schelling’s text is true of decisive stages in the thought of Heidegger and Schelling – that the imagination as a ‘matter connected’ is in fact something integral to their courses of inquiry. But before elucidating the meaning of ‘poetic imagination’ in this regard a more immediate question presents itself: Why Heidegger and Schelling? Accustomed as we are to treating Heidegger in concert with Edmund Husserl, Jacques Derrida, Immanuel Kant, and possibly Aristotle and Plato, and to treating Schelling in concert with J.G. Fichte, G.W.F. Hegel, and possibly the mystical tradition, this pairing may well strike an anachronistic and unlikely chord.

Schelling and Heidegger indeed appear to inhabit the summits of ‘mountains most separate.’

Schelling is the protean German Idealist for whom the Absolute is the unconditioned, infinite, living

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system by which being is rendered in terms of rational necessity. Heidegger is the thinker of fundamental ontology for whom the question of the meaning of being is to be treated phenomenologically in the form of Dasein, and poetically in the shape of Ereignis. Heidegger’s ‘Destruktion’ of the history of Western ontology is, it would seem, an offensive against the totalizing ambitions of Schelling’s Idealism. However, the inadequacy of such summations belies the more specific inadequacy of assuming a standard, readily delineated distance between these two thinkers, for they are in fact much closer than the categorization of philosophical schools or movements may permit. Indeed, if compared on the basis of their fundamental concentration on the imagination, one realizes how Schelling and Heidegger’s paths of thinking are deeply intertwined, even to the extent of their shared willingness to think the very limits of metaphysics and to risk the enactment of a new style of thinking itself. Moreover, if considered in light of Heidegger’s own reading of Schelling, one sees that the crossing of these paths, though marked by distinct tension and distance, is of profound importance to the formation of Heidegger’s thought after Being and Time (1927).

As a starting point, then, this project wagers on the fruits to be won by an unlikely and uncommon comparison. Of course, what Heidegger himself says of comparing [Vergleichen] here applies – that “the two ‘things’ to be compared are somehow already equated [gleichgestellt] with one another insofar as they are selected and presented as what is to be compared . . . [T]here is already something the same [Gleiches] that is perceived about the two things, although it is mostly undetermined and evanescent.”\(^5\) If, following Paul Ricoeur, one asks of this project D’ou parlez vous?, the answer is that I speak from a horizon wherein something of the ‘same’ is sensed in these thinkers, is accredited by Heidegger’s own 1936 lecture course on Schelling, and though initially ‘undetermined,’ this kinship appears rooted in the manner in which both thinkers come to conceive of the poetic imagination. Accordingly, to carry out this comparison I will address not only their

\(^4\) The analogy appears famously in the 1943 ‘Postscript’ to Heidegger’s “What is Metaphysics?” (1929), and may also be found in §256 of his Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis) (1936-38).

\(^5\) TP 42/137.
explicit treatments of the imagination in the wake of Kant and at the limits of metaphysics, but also the dynamism this problem affords their own paths of thought. For the imagination, I will argue, is not simply an isolated problematic for these thinkers, but rather the whetting stone by which they sharpen their own philosophical inquiries and hone their sense of the deeper necessities these inquiries serve.

My approach to the topic will follow a systematic and exegetical course, and will stay close to the historical ordering of the texts under consideration. My argumentation will be clarifying with respect to the centrality and reorientations of the imagination in the stages of Schelling and Heidegger’s paths; it will be dialogical in the attention I give to Heidegger’s encounter with Schelling on the question of freedom, ground, and creative measure; and it will be provocative in contending that the poetic imagination delimits both the ‘end’ of metaphysics and the shape of the ‘crossing’ to another beginning for thought. Though I intend the resulting shape of this project to be a contribution to contemporary discussions of aesthetics, it is not an interrogation of what Heidegger and Schelling have to say about imagination and poetry on the basis of interests delimited by contemporary conceptual points of reference. Heeding Heidegger’s own appraisal of philosophical concepts, my project is better understood as a retrieval of the basic questions and dispositions that run antecedent to (and to some extent in anticipation of) today’s aesthetic touchstones – I have in mind matters such as the meaning of artistic works, expression, form, symbol, beauty, and the intrinsically creative shape of reason. Of course, contemporary aesthetics, like recent Continental philosophy, is always already in dialogue with a tradition in which the matter of imagination is of principle concern, and the efforts toward conceptual delimitation and discovery are, at least in part,

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6 It is worth recalling that the word “aesthetics” did not come to name a discipline that treats works of art and beauty with respect to a judging and contemplating ‘ego’ until the eighteenth century. My use of the term in this project includes this recent history but also looks beyond its purview to the Greek and medieval emphasis on more poietic meditation – reflections on artistic production, not simply aesthetic reflection (see Jacques Taminiaux, Poetics, Speculation, and Judgment, ed./trans. Michael Gendre (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993) 57). In Schelling and Heidegger we will find a certain reorientation of the poietic emphasis, joining it with variations of ontological inquiry that, I believe, still offer much to contemporary aesthetics.
hewn through a mindfulness to that Kantian critical spirit which wants to know on what basis we enjoy an experience of objects and engage in a conceptual ordering of their meaning. Accordingly, we must lay a certain ground for this project by asking a question we cannot answer in full: How has the imagination fared in a critical tradition prone to regard it as reason’s affective double?

II. Mainsprings of Imagination and Critique

In his eminent novel, *Les Misérables* (1862), Victor Hugo furnished the conscience of Europe with this study of his main character: “He set himself up as a tribunal. He began by arraigning himself... If a millet seed under a millstone had thoughts, undoubtedly it would think as Jean Valjean did.” One thought that comes to pass in this prolonged self-arrainment on the threshold between grace and the abyss is a peculiar reflection on thought itself. With Valjean, writes Hugo, we attain a state in which “We no longer see the objects before us, but we see, as if outside of ourselves, the forms we have in our minds.” If, through Valjean, Hugo allows human conscience to make its case, it was the concern of Immanuel Kant, through his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781/1787), to do the same for human cognition. In both cases the author and subject of the ‘tribunal’ are modalities of the same entity (man for Hugo, metaphysics for Kant), and in both cases the critical itinerary is born from a spirit of necessity that will plumb the depths of self-examination so as to adjudicate justly the possibilities inherent in the ‘forms’ of the mind. In this way Kant will be not simply the historical, but also the thematic, point of departure for the present inquiry. For it is from within the domain of his critical project that philosophy is recalled to the puzzle of imagination, and it is in the ontological aftermath of his transcendental turn that Schelling and Heidegger stake so much on this mystery.

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That the scrutiny of critique should examine the question of the imagination is a necessity already familiar to the Western tradition before Kant. In turning to this tradition, however, one finds a state of affairs in which the imagination is almost always already in question without ever quite resting in an established mode of signification. The matter famously arises, for example, when in Book VI of the Plato’s Republic, Socrates and Glaucon endeavor to arraign the educational emphases befitting those qualified to rule in the kallipolis. The result is an indictment of the imagination on two fronts. First, they determine that the love of learning appropriate to a philosophical nature must privilege “some feature of the being that always is and does not wander around between coming to be and decaying” (485b). The capstone of such being is an object pursued by all but understood by few: the good. The good is “more beautiful” (κάλλιον) than knowledge and truth, and “superior” to being in “rank and power” (508e-509b). And even though Socrates has appealed to beauty in order to disclose the necessity of a level of intelligible forms, and has already characterized philosophers as those who “love the sight of truth” (507b; 475e), the sun and line analogies are a case against the visible (equated with doxa) in favor of the intelligible. Hence the hierarchy which places understanding (noësis) above appearances, but also the adjacent predicament that those guardians suited to “keep watch over everything” and be “keen-sighted rather than blind” must ‘see’ by way of forms, not images, for what may be first in the order of vision is lowest in the

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10 In his Force of Imagination, John Sallis speaks of a “loss of anterior signification” concerning imagination – a sense in which “[o]ne can no longer take it for granted that what imagination is as such is established anterior to all discourse on imagination, that imagination has a predetermined sense to which that which is called imagination—that to which imagination refers—would conform in its concrete determinativeness” (Force of Imagination: The Sense of the Elemental (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000) 45-46). To approach the matter, then, Sallis enacts a “remembrance of the old words that resound in imagination,” a “labor of freeing the traces of exorbitant sense retained by these words and of translating them into imagination so as to lend it now an exorbitant and unheard-of-sense” (46).

order of understanding (484c). When Socrates remarks “nothing incomplete is the measure of anything” (504c) it is not simply a reflection on the authority of their ‘tribunal’ or a dig at Protagoras, but is a hint toward the inadequacy of the ocular imagination to the demands of dialectic and, ultimately, justice. But sensibility, and with it the imagination, remain marked by a curious tension. Early in Book VI Socrates opposes the blind and ignorant to the painters – those who “look to what is most true” in the exercise of their craft (484d). And yet in Book X the painter, like the poet, is treated as a maker of imitation (mimēsis) – in effect, an imitator of appearances, and thus “far removed from the truth” (598b). Whether a painter or poet, the craftsman of imitation “knows nothing about that which is but only about its appearance” (601b), and so fails to exhibit the love of learning privileged in Book VI. Turning to the Sophist, we find this caution treated in the Stranger’s comments regarding the imitative practice manifest in the canny images spoken by the sophist. Sophistry disguises itself as philosophy, John Sallis explains, by way of an “image-making [that] produces. . . only something that seems (ψαίνεται) to be like its paradigm.” This product “can appropriately be called a semblance (ψαντασμα), and the τέχνη that produces such images the Stranger calls semblance-making or phantastic (ψανταστική) τέχνη.”

A true likeness or image, by contrast, is an εἰκόν, though the task of distinguishing which imitative work is underway remains beset by the concealment of the productive work. The distinction between ψαντασμα and εἰκόν is not necessarily reducible to false/true imaginations, but rather informs the nascent sense in which imitative production, or imagination, is a τέχνη shrouded in difficulty even as its meaning is underway. We may in the least observe that to speak of true understanding, with Plato, is to speak of

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12 The tension surrounding imitation, and the distinction between the work of painters and craftsmen, artists and artisans, comes down to the Greek notion of poiēsis. This term shall remain of vital significance throughout this project. Poiēsis, following Taminiaux, denotes productive activity – be it in the artisan or artist. Though Plato may well have thought “the true poet is the artisan,” he held that the artisan in the basic sense of craftsman devoted his productive work to the imitation of the Ideas, whereas painters, sculptors, and poets do not attain the contemplation of Ideas in their imitative work (see Taminiaux, Poetics, Speculation, and Judgment, 2-3).
13 John Sallis, Force of Imagination, 46-47.
14 Sallis continues: “The force of imagination is attested not only by its twofold productivity but also by the facility with which it can make its semblances seem like likenesses so as to dissemble its own operation, keeping itself withdrawn, in hiding” (ibid., 47).
paradigms, and thus to involve questions of sight and production, likeness and image, in the discourse concerning wisdom, justice, and artistry. Returning to the Republic, the tensions surrounding imitation hold, and are more generally manifest in the kind of liberating ‘vision’ which sees through an image to an original. Plato’s case for ‘original’ understanding continues to entail an ascent in vision, though not the vision of the artist or poet. “Even in antiquity,” observes Friedrich Schiller, “there were men who were by no means so convinced that aesthetic culture is a boon and a blessing, and were hence more inclined to refuse the arts of imagination [den Künsten der Einbildungskraft] admission to their Republic.” In short, sensibility and imagination are employed in the case against imagination as the currency of imitation and opinion, and thus a shortcoming for any understanding trained not only on being, but on the good that exceeds it.

Still, though we are speaking here of ‘imagination’ it is important to bear in mind the lack of a decided, anterior signification belonging to the term in the Greek context. Remaining on this terrain of cautionary development, we might also note that to occupy a position ‘removed’ from the truth does not, however, render ‘the imagination’ (in the broad sense) anathema to the function of knowing. As Aristotle, and Aquinas after him, concede, “the intellect can’t operate without images [ψαντασία]” In De Anima, Aristotle surmises: “If imagination [ψαντασία] is that in virtue of which an image is formed in us. . . it [may be] some power or habit by which we discriminate,

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15 Ibid., 48-49.
16 Friedrich Schiller, On the Aesthetic Education of Man, in a Series of Letters (Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen, in einer Reihe von Briefen) (1794-95), ed./trans. Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L.A. Willoughby (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989) 63-65. Hereafter Letters. Schelling will treat the matter with similar consternation from the outset of his career. Theodore George observes: “The philosophers’ banishment of the poets in the Republic forms one of the binding motifs of the tradition as a whole. In the Letters [on Dogmatism and Criticism], by contrast, Schelling not only argues that poetic art is endowed with its own excellences but that poetry has the power to succeed where philosophical discourse fails. It is in the poetic arts, as exemplified in the art of tragic drama, in which human knowledge reaches its final heights, and not within the confines of rational discourse alone” (George, “A Monstrous Absolute,” in Schelling Now: Contemporary Readings, ed. Jason Wirth (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005) 144).
whether truly or falsely,” although “most imaginations turn out to be false.” The possibility for the Platonic distinction between ψαντασμα and εικόν is not explicitly entertained here; but the larger necessity for thinking ‘in’ likenesses, together with the caveat about falsehood, comprise a core tension that will pass into the disposition of the metaphysical tradition. When Plutarch recounts Cicero’s effort to “compose and translate philosophical dialogues and to render logical and physical terms into the Roman idiom” the first term noted is phantasia. Cartesian intellectualism, Spinozistic rationalism, and Leibnizian dogmatism, to be sure, exhibit the modernist wrangling with this state of affairs, with Descartes assigning the imagination (imaginatio) to the mediation between mind and body, Spinoza casting it as a short-cut to logical contradiction, and Leibniz balking at the deceptive, if persistent, status of images masquerading as rational ideas. But it is David Hume’s summary empiricist account of the mimetic fiction that in one swoop establishes the representational centrality of imagination yet assails reason’s purported autonomy on this very basis. In his A Treatise of Human Nature (1739-1740) the imagination is that psychological vulnerability by which metaphysical reason contrives to translate distinct perceptions and impressions into unified entities. Likening the mind to a “theatre” and contending (contra Plato) that “thought is still more variable than our sight,” Hume holds that the imagination is an intrinsic “bias” by which thought makes the mistake of attributing identity, for example, to what is in effect merely a sequence of perceptions. Conceptions of self, soul, substance, and cause arise from the “smooth and easy” connections of reason which “disguise the variation” in impressions, advance a “customary association of ideas,” and thereby “gives rise to some fiction or imaginary principle of union.” By catching the imagination in this subtle work, Hume believes, we are pressed back upon a position of skepticism in

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21 Ibid., 252-254, 260, 262.
which we must confess the contingency of metaphysical principles and exchange the ambitions of Descartes’ ‘foundation’ for the modesty of a “labyrinth.” Removed from truth we may well be, but the illusions of subjectivism are all we have.

To say, as Kant does, that Hume “interrupted my dogmatic slumber” is not only an admission of the questionability of *a priori* principles (such as cause/effect), but also suggests a more specific alertness to the difficulties attending any treatment of the imagination. Within the scope of the critical project, as we shall see, the positive accounts of the transcendental imagination do not escape moments of apparent hesitation – as though the precautions of Plato and Hume still sound from the margins of Kant’s architectonic and have only to point to the rising enthusiasm of idealism in the 1780s as evidence for continued firmness. A brief look at the broader context of Kant’s *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (1798), which spans more than thirty years surrounding the critical project, illustrates Kant’s hesitating resolve on the matter. He observes, on the one hand, how the “power of imagination swarms in one who studies by candle-light in the still of the night. . . or wanders about in his room building castles in the air. But everything that seems important to him then loses its entire importance the following morning after a night’s sleep.” And yet, he will later position this ‘power’ in the heart of *genius* – which “flashes as a momentary phenomenon, appearing at intervals and then disappearing again; it is not a light that can be kindled at will and kept burning for as long as one pleases, but an explosive flash that a happy impulse of the spirit lures from the *productive power of imagination*.” In the first reference the imagination ‘builds’ its images (*bilder*) by candlelight in the dim reveries of night. But in the second reference it illuminates a greater flash of poetic discovery. There are then two ‘lights’ by which we see the

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22 Ibid., 633.
25 Ibid., 180-181 (p. 74), my emphasis.
26 Ibid., 318n (p. 220), my emphasis.
imagination at work and two distinct ‘depths’ from which this power arises. When, in his
*Prolegomena*, Kant describes the science of transcendental philosophy as “shrouded in obscurity,”
and the Schematism of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding as “indispensable,” he may well have had in mind the peculiar nature of this light and the function it serves amid the faculties.

The foregoing survey of our theme is not exhaustive, but affords a backdrop against which our study of the imagination, and the question of the poetic imagination specifically, will stand out in sharp relief. What follows is a brief account of how I will navigate this investigation of a matter that is at once obscure and indispensable.

**III. Project Overview**

*Chapter One* furthers the above account by examining the status of the imagination within the domain of Kant’s critical project. Primarily oriented toward the *First* and *Third* Critiques, I highlight the nature of *aisthēsis* in intuition, his appeal to the transcendental and productive imagination as a fundamental synthetic power of the subject, and the expansive repurposing of imagination in judgments of taste and the sublime. More than a mere elucidation, I establish the bases from which Schelling and Heidegger derive a Kantian point of departure for their own attunements to imagination at times in which their own decisive and distinct paths of philosophical questioning enter periods of pronounced refinement. To position these paths, I emphasize how (i) for Schelling, the Kantian imagination provides intuition with a means of approaching the Absolute and unifying theoretical and practical philosophy; and (ii) for Heidegger, Kant’s ‘root’ comports with the itinerary of fundamental ontology in reawakening the question of the meaning of ‘being’ (*Seinsfrage*) in a way that seeks to avoid the Modern metaphysics of subjectivity and representational thinking, as well as the longstanding prejudices that ascribe to being superlative universality, indefinability, and conceptual self-evidence.

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27 Kant, *Prolegomena*, 278-279, 315-316 (pp. 26, 63).
Chapter Two investigates the expansive scope of the imagination as a matter for the ambitions of system and the problem of identity in Schelling’s early work. Highlighting the accelerating poeticization of this faculty in conjunction with Schelling’s treatment of intuition, spirit, nature, and history, I argue that his passage through self-consciousness, identity, and indifference is constituted by a heightened communication between the terrain of Einbildung’s productivity and reason’s own aesthetic possibilities. Aesthetic intuition, artistic genius, unconscious production, and absolute reason are matters situated within a movement from transcendental reflection and Fichtean subjectivity to the mark of Ineinbildung in a grounded system. The drive to position reason in the standpoint of absolute identity is, beyond the mere assumption of intellectual intuition, a strenuous appeal to the elemental life of creative production and poetic consciousness.

Chapter Three brings us to the intersection of Schelling’s 1809 treatise on The Essence of Human Freedom, a work of thought which reexamines the grounds for a living idealist system and, so doing, crystallizes the matter of imagination both as a force of ontological creation and as a hindrance to the style of inquiry bent on delimiting the horizon of essential becoming. To underscore how this text represents a highpoint in Schelling’s relationship to the imagination, as well as a point of tension with respect to the poetic possibilities of philosophical reasoning itself, I will elucidate the importance of the divine imagination in Schelling’s account of God’s self-revelation, the poietic framework for Schelling’s ground/existence distinction in this account, and the priority of the ‘word’ in sustaining the inspired unity of the ‘whole.’ I will also argue that the work of measure Schelling ascribes to this ‘word’ signals an increasingly inspired and aesthetic bearing of thought which rivals the assumptions of imagination in representative and mechanistic modes of metaphysical inquiry. In this way the imagination is not simply thematized as integral to the matters of ground and existence, but is indeed exercised in the dialogical and poetic performance of a path of thought closely attuned to the directives of its subject.
The treatise of 1809 is also an intersection through which Heidegger returns to the fore of our discussion. The aim of Chapter Four is to examine the significance of Schelling’s study for Heidegger in his 1936 lecture course on this text and the milieu of idealism in which it stands. Though the matter of imagination is not as explicit in this course as it was in the Kantbuch, I will show that it comprises both the promise and peril of the fugal impulse Heidegger finds in Schelling’s turn toward the limit of metaphysics. The necessity for fundamental ontology deduced in his reading of Kant is, in his reading of Schelling, radicalized toward a deduction for the being-historical thinking so often ascribed to Heidegger in this period. If, as I argue, he celebrates the impulse in Schelling toward the abyssal yet creative instantiation of Dasein in the jointure of ground and existence, Heidegger will also identify in Schelling’s domain of measurement the very embodiment of idealism’s ultimate impasse for thought. Elucidating his reading thus wins for us a means of exploring how and why the imagination lacks the luster it enjoyed for the Heidegger of 1929. Oriented by material from his later Nietzsche Lectures, I show that Heidegger’s reluctance in this later period owes to a more specific concentration on the obfuscations of what he calls the poetizing essence of reason – the all too figurative and commanding reliance on an ontology of will in which the creative character of reason sees its own reflection. Heidegger thus reads Schelling in a moment wherein he is counting the cost of the Kantian creative inheritance, and looking to untwist the concealing drama of poetizing measures into the more revealing and projective measures of poetic imagination.

From this point of intersection in chapters three and four, Chapter Five explores the translation of our theme into the questions of essence and origin so decisive for Heidegger in the aftermath of his “On the Essence of Truth” (1930) and Introduction to Metaphysics (1935): poetry, art, and the depth of measure attending the event of the truth of Being in the strife and bestowal of its instantiating field of openness. If I allow the imagination to have a certain resonance in these matters that themselves aspire to surmount the ‘productions’ of reason’s poetizing craft, this does not mean I
protest too much on behalf of a theme that is very much in question, but neither am I content to gloss Heidegger’s retreat from the imagination (properly speaking) as a minor episode in a larger tale of ‘turning.’ By focusing on his Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry (1936) and “The Origin of the Work of Art” (1935/36), I indicate the elements through which Heidegger intends a reorientation and re-tasking of the poetic imagination as the very touchstone for thought’s inceptual ‘leap’ into another beginning; namely, I address Heidegger’s concern to resolve the dilemma of production by way of the creative bestowal of projection, his specification of the fugal event as an event of poetic and artistic work, his opposing the measure of poetic naming and workly strife to figurative representation and aesthetic reductionism, and his effort to retrieve in the endurance of poetic work a basis for Dasein’s resolute dwelling and thought’s questioning. In short, these texts accentuate how the imagination is both questionable with respect to ascertaining what a poetic work discloses, and question-worthy with respect to composing the clearing of truth as the openness of beings and the founding of Beyng in a work. To speak of a poetic imagination in this milieu now means to speak of the life of measure and creative possibility signaled in Schelling’s ‘impulse’ but untwisted from his ‘impasse.’

Chapter Six sustains the attention to measure and creative impulse by concentrating on Heidegger’s larger turn of poetizing from the command of reason’s production (the problematic guise of the imagination since chapter three) to the projection (dichtender Entwurf) distilled in his essential investigations of poetry and art. Evident in his Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event) (1936-38), I argue, is that the anticipated ‘crossing’ into another beginning arises as a ‘work’ of the poetic imagination, an apprenticeship of thought to the path and place of poetizing projection. The task of thinking underway in this text is an endeavor to carry the best elements of Schelling’s ‘impulse’ beyond his metaphysical ‘impasse’ by recalibrating the gauge of philosophical questioning, essential measuring, and aesthesis in an attunement to Beyng’s word: Ereignis. I highlight the function of plight (die Not) in this exercise as the creative release of basic measures, and the
projection of the *Da* of Da-sein as the grounding exposure to imagination as the domain of transfiguration. The return of imagination in this text is by no means explicit, but by accounting for the priority of *measure* at the helm of what is to be *creative* thinking we shall observe how Da-sein’s instantiation in the playing-field (*Spielraum*) of *Ereignis* consists in a work of saying, configuration, and measure-taking justifiably termed ‘the poetic imagination.’ A brief look at Heidegger’s “Poetically Man Dwells” (1951) confirms that his own thinking from the ‘meantime’ of the crossing is a path of questioning and dwelling shaped by the artistry of poetizing projection, and thus an active recovery of imagination as a domain of inceptual *poieisis*.

I *conclude* with some brief reflections on the development of our theme, the importance of Schelling for Heidegger, and what regarding Schelling and Heidegger as philosophers of the poetic imagination may mean for contemporary interpretations of their thought.
Chapter One
Art of the Root: The Kantian Imagination and New Possibilities for Thought

Imagination. . . differs from sensation and from thought; but without sensation there can be no imagination, and without imagination there can be no belief.
–Aristotle, De Anima

My primary goal in this chapter is to ascertain the function and standing of the imagination in the architecture of Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason and in the aesthetic terrain of his Critique of Judgment.¹ This task is by no means equivalent to reporting on positions made plain in the material. What is evident is that Kant’s transcendental turn includes a surprising reinstatement of the imagination as mediating intuition and understanding, an appeal to the transcendental or productive imagination as a fundamental synthetic power of the subject. I will highlight the role of this power within the aisthēsis of intuition, but will elucidate important tensions between Kant’s treatment of the nature of synthesis in the A and B versions of his Transcendental Deduction, as well as the work of imagination in the Schematism. In the third Critique, I argue, the initially uncertain standing of the imagination is displaced into a pronounced repurposing of the power in the judgments of taste and the sublime. Here we find a new resolve to embrace and delineate the function of what was (arguably) the “unknown root” (A15/B29) of knowledge in the first Critique. This expansive horizon of the mediating, synthetic power is, I contend, a decisive matter of engagement for Schelling and Heidegger in periods fundamental to the direction of their philosophical itineraries. For Schelling, the Kantian imagination provides the basis for connecting theoretical and practical philosophy and arming intuition with a means of approaching the Absolute. For Heidegger, it furnishes a justification for the necessary work of fundamental ontology in extending the impulse of the Seinsfrage such that the continued recovery and repetition (Wiederholung) of this constitutive question will find in ‘imagination’ a name for a central preconceptual element which the common structures of evidence

and judgment have forgotten or failed to formulate properly, and which must be remembered in a
decisive way. I will note how, in each case, our thinkers turn to Kant for a retrieval of the
imagination, but assign to it a scope of necessity and possibility beyond the letter of Kant’s project.

I. Concealed in the Depths: The Elemental Art of Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason

The term “imagination” first appears in the Critique of Pure Reason (CPR) in a brief and
negative light. In §7 of the Transcendental Aesthetic, Kant speaks in the voice of those who might
oppose the a priori status of space and time as “the pure forms of all sensible intuition,” maintaining
instead their “inherent” absolute reality (CPR, A39-40/B56-57). According to such a view, “the a
priori concepts of space and time are merely creatures of the imagination [Einbildungskraft], whose
source must really be sought in experience, the imagination framing out of the relations abstracted
from experience something that does indeed contain what is general in those relations, but which
cannot exist without the restrictions which nature has attached to them” (A40/B57). Though indirect
and unthematized, the plausible remark by such “men of intelligence” (A36/B53) exhibits an
assumed association between ‘imagination’ and error, perhaps fantasy, and thus places a subtle
question mark beside the term. How would Kant, when pressed, treat the imagination, its ‘framing,’
and relation to experience or otherwise? How might his critics respond when Kant will allow, for
example, that some intuitive representations “can very well be the product merely of the imagination
(as in dreams and delusions)” (A226/B278), and yet will also assert that all empirical knowledge
“involves the synthesis of the manifold by imagination” (A201/B246)? Behind such a question, and
before attempting any investigation of Schelling and Heidegger’s positions on the theme, lies the
need to identify those steps in Kant’s inquiry which give rise to the imagination as a discovery, a
matter of hesitation, and a persistent point of possibility in transcendental philosophy.

In his effort to establish a science that will determine the possibility, principles, and extent of
all a priori knowledge in CPR, Kant checks the driving momentum and irresistible “charm of
extending our knowledge” (A4/B8) by rethinking the ground and authority of metaphysical thought.
So doing, his subject matter is, in part, not the nature of things, but rather “the understanding which passes judgment upon the nature of things; and this understanding... only in respect of it’s a priori knowledge” (A13/B26). Delimited thus, the negative and positive aspects of his critical project stand as two sides of an overarching necessity. To satisfy the metaphysical necessity for a priori synthetic knowledge, while nevertheless remaining “within the bounds of possible experience,” is to excavate “that transcendental truth which precedes all empirical truth and makes it possible” (A146/B185) and thereby introduce “the system of all principles of pure reason” (A13/B27). But to speak of transcendental truth also requires a form of argumentation that will disclose a shift in the locus of validity, and the objectivity of objects, to the side of consciousness in its constitutive work. Such argumentation, says Kant, will lead to “knowledge which is occupied not so much with objects as with the mode of our knowledge of objects in so far as this mode of knowledge is possible a priori (B81). This focus on the structure of experience in terms of the a priori components of cognition (after the manner of the function of judgments with respect to the truth of objects) treats both the conceptual and sensible elements of knowing without surrendering reason’s capacity for determination.2 And Kant’s revolutionary measure, along such lines, consists in his stricture that the conditions “required for such determination are not, however, to be found in experience, and the concept itself is therefore transcendent” (A571/B599).

To exhibit the necessity of synthetic a priori knowledge by way of transcendental argumentation, and thereby disclose the underlying operations within any knowledge of objects of possible experience, Kant must provide a survey of the available terrain. That he names the leading division of CPR “Transcendental Doctrine of Elements” (Transcendentale Elementarlehre) already indicates the pronounced adoption of what John Sallis calls an ‘architectural metaphorics.’ Kant’s

2 Quite the contrary, what transcendental argumentation appreciates is the manner in which reason, says Kant, ideally aims “at complete determination in accordance with a priori rules. Accordingly it thinks for itself an object which it regards as being completely determinable in accordance with principles” (CPR, A571/B599). Schiller observes: “In this, as in everything else, critical philosophy has opened up the way whereby empiricism can be led back to principles, and speculation back to experience” (Letters, 103n).
project, says Sallis, “is to prepare for the construction of the edifice of metaphysics” and to instigate this preparation by way of what Kant calls “an estimate of the materials.” Though, as Bernard Freydberg observes, “[t]he language of the CPR is the vocabulary of Kant’s tradition, especially its rationalist side,” the metaphorical disposition places the security of this very tradition in question. What the material estimation intends, explains Sallis, is not “the construction of a new metaphysical edifice,” but primarily a reckoning with what Kant calls “a ground that is completely overgrown [verwachsen]” (Axxi). Beneath the tangled thicket of metaphysical language and dogma lies a ground in need of recovery, of uprooting one could say, if its structure is to stand. The architecture depends on the excavation, much the same as a system of pure reason depends on a transcendental movement before/beneath empirical experience to the level of cognitive capacities or roots – most famously, to the “two stems of human knowledge, namely, sensibility and understanding, and the “unknown root” from which they may commonly “spring” (aber uns unbekannten Wurzel entspringen) (A15/B29).

In view of such a “phenomenon of depth” beneath any edifice, the notion of a subjective and a priori ‘grounds’ for a necessary unity of appearances, and an original synthetic unity within the cognitive powers of the mind, testifies to an elemental itinerary that means to excavate conditions and possibilities – or rather, the transcendental conditions for the possibility of empirical knowledge. The common orientation for following this itinerary is of course the collaborative work of the faculties: sensibility, understanding, judgment. As Kant explains: “Sensibility gives us the forms (of intuition), but understanding gives the rules” (A126, my emphasis); and judgment is the event of relation and subsumption by which “given modes of knowledge are brought to the objective unity of

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apperception” (B141) such that the designs of these intrinsic powers may be stamped with a valid structuring of a given state of affairs. Delineating the precise function of these powers within the scope of their transcendental interrelation is the matter on which the constitution of knowledge depends. We will come soon to the question of the elemental status of the imagination as a faculty, as the productive force of synthesis within/beneath the transcendental unity of apperception, and as the schematizing link by which sensible intuition and concepts of the understanding converge in the transcendental doctrine of judgment.

But it is important to note that before Kant treats imagination in any strict sense, there is already an emphasis on the activity of ‘form’ or formation in the function and essence of intuition. To begin the elemental study with a Transcendental Aesthetic is, in part, to echo Plato’s own initial approach (in the Republic) to ‘truth’ and ‘the good’ by means of aesthetic experience – namely, matters of sight, light, and beauty. That is not to say that Kant (or Plato for that matter) means to assure safe passage to the summit of the rational on the provisional stepping-stones of the empirical, but that a ‘complete measure’ of knowing must embrace the aesthetic constitution of the knower. With this opening in view, Kant underscores the receptive passivity of sensibility and the flow of the manifold into the matrix of intuition. More specifically, he contends that the form of an object’s appearance lies “ready for the sensations a priori in the mind, and so must allow of being considered apart from all sensation” (A20/B34). Consciousness is thus aesthetic, not simply impressionable, in its basic activity. Insofar as intuition is “the representation of appearance” (A42/B59) the capacity to form/figure signals the fundamental role of aisthesis within cognition. To attain true knowledge this disposition to form and representation will require that the manifold of pure intuition be synthesized “by means of the imagination” (A78-79/B104). Prior to examining such synthesis, one must appreciate how the capacity to form or figure, in the immediacy of representation which defines intuition, is of course rooted in the pure intuitions of space and time. Briefly stated: space, as necessarily prior to any perception of an object, enframes the external appearance of objects such that
they are valid as representations; *time*, as the “intuition of ourselves and of our inner state” (A33/B50), is that inner sense which contains the simultaneity of appearances against the backdrop of infinity. But there is a limiting factor alongside these elements: “The true correlate of sensibility, the thing in itself, is not known, and cannot be known, through these representations; and in experience no question is ever asked in regard to it” (A30/B45). Here it is important to recognize that Kant’s account of aesthetic intuition – within such a phenomenal limit – worries not about being twice or thrice ‘removed’ from the ‘truth.’ The assumed status of the thing in itself poses a limit point for sensibility (as well as understanding), but intuition and the elemental artistry of sense are, in fact, intrinsic to the determination of “transcendental truth” (A146/B185). What then is the place of imagination in this larger determination?

II. The A Deduction: Imagination in the Work of Synthesis

On the other side of the Aesthetic stands the Transcendental Analytic, and with it the translation by/in the *understanding* of the intuitive material into the material of thought. But to elucidate this translation we must remain in the “the dark origin” or depth of its juncture, and this means attending to the matter of *synthesis* within which the imagination stands out in sharp relief. To do so, it is vital not to lose sight of the relational context in which Kant presents sensibility and understanding; the temptation, and the source of much consternation in the literature, is to treat them as utterly distinct epistemological apparatuses – two continents within cognition that must be surveyed in isolation from one another, then bridged by a narrow platform. Kant’s own presentation tends to invite such an analysis insofar as we follow him down through intuition, up through pure concepts, and back and forth by way of the Schematism en route to the possibility of empirical knowledge. But to assume that the divisions of his text comprise a ready grid for his subject matter is to take a dynamic relation, render its elements static, and deprive oneself of the alertness to transcendental relations within which synthesis is understood. Returning to the notion of ‘grounding’

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in both its logical and earthen aspects, intuitions and concepts are elements of the same soil, wherein synthesis is the agent of growth.

Kant explains that transcendental logic “has lying before it a manifold of a priori sensibility, presented by transcendental aesthetic, as material for the concepts of pure understanding” (A76-77/B102). The traditional positioning of potentiality and actuality is clear, but turns on a necessary activity: “But if this manifold is to be known, the spontaneity of our thought requires that it be gone through in a certain way, taken up, and connected. This act I name synthesis” (A77/B102). Synthesis is thus introduced as a necessity from the retrospection of knowledge: it must be the case. But the necessity hastens into a fact: “Synthesis of a manifold,” he explains, “is what first gives rise to knowledge” (A77/B103). And what is required by the spontaneity of thought, once secured, nevertheless rebounds upon thought with a further, more obscure, necessity: “Synthesis in general, as we shall hereafter see, is the mere result [Wirkung] of the power of imagination, a blind but indispensible function of the soul, without which we should have no knowledge whatsoever, but of which we are scarcely ever conscious” (A78/B103, my emphasis). Kant’s ‘hereafter’ is a promise to clarify and defend this necessity, one which even the most reluctant readers of Hume would have met with suspicion. The imagination, it seems, is what accomplishes the synthesis of the manifold upon which the concepts of the understanding and “knowledge properly so called” depend (A78/B103). For a tradition that privileges sight and presence and is loathe to shadows, Kant has embraced a fundamental, figurative blindness. Such an imagination is already irreducible to an imitative facility

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9 This observation that we are scarcely conscious of the imagination in its workings is echoed Kant’s Anthropology: “To observe the various acts of representative power in myself, when I summon them, is indeed worth reflection; it is necessary and useful for logic and metaphysics.—But to wish to eavesdrop on oneself when they come into the mind unbidden and on their own (this happens through the play of the power of the imagination when it is unintentionally meditating) constitutes a reversal of the natural order of the faculty of knowledge, because then the principles of thought do not lead the way (as they should), but rather follow behind.” See Anthropology From a Pragmatic Point of View, trans. Robert Louden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) 22. Kant’s lectures, published in 1798, were delivered during courses between 1772-1796.
trafficking in likeness or semblances (and is, obviously, a transcendental as opposed to artistic or
sophistic visual or linguistic power), though it retains its ‘productive’ cast. To trace Kant’s
‘hereafter’ elucidation of this necessity within synthesis I will remain close to the text, beginning
with the Transcendental Deduction of the A edition. So doing, I will highlight how Kant’s descriptive
account of synthesis as a condition for the possibility of knowledge allows him to identify the
imagination in terms of its original and originating activity, and accordingly to title it transcendental
and productive.

By way of introducing “The Deduction of the Pure Concepts of Understanding” in Book I of
the Analytic, Kant recasts the relational elements of the mind in a three-fold division centered on the
synthetic operation:

There are three original sources (capacities or faculties of the soul) which contain the conditions
of the possibility of all experience, and cannot themselves be derived from any other faculty of
mind, namely, sense, imagination, and apperception. Upon them are grounded (1) the synopsis of
the manifold a priori through sense; (2) the synthesis of this manifold through imagination; finally
(3) the unity of this synthesis through original apperception. All these faculties have a
transcendental (as well as an empirical) employment which concerns the form alone, and is
possible a priori. (CPR A95)¹⁰

The appearance of the imagination in these remarks would appear to forestall any dualistic reading of
sensibility and understanding. In the very least it is an invitation to regard the imagination as a
necessary route – a passage through which the manifold of intuition may be “taken up into
consciousness” (A116) as a synthesis that will then be unified in apperception. On the basis of the A
Deduction (the “subjective deduction,” Axvi-xvii), this route must be understood as a subjective
cognitive power required by the larger demands for unity and combination on the side of
understanding. To justify the application of the categories to the manifold, that is, the transcendental
unity of apperception must be cast as a story of syntheses vectoring towards the unity of self-
consciousness in cognition. All of this of course takes place on the level of the a priori, which means
that any eventual employment of synthetic a priori judgments will owe a substantial debt to the depth

¹⁰ This passage does not appear in the B edition of CPR, a revision we will have cause to wonder about.
of imagination. The representations absorbed through intuition will reach the understanding only if there is this “synthesis through imagination” (A119) to which apperception may assign a unifying principle. The unity of representations in ‘my’ consciousness, as it were, becomes synthetic and therefore graspable by the understanding on the basis of a production via the imagination. Kant explains:

This synthetic unity presupposes or includes a synthesis, and if the former is to be *a priori* necessary, the synthesis must also be *a priori*. The transcendental unity of apperception thus relates to the pure synthesis of imagination, as an *a priori* condition of the possibility of all combination of the manifold in one knowledge. But only the *productive* synthesis of the imagination can take place *a priori*; the reproductive rests upon empirical conditions. Thus the principle of the necessary unity of pure (productive) synthesis of imagination, prior to apperception, is the ground of the possibility of all knowledge, especially of experience. (*CPR* A118)

To be clear, this characterization of the imagination is not an empirical survey of concrete modalities within consciousness (as though such a thing were possible), but is an account of a dynamic that must by *necessity* come to pass on the level of conditions already delineated according to outer and inner intuition. The dependence of apperception on its a priori ground, specifically the “*a priori* combination of the manifold,” allows Kant to describe this “synthesis of the manifold in imagination” as “transcendental” (A118). Argument on the basis of conditions of possibility is not, however, argumentation reducible to hypotheses. The place/status of the transcendental imagination, and its productive synthesis, is not a supposition, but is demonstrable within the transcendental framework on the basis of what the Aesthetic has shown, on the one hand, and what is mirrored by the empirical, or reproductive, imagination on the other. Kant’s broader construal of imperative necessity is evidenced the following statement: “The empirical faculty of knowledge in man must therefore contain an understanding which relates to all objects of the senses, although only by means of intuition and of its synthesis through imagination” (A119).\(^\text{11}\) This says: to know objects

\(^\text{11}\) Couched in this language of empirical sensation is a more basic reference to perception, the object of so much Humean skepticism. Kant does not dodge the critical import to be shouldered by imagination, even from this empirical point of departure. Rather, working backwards from perception, he makes the same maneuver through
objectively requires pure concepts of understanding (the categories), and these in turn require a sense
manifold to combine, which itself depends on the productive synthesis of the imagination. A more
precise, ‘elemental’ rendering of the same point explains that the “unity of apperception in relation to
the synthesis of imagination is the understanding; and this same unity, with references to the
transcendental synthesis of the imagination, the pure understanding” (A119). Understanding is thus
disclosed in terms of the relationship between apperception and imagination. Even if one were to
work from the ‘grounded’ level of empirical or reproductive imagination in terms of the association
of appearances (as in the Humean critique), this same transcendental necessity arises:

Since the imagination is itself a faculty of a priori synthesis, we assign to it the title, productive
imagination. In so far as it aims at nothing but necessary unity in the synthesis of what is
manifold in appearance, it may be entitled the transcendental function of imagination. That the
affinity of appearances, and with it their association, and through this, in turn, their reproduction
according to laws, and so [as involving these various factors] experience itself, should only be
possible by means of this transcendental function of the imagination, is indeed strange, but is
none the less an obvious consequence of the preceding argument. For without this transcendental
function no concepts of objects would together make up a unitary experience. (CPR A123)

When Kant ‘titles’ or ‘entitles’ his operating concepts it amounts to his placing a signature of
necessity beneath them. That he does this for the ‘imagination,’ the ‘productive imagination,’ and the
‘transcendental synthesis of imagination’ no less than three times in the A Deduction (and three more
in the B Deduction) is telling. Whatever hesitations and qualifications will arise, it is correct to say
that the terrain of a priori necessity places Einbildungskraft and Erkenntnisse in close proximity. And
it is with such proximity in view that Freydberg goes so far as to contend: “When the most rigorous
look is taken at the Kantian text, it must be conceded that it is imagination-driven, even if

synthesis to the imagination: “Now, since every appearance contains a manifold, and since different perceptions
therefore occur in the mind separately and singly, a combination of them, such as they cannot have in sense itself, is
demanded. There must therefore exist in us an active faculty for the synthesis of this manifold. To this faculty I give
the title, imagination. Its action, when immediately directed upon perceptions, I entitle apprehension. Since
imagination has to bring the manifold of intuition into the form of an image, it must previously have taken the
impressions up into its activity, that is, have apprehended them” (A120). That he has the Humean project in mind is
evident in this rather understated footnote: “Psychologists have hitherto failed to realize that imagination is a
necessary ingredient of perception itself. This is due partly to the fact that that faculty has been limited to
reproduction, partly to the belief that the senses not only supply impressions but also combine them so as to generate
images of objects. For that purpose something more than the mere receptivity of impressions is undoubtedly
required, namely, a function for the synthesis of them” (Ibid., note, my emphases).
imagination is seldom thematized. Both synthesis and the connection of concepts and judgments to
sensation are its unique work.”12 Kant himself appears to concede as much when he allows that the
“pure imagination, which conditions all a priori knowledge, is thus one of the fundamental faculties
of the human soul” (A124); and when, in the B Deduction, he declares imagination to be “a faculty
which determines the sensibility a priori; and its synthesis of intuitions, conforming as it does to the
categories, must be a transcendental synthesis of imagination” (B151-152). In this way we know the
imagination by virtue of the effects of synthesis, but what we know of synthesis follows from the
function of other necessary factors constituting the drive toward unitary experience. When, for
example, Kant explains that pure apperception “must be added to pure imagination, in order to
render its function intellectual” (A124, my emphasis), he signals how the essence of this
productive/transcendental element is vital to consciousness with respect to how it may be
employed.13

Understood by virtue of such employment, a certain ambiguity begins to shadow this abiding
necessity, obscuring our efforts to treat the imagination in its singular function. Resurfacing from his
descriptive excavation of the imagination, Kant observes that the “the formal unity of experience,
and therewith all objective validity (truth) of empirical knowledge,” and indeed even the unity
bestowed upon the “synthesis of imagination,” is ultimately grounded upon the categories (A124-
125). That the productive imagination is vital to the possibility of pure concepts of understanding
remains without question, but the culmination of the A Deduction executes a step beyond these
depths of synthesis toward the integrity of original apperception and the “connection and unity (in the
representation of an object)” (A130) furnished by the categories. Can one speak of the
indispensability of the faculty of imagination – of its creative, synthesizing, formative work – in

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12 Freyberg, Imagination and Depth, 16.
13 Sensibility and understanding, he continues, “must stand in necessary relation with each other through the
mediation of this transcendental function of imagination” if there is to be empirical knowledge and experience
(A124).
terms of reason’s intrinsic, elemental capital, or only in the terms of a discourse calculated to deduce the categories? Must the latter, larger discourse attenuate the former? And this, as we shall see with Heidegger, begs the larger question of whether the imagination carries the transcendental project beyond itself, or whether it remains simply one layer of synthesis and mediation in the larger outgrowth of cognition.

III. The B Deduction and its Aftermath: Imagination in the Drift of Combination

If in the A Deduction the activity of the imagination is disclosed as a necessary function of the soul obtaining within the synthesis of the manifold, the B Deduction privileges the work of combination (conjuntio, Verbindung), thus treating imagination more from the side of understanding and the unity of apperception. I will now highlight how such combination, regarded as a spontaneous act, appears to eclipse the emphasis on the productive imagination’s activity/effect with a more direct elaboration of apperception’s synthetic unity. In order to account for and assess the ambiguous status of the imagination resulting from this drift, I will address the effects of an escalating need for determinability in Kant’s discussion, namely, the isolation of sensibility, the lacuna of imagination, and the partitioning of synthesis.\textsuperscript{14} I will then compare these findings with an interpretation of the

\textsuperscript{14} Though I am working principally from the level of close textual comparison, an historical note is in order insofar as it bears on the motivations informing Kant’s A and B Deductions. As is well known, in 1782 there appeared the rather scathing ‘Göttingen Review’ of the first Critique. The review, appearing anonymously in the Zugabe zu den Göttinger gelehrte Anzeigen, was attributed to Christian Garve and edited at length by his associate, J. G. Feder. Garve charged Kant’s idealism with succumbing to a Berkeleyian reduction of “the world and ourselves into mere representations” (Beiser, German Idealism: The Struggle Against Subjectivism 1781-1801 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008, 2002) 89). Kant’s purported distinctions between the spatio-temporal reality of things and the determinative faculties of subjective representation amounted, so it goes, to an unconvincing difference that did little to overcome the otherwise apparent “identification of the objects of consciousness with ideas” (89). This is not the place to investigate the dispute in the detail it deserves, but it is worth nothing that Kant replied to the review rather bitterly in a 1783 Appendix to his Prolegomena. Among his concerns is that the charge of subjective idealism overlooks the core question of synthetic a priori judgments, a question that any careful reading of the Transcendental Deduction would evidence. The association with Berkeley, regardless, was potentially devastating to the effect that Kant’s work, says Beiser, “would be dismissed as a radical solipsism or Egoismus that doubts or denies the existence of everything except one’s own self” (90). Given this concern, and given the precarious association of ‘imagination’ with subjective idealism, it is safe to assume that when Kant set out to author the B version of the Deduction he took pains to minimize his treatment of the representative power and thereby remove some of the basis for the Göttingen misreading, and those likewise prejudiced. This context clearly informs the ‘ambiguity’ I attribute to the comparison of the two versions, but does not explain it in full or decide outright the question of Einbildungskraft which remains before us.
Transcendental Schematism, and determine the character of possibility attending the matter of imagination in the broader extent of CPR.

Since Kant will follow this rigorous justification of the categories (as applicable to the manifold of intuition) with an account of transcendental judgment relying heavily upon cognitive connectivity or connections, it is unsurprising that he will prepare the way with a discourse of combination that serves the spirit of determination. Any residue of obscurity still attached to the work of synthesis must then be polished clean, redirected toward the structural integrity befitting a consciousness that is a priori equipped to employ its understanding in a valid manner. For this reason the B Deduction opens with a distinction between sensibility and understanding on the precise basis of combination. Though the manifold of representations is given in intuition through the form of affectivity, sensibility cannot exercise combination. As itself a power of representation (not that of the manifold proper), combination is an “act of spontaneity” which “must be entitled understanding” insofar as it “cannot be given through objects” (B129-130). More specifically, combination “is representation of the synthetic unity of the manifold” (B130-131). The singularity of such combination is, again, unsurprising, as the A Deduction already alerted us to the operations of unity on the side of understanding. What is surprising, however, is that Kant does not (in his initial discussion) here cite the crucial work of the transcendental synthesis of the imagination in rendering the manifold open to combination. Instead, he moves the spontaneous nature of combination further from sensibility and closer to the unity of apperception – what he entitles “the transcendental unity of self-consciousness” (B132) – stretching the mediating synthesis of the transcendental imagination so thin as to appear almost irrelevant. Observe the lacuna in the following assertion: “[Combination] is an affair of the understanding alone, which itself is nothing but the faculty of combining a priori, and of bringing the manifold of given representations under the unity of apperception. The principle of apperception is the highest principle in the whole sphere of human knowledge” (B134-135). The absence of any mention of the productive imagination in terms of such a ‘bringing’ is odd. And
when, continuing, he speaks of the unity of apperception as “synthetic” (B137) one wonders if this is meant to capture what was the synthesis previously performed by the imagination (see A95 noted above). The inevitable sense of ‘activity’ within any work of ‘synthesis’ has prompted Kant to move his emphasis toward the combination and spontaneity of an understanding safely anchored in “the principle of the original synthetic unity of apperception” (B137). As noted, Kant did hold in the Analytic of Concepts that it is the understanding which ‘brings’ the synthesis to concepts (A78/B103), but he there also emphasized the synthesis itself as an act “by means of the imagination” (A79/B104).

The Question of ‘Elsewhere’

There are two immediate ways to account for this ambiguity. The first is to say that the B Deduction’s strict concern with an ‘objective’ demonstration incorporates the ‘result/effect’ (Wirkung) of the transcendental imagination without needing to revisit the matter. If so, the transcendental synthesis is not jettisoned, but has given way to the ‘synthesis’ attributed to apperception by virtue of the escalating need for its ‘unity’ to shoulder the burden of objectivity in judgments. Kant emphasizes his alertness to this necessity in stating: “This [objectivity] is what is intended by the copula ‘is.’ It is employed to distinguish the objective unity of given representations from the subjective. It indicates their relation to original apperception, and its necessary unity” (B142). We may surmise that any mere mention of Einbildungskraft could be misinterpreted as empirical (‘reproductive’ in the strict sense), and thus an erstwhile stress on the transcendental architecture. When describing the categories as rules for understanding, Kant specifies their power in terms of “the act whereby it brings the synthesis of a manifold, given to it from elsewhere in intuition, to the unity of apperception” (B145, my emphasis). If this account of the ambiguity is to hold, so much depends on this gift ‘from elsewhere.’ If it is a placeholder for the productive imagination then we have our clarification. If, however, it expresses an immediate leap from manifold to combination then, as a second explanation, we must understand all synthesis as a work of
understanding, and wonder whether the faculty of imagination was, in effect, wholly consigned to the passivity of sensibility all along. This second possibility gains traction when Kant proceeds to draw the distinction between sensibility and the unity of apperception in terms of the concepts of the understanding: “The synthesis or combination [Synthesis, Verbindung] of the manifold in them [the concepts (my emphasis)] relates only to the unity of apperception, and is thereby the ground of the possibility of a priori knowledge, so far as such knowledge rests on the understanding” (B150). If this ‘synthesis’ speaks for all synthesizing operations, then it appears as though the subtlety of ‘bringing to’ has given way to the ‘determinations’ of the understanding, and the ‘formative’ operation of the categories have indeed eclipsed the synthesizing work of the transcendental imagination.  

Having left the reader in a state of uncertainty, Kant offers his own (third) explanation. In §24, well past the midpoint of the Deduction, he treats the problem of synthesis directly, noting:

This synthesis of the manifold of sensible intuition, which is possible and necessary a priori, may be entitled figurative synthesis [figürlich] (synthesis speciosa), to distinguish it from the synthesis which is thought in the mere category in respect of the manifold of an intuition in general, and which is entitled combination through the understanding [Verstandesverbindung] (synthesis intellectualis). Both are transcendental, not merely as taking place a priori, but also as conditioning the possibility of other a priori knowledge. (CPR B151)

Does this distinction answer what has become the riddle of imagination? From within the larger framework of our initial ‘elemental’ configuration, we are now able to isolate the constitutive work of the synthesis in which the transcendental imagination is primary, and the synthesis in which the combining work of the understanding is primary. Having introduced this distinction, Kant reinstates the imagination as a power of the soul, calling it “the ability to represent an object into view without it being present”16 (B151). This appears to amount to a measured clarification of sensibility and

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15 The synthesis of the manifold, Kant continues, “is at once transcendental and also purely intellectual” (B150-151). The a priori nature of sensible intuition remains vital, but its worth is appreciated solely through the guarantee of the synthetic unity of apperception and the role of the categories in obtaining “objective reality” (Ibid).

16 I have adapted Smith’s translation of: “Einbildungskraft is das Vermögen, einen Gegenstand auch ohne dessen Gegenwart in der Anschauung vorzustellen” (B151).
understanding in their distinct roles, their intimate relationship, and in terms of their point of contact within the activity of synthesis. However, the matter is far from settled, for what is delineated by way of two-tiered synthesis unravels once more in terms of imagination and presses us back upon the confusion of the first two accounts.

With this new distinction in mind, let us see to what extent the imagination returns ‘from elsewhere.’ Initially, it appears to stand as a chiasma between the two levels of synthesis, provided the figurative synthesis takes place on the edge of sensibility. Since the imagination is exercised in accordance with sensible intuition, Kant asserts that it “belongs to sensibility” (B151), thus delimiting it within the intuitive faculty. And yet, owing to the “spontaneity” inherent in any act of synthesis, he is also compelled to characterize the imagination as a determinative faculty (performing its work in view of the categories). The figurative synthesis ‘is’ the “the transcendental synthesis of imagination” viewed with respect to its service to the unity of apperception, and is not to be confused with intellectual combination (B152). Viewed thus, the imagination is “a faculty which determines the sensibility a priori” (B152). Accordingly, Kant terms the transcendental synthesis of imagination “an action of the understanding on the sensibility” (B152). But this would appear to say: the figurative synthesis (though not intellectual) is an action of the understanding on sensibility, performed with the aid of what belongs to sensibility (the imagination). Even if adequate, the conceptual negotiation is bewildering, and all the more so when Kant then reassigns the signification of his title, “productive imagination [die produktive Einbildungskraft],” to the action of understanding (B152). He justifies this reassignment as a safeguard against confusing the productive and reproductive [der reproduktiven] (empirical) imaginations, but as there is little chance of such confusion at this stage one wonders if his aim is to deflect the discussion away from the question of the status of the imagination as a faculty in and of itself. Indeed, what is of interest to Kant in this section is the quality of the act associated with imagination – that it is spontaneous – not its nominative location or power. Put differently, he is content to treat the coefficients of imagination,
though with little comment on the variable itself. In short, the best resolution available thus far is to say that the transcendental synthesis of imagination is not intellectual, but belongs to sensibility on the basis of its conditions, and belongs to understanding on the basis of its exercise.

Nonetheless, Kant’s direct treatment of synthesis leaves him entangled in a difficulty, the resolution of which will ultimately come at the price of renewed ambiguity concerning the imagination. By attributing the transcendental synthesis to an ‘action of the understanding,’ he has inadvertently made room in the understanding for a term typically associated with sensibility. For this reason, he must insist that this synthesizing action does not imply the understanding is itself intuitive.\(^7\) He thus provides a concentrated view of synthesis, elucidated in terms of combination, which allows inner sense (sensibility) and apperception to remain distinct. So doing, however, the understanding’s proprietorship over transcendental synthesis entails a further slippage of the imagination toward combination and concepts. Indeed, he countersigns once more what was the ‘faculty of imagination’ under the name of the understanding: “Thus the understanding, under the title of a transcendental synthesis of imagination, performs this act upon the passive subject, whose faculty it is…” (B153). And he characterizes the transcendental act of imagination as the “synthetic influence of the understanding upon the inner sense” (B154), thus tipping the scales toward the authority of combination over figuration. Combination of the manifold, to be sure, is a power laying beyond the realm of sensibility, and so it is the understanding that “produces it, in that it affects that

\(^7\) Kant explains: “Now the understanding in us men is not itself a faculty of intuitions, and cannot, even if intuitions be given in sensibility, take them up into itself in such a manner as to combine them as the manifold of its own intuition” (B153). Understood in terms of its capacity to combine, the understanding is accredited with this synthesis provided the synthesis be viewed in terms of the unity of apperception. It is possible that the context for this argumentation dissolves the problem in two ways. First, Kant’s specific point of view is on the act of synthesis from the vantage point of the understanding. “Its synthesis,” he explains, “if the synthesis be viewed by itself alone, is nothing but the unity of the act, of which, as an act, it is conscious to itself, even without [the aid of] sensibility, but through which it is yet able to determine the sensibility” (B153). Second, the consciousness here noted refers to the faculty of apperception, which is of course already intrinsic to the understanding; it is not to be confused with inner sense (having “the mere form of intuition,” B154). Thus, combination is not an intuitive work but a synthetic operation of the understanding through which the apperception determines the synthetic unity. What Kant means to preserve here is a justification for our self-consciousness of the synthesis, not, that is, to reduce all intuitive figuration to the action of understanding. However, the latter is an indirect consequence of the former, one which further obscures the position and function of the transcendental imagination.
sense” (B155). What is left for the imagination, however, is simply the “synthesis of apprehension,” an empirical reflection of the figurative synthesis, and an act obtaining “under the title of imagination” though conforming necessarily to the (intellectual) “synthesis of apperception” under the title of “understanding” (B160-161 note b). And insofar as both events consist in “one and the same spontaneity,” the indebtedness to the understanding is all but assured once more. Kant expresses this very point by continuing to delimit what remains proper to the imagination in terms of apprehension alone: “Now it is the imagination that connects the manifold of sensible intuition; and imagination is dependent for the unity of its intellectual synthesis upon the understanding, and for the manifoldness of its apprehension upon sensibility” (B164-165).

In short, though we should not expect the A and B versions of the Deduction to constitute one unified project, we are compelled to admit that this justification of the categories leaves the imagination in an uncertain light. It is a lens through which synthesis, combination, spontaneity, and unity may be magnified by the light of understanding, but a lens which, when examined in its own light, has none of the determinability it is meant to serve. One wonders whether the imagination’s synthesis is only transcendental on the basis of intellectual combination, or if there is indeed an a priori, creative, unifying capacity within or alongside of intuition itself?

Time-Bound Mediation in the Schematism

If the exposition of the transcendental elements of a priori cognition leaves the imagination in a position of crucial function yet uncertain status, “The Schematism of the Pure Concepts of Understanding” (the first chapter in Kant’s ‘Analytic of Principles’) positions the transcendental synthesis of imagination in terms of the events of subsumption and judgment. What problem

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18 Kant will later attribute the apprehension of appearances to “their reception in the synthesis of imagination” (A190/B235).
19 This allows a certain activity on the side of imagination, but keeps the connective operation dependent on the intellectual synthesis. This dependency holds when viewed from the reverse transcendental direction: “All possible perception is thus dependent upon synthesis of apprehension, and this empirical synthesis in turn upon transcendental synthesis, and therefore upon the categories” (B164-165).
necessitates this further return of the imagination from ‘elsewhere’? To speak of the “employment [Gebrauch]” of “elementary concepts [Elementarbegriffen]” is to speak in reference to the 
transcendental doctrine of judgment (B169), and thus to come to the matter of that correctness or 
validity on which the application of concepts to appearances stands: “the possibility of synthetic 
judgments” (A154/B193). Since it is the activity of the understanding, through its categories, that 
translates all the elemental work of synthesis and combination into the mode of judgment, but since 
sensibility is required for this work and its translation, Kant calls the schematism “the sensible 
condition under which alone pure concepts of understanding can be employed” (A136/B175). The 
condition provides the grounds for judgment as a mode of ‘subsumption’ [Subsumtion], a term right 
away freighted with a matrix of necessity and relation. Under general conditions, subsumption 
requires a point of homogeneous relation between the object and the containing concept. The 
problem for transcendental judgment is that the pure concepts of understanding are heterogeneous to 
their objects, sensible intuitions. “How, then,” Kant asks, “is the subsumption of intuitions under pure 
concepts, the application of a category to appearances, possible?” His answer rests with identifying a 
mediating term, a “third thing, which is homogeneous on the one hand with the category, and on the 
other hand with the appearance, and which thus makes the application of the former to the latter 
possible” (A138/B177).

Since we remain on the level of transcendental operation Kant describes this mediating entity as a “representation.” Unique to the governing necessity that this representation be homogeneous to 
two heterogeneous elements, however, is that it reverses the general order of synthesis, combination, 
and unity thus far sustained in Kant’s larger discussion. To attain a mediating “transcendental 
schema” that is “intellectual” in one respect and “sensible” in another is to disclose a matter by way 
of regression to parts rather than progression to the whole of elemental possibility. Kant’s instigating 
regressive move is to pass from the understanding which “contains the pure synthetic unity of the 
manifold in general” to time, “the formal condition of the manifold of inner sense” (A138/B177), and
Thus to time as the a priori host of the manifold. (Heidegger will make much of this time-related imaginative synthesis.) As Kant later explains, “[t]here is only one whole in which all our representations are contained, namely, inner sense and its a priori form, time” (A155/B194). Time is homogeneous to the category as well as appearance, and thus works as a point of mediation in the formal sense. Though not itself a representation, time indicates a formal sensible condition to which the employment of the understanding is bound – what Kant terms “the schema of the concept” – and thus a condition that may serve to guide the “schematism of pure understanding” (A140/B179).

Before addressing the question of imagination in this context, it is important to acknowledge that here we turn a rather difficult corner in Kant’s argumentation. As we have begun to see, he not only must halt the activity of judgment (presumably spontaneous) so as to catch a mediation underway, but must then exhibit the manner in which this schematizing relation obtains. This amounts to the disclosure of an occurrence of mediation within an event of subsumption. Though by many accounts this would seem a rather hypothetical venture in the operation of transcendental reflection, Kant’s reference to the Aesthetic (namely, time as form of inner sense) wins for him a case in which a sensible form is, so to speak, necessarily conceptualized. Time is unique insofar as it is the pure intuition in which objects are intuited and concepts are pressed into activity. The transcendental subject works ‘in’ time with objects intuited ‘in’ time. Time is homogeneous ‘as’ a condition for sensibility and understanding. In the Second Analogy Kant will summarily declare that the “synthetic faculty of imagination. . . determines inner sense in respect of time-relation” (A189/B233). If time is the ‘condition’ for thinking the possibility of the transcendental schema, then in what way does the imagination constitute its ‘art’?

Though schematism belongs to the understanding, a given schema, says Kant, “is always a product of imagination” (A140/B179, my emphasis). We are already familiar with such a tension, and remain curious to know how the product of one faculty can belong to another. One might regard the comment as a more specified way of echoing Aristotle’s contention that “without images
understanding is impossible." But, again, we have already learned that what makes the imagination necessarily ‘productive,’ for Kant, is not images per se (which would be reproductive and empirical), but its service in furnishing a “connection” (A189/B233) or unity by which intellectual synthesis, combination, or the understanding more generally, may determine sensible objects. Without the imagination there is no synthesis of representations, and thus no synthetic unity, which means ultimately no transcendental judgment (cf. A155/B194). Since the progression of conditions is a story of figuration and connection a mere ‘image’ will not suffice. But what distinguishes a schema from an image, and what has a schema to do with the imagination?

When Kant insists that “the schema has to be distinguished from the image” (A140/B179), he has in mind the nature of a schema to represent a “method” or form of, for example, multiplicity, and not a singular intuition. “No image,” Kant explains, “could ever be adequate to the concept of a triangle in general. It would never attain that universality of the concept which renders it valid of all triangles” (A141/B180). Based on their representational power in the imagination, schemas have a conceptual bearing. Kant’s example locates the discussion in the context of Aristotle’s consideration of the triangle ‘drawn’ as an image within the understanding. Here Aristotle cites the inherent need for such an imaginative sketch, provided “the mind understands it only as a quantity.” In his commentary on this text, Aquinas explains that Aristotle is attempting to maintain a tension between the understanding’s need to “conjure up before our eyes an image of determinate size” – the need for a ‘particular’ representation – and yet still recognize that such determinacy does not apply to the ‘concept’ of what is sought. Imagination, in this way, aids the understanding provided the understanding qualify it: an image of a triangle produces a determinate representation, from which the quantitative determinacy (and not the sketch proper) yields a conceptual determinacy that may be

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20 Aristotle, *De Anima* I 1.403a8, III 7.431a16.
21 See Aristotle, *De Memoria et Reminiscentia*, 449a30-450a10, at Aquinas, 138-139.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
used in proofs. Kant’s distinction between schema and image is meant to simplify this confusion, while at the same time emphasizing the relationship between rule and unity furnished by the schema. In keeping with the formal condition that is time, the schema’s mediating necessity requires that it be a representation of what exceeds the imaged – in the case of a triangle, “a rule of synthesis of the imagination, in respect to pure figures in space” (A141/B180). The same holds for schemata of the pure concepts of understanding:

It is simply the pure synthesis, determined by a rule of that unity, in accordance with concepts, to which the category gives expression. It is a transcendental product of imagination, a product which concerns the determination of inner sense in general according to conditions of its form (time), in respect of all representations, so far as these representations are to be connected a priori in one concept in conformity with the unity of apperception. (CPR A141-142/B180-181)

Ambiguities remain, but what is significant for our present purposes is that Kant has based his account of the schematism on the mediating privilege of ‘pure synthesis,’ and has in turn based such synthesis on the effect of the imagination. Schematism itself belongs to the understanding, but, quite apart from a ‘bringing to’ of the understanding or an ‘intellectual synthesis,’ the mediation depends on “the transcendental synthesis of imagination” (A145/B185). Transcendental judgments’ need for a homogeneous/heterogeneous principle of mediation between the categories and objects of representation echoes understanding’s need for a figurative/intellectual synthesis. Both are bound to the imagination as the aesthetic point of delivery for the manifold – a point of intrinsic figuration and synthesis that is productive beyond the bounds of sensibility’s passivity, yet not so active as to be determinative in its own right.

*Between the Visionary and Inventive*

If we follow the movement of CPR through judgment to the Transcendental Dialectic we find a higher, more practical, formulation of these same tensions. When, for example, Kant speaks of “The Ideal of Pure Reason” he has in mind the manner in which the assemblage of cognitive powers, delimited by critique, may attain to the complete determination of given appearances and the regulative principles of actions. An ideal, in this sense, “must always rest on determinate concepts
and serve as a rule and archetype, alike in our actions and in our critical judgments” (A570/B598).

The critical and practical (ethical) bearing of such archetypes evidences the more constructive, indeed ambitious, tenor of these later remarks. We are no longer on the terrain of the elemental, but have ascended to the hard-won edifice of pure reason’s possibility. And here Kant returns once again to the matter of imagination – in this case as a counter-example to reason’s ideal:

The products of the imagination are of an entirely different nature; no one can explain or give an intelligible concept of them; each is a kind of monogram, a mere set of particular qualities, determined by no assignable rule, and forming rather a blurred sketch drawn from diverse experiences than a determinable image—a representation such as painters and physiognomists profess to carry in their heads, and which they treat as being an incommunicable shadowy image [Schattenbild] of their creations or even of their critical judgments. (CPR A570/B598)

On the surface this says: what is born from the imagination is as obscure as the process precipitating it, and thus an inadequate measure for the determinacy of reason. Pure reason must be on guard against the whims of the sensible. And yet, if viewed from the side, the counter-example is simply a comparison: there is an obscure work of the imagination, and though it may not suffice as a resource for ideal archetypes, it may well serve another, possibly artistic, end. When Kant later considers the place of hypothesis in pure reason he turns once more to the imagination: “If the imagination is not simply to be visionary [schwärmen], but is to be inventive [dichten soll] under the strict surveillance of reason, there must always previously be something that is completely certain, and not invented [erdichtet] or merely a matter of opinion, namely, the possibility of the object itself” (A770/B798). The remark sustains the practical concerns introduced in The Ideal of Pure Reason, and we must not mistake this ‘imagination’ – this ‘inventiveness’ – for the transcendental imagination or its synthesis.

But there is a resemblance of signification in the terms “schwärmen” and “Schattenbild,” as if to imply that theories and opinions, like artistic representation, skirt the edge of reason’s creative employment without meeting the criteria of determinant measures. This does little to suggest an embrace of the imagination on the constructive side of the critical project, but neither do these
allusions amount to a statement of its full exclusion. The creative or inventive imagination is left, at
this stage in Kant’s discourse, in a position of qualified possibility.

IV. Arousal & Attunement: Repurposing Imagination in the Critique of Judgment

If, under the measures of CPR, the imagination and its artistic products or inventions attain a
mere monogram or sketch, there is in the Critique of Judgment (1790) the rather astonishing
discovery of a “momentum” (184/315) whereby the imagination is “free,” released to a new level of
interaction with the understanding and capable even of carrying understanding beyond the
determinations of the concepts into the constitution of genius (185/316-17). Art, says Kant, is a
“production through freedom” based in reason (170/303), and the fine art of the genius arises as
means “for producing something for which no determinate rule can be given” (175/308). In this case
the rule or measure of the painter, poet, or composer is prescribed by nature in accordance with a
“talent” (174-5/307-8) that is trained by trial and taste to produce an object in the excess of the
rational concept. This is a remarkably different species of ‘possibility’ than the Schattenbild of CPR.
It speaks to a creative imagination which in fact “aesthetically expands the concept itself in an
unlimited way” (183/315), ‘quickening’ [beleben] the cognitive powers (185/316-17) rather than
threatening them. When Kant regards such possibility within the framework of imaginative
presentations he terms aesthetic ideas, he speaks of the imagination as a “productive cognitive
power” that is “very mighty when it creates, as it were, another nature out of the material that actual
nature gives it” (182/314). There is no reason to believe he does not mean the same productive
imagination discussed in CPR, but he is orienting it toward a new scope of animation. Several
intervening discoveries are required to disclose the ‘ideas’ presented by the imagination of, most
notably, the poet – whose talent equips him with the “inner intuitions” necessary to “venture. . .
behind the limits of experience,” emulating the “example of reason” so as to furnish expressions of
elements “with a completeness for which no example can be found in nature” (182-3/314). How is it

24 Internal references for CJ are English/German in pagination.
that the imagination becomes this aesthetic agent of arousal and quickening, and might judgment itself (not simply genius) exhibit an adjoining level of possibility?

_At Play in the Judgment of Taste_

The elucidation of the Schematism under the transcendental doctrine of judgment in _CPR_, together with the motion or effect of the imagination in furnishing the requisite schemata, presents a fitting bridge to _CJ_’s grounding considerations. Kant’s larger question remains that of his initial elemental and constructive itinerary: How are synthetic judgments possible _a priori_? However, the bridge consists in the traversal of a new discovery concerning judgment, and with it a new terrain of inquiry. Where the Schematism brought the productive imagination to bear and support the weight of validity in determinative judgments, Kant is now focused on the conditions of possibility for _reflective_ judgments, and _aesthetic_ judgments in particular. Of primary interest is the manner in which this traversal leads to the unique arraignment of the judgment of _taste_, and herein the status of the imagination in the function of permitting an object to be termed ‘beautiful’ without surrendering any objective universality in the determination. Kant asks:

How is a judgment possible in which the subject, merely on the basis of his _own_ feeling of pleasure in an object, independently of the object’s concept, judges this pleasure as one attaching to the presentation of that same object _in all other subjects_, and does so _a priori_, i.e., without being allowed to wait for other people’s assent? (_CJ_ 153/288)

Kant is aware that the scope of the question already threatens to undo the rigor erected in the service of understanding’s determinate employment within the transcendental doctrine of judgment. How could the integrity of subsumption – so intrinsic to the correct connections between concepts and sensibility – withstand this dalliance with a ‘feeling’ somehow beyond the domain of a containing concept? Is this not indicative of an enthusiastic profession masquerading in the subject as a communicable measure? What prevents such judgment from borrowing on the currency of hypothesis and inventing its own critical authority? Kant’s specific answer, according to the “Analytic of the Beautiful,” is that the _purposiveness_ of a given thing’s _form_ supplies the judgment
with the a priori condition required for determinant validity (27/187). This distinct, non-practical purposiveness Kant characterizes as the “attainment of an aim [Absicht],” and such attainment is experienced as the subjective feeling of pleasure (27/187). As a result, the given thing is called “beautiful,” and “our ability to judge by such pleasure (and hence also with universal validity) is called taste” (30/190). It is sufficient at present to highlight how these movements center on a crucial emphasis concerning form, and thus entail a significant burden upon, and provocative reappraisal of, the imagination.

We have already noted the underlying and imperative nature of ‘form’ within the a priori terrain mapped by the Transcendental Aesthetic. There the form of an object’s appearance stood ‘ready in the mind’ as a capacity for representation, and thus proximate to the imagination’s task of synthesizing the manifold of pure intuition. A similar elementary relationship of aisthesis remains in the judgment of taste, though the critique at hand is situated in within the larger task of reconciling the a priori legislation of the understanding (for nature) with that of reason (for freedom). Since the question of taste entails a specific class of objects, its treatment is less concerned with identifying the transcendental elements in their general positioning, and more intent on accounting for their work in a rather focused application. This means, as we will see, that the ‘form’ of the object will constitute the basis of ‘pleasure’ insofar as it remains in play (or motion) through apprehension, but without a restriction to the operations of sensibility. For this reason we do well to recall the elemental role of form and imagination in the work of cognition, but must understand that Kant’s ‘reflective’ appeal to them is now as much a matter of justifying this new species of judgment as it is a question of their elemental capacities. The judgment indeed concerns an object of intuition, but not with a view to

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25 He continues: “For the basis of the pleasure is posited merely in the form of the object for reflection in general, and hence not in a sensation of the object, nor with a reference to any concept that might involve some intention or other” (CIJ, 30/190). Kant states in a footnote to the title page of Book I: “The definition of taste on which I am basing this [analysis] is that it is the ability to judge the beautiful. But we have to analyze judgments of taste in order to discover what is required for calling an object beautiful” (43/203n.1).

26 In De Anima Aristotle entertains the dialectical premise that imagination is “a species of motion. . . . produced by the activity of sense” (De Anima, p.48-9, 428a11-12 – 429a1, see also Apostle’s commentary at p.148 notes 33-35.
determinate cognition (29/189), and so turns on a translation or specification in Kant’s treatment of form (and with it a different aesthetic orientation). Aesthetic judgment, Kant explains, “is a special power of judging things according to a rule, but not according to concepts” (34/194). Such judgment “contributes nothing to the cognition of its objects” (34/194), but nevertheless remains reliant on the “spontaneity in the play of the cognitive powers” (37/197, my emphasis), and based on a mediating a priori principle in its application to art. How does this new emphasis on form pertain to an affiliated reorientation in Kant’s understanding of the imagination?

Returning to the matter of purposiveness in a judgment “whose determining basis cannot be other than subjective” (44/203), the formal means by which the judgment is performed are meant to safeguard against any misguided inclinations of interest on the part of the subject. “Interest,” says Kant, “is what we call the liking we connect with the presentation of an object’s existence. . . But if the question is whether something is beautiful, what we want to know is not whether we or anyone cares. . . about the thing’s existence, but rather how we judge it in our mere contemplation of it (intuition or reflection)” (45/204). An authentic feeling of pleasure thus depends on a formal, non-material apprehension in sensibility (44/204). A valid taste for beauty, as it were, depends on the strict ‘presentation’ of the object in much the same way as a logical-determinative judgment depends on the strict presentation of the synthesis of the manifold before the combining work of the understanding and the unity of apperception. Kant means to highlight this resemblance when he notes plainly: “I have used the logical functions of judging to help me find the moments that judgment takes into consideration when it reflects (since even a judgment of taste still has reference to the understanding)” (43/203n1). But the measures assuring the presentation belonging to taste are not delineated by the accelerating emphasis on determinability observed in the B Deduction, which likewise suggests that the imagination in taste need not suffer the obfuscations attending its productive, synthesizing aspect in CPR. In the first “Introduction” to CJ Kant explains that in “an aesthetic judgment of reflection. . . the basis determining [it] is the sensation brought about, in the
subject, by the harmonious play of the two cognitive powers [involved] in the power of judgment, imagination and understanding” (413/224). Such status for the power of imagination may have been anticipated by Kant’s comments on synthesis at CPR A78/B103, and his inclusion of the imagination among the “three original sources” of the soul at A95, but this notion of harmonious play (“the mutual harmony of imagination and understanding,” 412/224) denotes a qualitative equality that is altogether new.

In §9 of “The Analytic of the Beautiful” Kant explains how this harmonizing activity is connected to the aforementioned matters of presentation and pleasure at the very center of taste’s determining basis:

The cognitive powers which are set into play by this presentation are thereby in free play, because no determinate concept restricts them to a particular rule of cognition. Hence the mental state in this presentation must be the feeling of the free play of the presentational powers in connection with this presentation and directed to cognition in general. Now if a presentation by which an object is given is, in general, to become cognition, we need imagination to combine the manifold of intuition, and understanding to provide the unity of the concept uniting the [component] presentations. This state of free play of the cognitive powers... must be universally communicable; for cognition, the determination of the object with which given presentations are to harmonize (in any subject whatever) is the only way of presenting that holds for everyone. (CJ 62/217)

Freed ‘from’ concept ‘for’ harmonious play with understanding, the imagination and its effect (Wirkung) must still serve the purposes of communicability. Insofar as beauty “is nothing by itself” without reference to subjective feeling (63/218), its determination depends on a mental state and not a conceptually determined characteristic of the object. But for this necessity, in turn, to attain a justifiable mode of communicability (paralleling the objective validity of logical-determinative judgments) it must find its resource in the harmony of the powers and not in an intellectual schematizing. Ever the criterion for determinability and validity, ‘unity’ in this case consists not in the application of the categories but rather in the “quickening” [beleben] and “reciprocal harmony” of imagination and understanding (see 63/218-19). Specifically, the imagination presents the form of the object – its purposiveness – carrying it up into a play with the understanding and ultimately
referring it not to subsumption but to the potentially pleasurable feeling of contemplation (see 68/222). To say that taste’s “determining basis is therefore merely the purposiveness of the form” (69/223) is to ground the judgment on an apprehension performed by the imagination, though without any determinative concept. This amounts to a considerable work of the imagination. As John Sallis observes: “the reflection from which the harmonious interplay can issue is not performed by some agency that would supervene on the process; rather, it is already underway with the very apprehension, provoked, induced, by the apprehension of form in the imagination. . . in the apprehension imagination is in play already, from the outset, in interplay with understanding.” In sum, Kant has allowed the imagination to perform a central work in assuring the formal nature of the judgment, the authenticity of the feeling of pleasure that is/is not evoked by the object, and thus the determination of beauty. One would expect that such a result is beset by the limitations of the subjective, aesthetic nature of it. However, the determination’s ‘resemblance’ to a logical judgment is further sustained when Kant says the determination has a universalizable objectivity (62-3/218). The work of the imagination herein, then, is of such a rigor and authority that it is rescued from the dim shadows of mere inventiveness and could not be further from anything like phantasy.

**The Supersensible Imagination**

Like the judgment of taste, that of the sublime consists in a reflective judgment that is singular yet universally valid, and in which the imagination acts as a “power of exhibition” that may ultimately ‘further’ reason without having recourse to determinate concepts (97/244). The difference between the judgments consists in their presentations, and hence in the qualitative aspect and movement of the imagination. Kant explains: “The beautiful in nature concerns the form of the object, which consists in [the object’s] being bounded. But the sublime can also be found in a formless object, insofar as we present unboundedness, either [as] in the object or because the object prompts us to present it” (98/244). Beyond the qualitative presentation of beauty in excess of

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understanding’s determinate concepts, the sublime’s quantitative presentation exhibits “an indeterminate concept of reason” (98/244, my emphasis). Both judgments contain ‘likings,’ however what was ‘pleasure’ and ‘play’ under taste is “seriousness” and “admiration” under the sublime. If in taste the imagination was oriented toward purposiveness, the sublime judgment apprehends and feels something in nature that at first seems “contrapurpose. . . incommensurate with our power of exhibition, and as it were violent to our imagination” (99/245). Nature arouses the imagination, that is, by way of chaos, exceeding the scope of presentable ‘form’ yet agitating our judgment in a way that nevertheless further attunes the “purposive use” of the imagination (100-1/246-7). As the imagination comes to recognize its own limits when faced with the excess of nature (mathematically or dynamically), an altogether new level of schematizing obtains – the difference between the sensible and supersensible is disclosed, the subject is in turn agitated, and the imagination begins to extend into the realm of morality (124/265).

To appreciate these movements we must understand that Kant is neither treating objects of sense nor limiting the force and power of the sublime to the side of nature. More specifically, we must appreciate how it is that the ‘violence’ felt by the imagination in such a judgment places the imagination on the threshold of a larger attunement of the intellect. As, for example, “our power of estimating the magnitude of things in the world of sense,” the imagination faces the specter of its own “inadequacy,” then translates the arousal of this reckoning back into “the feeling that we have within us a supersensible power” (106/250, my emphasis; cf. 109/252). The imagination, that is, is affected and effects an “emotional satisfaction” (rührendes Wohlgefallen) such that the magnitude of “crude nature” (109/252-53) discloses an inadequate apprehension on one hand, and (since we are aware of this inadequacy) “a mental power that surpasses any standard of sense” on the other (111/254). Says Kant, “If the human mind is nonetheless to be able even to think the given infinite

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28 For a contemporary debate on the question of the natural sublime and the possibility of artistic sublimity see Robert Clewis and Uygar Abaci’s discussion in JAAC Vol 68, No 2, Spring 2010, pp. 167-173.
without contradiction, it must have within itself a power that is supersensible” (109/253). That the imagination makes such a necessity possible is not unlike its role in furnishing schemata in CPR – both uses consist in the imagination as a mode of estimation, though in a sublime judgment it is the “effort” of the imagination in view of its very ‘inadequacy’ that testifies to “a supersensible substrate (which underlies both nature and our ability to think), a substrate that is large beyond any standard of sense and hence makes us judge as sublime not so much the object as the mental attunement in which we find ourselves when we estimate the object” (112/255-56). As a measure of attunement, then, the imagination is also productive of a “supersensible vocation” within reason’s ‘respect’ for law. In this more practical bearing, imagination’s feeling of inadequacy to an idea denotes a striving for adequacy, and thereby “makes intuitable for us the superiority of the rational vocation of our cognitive powers over the greatest power of sensibility” (114-15/257-58). Displeasure over inadequacy moves the reflection toward the pleasure attached to the magnitude of ideas of reason. What is felt as contrapurposive signals an intrinsic capacity for the purposiveness of reason “as the source of ideas, i.e., as the source of. . . intellectual comprehension (117/260). Speaking from this movement of imagination, Kant explains that “the subject’s own inability discloses in him the consciousness of an unlimited ability which is also his” (116/259). What is by necessity an aesthetic discovery yields, by way of the imagination, a larger attunement in the power of reason.

The same structure applies under the dynamically sublime, where it is the power of nature which arouses in us a vocation of “strength” by, specifically, elevating “our imagination [to] exhibit those cases where the mind can come to feel its own sublimity” (121/262). Accordingly, Kant notes that “the imagination strains to treat nature as a schema” (124/265) for reason, and indeed in an aesthetic judgment such as this the feeling for the sublime is referred to reason and not the understanding (125/266). Though, as in the case of beauty, concepts are not the destination for the imagination’s work, what the imagination constitutes in the sublime is a relation (more than a quality) by which we recognize how “the sensible [element] in the presentation of nature [is] suitable
for a possible supersensible use” (126/266-67). Kant characterizes this as a “moral feeling” that, like the communicability of taste, “obligates absolutely” (126/267). He explains: “The judging strains the imagination because it is based on a feeling that the mind has a vocation that wholly transcends the domain of nature. . . and it is with regard to this feeling that we judge the presentation of the object as subjectively purposive (128/268). In the imagination of the poet, for example, the purposiveness felt by a view of an ocean calmly “bounded only by the sky” or as “an abyss threatening to engulf everything” constitutes an aesthetic judgment which reflects back upon the lawful purposiveness of subjective freedom (130-32/270).

V. The Free Hand and the Fundamental Retrieval: Schelling and Heidegger at the Threshold of Possibility

My above discussions do not exhaust the question of the imagination in Kant’s thought but the synopsis affords a necessary and adequate account of those touchstones in the problematic, together with the attending questions, which are essential to the way forward. Though mine is not a dissertation on Kant, per se, without his recovery and redeployment of this mysterious faculty of the soul my investigation would exhibit a rather ‘blurred sketch’ of its subject matter, and there would be little imagination to speak of in the thought of Schelling or Heidegger. In view of the work ahead, and in keeping with my textual focus, I want now to say an introductory word regarding the pronounced way in which these thinkers found in Kant’s treatment of the imagination not only a vital problematic, but more importantly a point of possibility and orientation for their own distinct paths.

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29 This connection between imagination and subjective freedom is but one instance evidencing the importance of Kant’s CJ to German Idealism. Here we may reference a general comment by Taminiaux to begin our initial transition to Schelling and Heidegger: “Although it is a text that founds aesthetics as the approach to the beautiful in terms of subjectivity and self-consciousness, it is also a text that splinters the subjectivity of aesthetics by locating the beautiful and art at the juncture of freedom and nature. Although it is a text that lends itself to the meditation on finitude in the Heideggerian sense, it is also a text in which we can decipher—perhaps concerning the same issues—something that might well stand as the first document of absolute metaphysics in the sense of German idealism” (Taminiaux, Poetics, Speculation, and Judgment, 40).
Imagination in the Depth of Intuition

Already in his Philosophical Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism and Of the I as Principle of Philosophy (1795) Schelling exhibits a decided focus on broadening the scope and centrality of both intuition and imagination as delimited by Kant. That is not to say Kant’s more constructive hopes for carrying his system “of the epigenesis of pure reason” (B168) forward under the disciplined ideal of pure reason or its practical employment are lost on Schelling, or that reason’s canon of questions (What can I know? What ought I do? What may I hope?, A805/B833) and higher systematic hopes for the legislation of knowledge in its diverse modes (A832/B860) are beside the point. Rather, it is to acknowledge with Kant the then ‘ruinous’ state of the sciences and the forked road of dogmatism and skepticism (A852-56/B880-84), and yet to return through Kant to the unspent resources of the transcendental elements. Schelling says of intuition: “Kant started from this that the first in our knowledge is the intuition [Anschauung]. Very soon this gave rise to the proposition that the intuition is the lowest grade of knowledge. Yet it is the highest in the human mind [Geist], it is that from which all other knowledge borrows its worth and its reality” (Of the I 145n.97/355). And of the imagination: “It is to be hoped that time, the mother of all development, will also foster and eventually develop, unto completion of the whole science, those seeds of great disclosures about this wondrous faculty which Kant has sown in his immortal work” (LDC 190n/333).

But in order to understand the connection between this highest grade and this promising faculty it is important to note that Schelling’s thought at this time maintains with Fichte the primacy of an unconditional certainty – namely, the certainty that I am I. The Pantheism Controversy of the

30 F.W.J. Schelling, Philosophical Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism (1795) and Of the I as Principle of Philosophy (1795) in The Unconditional in Human Knowledge: Four Early Essays (1794-1796), trans. Fritz Marti (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1980). Hereafter Of the I and LDC. Original editions of these texts may be found in Schelling, Werke, 14 vols. (Stuttgart and Augsburg: J.G. Cotta, 1856-61); they are also included in the more recent and ongoing collection: Werke: Historisch-Kritische Ausgabe, ed. Hans Michael Baumgartner, Wilhelm G. Jacobs, Hermann Krings, and Hermann Zeltner (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzbook, 1976-present) vols. 2 & 3. Pagination will appear as English/German.

31 See F. Marti’s “Translators Introduction” to Schelling, LDC, 152; see also Alfred Denker, “Three Men Standing over a Dead Dog: The Absolute as Fundamental Problem of German Idealism” in Christoph Asmuth, Alfred Denker, and Michael Vater. Schelling: Between Fichte and Hegel/Zwischen Fichte Und Hegel, Bochumer
1780s had resulted, in part, in focusing the reception of Kant’s *CPR* on this question of the unconditioned ‘I’ in the consciousness of the transcendental subject. If the subject provides the ground for his own knowledge of ‘nature’ (Kant: ‘*natura materialiter spectata,*’ B163), this suggests, for Fichte, that the subject is free in self-reflection and thus necessarily noumenal. Seen in this way, the question of the unconditioned (*das Unbedingte*), particularly for Schelling, becomes a matter not only in the order of knowing, but also for the order of being. Deeper than Kant’s transcendental unity of apperception, and more concrete than his ‘idea’ of an unconditioned laying at the origin of a complete synthesis or beyond reason in the things themselves (cf. A416-17/B443-45), Schelling has in mind the manner in which the subject attains a free, non-sensuous intuition of the “eternal” on which the judgment that any being “is” a being, and not merely an appearance, depends. The basis for any relation between the subject and the objective world must, it seems, be grounded in a side of nature or being which encompasses both; but how to approach this ‘whole’ beneath the parts is precisely the problem. This contributes to what is termed *intellectual intuition* (*intellektuelle Anschauung*), a form of knowledge drawn “from an immediate experience in the strictest sense, that...”

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*Studien Zur Philosophie, 32* (Br Gruner Pub Co, 2001). The unconditioned principle is central to Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre* as a “science of scientific principles” (see Denker, 386). As he remarks in 1794: “It should express that Act that neither is, nor can be, found among the empirical determinations of our consciousness and alone makes it possible” (Fichte, GA 1, 2, p. 255, at Denker, 387). Denker explains: “The first, unconditioned and absolute principle can neither be deduced from a higher principle, nor be proven in any science. Factically, the I posits its own being” (388).

32 See Frederick C. Beiser, *German Idealism: The Struggle Against Subjectivism 1781-1801*.
33 See Andrew Bowie, “Freidrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, October 22, 2001, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/schelling/. Theodore George paraphrases Schelling’s entry into this problem in *Letters* by noting: “Paradoxically, dogmatism and criticism both fall short of achieving the representation of a thoroughgoing unity precisely because each of them works to subsume all things under a single, universal principle” (George, “A Monstrous Absolute,” in *Schelling Now*, 143). Taminiaux elucidates the nature of this problem in terms of Schelling’s specific relationship to Kant’s critical project: “Kant’s critical edifice appeared to [Schelling] as both oriented toward such a focal point of absolute convergence and as precluding its actual access. To articulate this convergence and to beyond the limitation with which critical philosophy is affected is the task that Schelling proposes to himself. Everything happens as if taking up such a task had been, according to Schelling, sketched out in the *Critique of Judgment*, concerning both the problems raised in it and the contents thematized” (Taminiaux, *Poetics, Speculation, and Judgment*, 26).
is, from an experience produced by ourselves and independent of any objective causality” (LDC 180-81/318-19).

It is not difficult to see how such an assertion turns the depth of Kantian intuition against the very criteria of critical philosophy. On the one hand, judgment is freed to recognize, without circumspection, the bearing of its determinacy on beings, not appearances. On the other, though it would be overly reductive to call Kant a thinker of ‘objective causality,’ the notion of an intuition lacking any sensible reference is untenable. Even the pure concepts of the understanding, though free in their employment from the limitations of sensible conditions, would be “empty” of “body and meaning” if void of sensible objects (B148-149). The closest approximation available in Kant would be the subjective feeling for the supersensible substrate in the sublime judgment, though this requires a presentation of nature. Schelling’s intellectual intuition would, nevertheless, seem to fail Kant’s initial stricture that “it is not permissible to invent any new original powers, as, for instance, an understanding capable of intuiting its objects without the aid of senses” (A770/B798). The question becomes whether or not the non-sensuous “eternal” qualifies as an ‘object’ of possible experience. I will not resolve the matter here, but will note that, insofar as intellectual intuition is an intuition of “the infinite [Unendliche]” (LDC 186/327) in the self, Schelling understands it is a risky venture, and one which may well involve the imagination at its best or worst.

34 Fichte explains the character of intellectual intuition as follows: It is “the intuiting of himself that is required of the philosopher, in performing the Act whereby the I arises for him. It is immediate consciousness that I act and what I enact: it is that whereby I know something because I do it. We cannot prove from concepts that this power of intuition exists, nor evolve from them what it may be. Everyone must discover it immediately in himself, or else he will never make its acquaintance” (Fichte, SW I, p.463 at Denker, 389). Schelling, in this early period, agrees with the necessity for the original self-positing I, but appreciates this necessity more as a principle of unity than an act of freedom in the exercise of science. Denker observes: “Schelling posits the Absolute I as a ‘metaphysical’ principle of unity and knowing and being. . . . Schelling’s concept of the Absolute shows a striking similarity to Plato’s idea of the good. . . . According to Schelling, intellectual intuition is the intuition of that which is not a thing, that is, the unconditioned Absolute. Fichte’s intellectual intuition is the intuition of the acts of consciousness and not an intuition of the Absolute. Schelling’s doctrine of the absolute I is a doctrine of the Absolute as I” (Denker, 391-92). As Schelling’s thought moves forward into his System later texts, the importance of intellectual intuition will remain central. As John Sallis explains: “Philosophy thus becomes intellectual intuition ‘of’ the absolute in the dual sense of the genitive, and the knowing of knowing (i.e. critique) is grounded as the self-knowing of the absolute” (J. Sallis, “Schelling’s System of Freedom: Review of Schellings Abhandlung über das Wesen der Menschlichen Freiheit (1809) by Martin Heidegger,” in Research and Phenomenology, vol.2 no.1 (1972), 160).
The risks and promise of intellectual intuition arise from the matter of *absolute identity* which moves in its depths. Though detached from what we today may call the concrete world, such intuition is ultimately a profound matter of experience and existence. In a statement that sounds almost like a preparatory reference to Heidegger’s *being-in-the-world*, Schelling asserts: “Even the most abstract concepts with which our cognition plays depend upon an experience of life and existence [*Dasein*]” (*LDC* 181/319-20). Intellectual intuition is an intensification of such experience, and its quality is not unlike Spinoza’s ‘self-intuition’ (*Selbstanschauung*) (180/318). Though Schelling does not subscribe to Spinoza’s view that immediate cognitions are intuitions of divine attributes, he does speak of the ‘object’ of such intuition as the ‘eternal.’ Adapting a language similar to that with which he describes the imagination, he observes:

> We all have a secret and wondrous capacity of withdrawing from temporal change into our innermost self, which we divest of every exterior accretion. There, in the form of immutability, we intuit the eternal in us. This intuition is the innermost and in the strictest sense our own experience, upon which depends everything we know and believe of the supersensuous world. It is this intuition which first convinces us that anything is, strictly speaking, while everything else merely *appears*, and is only inasmuch as we transfer the word *being* to it. This intuition is distinguished from every sensuous intuition by the fact that it is produced by freedom alone, and that it is foreign and unknown to any whose freedom, overcome by the invading power of the objects, is almost insufficient for the production of consciousness. (*LDC* 180/318)

The movement here described is inward not outward – from lived time to immutable eternity, and this by way of heightening experience, not diminishing it. One is reminded of Augustine’s

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35 Kant, George notes, refers to the ‘absolute’ in *CPR* as that which isolates the “special organizing telos of reason” (George, “A Monstrous Absolute,” 137 with reference to A326/B383). It is important to maintain precision with the term. As George explains: “[I]t is decisive to recognize that Schelling’s appropriation of Kant’s discussion of the absolute may not only be quite distinct from but ultimately act as a counterpoint to the sense of the absolute which has become more familiar to us today, namely, that advocated by Schelling’s schoolmate Hegel. Whereas Hegel maintains that the absolute may not only be quite distinct from but ultimately act as a counterpoint to the sense of the absolute which has become more familiar to us today, namely, that advocated by Schelling’s schoolmate Hegel. Whereas Hegel maintains that the absolute is to be achieved in terms of the complete *Aufhebung*, or sublation, of finite consciousness, Schelling’s appropriation of Kant’s concept of the absolute will lead him to embrace a form of representation that remains tied to a belief in the limited—even fractured—character of human cognition. . . . Schelling’s appropriation of the Kantian concept of the absolute focuses upon Kant’s claim that this absolute ultimately takes shape in terms of a representation constituted by the complete unity of *subject* and *world*” (George, 137). Concerning Schelling’s dialogue with Kant’s “Third Antinomy” of reason more specifically: “As Schelling recognizes, reason miscarries not because it fails to achieve any determinate content at all but because it falls into disagreement with itself or, to use Kant’s own idiom, into antinomy, in which it becomes compelled to affirm that two mutually incompatible determinations of the absolute are completely indispensible to it. . . . On Schelling’s interpretation of Kant, the aim of reason is the representation of the absolute. Toward this end, however, it discovers two different determinations of the unity of subject and world which, though mutually exclusive, remain equally legitimate and compelling” (139).
Confessions and his account of having entered “into my innermost citadel” where with his “soul’s eye” he sees an “immutable light” distinct from “the light of every day.” What Schelling intuits is that depth of experience at the root of the sensuous consciousness and the supersensuous imagination, a depth wherein “time and duration vanish for us; it is not we who are in time, but time is in us; in fact it is not time but rather pure absolute eternity that is in ourselves. It is not we who are lost in the intuition of the objective world; it is the world that is lost in our intuition” (LDC 181/319).

This language indicates that, at this stage in his development, Schelling stands midway between what Frederick Beiser calls the “subjective/formal” idealism of Kant and Fichte and the “objective/absolute” idealism that Hölderlin, the early Hegel, and Schelling himself will adopt. The depth of the intuition opens out upon an eternity that may well transcend the intuiting subject himself. And the risk in this withdraw into the absolute identity ‘of’ the subject consists in an avoidance of the mystery it unfolds and thus a misdirection of its supersensuous element (187/328).

Schelling borrows a term from Kant to describe this mistake: Schwärmerei (enthusiasm, eccentric fantasy) (LDC 182/321). It is an enthusiasm or swarming rapture for the ‘the infinite’ that, in the rush to command or delineate the discovery, forgets its location. Schelling explains:

“Whenever such fantastication becomes a system, it arises from nothing but the objectified intuition, from the fact that one would take the intuition of oneself for an intuition of an object outside of oneself, the intuition of the inner intellectual world for an intuition of a supersensuous world outside of oneself” (182/321). This says that if what is intuited is the eternal, infinite absolute in us, then it can only be called a ‘subject,’ and yet it is so much the habit of consciousness to speak of intuited ‘objects’ that we imagine it thus and ascribe to it an otherworldly dimension. This is not merely a

37 See Beiser, German Idealism: The Struggle Against Subjectivism (1781-1801).
38 More basically: “Intuition [Anschauung] as such is usually explained as the most immediate experience; correctly so, as far as it goes. Yet the more immediate the experience, the closer to disappearance” (Schelling, LDC 185/325).
39 For clarification on the meaning of Schwärmerei in Schelling see F. Marti’s helpful discussion at LDC 215-16n.69.
logical mistake. *Schwärmerei* has very good reasons, for the intellectual intuition is as much a story of strife as unconditional certainty. As I have begun to indicate, the specific consciousness of actuality (*Wirlichkeit*) (184/324). it unfolds (the eternal, infinite) is utterly disorienting; it signals a potential vanishing of all objects, including the intuiting self. “I must grasp myself with might,” says Schelling, “in order to save myself from the abyss of intuition” (185/325). The intuition thus comes at a considerable price, and ‘enthusiasm’ is phantasy’s way of defraying the cost – though objectifying the absolute (as in dogmatism) will present its own abyss for the subject.

The task, then, in avoiding this risk and enduring this strife, is for criticism (as Schelling understands it) to somehow balance its consciousness of actuality without imagining the intuited mystery (the absolute, the eternal) as actual and thus objective. At stake in this balance is the freedom of the imagination that, in Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*, quickened the understanding beyond the limits of the conceptual. “The absolute,” says Schelling, “if represented as realized (as existing), becomes objective; it becomes an object of knowledge and therewith ceases to be an object of freedom” (*LDC* 189/331-32). Transcendental consciousness, by way of this radical intuition, is thus put in a position of having to arrest its own drive toward determinate knowledge (if criticism is to

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40 Here, in his Ninth Letter, Schelling also makes a statement that is a remarkable anticipation of his later work on freedom: “He who has reflected upon freedom and necessity has found for himself that these two principles must be united in the absolute: freedom, because the absolute acts by unconditional autonomy [Selbstmacht], and necessity, because it acts only according to the laws of its own being, the inner necessity of its essence. In the absolute there is no longer any will that could have reality independently of those acts. Absolute freedom and absolute necessity are identical” (*LDC* 189/331-332.). See also Denker, 393f. George summarizes the issue as follows: “For Schelling the need to represent the absolute in reason remains a vital one, even if his own discovery of the crisis of philosophy serves to demarcate the exhaustion of philosophical inquiry as it had been practiced in the course of the history of Western thought. . . . it is a question of how to achieve a representation of the absolute in reason while still retaining its fidelity to the crisis of reason itself” (George, “A Monstrous Absolute,” 140-41). In his *The Tragic Absolute: German Idealism and the Languishing of God* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005), David Farrell Krell contextualizes the full dramatic shape of this matter: “If the word absolute retains anything at all of its traditional ontotheological import, it is only in order to say that what philosophy has called ‘the Absolute,’ to wit, all gods and every God, including the God of faith and the Spirit of absolute knowing, is subject to the same ambiguity and is on the same bumpy ride as the rest of us. Suffering is written into the script. Languishing is of the essence” (Krell, *The Tragic Absolute*, 14). The problem becomes still more pointed when one considers the scope of nature for Schelling (an issue we will explore in chapter three): “The bedeviling problem for Schelling, as for the entire generation of thinkers after Kant, is how infinite activity could ever have submitted to such a compulsion to reproduction or to a condition of determination of any kind—above all, the compulsion of inhibition (*Hemmung*), which inheres in infinite activity as such and is therefore a particularly crippling condition, indeed a condition that neutralizes any and every sense of an unconditioned absolute” (48).
attend to the ‘matter’ in a more adequate way than dogmatism). The subject in whom the intuition unfolds is not to be confused with the ‘subject/object’ identity it intuits. Schelling finds Spinoza’s confusion on this point rather telling, for Spinoza assumed “intellectual intuition was intuition of self. . . He believed himself identical with the absolute” and “lost in its nonfiniteness. Believing this, he deceived himself. It was not he who had vanished in the intuition of the absolute object. On the contrary, everything objective had vanished for him, in the intuition of himself” (181/319) Schelling is not yet able to pose an alternative, for neither criticism nor dogmatism offers an adequate approach to the ‘actuality’ of the intuited matter. However, he does entertain the possibilities of the imagination in navigating this impasse:

And if criticism represents the ultimate goal as realizable, then, though it does not set up the absolute as an object of knowledge . . . it must leave a free hand to the faculty of imagination, which always anticipates actuality [Wirklichkeit], and which, standing halfway between the cognitive and the realizing faculty, takes a hand at the point where cognition ceases and realization has not yet begun. (LDC 190/333)

The Kantian structure of the imagination in both the first and third Critiques is evident. But, continuing, Schelling expresses doubts as to imagination’s ability to avoid ‘enthusiasm’ (Schwärmerei) – would it not be all too inclined to represent the absolute as “realized” and not simply “realizable?” (LDC 190/333). There is an unresolved tension in his thought on this precise point. Attached to his hesitation over the imagination is a footnote in which he elaborates on the meaning of this ‘faculty,’ as though testing the worth of retrieving it out of its own depths. I have already quoted the closing word of hope above (‘wondrous faculty’). The main body of the remark is as follows:

Imagination [Einbildungskraft], as the connecting middle between the theoretical and the practical faculty, is analogous with theoretical reason inasmuch as this is dependent upon cognition of the object, and analogous with practical reason insofar as this produces its object, itself. Imagination actively produces an object by putting itself in complete dependence on that object, into full passivity. What the creature of imagination lacks in objectivity, imagination itself supplies by the passivity which, through an act of spontaneity, it voluntarily assumes toward the
idea of that object. Thus imagination could be defined as the faculty of putting oneself into complete passivity by full self-activity. (LDC 190/333n)\(^4\)

The emphasis on active passivity captures much of the confusion surrounding Kant’s treatment of this power in the A and B Deductions. But to speak of “imagination itself” and its “act of spontaneity” without reference to understanding or combination is to thematize the faculty in a way Kant would not or could not permit. How Schelling will come to adapt the Kantian imagination without inviting the misdirections of Schwärmerie remains to be seen. It is enough for now to note that the matter has appeared at the very heart of Schelling’s early reflections on intellectual intuition. In this way the imagination is of methodological and intuitive interest because the Absolute is of central interest. The depth of the intuition that signals the Absolute parallels the depth of imagination.

*Imagination and Interpretation in the Depth of Synthesis*

Heidegger, like Schelling, locates both within and behind Kant’s excavation of transcendental elements a critical itinerary far exceeding the mere delineation of epistemological faculties or the discipline of pure reason. If Schelling finds in Kant’s breakthrough a possible means of securing passage to the Absolute, Heidegger finds a means of ‘deducing’ the turn of metaphysics to fundamental ontology. Both approaches, and their ensuing discourses, are shaped by larger tremors within the tradition – including Fichte’s subjective idealism for Schelling, and Husserl’s

\(^4\) Privileging imagination in such a way is a point likewise pertinent to Schelling’s interest in the poetic arts, especially Greek tragedy. George explains: “Schelling is concerned with the poetic arts because he maintains that they provide the resource necessary to accomplish the philosophical task of achieving a representation of the absolute. . . . It is in poetic art, and not within the limits of reason alone, that philosophical discourse finds an idiom for the representation of an absolute that could contain even the contradictions of reason. . . . The genre of Greek tragic drama is considered the highest of the poetic arts because of the elasticity that its power of representation enjoys, a power to bring forth, in unified dramatic performances, irreconcilable collisions between equally justified but incompatible forces” (George, “A Monstrous Absolute,” 141-42). If the activity/passivity of the imagination is thus linked to the representational capacities of the poetic arts, we begin to see how the unity of the practical and theoretical is already a matter for aesthetics, not simply teleology. Here we may introduce a consideration well-stated by Taminiaux which shall become more central in the following chapter: “It pertains to the philosophy of art to show that the aesthetic activity that produces works of art is, in consciousness itself, an activity that is both conscious and unconscious. The philosophy of art is conceived as the organ of transcendental philosophy because the aesthetic intuition—understood in terms of the identification of the subjective and of the objective, and invested in objects—is as such offered to consciousness. Upon such identification, philosophy, which is an activity reserved to a few individuals, reflects internally” (Taminiaux, *Poetics, Speculation, and Judgment*, 27).
phenomenology for Heidegger\textsuperscript{42} – but Heidegger, like Schelling, will uncover in Kant those elements that awaken philosophical possibility in a way that his era had not yet grasped. One clue to the nature of such possibility lies in the preface to the 1973 edition of his \textit{Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics} (\textit{KPM}).\textsuperscript{43} Heidegger remarks: “Kant’s text became a refuge, as I sought in Kant an advocate for the question of Being which I posed” (\textit{KPM}, xv). The refuge was the manner in which Kant’s \textit{Critique} rendered metaphysics, the science “of beings as such in their totality,” a problem for itself (xix). By placing reason before its own tribunal, Kant’s project comprised a “laying of the ground” (\textit{Grundlegung}) for metaphysics and thus an implicit reckoning with fundamental ontology as that which constitutes the very possibility of metaphysics (1/1). That Heidegger’s focus was on the first \textit{Critique} and not the third is evidently a result of this readiness to find in the question of \textit{synthetic a priori knowledge} a point of dialogue with his own project in \textit{Being and Time} (1927). His 1929 text is the first publication following \textit{Being and Time}, and is itself based on a 1927-28 Marburg lecture course in which he proceeds section by section through Kant’s Transcendental Doctrine of Elements to the chapter on the Schematism. Thus, at the precise moment of his revolutionary work in the 1920s, it stands to consider that Heidegger apprenticed himself to Kant’s first \textit{Critique}. What we want to ascertain in this brief section is how and why Heidegger will privilege the \textit{power of imagination} in Kant’s project as “not just the mid-point ‘between’ pure intuition and pure thinking, but rather the mid-point in the sense of center and root \textit{[des Zentrums und der Wurzel]}” (\textit{PIK} 195/287)\textsuperscript{44}


\textsuperscript{44} For a clear introduction to Heidegger’s reading of \textit{CPR} see Kearney, \textit{Wake of Imagination}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, 189-195.
What has the question of synthetic a priori knowledge to do with fundamental ontology? What has Einbildungskraft to do with Dasein? In lecture courses from this period Heidegger holds that Kant’s Critique “is the first attempt since Plato and Aristotle to really make ontology a philosophical problem” and “[t]ranscendental philosophy denotes nothing but ontology.”45 This problem is born out in the question of a ‘laying of the ground’ for metaphysics, insofar as Kant’s elemental direction exceeds the scope of mere logical relationships and begs the deeper question of what it as once ‘pure’ and ‘finite.’ For Heidegger, retrieving the problem of ground-laying in part means relinquishing the assumption that being as such will emerge as a ‘what’ under the auspices of a general metaphysics, and at the same time restoring the “problem of the finitude in human beings” to the realm of the Seinsfrage (KPM 151/214). Such a retrieval involves reconsidering the place of finitude and ground in the posing of the question. For Kant to delimit the soul’s faculties, for example, quite apart from compiling a list of transcendentals, is to gain some headway in this regard – to capture what is intrinsic to finitude and to regard the a priori possibilities of consciousness in terms of both meaning and necessity. Transcendental inquiry, that is, is not at root a mere question of “seeking particular grounds for something,” but, more deeply, a question of attaining “insight into that which ground as such means” (MFL 213/275-76). If then the ground to be laid is, for Kant, the possibility of experience (what Heidegger terms “transcendence”), it is for Heidegger not a “principle” (Prinzip) in the traditional sense, but rather “the expression of the most original phenomenological knowledge of the innermost, unified structure of transcendence” (KPM 81/115). It is in this vein of the ‘innermost’ matter that Heidegger will contend that “going-back to the origin

“Ursprung” in the ground laying depends most of all on “the freeing of pure synthesis and with that the interpretation of the power of imagination” which is “the root of both stems, sensibility and understanding” (92/128; 138/197).

These elements, we are now well aware, present rather slippery footholds in Kant’s path of investigation. For Heidegger, however, the ontological, hermeneutical, and phenomenological shape of Kant’s ground laying depends precisely on regarding “the transcendental power of the imagination” as the phenomenon which “reveals itself as the ground for the inner possibility of ontological synthesis” (KPM 92-93/129). Indeed, Heidegger believes Kant’s general orientation toward the unity of pure intuition and pure thinking must “lead out beyond itself” by way of a deepening of the ‘matter’ that is the imagination: “in this way the transcendental power of imagination reveals itself more and more as a structure of possibility, i.e., in its making possible of transcendence as the essence of the finite self” (94/131-32, 106-07/150). Such disclosure already suggests that transcendental ‘truth’ and “ontological knowledge” are synonymous, and that imagination functions to ‘form’ transcendence in the depths of ontological synthesis (84-85/119-120). Even the essential spontaneity and freedom of pure thinking in general and pure apperception in particular must “spring forth [entspringen]” from the imagination. If one endeavors to ‘lead back’ pure intuition and pure thinking he will find that the imagination “loses not only the character of an empirical faculty of the soul which has been picked up, but also the restriction, hitherto in effect, of its essence to the root-Being [Wurzelsein] for the theoretical faculty as such” (106-07/151).

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46 William Desmond describes Heidegger’s interest in the this theme of original being as a singular attempt to think “an origin before the origin in Plato; an origin beyond the origin of the transcendental self in Kant. He does claim to think the otherness of the origin in more radical terms than the others. Nevertheless, his putative radicality puts him into deep kinship with those he seems to want to surpass” (Desmond, Art, Origins, Otherness: Between Philosophy and Art (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003) 221).

47 Desmond holds that Heidegger is engaged in “an effort to come to terms with the issue of origin in relation to the transcendental imagination” (Desmond, 222). Thus, on Heidegger’s view, “in productive imagination we approach a power at the edge of determinate intelligibility. . . If imagination is productive, it is the forming power and not the form, a prior energy of articulation never exhausted by any determinate articulation. If so, there is something always categorically unmastered about it; as source of origination, the productive imagination points to an inward otherness which resists categorical determination” (ibid). The full extent of this indication is, as Desmond summarizes by
In both his lecture course and the ensuing text Heidegger makes this case by contending that the power of imagination is otherwise rendered “dispensable,” and “everything operates on the basis of intuition and thinking as the point of departure” (PIK 191/281) if one allows Kant to give “mastery back to the understanding” even though, by Kant’s own account, synthesis itself, and its spontaneous activity “springs purely from the power of imagination” (KPM 166-67/237, PIK 190/279). More specifically, to allow that the logical function of understanding “codetermines what the power of imagination builds in this formation [Gebilde]” of synthesis ‘brought’ to concept is to neglect how the “content of a concept, which Kant calls concept of understanding, is constituted by [the pure synthesis], i.e., imaginatively unified time” (PIK, 190/280, 192/283). Kant’s carelessness and evident reluctance with respect to this ‘indispensable function of the soul’ is not simply disappointing, but amounts to an inconsistency whereby Kant will, on the one hand, explicitly distinguish imagination from understanding, and yet proceed to allow the unity underwriting synthesis, concepts, and the larger logical function of judgment to fall under the determinacy of understanding (188-89/277).

Speaking from the context of A79/B104f, Heidegger observes that “in all of Kant’s subsequent discussions the power of imagination and understanding battle with each other for priority as the means of an accent on origins, that “transcendental imagination is not floating in a void; it is rather the place in the ‘subject’ where, as it were, the under-ground stream of being as original breaks surface. Transcendental imagination as ontological is itself an expression of the articulating energy of being that comes out of the darkness of the ultimate origin into the light of articulate selfhood. It is precisely this fact that allows us to misinterpret it, and give it simply a subjectivist interpretation. What has emerged into subjective articulation gives the ‘self’ its being for itself, and so we take ‘self’ as a self-subsistent power. It is no such thing. This power is a flower of the ontological power of being. We forget that it has come to be, and hence forget that in its being for itself something is communicated of the more ultimate origin, that now, in turn, becomes double forgotten” (224).

48 Slavoj Žižek thus emphasizes what, for Heidegger, is lost in Kant’s otherwise penetrating insight: “One can see clearly, now, why Heidegger focuses on transcendental imagination: the unique character of imagination lies in the fact that it undermines the opposition between receptivity/finitude (of man as an empirical being caught in the phenomenal causal network) and spontaneity (i.e., the self-originating activity of man as a free agent, bearer of noumenal freedom): imagination is simultaneously receptive and positing, ‘passive’ (in it, we are affected by sensible images) and ‘active’ (the subject himself freely gives birth to these images, so that this affection is self-affection)” (Žižek, The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology (London: Verso Books, 2000) 27-28). Continuing, he summarizes: The point of Heidegger’s reading is that one should determine the synthesis of imagination as the fundamental dimension at the root of discursive understanding, which would thus be analysed independently of the categories of Understanding – Kant recoiled from this radical step, and reduced imagination to a mere mediating force between the pure sensuous manifold of intuition and the cognitive synthetic activity of Understanding” (29).
basic source [Grundquelle] of knowledge” (198/291-92). The imagination battles quietly from the margins, but remains strategic – sometimes evident in the confusion generated by its absence. This is the case in the Doctrine of the Schematism, a crucial discussion which when viewed “in terms of the arrangement of the Kantian presentation. . . grounds the transcendental deduction.” But when the categories are understood to “belong essentially to the original whole of the pure time-related imaginative synthesis,” one understands the schematism as “a reference to the original sphere of the radical grounding of the possibility of ontological knowledge” (291-92/430-31). What these tensions reveal, for Heidegger, is that though Kant gives us reason to believe transcendental imagination is at the center of the ontological ground-laying, he fails to follow this discovery to its ownmost conclusions.49

That we today, with some exceptions, remain unaccustomed to reading the CPR as an ontological treatise or phenomenological study bears retrospective witness to Kant’s own reluctance in following the imagination to its radical end. There is a correspondence between our interpretive posture and Kant's analytic position. This means that Heidegger, more than simply protesting on behalf of the imagination, must undertake a new mode of interpretation. We have already begun to see this in play, but the issue requires more direct attention. Consider this clear description of the interpretive predicament from the 1927-28 course:

> When one reads the Critique under the pressure of tradition and so comes upon the power of imagination, this power appears at first as a suspicious faculty of the soul, i.e., fantasy [Phantasie]. Because one thinks that one has to purify Kant from psychology, one crosses out all these phenomena. Doing so, one is struck with the words and is blind to the dimension of human Dasein, into which Kant in fact looked, only to be scared away from it. If, on the other hand, we

49 Desmond, though suspicious of Heidegger’s strategic appeal to time and becoming in this regard, nevertheless maintains: “The imagination itself, I would argue, is itself a threshold power, a intermediating power that asks us to think, both the irreducible doubleness between the self as origin and the ultimate origin, and their communication in the coming to be of that between. . . . If the poet names this original intimacy, the philosopher has to think it again” (Desmond, Art, Origins, Otherness, 226). Žižek likewise accounts for Kant’s failure as follows: “The mystery of transcendental imagination qua spontaneity lies in the fact that it cannot be properly located with regard to the couple of Phenomenal and Noumenal. . . . [This] explains why Kant was at such a loss, and got involved in a series of inconsistencies in his efforts to determine the exact ontological status of transcendental spontaneity. And the mystery of transcendental imagination ultimately coincides with the mystery of this abyss of freedom” (Žižek, Ticklish Subject, 25-26).
radically and without prejudice submit to the matters at stake and inquire into Dasein, then we shall see that it is completely erroneous to think that one must avoid as quickly as possible the power of imagination and the like. Whoever erases the power of imagination from the significant context of the problem of the Critique (as Kant himself was inclined to do), shall remove Kant from the abyss [Abgrund] on whose very edges every genuine philosophy must constantly move. We are for Kant against Kantianism. (PIK 189-90/279)

This says that what stands vulnerable under our reading – the imagination – is also a point of retreat for Kant, and yet what is nevertheless at the center of CPR. But this also suggests that ‘genuine philosophy’ is a matter of ‘submission’ to the ‘matter’ before it. At the end of this same lecture course Heidegger remarks that in Kant “as in no other thinker one has the immediate certainty that he does not cheat” and indeed “the meaning of doing philosophy consists in awakening the need for this genuineness [Echtheit] and in keeping it awake” (PIK 293/431). Kant does not cheat philosophy out of its necessary abyss, but to reawaken the ‘genuine’ philosophy he exemplifies we must, as it were, remain with the very matter he could not sustain.50 For Schelling, we recall, intellectual intuition entertains its own abyss, and this position in turn leads Schelling to weigh the possibilities of the imagination. Heidegger’s charge, in like manner, is to ‘submit’ to the abyss ‘of’ imagination in CPR by disclosing “the decisive content of this work and thereby to bring out what Kant ‘had wanted to say’,” so as to affect a “retrieval [Wiederholung]” of the ground-laying’s more original possibility (KPM 137-38/195). The phenomenon of imagination requires a phenomenological mode of interpretation. To exhibit the ground-laying as an “occurrence [Geschehen]” through the shape of its “innermost drive [innersten Zug]” then, is an interpretive undertaking aimed at ‘letting-be’ the manner in which pure thinking is “rooted in the transcendental power of imagination” (146-47/209, 100/140).

50 Žižek thus asks: “is the force of imagination the impenetrable ultimate mystery of transcendental spontaneity, the root of subjectivity, the encompassing genus our of which grows understanding as its discursive cognitive specification, or is the encompassing genus understanding itself, with imagination as a kind of shadow cast retroactively by understanding on the lower level of intuition – or, to put it in Hegelese, is the synthesis of imagination the underdeveloped ‘In-itself’ of a force posited ‘as such,’ ‘for itself,’ in Understanding?” (Žižek, Ticklish Subject, 29).
Though the notion of saying what Kant ‘wanted to say’ is easy bait for critics (Cassirer among them), Heidegger cautions that this is not “the wanting-to-know-better, but just the task of freeing the innermost drive of the ground-laying, and with it its ownmost problematic which guides all the efforts of the interpretation [Interpretation]” (KPM 146-47/209). On the surface ‘submission’ may lead to apparent ‘violence’ against Kant’s text, though it is in fact a means of ‘liberating’ his subject matter. For every mention of what springs forth in synthesis for the work of determination, Heidegger will insist on following the motion back to its subject, even when it means pointing “to connections which presumably are no longer explicitly in Kant’s intentions, but still present themselves…” (PIK 194-95/286). Heidegger’s Auslegung and Fragestellung carry the spirit of Husserl’s ‘Zu den Sachen selbst’ toward the disclosedness (Erschlossenheit) of the occurrence. If the hallmark of Kant’s ‘genuine’ philosophy consisted in carrying out a critique “prescribed by the very nature of reason itself” (CPR Avii), a genuine interpretation of Kant’s work consists in the parallel phenomenological necessity to attend to the ‘matter’ of the imagination in this work.

With these comments on the phenomenon and its interpretation in mind, we are in a better position to appreciate how the imagination sustains Kant’s text as a genuine ‘refuge’ for Heidegger on the brink of the metaphysical ‘abyss.’ Within the text (the A Deduction especially) the ontological ground-laying discloses the imagination as the “primordial productivity of the ‘subject’” (MFL 210/272). This means the cognitive faculties – the “‘creative’ capacities of the finite human creature” – depend on the same creative, innermost ground of finitude which contains the primordial

\footnote{In the Preface to the second edition of KPM (1950) Heidegger allows that readers “have taken constant offense at the violence of my interpretations. Their allegation of violence can indeed be supported by this text” (xviii).}

\footnote{That Kant’s understanding of subjectivity is already distinct from traditional notions, and therefore closer to Dasein, is further supported by Heidegger’s statement in The Essence of Reasons (Vom Wesen des Grundes) (1928): “Our brief consideration of the still-concealed history of the primordial problem of transcendence suggests that transcendence cannot be disclosed and understood through a flight to the objective, but solely through an ontological interpretation of the subjectivity of the subject: an interpretation which, if constantly renewed, will speak against ‘subjectivism’ and, at the same time, deny ‘objectivism’ any authority” (M. Heidegger, The Essence of Reasons (Vom Wesen des Grundes) (1928), trans. Terrence Malick (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969), 97/161-2. The original text appears as Gesamtausgabe Bd. 9, Wegmarken. Pagination is English/German.}
understanding of Being. Heidegger understands that this point would ‘rattle’ the metaphysical understanding of Being as that which enjoys a superlative universality which, though indefinable, is thought to be conceptually self-evident on the basis of representational reflection. When Kant ‘shrinks back’ from the imagination it is not because Hume is looking over his shoulder, but because he did not know to ground the powers of the soul in an “antecedent fundamental ontology of Dasein.” Heidegger explains:

Kant came upon the central function of the power of imagination. However, he did not come to terms with an interpretation of this power in terms of fundamental ontology; for this he was much too strongly tied to the traditional doctrine of the faculties of the soul and even more so to the division—still prevalent today—of the basic faculty of knowledge into intuition and thinking, which begins already in antiquity, with the distinction between αἰσθησις and νόησις.

Had Kant acknowledged and heeded the ontological weight of the imagination, it would have required him to “raze his own building” (MFL 210/272). The transcendental subject would have to become the finite Dasein, for whom the imagination is fundamental to the possibility of any native understanding of Being. Alas, “the question of the being of the Dasein as such is simply not raised” (BPP 153/218). But CPR is a refuge insofar as it affords a view back upon the ontological tradition, hovers in the mystery of a grounding synthesis, and points in every direction to the need for

53 In The Essence of Reasons Heidegger refers to Kant’s CPR section on “Supreme Principle of All Synthetic Judgments” (cf. A154/B193): “This second ‘principle’ explains what, at a transcendental level [überhaupt], i.e., within the range and on the level of Kant’s ontological inquiry, belongs to the Being of being—‘being’ here understood as that which is accessible in experience. It gives a positive definition of transcendental truth, which is to say that it defines the inner possibility of transcendental truth through the unity of time, the faculty of imagination, and the ‘I think’” (The Essence of Reasons, 31-33/136).

54 Heidegger explains: “If the essence of transcendence is grounded in the pure power of imagination, or more originally in temporality, then precisely the idea of the ‘Transcendental Logic’ is something inconceivable, especially if, contrary to Kant’s original intention, it is autonomous and is taken absolutely” (KPM 166/236-37, my emphasis). Castoriadis likewise observes that “this radical notion of imagination as neither passive-receptive nor conceptual. . . cannot be properly placed ontologically, since it indicates a gap in the very ontological edifice of Being (Castoriadis, “the Discovery of Imagination,” Constellations, vol. 1, no. 2 (October 1994) at Žižek, 24). And Taminiaux summarizes Heidegger’s concern by explaining: “Kant took a step backward and attempted to save the supremacy of reason, with the result that, at the same time as he got closer to a new mode of thinking, he also remained a prisoner of the modern metaphysics of subjectivity” (Taminiaux, Poetics, Speculation, and Judgment, 38).

55 He similarly states: “Perhaps the fact that, from antiquity and throughout the entire tradition until now, the ontological problem is dealt with as a problem of categories shows a fundamental misconception of the genuine philosophical problematic” (PIK 202/296).

fundamental ontology. It is telling that, where Heidegger concluded his lecture course on a point of ‘genuine’ philosophy in Kant, he concludes *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* on the need to “befriend the essential, the simple, and the constant.” The terrain of synthetic a priori knowledge enacted such a friendship (*philia*), sheltering the imagination in spite of itself, and so signals the genuine depth “from which the question concerning the concept of Being (*sophia*)—the grounding question of philosophy—arises” (*KPM* 168/239). What remains to be seen is the manner in which Heidegger’s retrieval of the imagination remains an organizing principle or inner dynamic for his own elemental questioning, and to what extent it gives way or gives shape to other beginnings at the limit of metaphysics.

That the ‘play’ of the Kantian imagination is productive both *in* the powers of the soul and *for* the thought of Schelling and Heidegger is now evident. The pronounced, if ambiguous, contribution it affords to transcendental consciousness is paralleled by the force it brings to the itineraries of absolute idealism and fundamental ontology. Though the constellation of themes unfolding from Kant’s recovery of the imagination may seem to affirm Hugo’s exasperated pronouncement, “What floods ideas are! . . . and how rapidly they create frightful abysses!,” Schelling’s interest in the depth of intuition and Heidegger’s interest in the ontological ground of synthesis yield several elements that shall remain crucial in our study of the poetic imagination. These include the shape of imagination as a *spontaneous occurrence*, the position and meaning of imagination at the ‘ground’ of finite being, its *motion* and reach beyond determinative concepts, its ‘*attunement*’ in aesthetic production, and the larger means by which its presentative aspect signals a core *creative capacity* in the work of thought. To prepare the way for a ‘poetic’ turn in these elements we do well to recall the elusive ‘flash’ and ‘happy impulse of the spirit’ Kant observed in the imagination of the genius. Schelling speaks of “a certain profoundness of mind [*Tiefsinn*] of

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which one is not aware, and which one would try in vain to produce at will.”\textsuperscript{58} And Heidegger accounts for poetry’s (\textit{Dichtung}) singular privilege as bearing “the elementary emergence into words, the becoming-uncovered, of existence as being-in-the-world” (\textit{BPP} 171-72/244). Such statements are uttered from the space wherein the architectonic concentration on the productive imagination opens out upon a broader terrain of \textit{poiesis}, and thus evoke a sense of cautious possibility for cultivating Kant’s ‘root.’

\textsuperscript{58} Schelling, \textit{LDC}, 180/318.
Chapter Two:
Poeticizing the Root: Production and Artistry in Schelling’s Philosophy of Identity

*It is a fundamental mistake to attempt a theoretical grounding of theoretical philosophy. . .*

-F.W.J. Schelling
*Treatise Explicatory of the Idealism in the Science of Knowledge* (1797)

*To penetrate into the deepest secrets of nature, one must not tire of inquiring into the opposed and antagonistic extremes or end points of things. To discover their point of union is not the greatest task, but to do this and then develop its opposite elements out of their point of union, this is the genuine and deepest secret of art.*

-Giordiano Bruno in Schelling’s *Bruno* (1802)

Having left Schelling at the borders of an intellectual intuition of the supersensuous and unconditional, and there extending a ‘free hand’ to the faculty of imagination, the aim of this chapter is to highlight the place of the imagination in the emergence of Schelling’s philosophy of identity between 1797-1803.¹ We have noted the figurative and schematizing function of this power at the root of the possibility for synthetic judgments in Kant’s first *Critique*, as well as its animated play and productivity in substantiating taste and furnishing aesthetic ideas in the *Critique of Judgment*. Never regarded in isolation, the imagination is indispensable to the treatment of representations and the reach of transcendental apperception in one sense, and integral to the quickening of the understanding and the supersensible stirrings of subjective freedom in the other. But what does a productive faculty, ostensibly limited to the realm of cognition, have to do with the larger odysseys of nature, history, and mind? By what necessities does this apparent ‘root’ of sensibility and understanding mature as both a matter of investigation and as a mode of aesthetic, even philosophical, production?

¹ I am aware the formal starting point for Schelling’s so-called “identity system” is commonly dated with the appearance of his 1801 “Presentation of My System of Philosophy.” See, for example, Antoon Braeckman, “From the Work of Art to Absolute Reason: Schelling’s Journey Toward Absolute Idealism,” in *Review of Metaphysics* vol. 57 no. 3 (March 1, 2004) 551. As I will indicate, this is so because the *Darstellung* contains a deductive rationale for ‘absolute identity’ that is self-consciously post-Fichtean, and therefore a ready point of orientation for Schelling’s more singular system. However, Schelling is already preoccupied with the question of identity and the problem of system – both with and against Fichte – in the late 1790s. I have broadened the period of these issues accordingly.
The predicament is as practical as it is ambitious, especially for the thinker who believes philosophy “is itself the striving to participate in primordial knowledge [Urwissen].”² “Under the guise of Reason,” says Maurice Merleau-Ponty in a lecture on Schelling, “is hidden an exercise of the arbitrary”,³ and the task of manifesting and mirroring this exercise falls to a philosophy understood, in Schelling’s terms, as a “science born of poetry.”⁴ For the philosopher, Schelling appears to allow in 1797, “must possess just as much aesthetic power as the poet”,⁵ and indeed (in 1802) “an artistic instinct [Kunsttrieb] is involved in philosophy no less than in poetry” (US 58/264).

In a certain sense the wager that there is a ‘primordial’ knowledge, together with our striving to ‘participate’ in it (and not merely apprehend it), is a claim that will be justified on the basis of showing what such a subject-matter does to reason when reason risks becoming an “aesthetic act.”⁶ This step, I believe, is precisely what Schelling ventures in a period of thought otherwise famous for his work on intellectual intuition and absolute identity. It is a period wherein Schelling speaks of the imagination as “the original activity of the spirit [die ursprüngliche geistige Thätigkeit]” (Treatise 2–3)


⁵ From “Earliest Program of German Idealism” (1797) at US xii-xiii. The authorship of this brief text has been variously attributed to Schelling, Hegel, and Hölderlin. Though indications are the text was a collaborative effort among the three, the authorship proper appears to belong to Hegel and is in his handwriting. See Christoph Jamme and Helmut Schneider, Mythologie der Vernunft: Hegels ältestes Systemprogramm des deutschen Idealismus (Surkamp, 1984). Among the primary aims of the text, according to Krell, are “to understand the supreme act of reason as an aesthetic act and beauty as the supreme idea of reason,” and to provide “a polytheism of the imagination conjoined with a monotheism of reason and the heart” (Krell, The Tragic Absolute, 3).

⁶ 1797 at US xii-xiii.
72/357) and contends that “‘pure reason’” is not itself an “absolute activity,” but is “merely imagination enhanced (by practical reason)” (Treatise 109/410, my emphasis). It is a period in which he likewise asserts that “what is commonly called theoretical reason is nothing else but imagination in the service of freedom” (System 176/558-59), and that productive intuition, taken in its aesthetic aspect, is creative on the basis of the only capacity “whereby we are able to think and to couple together even what is contradictory—and its name is imagination” (System 230-231/626-27).

Indeed, in the Jena lectures of 1802 Schelling holds that “reason and imagination. . . are one and the same” when understood in terms of the “inner esense of the absolute [inner Wesen des Absoluten]” (US, 61-62/267). Such remarks begin to suggest an ascending labor of the ‘free hand’ from the spade work of a priori synthesis to the keystone by which the arches of theoretical and practical reason, the ideal and the real, are joined.

Even so, the temptation in writing on Schelling’s thought in this period is to reduce it to a system of idealism centered on what, by 1801, he calls the absolute and its intuition in reason (Vernunftanschauung), and thereby work backwards and forwards through an apparent series of false starts, hesitations, and protean developments. There is no question ‘the absolute’ (from root absolvere, what is absolved from dependence on externality) emerges as the most definite article in his confederacy of identity, and that it comes to constitute the preeminent and primordial axis on

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8 This faculty, he continues, “equally capable of activity and passivity, is the only one capable of comprising and exhibiting in one communal product the negative and positive activities” (Treatise 72/357).

9 Here we might allow with Denker that “[f]rom our point of view it seems almost unbelievable anybody could become excited about the Absolute” (Denker, “Three Men Standing over a Dead Dog,” 381). Indeed, to understand the urgency of this matter for Schelling we might compare it to the status of Otherness and alterity for contemporary thought; the comparison is not as ironic as it might seem, since the absolvere root sense of ‘the absolute’ shares with ‘alterity’ the stress against external dependence or predication. My concern, however, is that our habitual typologies
which all that is real and ideal, phenomenal and pure, temporal and eternal, and natural and archetypical turn. It is all too easy, however, to take this matter as a gilded concept or synonym for ‘God’ and thereby blind oneself to the underlying adventure in which it arises. It is to miss the simple fact that Schelling is not interested in furnishing a “universally valid philosophy,” but rather in exhibiting the necessary and possible “resolution of the real in the ideal” (US 9/215); and it is to forget that his every ascent to what is highest, purest, or metaphysically totalizing is in fact a strenuous recovery of what is already most original. We may begin to repair the glosses of the ‘developmental’ approach if we recall that Schelling is, with acute consistency, a thinker of unity by way of opposition, of a primordial ‘whole’ abiding behind the many differences or cleavages (Entzweitung) that subsist in the field of experience and the practice of knowing. This is the dialectical pressure weighing on his larger discourse, and the very prospect of productive resolution is inspired specifically by the mediating activity of the creative faculty – what he calls the “true imagination,” (as opposed to “the disorderly reproduction of sensory images”), the “poetry [Poesie] of philosophy” which “can be developed, enhanced, and its resources multiplied ad infinitum” (US, 61-62/267-68). We soon discover, as well, that Schelling’s is a philosophy of the absolute only because Schelling himself is a thinker of standpoints, and a thinker for whom, says James Dodd, philosophical reflection is “a striving for the elucidation of a hidden principle.” It is in his self-assigned task of thinking through and from a sequence of standpoints that, I hope to show, he

of German Idealism have dulled the Absolute into a bygone fascination, in which case a focus on the role of imagination in Schelling’s thought may have the secondary effect of returning us to the immediate terrain in which the Absolute names the compass point of a theoretical and ontological adventure.

10 Werke, II, 7, at US, x-xi, 1797.  
11 The meaning of the ‘whole’ is conceived in terms of imagination in Schelling’s 1802-1803 Lectures on Art: “The splendid German word ‘imagination’ (Einbildungskraft) actually means the power of mutual informing into unity (Ineinsbildung) upon which all creation is based. It is the power whereby something ideal is simultaneously something real, the soul simultaneously the body, the power of individuation that is the real creative power.” F.W.J. Schelling, The Philosophy of Art (1802-1804), ed. and trans. Douglass Stott in vol. 58 of The Theory and History of Literature (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989) 32/386, my emphasis. Hereafter Art. The translation follows SW 5. Pagination appears as English/German.  
tightens his grip on the imagination – both as a vital matter of investigation as well as a conscious partner in the exercises of intuition, production, and abstraction. Schelling, after all, will not hesitate to speak of the “creative imagination” as the site wherein “everything is free and moves about in the same realm without crowding or chafing, for each is within itself equal of the whole” (Art 37/393). To attribute this quality of concerted individuation and unity is for Schelling, as we shall see, the highest praise.

In the sections to come we will follow his passage through mere consciousness to self-consciousness, identity, and indifference. So doing, I will specify his early attention to the necessary elements of mediation between poles of intuiting and producing, finitude and will, and consciousness and unconsciousness, as well as his remarkable treatment of aesthetic intuition and the status of the symbolic in works of artistic genius. I will argue that the power of imagination is afforded an increasingly poetic horizon – a work and life of imagination conducive of his arising interests in the unconscious, artistic productivity, and the deeper question of ground. The poetic horizon will be framed by Schelling’s initial post-Kantian interest in Einbildungskraft and the problem of absolute identity, as well as his later, increasingly resolute post-Fichtean interest in Ineinsbildung and the problem of absolute reason. If, as I will indicate, Schelling’s focus on intuition in its productive aspect is the blueprint by which he will reposition Kant’s cognitive elements, the power of imagination provides the traction and stability required by the system he aims to ground. My primary focus will be on his 1797 “Treatise Explicatory of the Idealism in the Science of Knowledge,” his 1800 System of Transcendental Idealism, and his 1802-1803 Lectures on Art; though I will also refer to his 1801-1802 Presentations, his 1802-1803 lectures at Jena entitled On University Studies, and his 1802 dialogue, Bruno. With these destinations and texts in view we now ask: In what framework and by virtue of which philosophical necessities does Schelling come to infuse the elemental imagination with the life of creative production and poetic consciousness?
I. The Ideal Receptivity for the Real

Schelling’s 1797 “Treatise Explicatory of the Idealism in the Science of Knowledge” is a revealing propaedeutic to his systematic ambitions at a time in which the integrity of the Kantian project remains in question and the promise Fichte’s subjective idealism is at once compelling and myopic. He anchors his discussion in a reading of Kant’s first Critique meant to defend Kant from readers who misconstrue his philosophy as speculative. Short of any apology for the letter of Kant’s cognitive architecture, Schelling echoes Fichte in offering an exposition of the spirit of the elemental terrain that celebrates the transcendental turn while also insisting on its need for a grounding, unconditional principle. As this objective unfolds, one learns that the principle is crucial to the operations of philosophical inquiry on one hand, and to the integrity of human consciousness and the systemic essence of spirit on the other. He will in fact characterize the unity of these elements such that the Fichtean notion of a grounding determination (Bestimmung) is, with the aid of the imagination in at least two manifestations, pressed beyond the transcendental logic and formal identity to encompass spirit, reason, nature, and history in a concerted genesis of the real. Its title notwithstanding, the text is not a précis of Fichte’s Wissenschaftslehre. While highlighting the Kantian emphasis on production in intuition, and embracing the priority Fichte affords the imagination, Schelling will follow the Fichtean path toward intellectual intuition and systemization yet escape the enclosure of the subjective ego by pressing the issue of synthetic identity. One finds

13 Orrin Summerell observes that Schelling, in the Treatise (1797) “goes beyond his predecessors” on the matter of imagination. Simply put, Schelling understands that “’Einbildungskraft,’ makes the imagination into that faculty rendering things in themselves objectively intuitable in the clear light of their determinative ideas” (Summerell, “The Theory of Imagination in Schelling’s Philosophy of Identity” in Idealistic Studies, vol. 34 no. 1 (March 1, 2004) 87).
15 “While Fichte has to admit that the imagination is crucial in his attempt to form a science of knowledge,” Richard Findler explains, “it is Schelling who exposes the hidden possibilities within Kant’s insights into the imagination and attempts to overcome the static nature of the Kantian critical philosophy in his system of transcendental idealism” (Findler, “A Sketch of Schelling’s Appropriation of the Kantian Imagination in the System of Transcendental Idealism: Schelling’s Divergence from Fichte” in Asmuth, Denker, and Vater, Schelling: Between Fichte and Hegel, 42-43). Specifically, “Fichte is unable to generate the necessary synthesis that will bridge the gap between nature and freedom. The reason the necessary synthesis is lacking is due to Fichte’s understanding of the imagination in the Wissenschaftslehre. In his discussion of the imagination, Fichte sees that the imagination makes
in the *Treatise* an emerging conception of an ideal/real synthesis, the intuition of absolute identity expressive of such, and a focus on the power of imagination that prepares the way for his decisive appeal to the *mediating imagination* and *aesthetic production* in the *System*.

Schelling begins the *Treatise* by insisting that the true mettle of the philosophic spirit is measured by the intractable necessities which compel a thinker to demand of inquiry an answer to the question made central in Descartes and Hume, and bequeathed in a more revolutionary way by Kant: “What, then, is ultimately the reality that inheres in our representations? [*Was ist denn am Ende das Reale in unsern Vorstellungen?*]” (*Treatise* 69/352-53). Such a question foists itself upon empiricist tedium and dogmatic speculation with a stubborn drive toward the “higher principles” and “guiding ideas” (ibid) that lie at the origin of knowledge, and evidences a marked dissatisfaction with the confusion engendered by the “chimera [*Hirngespinsst*]” of things in themselves (72/357). Schelling’s *System* will open on a similar note, insisting that the “highest task of transcendental philosophy” is to answer the question: “how can we think both of presentations as conforming to objects, and objects as conforming to presentations?” (*System* 11/347-48). In this later formulation Schelling is direct in stating that the answer will entail a “predetermined harmony” between the ideal and the real, and still possible the synthesis of the opposites that occur within theoretical knowledge. However, Fichte claims that all the imagination can do is ‘waver between object and non-object’” (see 44-45). Richard Velkley takes a similar position: “While having learned from Fichte that the self is a self-intuiting and self-producing act (the *Tathandlung* of intellectual intuition) that does not rest on a prior substratum, and that cannot be related to any such substratum without paradox, Schelling claims to be able to demonstrate the existence of the infinite activity of self-intuition in nature, prior to its appearance in the conscious human self ” (Velkley, “Realizing Nature in the Self: Schelling on Art and Intellectual Intuition in the *System of Transcendental Idealism*,” in eds. David Klemm and Günter Zöeller, *Figuring the Self: Subject, Absolute, and Others in Classical German Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997) 153).

16 The aim of this question, echoing Kant, is to solidify that preconceptual grounding center which ultimately “prevents my own self from drowning in the stream of representations” and “carries me from act to act, from thought to thought, from time to time (on invisible wings, as it were)” (103/402). The question is a specified way of treating the predicament noted by Schiller in the aftermath of Kant’s critical project: “In the Transcendental method of philosophizing, where everything depends on clearing form of content, and obtaining Necessity in its pure state, free of all admixture with the contingent, one easily falls into thinking of material things as nothing but an obstacle, and of imagining that our sensuous nature, just because it happens to be a hindrance in this operation, must of necessity be in conflict with reason. Such a way of thinking is, it is true, wholly alien to the spirit of the Kantian system, but it may very well be found in the letter of it” (*Letters*, 87n.2).
later, an “absolute indifference” of the two.\(^{17}\) In the earlier formulation the qualification is more exploratory, as though the conception of such a harmony is still underway and shall be unfolded through an incremental procedure, ultimately resulting in his 1802 assertion that what is “purely ideal and thereby purely real” is in fact rooted in the archetypal nature of knowledge itself (US 10/216). In advance of this, he says in 1797 that the temper of the question demands two conditions in the thinker: “a primordial tendency toward the real [zum Realen], on the one hand, and a capacity to elevate oneself above reality [das Wirkliche].” What is meant by this apparent misdirection?

Schelling explains that “without the former such a question will entangle us all too easily in idealistic speculations, and . . . without the latter the senses, rendered dull by the individual object, retain no receptivity whatsoever for the real” (Treatise 69/352-53). Playing both on the meaning of ‘reality’ and the trademark ‘receptivity’ of the sensible faculty, this says that the path of the primordial is a path of elevation, and that it is the privilege of sensibility to escape enthusiasm and the illusions of das Wirkliche. This attempt to hold together the real and ideal in a reciprocal, productive balance for inquiry is important because it mirrors the unity of activity Schelling will disclose within the cognitive faculties in general, and within intuition most importantly. Though his System will right away declare “absolute identity” to be the “ground of harmony between the subjective and the objective in action” (System 4/333-34), and though his 1801 “Presentation of My System of Philosophy” (Presentation) will detail the absolute identity of subject and object, being and cognizing, idealiter and realiter in the propositional form of identity (A=A), the Treatise reveals the discovery of this necessity in a performative way.

Before tracing Schelling’s initial development of these matters through the interior activity of intuition to spirit’s own striving for self determination, several points of orientation merit a more

formal positioning. *First*, the very posing of the above question indicates that the theoretical interest in identifying the reality attached to representations, and thus the origin of cognitive knowledge, is (as Fichte held) already practical. As the question of an unconditional grounding determination develops into the question of absolute identity it will always have an adjoining interest in explaining, beyond Kant, how and why “theoretical philosophy already presupposes practical philosophy in its very first principles” (*Treatise* 101/399). As is so often the case in Schelling, what is intimated through the power of suggestion nevertheless requires, and already anticipates, an intuition capable of catching such unity, as it were, in the act. *Second*, the Kantian preoccupation with respecting the unapproachable singularity of the noumenal substrate (things in themselves) is a useful clue to the *supersensuous* nature of the desired grounding principle, but amounts to a misleading boundary against this principle’s attainment. Schelling believes the very ability to draw the limitation, ‘things in themselves,’ already points to an intrinsic *act* of self-determination (namely, the autonomy of the *will* in Kant’s practical philosophy) on which the ability to distinguish between the “*real world of appearances*” and the “*ideal world of things in themselves*” depends (106-7/406-7). Schelling, at this time, is also more invested in the possibilities arising from a philosophy of nature than he is concerned with the elusiveness of the noumena. In 1796 he remarks: “While the Kantians... are grappling with figments of their imagination, their ‘things-in-themselves,’ men of truly philosophical spirit are quietly making discoveries in natural science, which healthy philosophy will soon put to

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18 Schelling later explains: “Theoretical philosophy mandates that the origins of representation be explained. Yet... does not the act of this explanation itself already presuppose that we have become independent of our representations, that is, that we have become *practical*?” (*Treatise* 101/399). A general point by Jason Wirth is here pertinent: “In Schelling one can locate his commitment to articulate the Good in such a way that it is not swallowed by ontology. For Schelling ethics was first philosophy... Knowing is a fundamentally ethical act, a responsibility to the Other” (Wirth, “Introduction” in *Schelling Now*, 7).

19 For a contextualization of this theoretical/practical impulse in terms of uncertainties left standing in Kant’s thought, see Denker, “Three Men Standing over a Dead Dog,” 383-85.

20 Since the matter is arbitrated by theoretical reason in the first *Critique*, Kant, says Schelling, could not help but *symbolize* “this supersensible ground of all sensibility” (*Treatise* 106/406), and as a result “leaves *unexplained* all that could be explained only through *this primordial, inner principle of all representation* (which he nowhere attempts to determine)” (107/407).
If his own *Philosophy of Nature* (1797) is any indication, he is en route to announcing, as he does in 1801, that the “standpoint of reason” consists in “a knowing of things as they are in themselves” and that “[t]he power that bursts forth in the stuff of nature is the same in essence as that which displays itself in the world of mind” (*Presentation* 349/115, 358/128). The interweaving of points one and two in Schelling’s thought will thus lead him to the central principle of the *will* in and behind all practical and theoretical activity,22 and to pitting the shared domain of the real and ideal (the “self-contained absolute world”) against the phenomenal world belonging to the standpoint of “finite discursive reason” (*US* 14/220). The problems attending a dualism of the phenomenal and noumenal will be overcome by virtue of being absorbed into a higher standpoint.

The third, and related, point of orientation is implicit in the leading question and its conditional criteria: though Kant’s edifice claims for its supports external and unknowable things in themselves and an internal transcendental unity of apperception, these theoretical principles are inadequate to the task of grounding a *system*. Something more is needed in order to bridge the gap between the genesis of the ‘real’ and the so-called ‘reality’ of our knowledge. “As long as we are merely concerned with setting up a philosophical *edifice*,” says Schelling, “we may content ourselves with such a foundation, just as we are satisfied when the house we are building stands on firm ground. Yet when speaking of a *system*, we must ask on what the ground itself rests, and on what that second ground [rests], and so for ad infinitum” (*Treatise* 101/399-400). A system, that is, must look within itself for its support and not to some “external ground for its movements and its coherence” (101-102/400).23 Schelling is not yet in a position of asserting, as he will in 1802, that: “The original

21 *Werke*, I, 348n, at *US* xi.
22 Anticipating this appeal to ‘will,’ Schelling would have agreed with the following position outlined in the 1797 “Earliest Program of German Idealism”: “The first Idea is naturally that of my own self as an absolutely free being. As I become aware of myself as free, a whole world emerges—out of nothing—the only true and conceivable creation out of nothing” (1797 Letter at *US* xi).
23 Any “true system,” he again declares in his *System*, “must contain the ground of its subsistence within itself” (*System* 15/352-53). The same imperative shall remain in play in his 1801 *Presentation* as the heightened form of the law of identity – the “ultimate law for the being of reason” (*Presentation* 350/116).23 He explains: “For the system that appears here for the first time in its fully characteristic shape is the same one that I always had in view in
purpose of all philosophy is precisely to go beyond the facts of consciousness and to arrive at something absolute in itself” (US 63/269). The reason, however, is not reducible to a difference between subjective and objective idealism, but is better understood as a development by which the unconditional ground for a system is entertained as a necessity, then enacted as a standpoint, then understood more rigorously as both. The immediate task will be to observe how and where the distinction between edifice and system moves Schelling’s investigation and shapes his accelerating interest in the question of a preconceptual ground. So doing, we will see how Schelling deflects worries over “how the representations of this world could have entered into our consciousness” (Treatise 77/364) so as to concentrate, rather, on the grounding ‘for-itself’ nature of spirit and the singular freedom underwriting intuition’s intrinsic activity – both of which are evident, if undervalued, in the constructive work of Kant’s productive imagination.

Finally, there is in the very question of the reality inhering in representations, and indeed in the presumption to inquire after the origin of knowledge of possible experience, a hermeneutical wager not lost on Schelling. To work at such is to risk an analysis – a parsing apart – of what is in consciousness spontaneous and “previously combined by necessity” (Treatise 70/354). For example, Schelling will speak of the cognitive faculties in their own individual right, but he will at the same time wonder in dismay at philosophers “who to this very day charge Kant with ‘an utter separation of the understanding and sensibility’” (73/359). A minimum of speculative partitioning is

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24 Schiller evokes the sense of forbearance one must bring to such analysis: “Like the analytical chemist, the philosopher can only discover how things are combined by analysing them, only by laying bare the workings of spontaneous Nature by subjecting them to the torment of his own techniques. In order to lay hold of the fleeting phenomenon, he must first bind it in the fetters of rule, tear its fair body to pieces by reducing it to concepts, and preserve its living spirit in a sorry skeleton of words” (Letters, 5).
required, but the needs of inquiry must not occlude the ‘whole’ they purport to serve. Though Kant, “had to dissect human knowledge and concepts into their individual components. . . he left it to his heirs to delineate with one stroke the great, remarkable whole of our nature that is composed of these parts” (74/360, my emphases). Schelling likewise speaks of a “talent to separate what has never been separated, and to divide into thoughts what is united everywhere within nature,” but also demands that such analysis (strict sense) be “conjoined with the philosophical [talent] that reunites what has been separated” (73-74/359-60, my emphases). Evidently, then, the methodological caution is itself meant to signal the larger emphasis on the overarching, systemic unity that Schelling will substantiate in terms of activity and spirit – the elemental markers of principled movement and relation of which perhaps even ‘analysis’ itself may be an expression.

With these points of orientation aligned with Schelling’s preparatory question, it is evident that the issue of what reality inheres in representations is simply the immediate and strategic opening upon a much deeper subject matter. How and why such an inquiry “belongs properly to aesthetics” (103/402) is not yet clear, though it will suffice for now to note that the spiraling motion is instigated from within Kant’s own transcendental aesthetic, and it is to this discussion that we now turn.

25 Schelling’s emphasis on the unity of the soul will increase in this period, and will inform his sharper criticisms of both Kant and of all residual dualisms. He holds in 1802, for example: “The true science of man [as opposed to psychology] must be based on the essential and absolute unity of soul and body, i.e., the Idea of man; empirical man is but a relative manifestation of the Idea” (US 65/270). And in 1804 he writes: “The essence of the soul is one. There are no faculties—these are assumed by a false psychological abstraction. Whatever springs from the essence of the soul, whether knowledge or action, is absolute, is true, and both free and necessary” (Werke VI, 540f, at US 154).

26 The problem of analysis and separation is more nuanced as Schelling comes to frame the principle of identity within the scope of absolute totality. In 1801, for example, he explains: “There is also nothing in itself outside the totality, and if something is viewed outside the totality, this happens only by arbitrary separation of the individual from the whole effected by reflection. But in itself this separation simply does not happen, since everything that is one, and within the totality is absolute identity itself” (Presentation 357/126). In the 1797 Treatise, however, Schelling is not yet willing or able to speak in such terms, and so the issue of analysis/separation is an active tension, like the related differences between a methodology and standpoint of reflection (Kant/Fichte) and that of production. See also US 14/220, 68/274, 154/128-9; and Presentation 359.
The Imagination and the Genesis of Activity

If the larger ambition of Schelling’s System is “to enlarge transcendental idealism into what it really should be, namely a system of all knowledge” (System 1/329-30), and if the domain of such expansion is the subjective, then “the sole organ of this mode of philosophizing is therefore inner sense,” (13/349-50) meaning intuition. This root of the “subjective element in knowledge” (17/355-57), then, will comprise the “nonconscious activity” which brings forth nature and anticipates the “conscious activity expressed in willing” (12/348-49). In the Treatise Schelling elects to pursue this endeavor by explaining that within intuition there is an assemblage of moving parts that constitute a whole of activity. Kant “said that intuition had to be preceded by an affection of our sensible faculty [Sinnlichkeit], although he left the question concerning the origin of this faculty altogether undecided” (Treatise 70/355). To mend this lacuna, Schelling begins by seeking this ‘origin’ in subjectivity – namely, in intuition’s most basic constitutive activity. The productive imagination is his clue: “If Kant spoke of a synthesis by the imagination in intuition, then surely this synthesis was an activity of our subjectivity [des Gemüths] and, consequently, space and time as forms of this synthesis [are] modes of activity of our subject” (71/355). It is one thing to treat the pure aesthetic forms of intuition (space and time) as “conditions for intuition,” but the formal or general consideration of their nature forgets that they are “two absolutely opposing activities” which “can serve as a principle according to which the material of the original modes of activity of the subject can be determined in intuition” (71-72/356-57). The ‘oppositional’ nature of space and time consists in the pull of time toward object form, and the pull of space toward object extension; the purity of both works positively, while the need for determination and delimitation works negatively. This means intuition is a site in which “two activities, originally and by their very nature opposed, must be united . . . must convene, determine, and limit one another reciprocally” (72/357). To say that sensibility is ‘receptive’ is thus to say that it is comprised by a dialectical motion even at the level of its purest constituents. The formal motion of opposition then reflects back as a principle upon the
material activity of intuition more broadly, and this in turn marks the genesis of a consciousness of objects.

The significance of tracing the story of sensibility back through receptivity and affectivity to this interior, productive motion is this: the essential material activity of intuition is, for Schelling, analogous to “the entire system of the human spirit” (Treatise 71/355). Within the focus on intuition, then, there is the Fichtean attention to the “imagination [as] the creator [Schöpferin] of consciousness” and yet the momentum toward a system of spirit suggests that Schelling is poised to look beyond the anthropological depth of Fichte’s self-positing ‘I’ to a larger domain of sensuous activity. Schelling understands Kant’s synthesis by the imagination as a “hint” (ibid) that the positive side of synthesis is “the original activity of the spirit” (72/357). In any given intuition the ‘object’ is “strictly the product of the original, spontaneous activity of the spirit which creates and produces from opposing activities a third, communal one (koinon in Plato)” (72/357). Before treating the systemic level of spirit, then, we have a clear connection between the activity of spirit and the activity of the productive imagination; only the imagination is a faculty “capable of comprising and exhibiting in one communal product the negative and positive activities” (72/357). But what, exactly, is the meaning of Geist in this regard? Is it not tautological to speak of the intuiting self and the activity of spirit? If we are going to proceed along this course a brief word of clarification is in order.

One must understand that Schelling’s use of ‘spirit’ (Geist) in 1797 reflects his devotion to what Pfau calls the “domain of intuition” as opposed to the instruments of “a priori concepts” or the

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27 Fichte, II, 3:300 at Pfau, Idealism and the Endgame of Theory, 21.
28 Fichte writes: “The (productive) imagination is itself a faculty of the Self. Couldn’t it be the only grounding faculty (Grundvermögen) of the Self?” (II, 3:298 at Pfau, 22). In a sense, yes, but Schelling is already moving beyond the ‘I’, beneath the Fichtean subjectivity of the subject. He holds, for example, that unity “cannot be produced, let alone be recognized, by an exclusively theoretical consciousness” (Pfau’s paraphrase, 25). He is interested, rather, in “a Being which precedes all thinking and imagining” (I,167/75 at 25).
29 In a different register, though sounding a similar note, Paul Valéry’s Socrates remarks of a graceful dance: “Here certainty is a sport; it is as though knowledge has found its act, and intelligence on a sudden gives its consent to spontaneous graces” (“Dance and the Soul,” Paul Valéry: An Anthology, 295-96).
theoretical domain of the Fichtean ‘ego.’

Spirit is indicative of a framework within which Schelling “is concerned with rethinking ‘Being’ (Seyn) in such a way as to preserve its material and historical autonomy as Being (das Seyende), albeit an autonomy that proves strictly relative (to Man).” Just as intuition’s focus concerns instances of underlying, pre-conceptual identity, Geist and Seyn denote an archetypal activity which results, among other things, in nature, matter, and self-consciousness.

Geist, then, is an element regarded in terms of constitution – of consciousness and the identity enabling any consciousness of objects across historical genesis. The tension, for Schelling, is that Geist is not a strict determinable entity (or substrate), but is nevertheless an entity which reflects “the unconditional identity of the absolute” and constitutes the “ground of unity for consciousness.” It is, as we will note, “that which is only its own object” and “can only be apprehended in its activity” (Treatise 78-79/366-67), as well as that which is manifest – as forms – in history, nature, and finite consciousness. Because of Schelling’s interest in self-consciousness (cir. 1797-1800) he often speaks of the ‘human spirit’, though there is a sense in which finite consciousness belongs to an anterior spiritual activity and not the reverse. Transcendental cognition, or even reinen Vernunft, is by no means equivalent to spirit. Rather, spirit is closer to the Scholastic conception of God as nous and logos, the active, creative divine mind at work in history. Spirit names an agency which is before the synthetic power of the faculties and is manifest as “an eternal becoming” (79/367). Whether or

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30 Pfau, 26-27.
31 Pfau, 27.
32 It is important to note that, prior to Schelling, Herder makes extensive use of ‘Geist’ in compiling his general history of cultures, arts, and the achievements of the human species. Herder’s usage typically comports with a story of how “Providence carried along the thread of development” (Johann Gottfried Herder, Another Philosophy of History (1774), trans. Ioannis D. Evrigenis and Daniel Pellerin (Indianapolis & Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2004) 11). Schelling’s usage may have a similar appreciation of ‘providence’ in view, but is more focused along lines of the constitution of consciousness and the play of the infinite and finite.
33 Pfau, 28.
34 see Marx, 12-13.
35 We have then a point of tension and discovery. Schelling’s note to this discussion shows that he is conscious of his thematizing spirit (here, long before Hegel), yet cautious of its misconstrual: “Many honorable men, not knowing how to object to what has been said thus far, will at least seize on the word spirit; the Kantians . . . will condemn it, or they will take it to task for issues that lie far below it; e.g., they will charge it with dogmatism or with treating the spirit as a thing in itself, etc. Hence I have repeatedly stated that I call spirit that which is for itself, not for a foreign being and which consequently is originally no object whatsoever, let alone an object in itself” (Treatise, 78/367n.C).
not Schelling ‘can’ in fact make discursive use of spirit, describe its tendencies, etc. without objectifying it is not my concern. What interests me, rather, is that the world of activity constituting transcendental cognition and, more specifically, productive intuition, is not simply the performance of the human mind but of this and (and on account of) a larger system of spirit. What is ascribed on the side ‘of’ intuition is at the same time already ascribed on the side ‘of’ this anterior spiritual movement.36

Returning to this connection between spirit’s original activity and the productive motion of imagination, we may note that Schelling’s emphasis on spirit’s purchase within intuition begins to redirect anxieties about Kant’s noumenal substrate toward the more positive possibility that the enactments of the productive imagination lay a genuine claim on the province of the ‘real.’ What the imagination performs with respect to opposition, for example, will be paralleled by spirit’s larger productive conflict, for “the very essence of the spirit involves an original conflict in self-consciousness resulting in the creation of a real world outside the spirit through intuition (a creation ex nihilo)” (Treatise 73/358). What is localized in the passive/active, positive/negative negotiations of intuitive synthesis bears broader witness to spirit’s intrinsic production of the knowable. The parallel affords Schelling’s System its crucial point of departure: the subjective (self, intelligence, the presentative) and the objective (nature, the presented) are found to be “mutually opposed” yet concurrent in knowing (System 5/339). In short, the larger aim of procuring a ‘harmony’ of the real and ideal, and a ‘congruence’ of the objective and subjective, is precipitated by the situation of imagination within primordial intuition. The situation is an elemental schematic for the larger story

36 Schelling will continue to understand the relationship between human spirit and spirit as a joint task in which the eternal and the finite participate. In the System he adopts an artistic metaphor to clarify the shape of “One Spirit [Ein Geist] who acts as the playwright in all the individual players” – a semblance of providence and freedom such that “we are poetic coauthors of the whole play and improvisers of the particular roles which we play” (System, at Marx, 16). This description is indicative of the way in which Geist also signifies the movement of Incinsbildung we will soon discuss, as well as the larger motion of a system of freedom.
of conflict, production, and mediation. It is also the literal explanation of the 1797 belief that “[t]he philosophy of the spirit is an aesthetic philosophy.”

The Imagination in the Service of Reason

Although the necessity of a harmonizing principle for the real and ideal has insinuated itself as a possibility in the concentration on primordial activity and imaginative production, we do not yet have an experience of this principle or a standpoint for grasping it. And though it is one thing to speak of the fundamental work of transcendental synthesis in furnishing the possibility for any knowledge of the ‘real,’ what may be said of the understanding and judgment, pure concepts and schematism? Schelling allows that “intuition alone does not suffice” for a knowledge of objects ‘outside’ myself (Treatise 73/358). But having established ‘activity’ as his guiding heuristic for the cognitive elements, his account of the faculties returns time and again to the primacy of intuition, to the unique function of the imagination, and to the determinate production of spirit it expresses. The limitation placed on intuition is pragmatic and is in no way a deference to understanding or judgment’s authority over the ‘real’ (which “subsists only in intuition” (73/359). For speculation and analysis (that is, knowing) to attain any traction on the level of conscious experience ‘independent’ objects are required. Within subjective intuition the “synthesis of the imagination” creates the object, but it would be absurd to ask of the same intuition that it afford the object a “reality and an autonomous existence independent of the subject” (73/358). One cannot halt intuitive activity and then treat its products empirically. It is thus up to the understanding, as it were, to

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37 “1797 “Earliest Program of German Idealism,” at US xiii. That the productive imagination is itself an activity of spirit is further evident in Schelling’s assertion that “the world is truly nothing other than our productive spirit in its finite productions and reproductions” (Treatise 74/360, my emphasis). These are the very activities Schelling has in mind when, in the System, he observes that “knowledge proper presupposes a concurrence of opposites, whose convergence can only be a mediated one” (System 15/353). Indeed, insofar as “no world exists unless a spirit is to form knowledge of it” (Treatise 37/358) and “nothing can be real unless there is a spirit to know it” (72/357), there is reason to believe that the viability of knowledge and world depend on imagination as a production of spirit in the depths of intuition.

38 The force of Schelling’s System, and indeed the central tension between intuition and abstraction which comprises the difficulty at the heart of attaining the absolute standpoint via intellectual intuition, operates in the aftermath of this vital clarification.
objectify the object: “Only after the creative faculty has completed [its activity], does the faculty of understanding enter the picture, according to Kant—an ancillary faculty that merely apprehends, comprehends [and] arrests what has been furnished by another faculty” (73/358-59). Schelling justifies this apparent demotion by retelling the story of a priori mediation and reducing Kant’s B Deduction emphases on intellectual synthesis and combination to a mode of imitation: understanding can “only imitate, only repeat that original act of intuition wherein the object first existed” (73/359). The statement is descriptive, not evaluative, for such imitation/repetition does hold considerable promise.\(^3\) For the moment, however, we may deem the understanding a ‘secondary’ activity within the primordial matrix from which consciousness arises.\(^4\) And understanding’s accomplishment, most importantly, depends on the imagination to mediate the faculties by way of schema.

We have then two modalities of the imagination: its material production in intuition cannot be repeated (since that would mean a circle of syntheses), but its formal aspect can perform a delineation of “the contour of an object hovering in time and space in general” (Treatise 73/359). The ‘contour,’ then, is what Kant means by ‘schema,’ and this is the larger activity of imagination as the power of mediation. Such figuration on the basis of what cognition requires, however, is not identical to the work of imagination in ‘creating’ the real. Kant’s schema “possesses no intrinsic reality,” and “[a] concept without sensibilization by the imagination is a word without sense, a sound without meaning” (73/359). To commit the productive imagination to mere mediation, as it were, is to satisfy the legitimate needs of cognition, but this allowance must not obfuscate spirit’s deeper, active genesis of the real.\(^4\) A similar lesson is learned in the case of judgment. Schelling endorses Kant’s

\(^3\) In his System Schelling will amplify the scope of this necessity by stating that philosophy itself is “nothing else but the free imitation, the free recapitulation of the original series of acts into which the one act of self-consciousness evolves” (System 49/397).

\(^4\) If conscious reason needs to render the ‘real’ in terms of separable, dissectible ‘objects,’ then it is up to the understanding to accommodate and translate the intuited object in this way.

\(^4\) He continues: “Only now that the subject is able to oppose, relate, compare, and bind together the object and the contour, the real and the formal aspects, does there originate an intuition with consciousness and the firm, incontrovertible conviction in the latter that there exists something outside and independent of it” (Treatise 73/359).
contention that this faculty is rooted in “an art hidden in the depth of the human soul” (97/393), and is critical to the apprehension of any given object. But the challenge in judgment is to allow representation and ‘object’ to refer to one another without, however, conflating concept and object. The imagination navigates this tension by overseeing the action ‘upon’ concepts much like it does in Kant’s judgments of the sublime.\footnote{Schelling explains: “To avoid the conflation of both, concept and object, in one consciousness, the imagination extends the concept beyond the limits of the particular in such a manner that the concept hovers in between the universal and the particular. In creating the rule according to which the object originates in sensuous contours \([sinnlich verzeichnet]\), the [imagination] is thus able to unite, by means of a peculiar schematism, the particularity and universality in the same product. Second, [we must ask] how it is possible that both, object and representation, can be referred to one another. The productive imagination projects a figure \([Bild]\) through which the concept is determined and delimited. Only with the convergence of the schema and the figure does there emerge the consciousness of an \textit{individual} object” (Treatise 97/393-94).}

To summarize, this reconstruction of Kant’s transcendental aesthetic, emphasizing the \textit{primacy of intuition} and the ongoing \textit{work of imagination} within cognition, reveals several elements that will prove formative in the treatment and accomplishment of \textit{identity}. First, the productive imagination balances the positive/negative play of \textit{oppositional} activities between the pure forms of intuition, thereby winning for intuition the ‘communal product’ Schelling must have in mind when he speaks of the object’s original belonging to intuition. Second, he has likewise endorsed Kant’s characterization of the imagination as capable of both activity and passivity, and he has aligned its work in this regard with the ‘original activity of the spirit.’ Finally, he has rendered the understanding’s own activity in attaining consciousness of a given object indebted to the mediating or schematizing labor of the imagination. This places the imagination in a position whereby it constitutes the repetition of its own initial effort, and where, in its formal figuration, it must necessarily have a native or elemental ‘sense’ of the link between the ‘real’ and the ensuing ‘objective.’ When reason begins to exercise itself by way of analysis and separation, one finds these three elements standing in reserve for the task of treating the central predicament of \textit{identity}.\footnote{Identity, to be clear, names the relationship between representation and object that must obtain if philosophical truth claims are to have any basis in the real. Schelling formulates the predicament of subject/object identity as a principle in need of recovery.}
Schelling will turn this predicament into a possibility by naming it *absolute identity*, and it is in the realization of this possibility that knowing will have its unconditional ground. Since, however, a transcendental or logical ‘identity’ is thought to be synonymous with ‘immediacy,’ it may appear as a state unattenuated by any mediation and therefore in need of the Kantian imagination. However, if the immediacy of identity is regarded as an ‘activity’ brimming with the balanced play of opposites, of the real and the ideal, and even of theoretical and practical reason, then we have a predicament that the imagination, so to speak, well knows. Remaining with Schelling’s *Treatise*, we now turn to this matter of identity and the way in which production, self-consciousness, and imagination are, as interlocking themes, constitutive of the problem’s resolution.

II. From the Standpoint of Consciousness, For the Standpoint of Identity

Identity names the problem reason faces after having performed its speculative works of separation. That philosophers persist in the anxiety of considering “knowledge real only to the extent that it corresponds with its object” (*Treatise* 77/365), speaks to the specific way in which the correspondence model of truth has handicapped the ability to reason from within that horizon of spirit’s productive activity in which there is an “absolute coinherence” (77/365) of object and representation, being and cognition. Analysis attempts to reunite the terms by way of conceptual mediation (such as “regarding the object as the cause and the representation as its effect”) (77-78/365), and yet the identity remains elusive, even though “the common understanding has always

\[\text{Schelling’s tone is contemptuous, though it is not clear he believes the handicap was unavoidable. Even this traditional decision to adjudicate truth on the basis of “the absolute correspondence of the object and cognition,” he argues, should have signaled “that the object itself cannot be anything but the necessity of our knowledge” (*Treatise* 77/365).}\]

\[\text{Schelling’s more forceful account of this unity is found in his 1801 *Presentation*. It is here that the specific discoveries of the *Treatise* and *System* allow him to work from the standpoint of absolute reason (the position of absolute identity and absolute totality which will be assumed through the act of intellectual intuition), and to raise the present matter of ‘identity’ into the ‘indifference’ expressed in the proposition } A\neq A. \text{ Absolute reason, he explains, is “reason insofar as it is conceived as the total indifference of the subjective and objective” (*Presentation* 349/114), and is a philosophical “standpoint” (349-50/114-15) which has recovered the notion (more primordial than correspondence models) that “Being belongs equally to the essence of reason and to that of absolute identity” (352/118). The error lodged within the correspondence model of truth is the same as that which shows itself more readily in formal logic and strictly inferential reasoning: the divorce of form and content, and the empirical}\]
presupposed it in each of its predications” (78/365). How are we to bring such an identity to the level of possible experience? Schelling’s answer sets a difficult course: “It is readily apparent that it would be possible only under one condition, [namely,] if there existed a being capable of an intuition of itself, that is, simultaneously representing and represented or intuiting and intuited” (78/365-66). This quality of simultaneity is more than a criterion, for it resonates with the nature of spirit in its essential activity, and thereby calls for intuition to indwell its productive principle more fully.

The path of turning the predicament into a possibility in the Treatise consists in attaching identity to the activity constitutive of self-consciousness. At this early stage Schelling is not yet working by what he will reconstrue as ‘deduction,’ but rather by running together the matter of identity at the level of the ‘I’ of consciousness as well as the ‘subject’ that is spirit. Since we know that he believes the active/passive quality of imagination in synthesis to be a clue to the larger system of spirit, this discursive proximity is not as surprising as it may seem. If he can establish a connection between the for-itself nature of spirit and the for-myself nature of self-consciousness then the identity of representation and object will be manifest as something beyond the pale of predication. It is a matter of subtraction – removing predication and recovering essential identity on the basis of original activity. When spirit is the subject of Schelling’s remarks he will argue on the basis of necessity, using a language of what must be ‘already assumed’ and ‘ought to be possible,’ and then express the consequences of this necessity in terms of ‘our knowledge.’ For example:

sundering of absolute reality from absolute ideality – what is assumed in any “antithesis between subjectivity and objectivity” (see US 63-68/269-75).

46 However, comments like the following mislead one into thinking his investigation is caught up in the Fichtean self, even though he has an anterior ‘subjectivity’ in view: “[T]he only example of an absolute identity of representation and object we find inheres within ourselves. . . . I myself am not originally for a knowing subject outside myself, as is the case with matter, but I am for myself; within my self there obtains the absolute identity of subject and object or knowledge and Being. Because I do not know myself in any way other than through myself, it is inconsistent to require of the ‘I’ yet another predicate besides that of self-consciousness. The essence of the spirit consists precisely in the fact that it has no other predicate for itself but its self” (Treatise 78/366). Though the move is glossed in his final two sentences above, a considerable leap must obtain between my ‘self-consciousness’ and ‘the essence of spirit.’ These entities are not the same; the reflective agent and the intuiting spirit are not reducible to a relationship of part and whole, nor a Fichtean ‘I’ or judging subject, but rather the intended self-consciousness of absolute identity belongs to both the inquiring subject and the spiritual subject.
The identity of representation and object . . . exists only in the intuition-of-self [Selbstanschauung] of the spirit. Hence, to demonstrate this absolute correspondence of representation and object, which is the sole ground for the reality of our entire knowledge, it ought to be possible to prove that the spirit, by having any intuition of whatever object, merely intuits itself. If this can be demonstrated, the reality of our knowledge will have been ascertained. (Treatise 78/366)

This says that the security of knowledge depends on an intuition belonging to spirit, where spirit means “that which is only its own object” (Treatise 78/367). Absolute identity is the potential privilege of spirit on the basis of spirit’s unique comportment to its own activity, and such immediacy collapses the need to speak of representation as belonging to an outside object. To use a language common today, such an assertion discloses a ‘benchmark’ for that which the thinking subject’s self-consciousness wants to attain. However, to attain and secure this “standpoint where subject and object or the intuiting and intuited poles form an identity within us” (78/366, my emphasis) requires something different from analysis or transcendental reflection. It requires that inquiry, like intuition, be productive – so attuned to the essential manner of activity constitutive of finite consciousness that the identity principle surfaces as a matter of genetic necessity.

**Disclosing Activity**

Schelling deploys two measures that will ultimately allow him to place the accent of ‘identity’ on what he has called self-consciousness. Both are expansive reformulations of the aforementioned connection between spirit’s activity and imagination’s productivity – the notion that the definitive features of spirit are already inscribed within pre-conscious intuition. First, he demonstrates that intuitive activity is born through a union of infinity and finitude, activity and passivity, in spirit’s own essential character. The signature ‘activity’ of spirit is that it “exists only in becoming or, rather, it is nothing but an eternal becoming;” spirit “becomes an object only through

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47 He explains: “[A]ll spirit is that which is for itself, not for a foreign being and which consequently is originally no object whatsoever, let alone an object in itself” (78/367n). Spirit is the “absolute subject for which everything (including itself) is an object” (Treatise 78-79/367).

48 It is in the passage of spirit through a state of objectification that consciousness first arises. We have already observed this motion, in reduced form, in the understanding’s formal imitation of the imagination’s material figuration, thereby constituting consciousness of an individual object. Schelling now combines his logic of necessity with a metaphysical extension of the activity/passivity principle discovered in the productive imagination.
itself, that is, by means of its own activity” (Treatise 79/367). This juncture of becoming and self-objectification denotes a play of the infinite and finite in spirit’s very character. To apprehend itself – to avoid remaining an empty concept (‘for-itself’) – spirit must objectify itself in terms of that (finite) being that is already encompassed within spirit’s activity. Only the intuiting subject fits the profile: “Finitude and infinity... are originally united only in the Being of a spirited nature. This absolute simultaneity of the infinite and the finite, then, contains the essence of an individual nature (of selfhood)” (79/368). What is necessary from the genetic view of spirit’s essential activity is then affirmed by the primordial view of our intuitive activity: “Those two activities [the infinite and finite] are originally united within me; however, that this is so I merely know because I comprise both in one activity. This activity we call intuition” (80/368). In short, the primordial makeup of intuition mirrors the essential nature of spirit. The back-story to intuition consists in spirit’s necessary and productive progression toward self-consciousness and self-determination. This argumentation alone neither proves that identity is the unconditional ground for the idealist system nor yet professes a discrete intuition of identity. But it is an initial exercise in presenting the history of self-consciousness – one that follows the lessons ‘hinted’ at in Schelling’s early attention to imaginative activity, and replaces the habits of predication with what we may call an ontology of activity.

Since drawing together the character of productive intuition and spiritual individuation does not explain how the individuated spirit (the self) can come to apprehend itself in its unifying activity – to grasp itself as the identity of two poles and as the finite display of spirit’s primordial active/passive unity – Schelling must borrow a second element from spirit’s primordial character,

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49 He explains: “In short, it is neither infinite nor finite alone, but instead involves the most primordial union of infinity and finitude (a new determination of the spirit’s character)” (Treatise 79/367)
50 For spirit to limit itself in the manifestation of finitude the “absolute union of activity and passivity must assume the character of an individual nature” (Treatise 80/369). The spirit, he continues, “is everything only by virtue of itself, [that is], by means of its own activity. Hence there ought to be activities originally opposed to it or, if we merely consider its form, [there ought to be] modes of activity of which one was originally infinite and the other originally finite. Yet the two ought to allow for their discrimination only in their reciprocity” (79-80/368). In simple terms, spirit’s essence is toward self intuition (88/380) but to become “conscious of itself” it must become “finite for itself” (89/382).
namely freedom. Here we find a considerable leap from arguing by way of primordial necessity to abstracting from the basis of spirit’s essential freedom. If intuition is offspring of the infinite becoming of the spiritual for-itself, then in the immediacy of intuition there is already a nexus of free activity, something like a transcendental reflex which knows nothing of the divide between the theoretical and practical.\footnote{See \textit{Treatise} 81/370.} Presumably, then, the standpoint of identity (now understood as spirit’s unity) already happens as a “free act” (\textit{Treatise} 78/366) in every intuitive production. The trick is to grasp it in the act. By Schelling’s account, the intentional, material attainment of identity thus turns on a free act of abstraction “from the \textit{product} of our intuition” (81/370, my emphasis). The structure of free abstraction is a ‘repetition’ similar to the secondary operation of imagination in schematizing its own intuitive product for the ‘ancillary’ purpose of conceptual delimitation; the task is to render the \textit{product} of intuitive activity an \textit{object}.\footnote{“Only now,” he explains, “through our abstraction, does the product of our activity become an \textit{object}” (\textit{Treatise} 81/370).} In this case the repeated matter is not simply the formal figuration of imagination but the “original mode of activity (of the spirit)” (81/370).\footnote{Where the understanding was a faculty of ‘imitation,’ the repetition within abstraction retains an originating character even in the midst of a constructive opposition. The subject is ‘free’ in terms of his activity and his independence from objects, but “we cannot abstract from the \textit{product} of the activity without opposing it to the free activity (i.e., without conceding it an \textit{autonomous} existence [\textit{Selbstdasein}] and independence from our activity)” (\textit{Treatise} 81/370). What Schelling calls the “standpoint of mere consciousness” arises from this repetitive and oppositional play between the material activity of intuition (which begets a product) and the formal activity of abstraction (which begets an object) (82/372).} Consciousness apprehends the object as the product of intuitive activity, and discovers itself as this unified nexus of activity.\footnote{See \textit{Treatise} 81/370. The price of becoming \textit{conscious} of an intuited product is that I must \textit{abstract} from it, and the price of becoming conscious of my \textit{freedom} is that “I feel restricted with respect to the object” (81/371). The necessary opposition (in abstraction) of self and object is evidenced by a “feeling of dependency” (81/371). The standpoint of consciousness also reveals the means by which \textit{concepts} originate,” for “we are \textit{conscious} of the \textit{concept} only in opposition to the intuition, and conscious of the intuition only in opposition to the concept” (81/371). Concepts are not an progressive improvement on intuition, but are, to be clear, “nothing but the spirit’s primordial \textit{modes of intuition}” (96/392) – for a concept, much like the ‘rule’ created by imagination in the prior scenario, amounts to an “intuition imitated [\textit{nachgeahmte}” (97/393).} If the first of our elements (intuition as a result of spirit’s individuation) prepared the approach to identity by way of primordial activity, this second element (primordial freedom) fortifies the requisite methodology of abstraction with a ‘real-time’ readiness to intuit in an ‘object’ the
abiding expression of identity. The intuition of absolute identity will dovetail with a self-intuition of
the primordial self – “that of which we have and can have original and true knowledge” (83/373).

These two elements are preparatory for the intellectual intuition of absolute identity. I have
mentioned them so as to show how Schelling’s ascent toward the disclosure of identity unfolds along
a course that is marked, on the one hand, by the central tenets of his desired unconditional ground for
knowing, and which, on the other, follows the path of the productive imagination in closing the
distance between the intuiting subject and spirit in the mode of individuation. To summarize,
Schelling believes that “the reliability of all our knowledge is grounded in the immediacy of
intuition” (85/376), and to recover this ground we require an intuition of the “original identity of the
object and the representation” (86/378). Toward this end, he has undertaken a renewed appraisal of
‘abstraction,’ an account of the genesis of consciousness from within a matrix of freedom and
opposition, and an elucidation of spirit’s movement toward individuation in the self. Self-
consciousness names the expanded version of the desired subject/object identity, and it is by way of
spirit’s essential ‘for-itself’ drive toward this end (88-89/380-82) that such identity becomes
manifestly ‘absolute.’ I have suggested how these associations were already glimpsed in the
essentially ‘spiritual’ activity of the productive imagination. The pattern of the imagination’s material
production and formal repetition – in the basic constitution of an object for consciousness – serves as
a specified schema for the objectification of spirit’s essential nature in and through the constitution of
pure self-consciousness. This means that a self-consciousness ‘of identity’ in and through the subject
is, so to speak, a living and active ‘objectification’ of spirit’s primordial identity. When Schelling

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55 That Schelling, in the System, further delineates the nature of freedom in abstraction in terms of a tension between
infinite willing and its finite operation, and returns to the imagination as a mediating power “wavering between
finitude and infinity” (System 176/558-59), confirms the presence of the matter at the forefront of his project.
speaks of the “superior perspective” these elucidations seek, he means that fully formed self-consciousness which ascertains the harmony of the ideal/real, representation/object (82/372).

Striving and Willing

One wonders, however, why the path toward such a perspective must be so difficult. Is not the task simply to recover that which was already signaled in the specific power of the productive imagination – in the ‘clue’ which linked intuitive activity with the system of spirit – and to secure it consciously within the compass of freedom? If Schelling were holding to a strictly Fichtean line on the matter he could claim the intuition of identity as an accomplishment of the imagination understood as “figural productivity,” the “creator (Schöpferin) of consciousness,” and the “grounding faculty (Grundvermögen) of the Self.” However, since his own account of self-consciousness has turned on an account of spirit as anterior to selfhood (in the order of priority, thought not succession per se) Schelling has begun to surpass the locus of the phenomenal self (as freedom), and located the condition for the possibility of identity in what is, suffice it to say, a greater whole. That is not to suggest that Fichte understood the self as a ‘thing’ or ‘subject,’ and that Schelling sought a simply ‘broader’ point of departure, but rather that, inspired by the trajectory of Fichte’s I=I, Schelling nevertheless seeks in the freedom of nature (natura naturans) a still more promising point of departure. In addition, we begin to see how Schelling’s discussion itself exhibits the movement of his subject matter. The treatment of one question gives way to another then returns to itself weighted all the more, bounding and broadening in a steady march of necessity reluctant to resolve itself. Since inferential and/or reflective discourse is not adequate to assuming the full standpoint of intuition, Schelling means to discipline thought to accompany spirit – to follow it “from representation to representation, from product to product, up to the point where for the first time it rends itself in its

56 Those, for example, who believe thought to consist primarily in the ‘observation’ of nature, and ‘matter’ as the primary touchstone for the ‘real’ are caught in a shortsighted material regard which overlooks this thoroughgoing spontaneity. Form and matter, says Schelling, are “begotten by the spirit” (Treatise 83/374).
57 Fichte, I, 3:298-300 at Pfau, 21-22.
pure activity and subsequently will form an intuition of *itself* only in its absolute activity” (*Treatise* 90/383). So doing, he prepares his discourse for a perceptual attunement that will enact, and not simply posit, the standpoint of identity. This brings us to a pivotal third element: a proper ‘submission’ to the matter of identity entails an immersion in the *striving* of spirit toward this very end. What is the nature of this striving such that it is not only a discursive ‘theme’ but also a modality of thinking?

Striving is a qualitative and decisive addition to the free for-itself ‘becoming’ by which Schelling understands the ‘activity’ of spirit at this time. Its emergence marks the moment in which the philosophy of spirit begins to become “aesthetic” and “sensuous” in its performance, though its relationship to the imagination is not yet clear. Striving denotes the primordial self-determination of spirit, on the basis of its being “simultaneously active and passive” (*Treatise* 99/395-96), to overcome opposition, pass through finitude and objectification, and carry forward its essential ‘becoming’ to attain a full intuition of itself as absolute identity. Schelling speaks of a *thrust* [Schwung] (98/394) of “primordial energy” (96/392) inherently disposed to rendering “the universal equilibrium of forces” (101-2/400) coherent and organized on a basis solely its own. And in human spirit this same orientation consists in a striving “toward the system, that is, toward absolute purposiveness” (92/386). Schelling could well have paired this purposiveness with the constitutive work of imagination between sensible affectation and consciousness, but in the *Treatise* he does not. Instead, he moves decidedly outward from the elemental terrain of the subject, contending that it is on account of this purposive drive that the structure and motion of history are constituted as the systemic framework for self-consciousness. “Hence, the history of the human spirit,” he explains,

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58 See 1797 “The Earliest Program of German Idealism” in trans introduction to *US*, xii-xiii. As we have noted, the authorship of this text appears to belong to Hegel, but indications are that its’ arguments were shared by Schelling. 59 “All acts of the spirit,” Schelling explains, “aim at *presenting the infinite within the finite*. The goal of all these acts is self-consciousness, and their history is none other than the *history of self-consciousness*” (*Treatise* 90/383). This means that what Schelling’s own inquiry seeks is also the aim of spirit’s striving, and the stages of this striving have left markers in history and nature as footholds, as it were, for thought. History exhibits the individuation of
“will prove none other than the history of the different stages in passing through which the spirit progressively attains an intuition of itself, [which is] pure self-consciousness” (90/383).60

Moreover, Schelling characterizes striving as a mode of spirit’s free willing – an act that occurs unconditionally [schlechthin]. The reach of this willing is absolute, enveloping the necessary stage of finite objectification such that “spirit becomes immediately conscious of its activity only as a will, and the act of will is generally the supreme condition of self-consciousness” (98/395). Here then we have a primordial autonomy that qualifies as the absolute standpoint of identity we have sought. The seemingly ‘ad infinitum’ question of system’s ground and the seemingly indefinite flux of representations within consciousness and history, together with the point of unity for all theoretical and practical philosophy, are thus resolved in the disclosure of will beneath and before all striving.

Accordingly, Schelling remarks:

The source of all self-consciousness is the will. However, in the absolute will the spirit becomes aware of itself immediately, that is, it has an intellectual intuition of itself. We call this an intuition because it [is] unmediated [and] intellectual, because it has for its object an activity that goes far beyond anything empirical and thus can never be reached by concepts. (Treatise 102/401)

Though this intuition of absolute identity is rightly attributed to spirit, Schelling has not lost sight of the horizon of self-consciousness and what there began as a practical need for subject/object identity. He has freed consciousness from all conceptual habituation in addressing the matter, and has redeemed abstraction for the purposes of an intuition which, like Kant’s judgment of taste, is universal and communicable:

[W]e claim that the human spirit, in abstracting from everything objective, possesses by virtue of this very act an intuition of itself, which we shall call intellectual, because its object is merely an intellectual act. At the same time, we claim that this intuition is an act whereby a pure self-consciousness originates, and that consequently the human spirit itself is nothing but this pure self-consciousness. Here, then, we have an intuition whose object is a primordial act, namely, an intuition that we must not merely attempt to awaken in others by means of concepts, but which we are entitled to postulate for everyone, because without this act the moral law itself—i.e., a

spirit’s striving – the finite and material landmarks of spirit’s becoming in the soul. The absolute standpoint sought by the philosopher is the same as the self-intuition sought by spirit.

60 In this way “the soul marks the path on which it gradually reaches self-consciousness. The external world lies unfolded [aufgeschlagen] for us, so that we may rediscover within it the history of our spirit” (Treatise 90/383).
postulate directed *absolutely* and *unconditionally* at every human being by virtue of its humanity—would prove completely unintelligible. (*Treatise* 116/420)

It is not difficult to see in these remarks an amalgamation of several components of Kant’s critical project, though at a level of spirit Kant did not explore. The intellectual intuition of absolute identity amounts to an ‘abstraction’ not unlike the imagination’s abstraction of ‘form’ from the artistic object in the judgment of taste. The feeling of purposiveness in such a judgment is also echoed in the intrinsic striving of spirit for this intuition. The supersensible principle of autonomy, central to Kant’s practical philosophy, is now the unconditional principle for all activity – theoretical and practical. Finally, Kant’s closest approximation to an unconditional ground in the first *Critique* – the transcendental unity of apperception – at last receives the deeper support it required. As Schelling notes: “It is this continuous intuition of *ourselves* in our pure activity that alone renders possible the *objective* unity of apperception and the correlate of all apperception, the *I think*” (*Treatise* 103/401).

The answer to the question of what/how reality inheres in representations is this: “spirit *wills*” (99/396). Spirit’s absolute act discloses the will as the grounding element of all intuitive activity. The deepest ground internal to human spirit and constitutive of the larger historical motion of spirit is won by an abstracting, intellectual intuition of the self – an act of will that reveals the will at and as the origins of self-consciousness.\(^6\)

Insofar as our chief interest concerns the place of the imagination in this initial formulation of identity, we leave the *Treatise* on a note of tension as well as possibility. Subtracting nothing from the singular importance of this principle of volition, I have sought to disclose how the structure and mode of its attainment is anticipated by Schelling’s interpretation of the primordial imagination. In the imagination he finds a hallmark of the activity of spirit which mediates production, abstraction, and intuition through a string of dialectical pairs: the active and passive, real and ideal, theoretical and practical. The productive and mediating imagination is, so to speak, the genetic code of pure self-

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6\(^1\) The standpoint is described then verified by the same necessity that posits the moral law (itself intrinsic to practical human purposiveness).
consciousness. With the issue of striving we have emphasized the aesthetic bearing of Schelling’s discourse, and yet we must admit that Schelling does not call upon the imagination in the act of intellectual intuition. Is striving creative in the same way the imaginative power is productive? Is the event of intellectual intuition, along with the feeling of identity, somehow aesthetic in the artistic (and not just affective) sense?

It is worth noting that Schelling concludes his *Treatise* by defending the account of absolute identity from imagination’s dubious double: *enthusiasm*. He understands that enthusiasm would be a transgression of the limits of reason. But insofar as these limits are now understood as what spirit “establishes for itself” it is “truly ridiculous to suspect of enthusiasm precisely that which renders enthusiasm impossible forever” (*Treatise* 103/402). Since the productive imagination bears witness to spirit’s underlying activity, may we allow that imagination is itself, then, an agent of warding off enthusiasm? The imagination is productive by virtue of being active and passive (see 110/412), and it mirrors spirit’s essential ‘becoming’ by figuring finite objects yet “creating ideas of what freedom is to realize in such a manner that these ideas are capable of infinite expansion” (123-24/431-32). The imagination thus sustains the productivity demanded of will, and so doing, it “remains within the limits of moral postulates” (ibid). In this way the imagination serves practical reason as the “faculty of ideas,” a designation that in turn also renders it “theoretical reason” (ibid).62 At the same time, the larger inquiry is called ‘aesthetic’ because it is from start to finish a story of affectivity – initially disclosed in the heart of sensibility, then enacted in an intuition of/for the self, then finally felt in the phenomenon of identity.

We are left, however, with an uncertain constellation of what have become principle interpretive themes. Though the power of the imagination, the primordial force of striving, and the increasingly aesthetic nature of thought have each, in their own right, facilitated the recovery of

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62 The sensuous feeling of active/passive identity, moreover, is not an invention of sensibility, but rather a phenomenon constituted by “the sensible-spiritual in us” which thereby “constitutes the inner principle of our representations” (*Treatise* 110/412).
identity through self-consciousness, the full concerted work of these elements is not yet evident. If Schelling is to furnish a true system of knowledge, and not an edifice, then these elements will have to converge in a unified production that bears witness to the whole of the absolute standpoint. It is with this necessity in mind that we now turn to his System of Transcendental Idealism and the ‘poetic consciousness’ there disclosed.

### III. Reimagining Harmonious Production

Based on Schelling’s decisive interest in the productive imagination, together with his appeal to the larger primordial activity of spirit, it should be evident that his inquiry in the Treatise, and the shape of its intellectual intuition in particular, is by no means reducible to a Fichtean sphere of subjective consciousness which the System alone would then surmount by expanding the story of production in a historical-spiritual direction. The revelation of ‘will’ at the heart of the identity principle resembles the Fichte an emphasis on subjective freedom, but Schelling’s ‘will’ is a pre-theoretical, primordial drive, and his ‘identity’ transcends the subject-object pairing Fichte’s ego holds in strict subjective balance. Discursively, Schelling’s movement between standpoints was realized by converting a logic of necessity into a motion of possibility, a turn made possible by the status of ‘activity’ in intuition, abstraction, and in spirit’s essential striving. Dialectically, the power of imagination disclosed the productive balancing of apparent opposites (infinite/finite, real/ideal, practical/theoretical, becoming/object) in the genesis of consciousness and in the purposiveness of spirit, thereby raising the volitional nature of activity to the surface of the inquiry in an immediate way. Schelling’s self-consciousness, as well, expresses the immediacy of self and spirit though without situating intuition’s productive drive and spirit’s activity within the plane of the merely

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63 A common synopsis of Schelling’s development tends to regard the System’s aggressive move to the terrain of the history of self-consciousness (encompassing both nature and freedom) as a sign that the disclosure of absolute identity in 1797 was haplessly limited to a Cartesian “inner insight” which afforded access to the unconditional absolute but failed to see it as “constitutive of the self” (Dale Snow, Schelling and the End of Idealism (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996) 126, 129). I have tried to correct this simplification in my reading of the Treatise and will continue to do so as we turn to the System.
theoretical or subjective. Schelling speaks rather of a “productive force” that “inheres in all external things,” constituting them as “creatures [or] productions of a spirit” (Treatise 93/387). There is a “system of the world . . . a kind of organization that has developed from a common center” (92-93/387) which, though most manifest in self-consciousness, is also constitutive of natural organisms and of history, and hence more archetypal and synthetic than even the most subjectively idealistic of egos.64

It is true, however, that a chief objective of the System is to sharpen and improve these distinctions by way of engaging thought, as Velkley observes, “in watching ordinary consciousness gradually disclose its own essence, and thus also its ultimate identity with the principle of nature.”65 So doing, the principle of absolute identity will undergo several advances in the System, among them the formative irrationality of the unconscious in the constitution of self, nature, and history, as well as the indifference at the root of self-consciousness, and the turn toward aesthetic or artistic production as a disclosure of conscious and non-conscious identity.66 We cannot account for these matters in full. However, I will examine their operation so as to highlight how the imagination structures the ongoing movement of self-intuition, and the affiliated disclosure of the ground for subject/object harmony in intuition. I will contend that the System’s rigor lies in the fact that Schelling will allow the problem of mediation and grounding—in the self and revealed through intuition—to become still more difficult so as to anticipate a more exhaustive and indeed imaginative resolution.

64 Cf. Treatise 92-93/386-87.
65 Velkley, “Realizing Nature in the Self,” 153. Summerell states: “The task of transcendental idealism, as Schelling propounds it, is one of grasping objectively and therewith actually knowing the initially merely subjective self-certainty of thinking” (88). Velkley notes the difficulty here: “The true self that the human spirit discovers in nature—the hidden infinite unconscious self beneath the apparent finite conscious self—is a self whose objectification by the finite categories of discursive reason is quite impossible” (153-54).
66 Dodd offers a helpful qualitative word of orientation to the rather daunting range of these matters, and evokes a summary emphasis that I will share: “We have the first, and I believe the most important piece to this puzzle: the idea of the inwardness of thinking as an imaginative, aesthetic creation, a work of art—not as a thing, but rather an inner world, an inner life, that reflects the absolute ‘through an aesthetic act of imagination [Einzahlungskraft].’” We must, Dodd argues, appreciate the System as “an act of imagination that ultimately renders what would otherwise be a dead artifice a living unity” (Dodd, “Philosophy and Art in Schelling’s System,” 10).
When, early in the *System*, Schelling speaks of self-consciousness as a “primary knowledge” and as “the lamp for the whole system of knowledge” (*System* 16-18/355-58), he is announcing the conclusion won by the *Treatise*. As we have seen, the twin emphases on activity and productivity intrinsic to the self and to spirit drew forth an intellectual intuition of a grounding freedom that is ‘felt’ in a supra-empirical manner. The intuition’s ‘object’ is subjective activity – be it in the eternal becoming of spirit or the infinite producing of the self – and it is, as the *System* reminds us, irreducible to conceptualization or actualization. It is not a ‘being’ but rather the essential ‘how’ of all knowing (cf. 17/355-57), the pure self as a “producing [Produciren] that becomes an object to itself” (28/370). Now, as if to refurbish the ‘lamp,’ Schelling’s goal remains one of illuminating self-consciousness with an intuition of that grounding principle which is constitutive of self-determination yet inseparable from the immediacy of knowing. The difference between the two projects, owing largely to advances in Schelling’s philosophy of nature (1797-1799), is one of degree. Identity now concerns not only the “coincidence or agreement (Übereinstimmung) between subject and object” but, more broadly, between “intelligence and nature.” To reconstitute the principle of absolute identity “in action” (4/33-34) through an aggressive “knowing of knowing [Wissen des Wissens]” (9/345), is to account for the historical genesis of self-consciousness (and indeed the very system of spirit governing the realms of nature, history, and knowing) without yielding to ontic or empirical expressions that would subtract from its freedom. This project effectively raises the mediational stakes underwriting self-consciousness and intellectual intuition alike. The self, for Schelling, is “being-itself” (32/376) – that entity which carries the principle of identity in the same way that something like flight carries the laws of physics or a variable carries its coefficient. The concern of the *System* is not to ‘actualize’ the principle of grounding unity more effectively than the *Treatise*, but to draw a larger formula – to write the history of self-consciousness

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67 Velkley, 153.
in terms of “the parallelism of nature with intelligence” (2/331), and thereby magnify the mediating motion between coefficient and variable.

The Mediating Factor

The leading problem is thus a familiar one: on what mediating basis is the intuiting self able to apprehend its’ intrinsic producing activity? How does free production ‘know’ itself without losing the self in the ideal realm of willing? If in philosophy “one is not simply the object of contemplation, but always at the same time the subject,” and if intuition is an “act of construction [Construction]” (System 13/350-51), then the ‘proof’ that the absolute standpoint is already written in the pure activity that is the self will require a further disclosure ‘of’ productive intuition ‘by’ the power of intuition. Schelling frames the issue as a task of unveiling that which mediates production and intuition – the “universally mediating factor in our knowledge” (15/353). We must appreciate this production-intuition tension in two ways. First, production is now the summary term for that striving drive manifest in the essential activity of spirit which is generative of self, nature, and history; intuition (itself productive) names the work of creative thought to enact an immediate grasp of this drive though without reducing it to ‘objective’ knowledge. Second, and in a related vein, to attain a mediation of production and intuition is to signal the overcoming of a philosophical standpoint of reflection, and to assume a standpoint in which ‘reason’ is no longer subjective or objective but is, as he will later summarize, “the true in-itself . . . located precisely in the indifference-point of the subjective and the objective (Presentation 349/115, cf. 345/109).

Together, this means that the System formalizes the two-tiered motion of inquiry in the Treatise: as ‘matters’ of identity, production and intuition are invested in mediation, and it is up to an ongoing revolution in thought itself to work out and work from this mediation. Both movements,
then, require an intrinsic creativity.\textsuperscript{68} Mediation, as well, is not a question of joining two unrelated terms. It is more a question of allowing the variable to catch hold of its coefficient without ever sundering the two. Schelling announces early in the \textit{System} that the elusive mediating factor will be attained via an “aesthetic act of the imagination” (\textit{System} 13/351). On the surface, this says that he means to continue the aesthetic mode of inquiry introduced in the \textit{Treatise}, and that he will do so having no residual compunctions about ‘enthusiasm.’ More deeply, the phrasing intimates that the imagination, as a power of elemental activity and mediation within intuition and for understanding, still has much to offer an inquiry itself bent on disclosing mediation.\textsuperscript{69} If, as I have indicated, one feature of ‘aesthetic inquiry’ is that it reenacts the enactments proper to its subject-matter, we do well to expect that Schelling will further aestheticize the mediation of production and intuition, and appeal to an \textit{aesthetic intuition} – an artistic imagination – for the purposes of uncovering this mediation.

The first way in which the question of mediation underscores an aesthetic turn lies in the meaning of \textit{harmony} attributed to knowledge, history, and nature.\textsuperscript{70} If knowledge is a “primordial whole” (\textit{System} 15/353), the endeavor of Schelling’s ‘history’ is to exercise a “free imitation [\textit{freye Nachahmung}]” (49/397) that will outline the “various epochs” through which “that one absolute synthesis is successively put together” (50/399). The case for a “predetermined harmony” (11/348) between the ideal and the real likewise turns on the markers of mediated unity imprinted in nature’s production; for “the same powers of intuition which reside in the self can also be exhibited up to a certain point in nature” (3/331).\textsuperscript{71} Schelling speaks of a productive activity in which the ideal world

\textsuperscript{68} In 1801 Schelling will imply that the imagination is the productive capital of reason (cf. \textit{Presentation} 349n.15/115), for it is an element shared by what may be called spiritual productivity, as well as by intuitive intellectual insight (in the sense of \textit{Erkennen}).
\textsuperscript{69} Findler rightly captures the significance imagination will have in this story of mediation and synthesis: “[I]f synthetic identity is already there and is only drawn out through the movement of the system, then what is present at the end is there at the beginning. Further, if synthesis is a result of the power of the imagination and if aesthetic activity is the result of the imagination, then the system begins and ends with the imagination” (Findler, “A Sketch of Schelling’s Appropriation,” 47).
\textsuperscript{70} See \textit{System} 15/352-53.
\textsuperscript{71} The division between natural philosophy and transcendental philosophy is not affirmed by privileging freedom as the absolute principle (as one might expect from the traditional dichotomy between nature and freedom), but is to
and the real world arise in concert, something overseeing the synthesis of the “nonconscious activity that has brought forth nature, and the conscious activity expressed in willing” (12/348-49, my emphases). This emphasis on nature’s nonconscious productivity amounts to a decisive lens laid upon the central standpoint of self-consciousness. Nature now names the absolute identity of subject and object, and self-consciousness is said to be “its highest potentiality” (17/355-57). Nature is not a sum of appearances, but rather an ally in the productive history of self-consciousness and in the ‘bringing-forth’ (28/371, from hervorbringen) of this history for the self. Nature is party to spirit’s striving; nature “in its purposive forms speaks figuratively” (215/608). Nature and self thus share a history of productive, purposive, becoming, and the aim of duplicating their harmony through philosophical construction is neither to “make an intelligence out of nature [nature philosophy], or a nature out of intelligence [transcendental philosophy]” (7/342-43), but to appreciate their “parallelism” (2/331) as a means for intuiting a reflection of the ideal world in the self (232/628-29).

some extent eclipsed. Natural science, says Schelling, “brings forth idealism out of realism,” and transcendental philosophy does the reverse (System 14/351).

72 For the self, willing is consciously productive, whereas the action that is productive of the world is done without consciousness (System 12/348-49).

73 Though such a move may seem to collapse ‘knowing’ into ‘being,’ Schelling is not taking up the dogmatic line that privileges being as fundamental, but rather pressing the Spinozistic trajectory toward its natural conclusion in transcendental philosophy; the principle of identity (here named ‘nature’) is treated as a principle within knowledge itself (System 19/358-59), which means nature is taken in such a way that it shares in knowledge the unconditional ground heretofore characterized as ‘freedom.’ Schelling gives considerable attention to this important difference in his 1801 ‘Presentation.’ Here he calls Spinozism “realism in its most sublime and perfect form” (Presentation 345/110) and allows that Spinoza “came nearest to my system in terms of content or material and in form” (348/113). Spinoza, Schelling explains, rightly regarded everything that is as “infinity itself” (353/120), but did not specify adequately the relationship of finitude and potency (in terms of quantitative difference) to absolute identity. Moreover, such absolute identity does not, in principle, step beyond itself or the world (ibid) – thought and extension are “never separated in anything, not even in thought and in extension, but are without exception {everywhere} together and identical” (364/136). Schelling goes so far as to suggest that readers who ascribe the labels “realism or idealism” to his own system in fact miss the point: “One who has understood us sees that this question makes no sense whatsoever in reference to us. . . there is simply nothing in itself except the absolute indifference [absolute Indifferenz] of the real and the ideal. Only this is in the proper sense of the term, everything else has being only in it and relative to it” (370n.37/144n).

74 “Nature, to the artist, is nothing more than it is to the philosopher, being simply the ideal world appearing under permanent restrictions, or merely the imperfect reflection of a world existing, not outside him, but within” (System 232/628).
What is most interesting is how Schelling elects to disclose the nonconscious, originating source of such harmonies. A singular species of consciousness is required to reveal the mediated harmony of an activity that is “simultaneously conscious and nonconscious,” a poietic activity that brings forth nature and self-consciousness alike (System 12/348). Everything depends on making manifest this seed of harmony at the root of indifference. But this is not the first time Schelling must maneuver the philosophical standpoint through such a difficulty. The status of the all encompassing nonconscious or irrational drive, and the attendant issue of mediation, is a rather pronounced extension of the problem of immediacy and spontaneity seen in the primordial investigations of the Treatise. It echoes the production in intuition which the conscious philosopher wants to know by means of abstracting an ‘object’ from the ‘product,’ and is an expanded form of the same concealed artistry of synthesis and spirit which furnished the genesis of our mere consciousness of an individual object, an irrational artistry of the presentative which is necessarily concurrent with the conscious objectivity of the presented (5/349). But the expansion of this nonconscious element in the System renders the discursive challenge still more pronounced. By submitting to this matter of the nonconscious in the larger story of nature and history, Schelling creates a more deliberate schema for navigating the double activity of producing and intuiting (13/351). What we now want to appreciate is how the kind of intuition required for making manifest the mediating element (what I have called the coefficient) will be one in which the irrational and conscious sides of production reflect their own generative and otherwise concealed activity (the ‘for-itself’). The lamp of self-consciousness is, so to speak, lit by a dark charge. It is a poetry best captured in a poetic production. As Tilliette observes, “if it is true that philosophy alone penetrates to the secret of the work of art, inversely Art, poetic and plastic at once, illumines the meaning of the history of consciousness.”

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IV. The Artistry of Intuition and the Striving of Imagination

Schelling has this puzzle of production in mind when he speaks of nature as “a poem lying pent in a mysterious and wonderful script” (System 232/628), and of the need to exhibit an appearance of the self that is “at once conscious and unconscious for itself” (217-18/610).

“Conscious and unconscious activities,” he explains, “are to be absolutely one in the product, just as they also are in the organic product, but they are to be one in a different manner; the two are to be one for the self itself” (220/613-14). This means the self must become conscious of the conscious and unconscious sides of production, allowing them their necessary opposition for the sake of production, yet also manifesting their identity for the self. The immediate awareness of such identity – via self-intuition – obtains, much as in the Treatise, in the form of a feeling, in this case “of infinite tranquility” (221/614). Tranquility implies the attainment of an end, a surmounting of conflict. It is a feeling evoked by the passage of free oppositional activity into unity. Schelling explains:

This unknown. . . whereby the objective and the conscious activities are here brought into unexpected harmony, is none other than the absolute which contains the common ground [allgemeinen Grund] of the preestablished harmony between the conscious and the unconscious. Hence, if this absolute is reflected from out of the product, it will appear to the intelligence as something lying above the latter, and which, in contrast to freedom, brings an element of the unintended to that which was begun with consciousness and intention. (System 221-22/615)

In the very bearing of the unconscious, then, and in the very conflict which carries production, lies a harmonizing force. But a unique product is required if such a reconciling production is to be exhibited. What is such a product, and where is this productive intuition to be found?

It is in view of this distillation of mediation in terms of the conscious and unconscious sides of production that Schelling makes his provocative turn to aesthetic, or artistic, production and intuition. Within this specific turn we will be able to repair the apparent divide (left standing in the Treatise) between the power of imagination and the free striving of spirit. Schelling asks: “how are we to explain transcendentally to ourselves an intuition such as this, in which the unconscious activity operates as it were, through the conscious, to the point of attaining complete identity therewith?” (System 219/612). His answer consists in extending and privileging the “aesthetic
ästhetische sense” (14/351) of philosophizing, on the one hand, and elucidating the aesthetic activity constitutive of works of art on the other. This is not a case of invoking artistic production as an ‘analogy’ or ‘surrogate’ for intellectual intuition or an ‘example’ of the double activity of producing and intuiting. Rather, it is a turn of attention in his subject-matter and a parallel turn of inquiry itself – artistic and philosophical production alike are to be carried by “an aesthetic act of the imagination [ästhetischen Act der Einbildungskraft]” (13/351). The virtue of treating artistic activity is that the production proper renders the doubling more visible. In and through artistic creation, the “ideal world of art and the real world of objects are... products of one and the same activity; the concurrence of the two (the conscious and the nonconscious) without consciousness yields the real, and with consciousness the aesthetic world” (12/349). If, that is, transcendental inquiry can attain an aesthetic attunement, then it will see in artistic production (aesthetic intuition) the harmonizing concurrence or mediation underway.

The Light of Genius
When, in the Treatise, Schelling explained the genesis of consciousness of an individual object, he first formulated the tension between a ‘product’ belonging to the primordial work of intuition and the inevitable ‘objectivization’ of this product under the imitative work of abstraction.

76 Since the turn toward aesthetic production/intuition does entail the artistic product as such, we may be inclined to think that this is a sensory, object-oriented intuition, and thus a mere ‘analogy’ to or ‘surrogate’ for the intellectual intuition. See, for example, Snow, 134-39 and Vater (2000), 215-16. Categorizing the appeal to aesthetic intuition and the artistic product in this way overlooks the centrality of the creative imagination in Schelling’s reconstruction of identity on the basis of synthesis, and fails to appreciate the fundamentally aesthetic way in which Schelling already understands production in the System. Findler, by contrast, observes that art and philosophy alike “require an ‘aesthetic sense’ to be productive” (Findler, 47, citing System, 14), that “there is no synthesis without imagination” (49), and that “the imagination is in essence both aesthetic and intellectual intuition” (54). Velkley’s account is similar: “Is aesthetic intuition the best representation, or is it the true actualization, of the primordial self-intuition? It is clear that art as unifying organon is to effect an actualizing, and not just representational, completion of the system” (157). See also Summerell, 88.

77 The basic difference between philosophical and artistic activity consists in the “direction taken by the productive force.” Philosophical production, Schelling explains “is directed immediately inwards, so as to reflect it in intellectual intuition”; in art, however, “the production is directed outwards, so as to reflect the unknown by means of products” (System 14/351-52). This distinction, as we shall see, nevertheless anticipates a profound convergence in Schelling’s conception of aesthetic intuition. Schelling, notes Taminiaux, “immediately dilates Kant’s notion of reflection to enable it to grasp the identity of the objective and of the subjective: Such is the meaning of aesthetic intuition, which is said to provide understanding of the self within a product” (Taminiaux, Poetics, Speculation, and Judgment, 28).
This formulation was itself patterned upon the *material* work of imagination in a fundamental sense, and the *formal* figurative work of the imagination in the service of understanding and judgment.

Schelling now finds a point of entry into the active principle of identity without having to run the risk of analysis or separation; artistic production mirrors intuitive production, but is a process that is as concrete as the ‘product’ it creates. To say that “the philosophy of art is the true organon of philosophy” (*System* 14/351) is to suggest that the aesthetic orientation of a reflection on art reveals a concentrated form of the proximity possible between an intuitive inquiry and the productive intuition afoot in its subject matter.78 To the artist belongs an intuition that is “conscious in respect of production [*Production*], unconscious in regard to the product” (219/613). Such a double orientation mirrors the tension in freedom between infinite willing and finite operation (176/558-59), while also recalling the unconscious purposiveness of nature (214/606) and the harmonizing intentions of the absolute. The genius is that productive self in whom the mediation of nature and freedom, and of the unconscious and conscious, the ideal and the real, happens. A work of art is won from a process of limitation and opposition, a process of conflict welcomed and required by an involuntary drive, an “irresistible urge” in the artist’s own nature and a “feeling of inner contradiction” (222/614).79 The contradiction is an inspired production, a mediation that results in the *event* of absolute identity: art is “the one everlasting revelation [*Offenberung*] which yields that concurrence, and the marvel which, had it existed but once only, would necessarily have convinced us of the absolute reality of that supreme event [*absoluten Realität jenes Höchsten*]” (223/618).

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78 Elsewhere Schelling offers a guiding criterion that we do well to keep in mind: “I speak of art in a more sacred sense—of the art which, in the words of the ancients, is an instrument of the gods, herald of divine mysteries, unveiler of the Ideas [*Enthüllerin der Ideen*]. It is that preternatural beauty whose inviolate light illumines only pure souls, which is as hidden and inaccessible to the sensible eye as pure truth itself. The philosopher is not interested in what the vulgar call art. To him, art is a direct and necessary expression of the absolute, and only insofar as this can be demonstrated has it any reality to him” (*US* 144/345).

79 Schelling further notes: “Only what art brings forth is simply and solely possible through genius, since in every task that art has charged, an infinite contradiction is reconciled” (*System* 228/623).
But apart from the testimony of the artist, how is this disclosure manifest for the philosopher?

The answer has everything to do with the artistic ‘product,’ provided it is sheltered from the objectifying tendencies of abstraction. Schelling adopts a language of illumination when speaking of such a product, as though it magnifies the ‘lamp’ of self-consciousness all the more. He explains:

> This unchanging identity, which can never attain to consciousness, and merely radiates back from the product, is for the producer precisely what destiny is for the agent, namely a dark unknown force \( \text{dunkle unbekannte Gewalt} \) which supplies the element of completeness or objectivity to the piecework of freedom; and as that power is called destiny, which through our free action realizes, without our knowledge and even against our will, goals that we did not envisage, so likewise that incomprehensible agency which supplies objectivity to the conscious, without the cooperation of freedom, and to some extent in opposition to freedom (wherein is eternally dispersed what in this production is united), is denominated by means of the obscure concept of \text{genius}. (System 222/616)

Schelling defines the act of genius as “an unexpected concurrence of the unconscious with the conscious activity” (228/624). The language of destiny in the above remarks connects the work of genius to the work of thought (to the ‘talent’ for thinking, and the ‘superior perspective’ noted above), and denotes the infusion of the absolute’s harmonizing necessity in and through the conflict of production. What for Kant was a gift of nature manifest as a human genius is here, for Schelling’s artist, a distinct capacity to manifest nature’s ontological genius in and through the progression of aesthetic intuition; the artistic imagination, in this regard, allows the philosopher to intuit the genius of nature.\(^8\) A radiation issues from the product, reflecting back the modality of its creation such that the purposiveness of an ‘unknown’ and ‘incomprehensible’ agency is revealed.\(^9\) Artistic productivity, understood as an outgrowth of aesthetic intuition, is a manifest case of spirit’s striving and a visible rendering of the internal identity between the subjective and objective, conscious and unconscious. “The idea of genius,” Tilliette explains, “does not count among the acts of evolutionary

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\(^8\) In 1802 he speaks of the need for the philosopher to “penetrate into the very workshop of its [the absolute law’s] creations” (\textit{US}, 148/349). The artist, moreover, “is a genius insofar as he expresses the highest law, and it is precisely this absolute law that philosophy recognizes in him, for philosophy is not only autonomous itself but also seeks to penetrate to the very principle of autonomy” (\textit{US} 148/349).

\(^9\) See also Findler, 53; Velkley, 155; and Sumerell, 88.
syntheses, it is rather that this entire theoretical-practical organism is subsumed by aesthetic intuition.”\(^{82}\) Schelling continues:

> The work of art merely reflects to me what is otherwise not reflected by anything, namely that absolutely identical which has already divided itself even in the self. Hence, that which the philosopher allows to be divided even in the primary act of consciousness, and which would otherwise be inaccessible to any intuition, comes, through the miracle \[^{Wunder}^\] of art, to be radiated back \[^{zurückgestrahlt}^\] from the products thereof. (System 230/625, my emphases)

Let us be clear about this ‘miracle.’ Schelling describes the unconscious factor in aesthetic production as “the element of poetry in art” (224/618), and characterizes this felt contradiction as that freedom which precisely sets in motion the “whole of man” and “strikes at the ultimate in him, the root of his whole being \[^{das Letze in ihm, die Wurzel seines ganzen Daseins]}^\)” (222/614). May we say that the imagination sustains this striving ‘drive’, this ‘poetry’ so interior to the artist? This would suggest that the creative imagination is a power of accomplishing harmony by means of conflict and contradiction.\(^{83}\) Is this reference to the ‘root’ in man not an echo of that same way in which Kant first spoke of the imagination in its mediating work in cognition? Without question there is a functional and qualitative parallel between the productive imagination as Schelling understood it in his reading of Kant’s transcendental aesthetic (a primordial and productive unity in opposition), and the creative imagination as he now understands it in the artistic drive. Where the imagination was a ‘clue’ in resolving the issue of the ‘real’ in representations and an activity of spirit in the genesis of consciousness, it is now a more active and concrete disclosure of the larger problem of harmony and mediation. The affiliation of the productive imagination with spirit’s essential activity is mirrored by

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\(^{82}\) Tilliette at Dodd, 13. Schelling’s specific departure from Kant on genius consists in this: “whereas the Kantian doctrine of the genius and of aesthetic Ideas is inscribed within the limits of finitude (a characteristic further stressed by its connotation to the theme of symbolism, which undeniably is evidence of the gap between the finite and the infinite), such limits are totally disregarded by Schelling. . . . [A]rt, as the product of genius [reveals the identity of] unconscious activity and of conscious activity. . . . in complete opposition to Kant’s whole effort to show that intellectual intuition is precisely not permitted to our finite condition” (Taminiaux, 29).

\(^{83}\) This applies to poetry itself, not just painting: “The unquenchable thirst for knowledge no doubt creates conflict \[^{Widerstreit}^\]—conflict such as the poet [Goethe], in the most German of all poems, has utilized as vehicle of his own invention to open up an eternally fresh spring of inspiration, sufficient of itself to rejuvenate the science of the day, to breath new and fragrant life into it. Let all who would penetrate the temple of nature drink in this music of a higher sphere, absorb while young the strength that emanates from this poem, whose dazzling radiance lights up the very heart of the world” (US 124/326).
the affiliation of the creative imagination with the absolute’s essential unity. “Every genuine work of art [wahre. . . Kunstwerk],” says Schelling, “created by the imagination, is a unity [Auflösung] of the same opposites as those unified in the Ideas.” The creative imagination brings forth the “inner essence of the absolute. . . the eternal unity [ewige In-Eins-Bildung] of the universal and the particular,” the very same matter that is felt in the immediacy of intellectual intuition (US 61-62/267).  

The Common Root

Though it is true aesthetic and intellectual intuition enjoy different “conditions of . . . emergence” (System 231/626), settling the question of mediation at the heart of absolute identity clearly depends on evoking the poetic root shared by both forms of production. They have in common an ‘internal’ conflict at the core of production, and aesthetic intuition is characterized by the same dichotomy of activities which intellectual intuition intuits but struggles to resolve into an intelligible object. Schelling says as much when he contends that the power of productive intuition in philosophy is “the same whereby art also achieves the impossible, namely to resolve an infinite opposition in a finite product” (230/626). The difference is not one of analogy, but one of standpoint; in aesthetic production the ‘unconscious’ side of opposition is more accessible, and thus reflects back from its product a heightened awareness of the primordial root of all intuition. In this way art bears witness to the integrity of intellectual intuition. Schelling goes so far as to ask: “How. . . can it be established beyond doubt, that such an [intellectual] intuition does not rest upon a purely subjective deception, if it possesses no objectivity that is universal and acknowledged by all men?” And he answers: “This universally acknowledged and altogether incontestable objectivity of

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84 The larger identity of intelligence and nature is also at work in the revelatory unity of the work. See Dodd, 11.
85 Ryan Hellmers rightly focuses on the element of freedom in this accomplishment: “It is the work of art that is crucial to transcendence in Schelling, because it is here that freedom is most readily at play in the generation of an object from the transcendental subject which experiences its conscious and unconscious processes unified and brought into harmony with the objective in the form of the work of art” (Hellmers, “Reading in Ereignis: Schelling’s System of Freedom and the Beiträge,” Epoché, vol. 13, no 1. (Fall, 2008) 151).
intellectual intuition is art itself. For the aesthetic intuition simply is the intellectual intuition become objective” (229/625). This defense is also indicative of a deeper point. Just as the ‘product’ of art reflects back on the conflict inherent in the creative drive, the fact of this ‘resolution’ is meant to reflect back on a deeper understanding of the ‘productive power’ at the root of self-consciousness.

The element of ‘poetry’ in art is also in thought. Schelling explains:

> It is the poetic gift, which in its primary potentiality constitutes the primordial intuition, and conversely. [W]hat we speak of as the poetic gift is merely productive intuition, reiterated to its highest power. It is one and the same capacity that is active in both, the only one whereby we are able to think and to couple together even what is contradictory—and its name is imagination [Einbildungskraft]. (System 230/626)

Aesthetic intuition, in other words, unveils the more primordial productivity at the heart of intellectual intuition, that mediating power that is the hidden aspect of theoretical and practical reason: the imagination.

Here we do well to recall a simple lesson from the Treatise – that spirit tends toward an intuition of itself (Treatise 88/380), a tendency that is the basis for all activity constitutive of consciousness and knowing. The artistic imagination brings this unconscious tendency to the surface of a specific production, and, so doing, particularizes the same purposive striving from which self-consciousness arises. Artistry mediates formal purposiveness with material limitation, and the traces of these constituents are borne on the surface of the ‘work’ – a ‘product’ of the creative imagination and an ‘image’ of the identity stowed in the immediacy of intellectual intuition. In the relationship between aesthetic production and intellectual intuition we have then a repetition of the structure in the Treatise concerning philosophical abstraction (which needs an object) and intuitive production (cf. System 222/613-14). The difference consists in the fact that, now in the System, where we are working from the standpoint of pure self-consciousness and conscious volition, we are able to treat the aesthetic and intellectual intuitions as phenomenal events issuing from one same absolute emanation unfolding through history and in nature. Both are ‘real’ events having an ‘ideal’ meaning. By definition visual (or in the case of Goethe’s poetry, for example, oral), the product of genius is a
work of creative imagination that *shows* (or sounds) the work of intellectual intuition. The imagination is once again a ‘clue’ to the disclosure of identity. In rather soaring language, Schelling explains:

If aesthetic intuition is merely intellectual intuition become objective, it is self-evident that art is at once the only true and eternal organ and document of philosophy, which ever and again continues to speak to us of what philosophy cannot depict in external form, namely the unconscious element in acting and producing, and its original identity with the conscious. Art is paramount to the philosopher, precisely because it opens to him, as it were, the holy of holies, where burns in eternal and original unity, as if in a single flame, that which in nature and history is rent asunder, and in life and action, no less than in thought, must forever fly apart. . . . Each splendid painting owes, as it were, its genesis to a removal of the invisible barrier dividing the real from the ideal world, and is no more than the gateway, through which come forth completely the shapes and scenes of that world of fantasy [*Phantasiewelt*] which gleams but imperfectly through the real. *(System 231-232/628)*

The import of the discovery is such that even artistic ‘fantasy’ is reinstated and attached to the horizon of the ideal. Schelling is so assured of the aesthetic disclosure that he gives fodder to the charges of ‘enthusiasm.’ He embraces this risk because the turn toward art has proved a fitting match for the poetic life of the absolute itself (as it navigates the nonconscious and conscious, the ideal and real), and, so doing, he has accounted for the standpoint of self-consciousness and ‘made the philosopher sensuous’ along the way. 86 He continues:

The ultimate ground of all harmony between subjective and objective could be exhibited in its original identity only through intellectual intuition; and it is precisely this ground which, by means of the work of art, has been brought forth [*herausgebracht*] entirely from the subjective, and rendered wholly objective, in such wise, that we have gradually led our object, the self itself, up to the very point where we ourselves were standing when we began to philosophize. . . . Philosophy was born and nourished by poetry in the infancy of knowledge, and with it all those sciences it has guided toward perfection; we may thus expect them, on completion, to flow back like so many individual streams into the universal ocean of poetry from which they took their source. *(System 232/628)* 87

Whether or not Schelling and his absolute ground remain within such a poetic flow is a question that reflects on the ultimate status of the poetic imagination in his identity period. In the

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86 cf. 1797 “Earliest Program of German Idealism,” at *US* xiii.
following section we will navigate these currents by examining several of his works between 1801-1802 – works in which his regard for aesthetic production and his ambitions for absolute reason present the reader with tensions that may be resolved only by a proper appreciation for the advance from Einbildungskraft to Ineinsbildung.

V. The Art of Creation and the Absolute Standpoint
Earlier in this chapter I described Schelling’s initial interest in the question of subject/object identity as a practical one. A system of knowledge requires a grounding principle that assures the reality inhering in representations, and recovers the harmony subsisting beneath and beyond the cleavages (Entzweigungen, US 153n) of speculative and scientific thought. On the basis of this need Schelling established the workshop in which his system of identity would emerge – an apprenticeship that began under Fichte, reassigned itself to the larger striving of spirit in consciousness, nature, and history, then wed itself to the studio of the artistic genius and the poetic, harmonizing force of the absolute. The Treatise and System comprise a sustained and expansive movement toward the disclosure of the absolute as the essential identity of the ideal and real, the “supreme presupposition of all knowledge” (US 10/216). The imagination has served as both traction and accelerant for this movement. And the work of disclosing the absolute has involved a striving of inquiry suited to catch and join the striving of spirit – a poiesis of the grounding principle that is by turns intellectual and aesthetic, intuitive and productive. Art exhibits a real harmony of the real and ideal, and philosophy, thanks to the reflection and radiance of the artistic product, is understood to exhibit an ideal harmony of the same. The two, says Schelling, “meet at the summit [Gipfel], and because both are absolute, each can be the archetype of the other” (US 147/348).88 The lesson to be won from this disclosure is

88 Schelling explains: “The same principle is present in the philosopher as a subjective reflection and in the artist as an objective reality; this is why the artist’s attitude toward it is not subjective or conscious—not that he cannot become conscious of it, but if he does, he is not conscious of it in his capacity as artist. As an artist he is driven by this principle and, for this very reason, cannot be said to possess it; when he conceives of it ideally, he attains to a higher stage as an artist, but even when his attitude remains objective, and whatever has been subjective in him becomes again objective. The opposite takes place in the philosopher; that is, in him the objective is reabsorbed in
not one of an Archimedian authority of self-consciousness nor a template for a resolved departure from the phenomenal domain, but rather the invitation to explore how the creative imagination is invested in manifesting and recovering that “truly absolute identity” (US 67/273) which transcends the logic and fate of all antitheses. The early system of identity is, ultimately, an exercise in rendering thought a work that is productive and poetic in the deepest, most ‘spiritual’ and ‘primordial’ sense of the terms. Identity began as a ‘problem,’ matured as a possibility, and now, on the heels of the System, names an ambition to indwell the absolution from all limited standpoints.

But any reading of Schelling’s lectures and texts between 1801-1803 (and recent scholarship devoted to them) leaves one wondering if the productive and aesthetic bearing of the System remains decisive in a more rigorously deductive and constructive formulation of what it means to think from the horizon of indifference. Two questions capture the pertinence of this tension to our present interests: (1) Does the rigor of absolute reason (its treatment and apparent performance) 1801-1803 indeed jettison the artistic production that seemed of great consequence in years prior? (2) Does the increasingly formal account of absolute identity suggest that Schelling has surmounted his own appeal to, and employment of, the productive imagination in the standpoint of intellectual intuition? To answer these questions we must first establish the terms of the tension more clearly. A brief account of two texts – Presentation of My System of Philosophy (1801) and his lectures on The Philosophy of Art (1802-1803) – will suffice.

Deduction in the Domain of Ineinsbildung

In his Presentation of My System of Philosophy (1801) Schelling situates his thought in the grounding principle and demonstrates that the indifference-point of absolute identity and that of absolute reason are one and the same.89 He explains that “[t]he standpoint [Standpunkt] of philosophy is the standpoint of reason; its kind of knowing is a knowing of things as they are in

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89 See, for example, Presentation 349/115, 352/118.
themselves, i.e., as they are in reason” (349/115). And if, as he argues, “it belongs to the essence of absolute identity to be” (351/118), then the principle of identity is also already an ontological totalizing of the absolute such that “Each individual being is as such a determined form of the being of absolute identity” (361/131).90 Schelling elucidates this point through a series of deductions from the law of identity (the proposition A=A).91 A distinction between essence and being (Seyn) accounts for the place of differentiation, finitude, and potency (as A=B, see 356/124) within the indifference of A=A, but from the standpoint of production (as opposed to that of reflection, “idealism in the objective sense” 345/109) absolute identity remains analogous to an indivisible line.92 In this way Schelling’s Presentation is an enactment and further justification of the kind of cognizing one enjoys after having followed the direction of intellectual intuition to absolute identity and totality, and having taken up the site of absolute reason; it is the Erkennen, as opposed to Wissen, that happens at the indifference-point between transcendental philosophy and philosophy of nature.93

Schelling indeed believes he has substantiated the means for converting the phenomenal/ideal and necessity/freedom divide into two expressions of the same absolute totality. The accomplishment ultimately amounts to a renewed grounding for reason and its sciences.94 In his comments before a Jena audience in 1802 he charges that man, freshly equipped with a standing in absolute reason, is the being destined “to supplement the phenomenal world” (US 12/218). But is a vocation of

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90 In which case: “Everything that is, is absolute identity itself” (Presentation 352/119),
91 Schelling will radicalize this position on the law of identity in his 1809 Freedom Essay, a crucial ontological development we will discuss in chapters three and four.
92 One’s emphasis on “infinite knowing” or “infinite being” depends on which propositional ‘A’ is in question (Presentations, 365-66/137-38).
93 See Vater’s note at Presentation 343 on terms, and Schelling at Presentation 344-45/108-9).
94 See US 12/218. If the absolute is real and ideal, a fusion of essence and form (US 13/218) at each point along its continuum, then the objects of any manner of ‘knowing’ are equally weighted. He continues: “Clearly, if knowledge is the ideal embodiment of the infinite in the finite, and action of the finite in the infinite, at the level of the Idea or being-in-itself each expresses the same absolute unity or primordial knowledge” (US 14/220). The totality behind such expressions is not reducible to a homogeneous, deterministic landscape (a “night in which all cows are black,” as Hegel jests in his 1807 Phenomenology of Spirit). Wirth’s explanation is clarifying: “The night when all cows are black is the flight into absolute obscurity, when one looses sight of the concrete and particular facts that comprise the realm of the real. Everything fades into a dark night in which nothing is anything in particular. The insinuation was a cheap shot, although Hegel never retracted it” (Wirth, Schelling Now, 3). For Heidegger’s relationship to Schelling and Hegel on this question of ‘darkness’ see also Desmond, Art, Origins, Otherness, 231.
supplementation necessarily reducible to a triumph of essence over image, reason over imagination, or Vernunftanschauung over aesthetic intuition. In a subtle way, Schelling’s hopes for absolute reason echo the imaging and reflection of harmony he found in the work of genius: man, he explains, “is meant to express the image [Bild] of the same divine nature as it is in itself, i.e., in its ideal aspect” (12/218, my emphasis). In these same lectures he remarks that art “is a direct and necessary expression of the absolute” (144/345) and the “philosopher who sees in art the inner essence of his own science as in a magic and symbolic mirror [magischen und symbolischen Spiegel] will inevitably make the philosophy of art one of his goals” (150/351). Is such language indicative of a continued interest in the aesthetic shape of intuition and reason?

The organizing theme of the lectures compiled as The Philosophy of Art (1802-1803), is creation. It is an extension and religious specification of the thought of production and the ‘miracle’ of art so central to the System’s culmination. As a concurrence of the divine and human, creation carries that sense of striving we have charted in the purposiveness of spirit and the artistic imagination. Art, says Schelling is the objective representation of “divine creation,” an aesthetic manifestation of the “informing of infinite ideality into the real” (Art 31-32/386). Such informing echoes the System’s movement through opposition and contradiction to a synthesis of the real and ideal, the necessary and free, and thus specifies the conversion underway between the realm of the phenomenal/temporal and that of the absolute. Although the creative imagination (particularly in the poetic world of Greek mythology) is treated principally on the side of the divine or absolute, artistic objects are not simply ontic effects of a divine cause; the unconscious drive of the genius observed in

95 The trope of the ‘mirror’ will continue to figure in Schelling’s thought at least until 1821, and will enter into Heidegger’s discourse in a limited way in the 1930s (see our chapter five). Readers will recognize it—katoptron—as a theme from Plato’s Republic, Book X. For Plato, katoptron denotes the imitative possibilities of artistic activity. But the mirror also signals a limit situation – the artist may imitate appearances, but cannot engage in the same level of ontological production enjoyed by the artisan (who fabricates). As Taminiaux notes, “the artisan is in a true relationship with Ideas, whereas the artist cares only for appearances” (Taminiaux, Poetics, Speculation, and Judgment, 2). Suffice it to say, Schelling does not take artistry (in the form of mythology, tragedy, poetry, or painting) to be limited to the imitation of appearances, as Plato would have it, but rather weds artistry to the inspired corroboration of speculation and creation.
the *System* remains in effect, but is characterized afresh in terms of the ‘unity’ so decisive to Schelling’s *Presentation*. One sees this difference on the level of operative terms: *Ineinsbildung* (“mutual informing into unity”) places a pronounced accent upon *Einbildungskraft* while also subtracting the subjectivist orientation denoted by Kant’s ‘*kraft*’.\(^{96}\) The terms advance a simultaneity of unity and individuation – the former assured by the divine informing, the latter accomplished by the artist who intuits their accord. As a result, Schelling’s affiliated treatments of fantasy, the symbolic, and the sublime situate us in the ground of the absolute totality in a more daunting and compelling way than the deductive presentation of 1801 may have suggested.\(^{97}\)

The status of *Ineinsbildung* in these lectures indicates that Schelling’s concern is not to prove absolute identity as a grounding principle nor substantiate the claims of intellectual intuition, but rather to report on the imaginative life of the absolute. Artistic production presents the most poignant intersection with this life, a poetic proximity that requires us to pause before simply converting, on Schelling’s behalf, absolute identity into absolute reason. The human imagination, including “fantasy,” can apprehend and carry absolute unity’s movement in and through finite limitation. Says Schelling, “according to this law [of unity] life flows out into the world from the absolute as from that which is without qualification one. According to the same law the universe forms and molds itself within the reflex of human creative imagination into a world of fantasy whose consistent and

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\(^{96}\) I am grateful to my colleague, Mark Thomas, for alerting me to this latter point.

\(^{97}\) The conception of creation remains framed within Schelling’s abiding appreciation for the tension between the ideal and the phenomenal – the absolute standpoint (embodied in A=A, 1801) and the finite standpoint (accounted as A=B, 1801). But his ambitious embrace of ‘absolute reason’ in 1801 is now tempered by a more qualitative characterization of the unconscious, irrational, and harrowingly ‘actual’ absolute: “[the] absolute in and for itself offers no multiplicity or variety whatever, and to that extent it is for the understanding an absolute, bottomless emptiness” (*Art* 36/393). The standpoint of mere understanding, caught in the flux of particularity, cannot attain the limitless freedom and unity enjoyed by the absolute, and thus regards the absolute as a signal of the standing separation between the divine imagination and the particular human imagination. However, as we have learned from intellectual intuition and aesthetic production, separation does not imply detachment, for the realm of the particular is made possible by the “principle of the divine imagination” (ibid), just as the quantitative differentiation within identity – every ‘being’ that ‘is’ – stands as “a determined form of the being of absolute identity” (*Presentation* 361/131). Put in a more religious register, this means gathering of what is absolute and what is ‘limitation’ is the means by which the world is derived in accordance with the “divinity of the universal” (*Art* 37/393).
The pervading law is absoluteness in limitation” (Art 37/393). He thus characterizes the connection between absolute and world, between divine freedom and life, by a mode of formation moving between the divine imagination and human fantasy. The implication is that fantasy, of all things, enjoys a privilege that philosophical abstraction, deduction, and construction would do well to absorb. Moreover, where thisimaginative reflex obtains there is also a prescient awareness of “the initial ground of existence,” an eternal “region of darkness and formlessness” (37/394). Art, then, consists in a generation of form from chaos, much like the dialectic of the nonconscious and conscious in the System, and even the material and formal figurations of the productive imagination before it. Paralleling the generative work of what has been called ‘spirit’ and ‘the absolute,’ form is generated via a play of the universal and the particular. This generation is manifest in what Schelling calls ‘schematism’ (to reinscribe an old term), ‘allegory,’ and most importantly, the ‘symbolic,’ for it is the symbolic which “constitutes the absolute form” (46/407). In the symbolism of the sublime, for example, the limits of concrete intuition create a situation in which “the truly infinite appears for which the merely concretely infinite is the symbol” (86/462-63). The appearance, moreover, depends on that disposition in the subject to intuit the finite as a symbol of the infinite (90/468). The reflexive imagination of the beholder, as it were, is hermeneutically equipped to symbolize the

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98 We are reminded of how, in the Treatise, the human spirit was that being in which spirit’s eternal becoming was individuated; furthermore, Schelling’s analogy of ‘flow’ appeared in the System as a way of capturing the return motion of philosophy to its source in poetry (see System 232/628-29).
99 Regarding the manner in which archetypes delivered through beautiful works in symbolic way, see Summerell, 90 and Braeckman, 556.
100 Not unlike Kant’s position in the Critique of Judgment, Schelling explains that nature contains touchstones of this kind, for, as he noted in his Jena lectures, the student of philosophy “learns to recognize... forms in works of art as sensuous images which have their origin in nature and which are her symbols” (US 151/351-52). But in the Art Lectures Schelling draws a further distinction: “only in art is the object itself sublime” (Art 90/468). What is ‘beautiful’ about the sublime in a work of art is that it is not just a showing of the infinite or of the chaos within the absolute, but that it is all this and a showing of the finite (ibid). The difference between the reflexive imagination when focused on nature and a work is the difference between sublimity and symbolism, on the one hand, and beauty and unity on the other. “In the sublime,” Schelling explains, “the physically infinite is coerced or subdued by the truly infinite. Within beauty the finite is allowed to show itself once again by appearing within the beautiful as already informed into the infinite” (ibid).
freedom of the absolute – to grasp the sublime disclosure of unboundedness. Schelling calls this event an “aesthetic intuition” (86/463) and goes so far as to contend that it, like the intellectual intuition “is the poesy that any human being can practice” (87/463; cf. Treatise 116/420). The emphasis is on the possibility, for the poesy of symbolism ‘supplements’ the phenomenal realm. The artistic imagination, ever tethered to the finite, steps beyond the finite standpoint.

What is significant is this connection established between an aesthetic intuition which must exceed the mere sensible, and the incomprehensible “primal chaos” that marks the “inner essence of the absolute” (Art 88/465). The intuitions (intellectual and aesthetic) of the System anticipated this connection, and the Presentation provided a logical outline for the life of unity in and through the law of identity, but here, under the guise of a philosophy of art, Schelling has provided a model for the conversion of reason’s working standpoint. The intuition of, and reasoning from, absolute identity remains decisive, but an intuition of incomprehensibility, says Schelling, “appears to be the first step toward philosophy, or at least toward an aesthetic view of the world” (88/465). But such a statement returns us to the tension introduced in our two questions above. Is art an illustration of what the conversion to the absolute standpoint (from that of consciousness) entails, or is it a way of disciplining thought to become more aesthetic? Even with the specification of aesthetic intuition and the artistic/affective imaginations in Schelling’s philosophy of art, many scholars argue that Schelling’s post-System period chiefly consists in a correlation of philosophical reason and absolute identity which jettisons the interest in aesthetic intuition specifically, and any poetic conception of thought more generally. Insofar as Schelling is, says Vater, “guided by the idea of an absolute principle neither internal to knowing nor external to it” and rigorously committed to deductive and

\[101\] Schelling explains: “There (within the sublime) the finite still manifests itself as it were in a condition of revolt against the infinite, although in this very relationship it becomes a symbol of it” (Art 90/468). The incomprehensibility symbolized in the sublime is, in effect, “a symbol of the absolute itself, in which everything is free and unconstrained” (88/466, my emphasis).

\[102\] This is true provided one make the colossal element in nature “into a symbol of the absolutely colossal” (Art 87/463).
constructive presentations of absolute indifference, absolute reason effectively overtakes all forms of transcendental reflection and the appeal to imaginative production, intuition, and mediation is at best secondary. Such a view is too rigid. I have no interest in challenging the obvious centrality of absolute reason for Schelling circa 1802, but I am reluctant to embrace a developmental typology that fails to understand and appreciate how, without his steadfast attention to the artistry of imagination, Schelling’s absolute reason and intended wissenscacht of intellectual intuition have no standing. I will demonstrate this point by briefly treating the two texts often cited for the opposite case: Bruno and Further Presentations.

The Possessive Imagination

The conversation in Bruno develops the matter of absolute unity by exploring the unconditional identity of truth and beauty (Bruno 120/SW 3: 218). So doing, the dialogue compares the efficacy of philosophy and poetry in apprehending this unity, though both strive for it. Schelling’s Anselm observes that although artists may lack a conscious possession of the idea of identity, “they are possessed by it [bessesen werden]” (131-32/231). The statement locates the text’s

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103 Vater, 217-19. A common interpretation regards the two Presentations and Philosophy and Religion (1804) as evidencing a retreat from Schelling’s earlier interest in art and aesthetic intuition. The standard storyline holds that with the move toward ‘absolute reason,’ the identity system at last comes into its own and has no remaining need for aesthetic analogies. Of Bruno, Joseph Lawrence notes that Schelling revokes the “doctrine of the superiority of art” in favor of intellectual intuition (Lawrence, “Art and Philosophy in Schelling,” The Owl of Minerva, vol. 20 no. 1 (Fall, 1988) 12). After commenting on the Art Lectures 1802-03, Velkley holds: “Schelling no longer maintains that ontological reconciliation can be brought about only through the activity of genius; instead the principle of absolute identity is that of an eternal Indifferenz of ideal and real, subject and object” (Velkley, 1997: 167n.42). In a note on Bruno, Vater says that Schelling had established such identity at conclusion of System, however: “As the following discussion [in Bruno] shows, Schelling now thinks he conceded too much to art by focusing on the aspect of unconscious creativity. Whereas in 1799 he believed that philosophy lacks the power to consciously attain to absolute identity, Schelling now thinks it possesses that power, ‘intellectual intuition.’ Philosophy need no longer depend on the surrogate of aesthetic intuition” (Vater, 229n.13, and he refers us to Bruno 325-28/301f). See also Braeckman (2004), 552-554.


106 Bruno thus offers the central premise of the dialogue: “We can all agree on this fundamental notion: the idea [of the absolute], wherein all opposites are not just united, by are simply identical, wherein all opposites are not just cancelled, but are entirely undivided from one another” (Bruno 136/235). Undeniably, Bruno means to justify the identity principle, even if his means are more speculative than the deductive rationale of the Presentation. Absolute identity is the “perfectly simple” unity which allows the differentiation of form and essence (207/312).
discussion in the immediate aftermath of Schelling’s *System* remarks concerning aesthetic intuition and production. The case of the philosopher, Anselm continues, is similar though more conscious—he “employs, but in an inward way, the same God-given faculty that the artist uses externally and unknowingly” (132/231). The task then is to characterize the philosopher’s intentional employment of the faculty which grasps and exercises the absolute principle not only with respect to the identity of truth and beauty, but also the identity of all things natural and divine—a principle indicative of what Schelling has elsewhere called absolute totality. Such identity, as Bruno puts it, likewise encompasses the magnetism by which the numerous metaphysical and productive poles enjoy a disclosure of unity surpassing all difference: the ground of the ideal and real, the unity of thought and intuition, the particular and universal, difference and indifference, possibility and actuality, being and knowing. To enact a philosophical inwardness rooted in such identity is, like the grounding self-consciousness of reasoning based in identity, to outstrip the “finite cognition, which keeps object and concept, particular and universal distinct from one another” (141/241).

No doubt this program for inwardness appears to subsume the privileges ascribed to aesthetic intuition in years prior. And yet, the very contours of inwardness are presented on the bases of a conception of philosophical production manifestly shaped by an artistic parallel. Bruno’s ensuing attempts to determine the formal domain of the absolute—as and by reason and not finite cognition or reflection—are performed according to an artistic and imaginative hermeneutic apparatus. Philosophical inwardness is not just analogous to artistic or poetic production, but happens according to their very terms. Explicating the meaning of absolute identity and reason in terms of beauty and truth’s identity, for example, is no mere romantic flourish. Schelling treats nature and its entities in terms of a “living artistry [*lebendigen Kunst*]” of the archetypal (*Urbild*) (125/223-24, cf. 178/282). He explains the principle of indifference, moreover, and the play of opposition within it, in terms of a mirror imaging of object and copy—a harmonious relation Bruno leverages to illustrate how “philosophy should be a true copy of the universe” (137/237). The very mark of comparison between
finite understanding and the “supreme idea” of absolute identity, Bruno continues, is the ability to ascertain how it is that “the beautiful is what absolutely identifies the universal and the particular” – an ontological quality otherwise cognized as though “reflected in a pool of water” (143-44/243-44). Recalling the problem of ‘immediacy’ in the Treatise, identity here consists in “the immediate image of the idea itself [das unmittelbare Abbild der Idee selbst]” (162/262). Such imagery is not delimited by the Platonic suspicion of derivation and removal, but rather one that has the quality of animation and ‘ensouling’ (cf. Bruno, 167/267-68, 178/280-81) – the formative rescue effort of a world of appearances and mechanistic nature, restoring them as entities which image the essential unity of thought and being (cf. 198-99/301-03).

What these connections suggest is that the scope and manner of philosophical inwardness (and its best expression, absolute reason) is established as an attunement of the imagination. The qualitative nature of identity demands a poeticization of thought. We have already observed the operation of Ineinsbildung with respect to identity’s motion toward the symbolic, and it now appears as though a similar structure of ‘forming into unity’ is the very thing Schelling requires between aesthetic intuition and the intuition of reason. All elements pertaining to the manner in which “the finite inheres in the infinite” – the image world’s intrinsic communion or fellowship with the absolute – and one’s ability to recognize spirit as “the unity of all things” (150-51/251-52, cf. 187/289), are, for Schelling’s Bruno, captured by a metaphorical and artistic refrain reducible to this: “the thing carries within itself the stamp of the eternal, an image of eternity, as it were [das Gespräche und gleichsam ein Abbild des Ewigen]” (160/260; cf. 187/289, 194/297).107 An eternal image indeed trumps a phenomenal image, but this does not imply that absolute reason rids itself of aesthetic figuration or poetic imagination. Though the field of philosophical inwardness means Bruno’s specific task is “the deduction of consciousness from the idea of the eternal itself and from its internal identity” (179/282), and though this alters the path of deduction from one of nature and

history in the *System*, and even the logical law of identity in the *Darstellung*, the very ability to say that phenomenal images do not display “perfect indifference [völligen Indifferenz]” (198/301) and that absolute cognition “includes both thought and being itself, already absolutely united within it” (216/323), depends from the start on a decision to *reason* through *images* – to catch the eternal as it informs the real with the beauty of truth. The more the philosophical inwardness accelerates as a standpoint to be won, the more *Bruno* imbues its components with the ‘springing forth’ and striving we have found native to nature and to the artistic genius. To say, then, that “It is reason alone that knows everything divine, for in knowing itself, it universally establishes its native indifference as the matter and form of all things” (198/301) does not mean aesthetic intuition, artistic productivity, or the philosophy of art in general are now revised as remote or provisional interests for Schelling. It says, rather, that the advantage reason now enjoys over understanding (see 196-97/299-300) consists in the same advantage the striving genius and his work (if even unconsciously) enjoyed over finite reflection and separation.

We may test this view by turning to Schelling’s *Further Presentations*. What is peculiar about this text is not that it concerns the same unity of thought and being in absolute cognition so central to *Bruno* but that it is a no-frills display of philosophical ‘construction’ (the systematicity that overtakes reflection) *and* is as indebted to the poetic imagination as *Bruno*, if not more so. Let us observe how such construction unfolds. Just as *Bruno* characterized philosophical inwardness as the ability to comprehend “the fact that everything is contained in everything . . . the abundance of the whole universe is stored in individual beings” (*Bruno* 188/291), *Schelling* now argues that one must grasp “how everything is contained in everything, and how what is expressed on the one side of being, and on the other in thought, reflects the whole organism of reason” (*FP* 378/363-64). Reason is, as it were, alive – having a life in which “the absolute itself and knowledge of the absolute” share

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108 See, for example, *FP* 378/364, 381/367, 381/368.
109 See *Bruno* 151/251, 158/258, 167/267-68
This convergence means, as we have come to expect, that to speak of a knowledge ‘of’ the absolute is to speak from both directions of the genitive – to incarnate a knowledge beyond reflection, Criticism, and finite cognition such that one carries a “reason-intuition” (382/368-69) which identifies thought and being as one and is itself an expression of this essential unity. The philosopher invested in and by such knowledge practices an absolute science “of the eternal, in its very self” (382n.6/369). We have then a clearly delimited account of an “absolute mode of cognition” (383/370) which by all appearances enjoys a mastery exceeding the glimmer of identity found in aesthetic intuition – for the cognition issues from an identity point in which absolute knowledge and the absolute itself are equal (383n.8/390; cf. 384n.11/391). But we also have an assertion that reason, and not just the entity, is stamped with an image of eternity. Indwardness again becomes a story of Ineinsbildung. The absolute itself, says Schelling, “is informed in us as the idea and the essence of our soul” (383n.8/390). He returns to Bruno’s language of creative imaging, for example, in stating that the “innermost mystery of creation” is “the divine identification (imaging) of original and copy that is the true root of every being” (386/394). Ineinsbildung again denotes the unifying movement, and we may now understand it as the larger creation narrative in which the current chapter of identification is told. It is the eternal, all enveloping action of Einbildungs­kraft which gives reason (as absolute cognition) its life. So doing, it accounts for and expands upon the notions of ‘living artistry’ and ‘stamp’ of identification noted in Bruno. The absolute reason attained via philosophical inwardness thus arises as an exercise that is party to (and parcel of) a more divine and original schematism – a divine in-forming which eliminates all differences between possibility and actuality (387/394-95).

That here, in the heart of what many consider to be the highpoint of his identity system, Schelling would return once again to the apparatus of the productive imagination, is nothing short of

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110 He continues: “For neither the particular nor the universal would have a reality for itself if the two were not formed into one within the absolute, i.e., unless both were absolute” (FP 386/394).
remarkable. To be sure, Schelling’s concern in this discussion is not the formative activity of the human artist, but a construction of the unity by which the absolute subsists and of which every entity (plant, organism, being, etc.) partakes. A divine artistry – the very movement of absolute knowing and being – supplants the world taken as a field of appearances with a standpoint by which every entity is regarded as a unity “under which the whole is minted” (386/394), a figuration of the absolute essence in a manifest form.¹¹¹ Philosophical construction attunes one’s gaze to the living fruit of this artistry, there disclosing “one being in all the original schematisms of world intuition” (387/394). The philosophy of nature and the philosophy of art are thus drawn together under the rubric of this divine in-forming – what we may call the poetic imagination of the absolute. Entities, from a more general standpoint, strive to comprehend “the universal in their particularity and the particular in their universality” (387-88/396-97), for every ‘particular’ consists in its own individual schematism yet subsists under the schematizing life of Ineinsbildung. Schelling explains this point by conjoining the Epicurean language of the Apostle Paul with the Kantian language of the productive faculty: “Everything lives and moves because of this twofold striving, and this striving springs from the first forming-into-one {identification} or from the fact that the undivided essence of the absolute is stamped identically upon the real and the ideal, and that substance is only in this way” (387-88/395-96).¹¹² As the keystone of the identity system, Ineinsbildung wins for Schelling not only a construction of absolute unity, but also a legend for working out the totality of philosophy. The chief instrument of thought is that absolute form which “discloses essence and . . . universally mediates between knowing and the absolute” (391/403). Philosophical thought, that is, works on and according to the path of mediation hewn by the absolute imagination. The identification “of form with essence in intellectual intuition” constitutes absolute idealism as such (392/404) – a path of

¹¹¹ He says, for example: “Pick from the universe whatever fragment you will and know that it is infinitely fruitful and is impregnated with the possibilities of all things” (FP 390/400).
¹¹² In sum: “Everything we can know is a fragment of the absolute essence of the eternal principle, only cast in the form of appearance. But philosophy considers only what everything is in itself, i.e., in the eternal” (FP 388/396).
thinking equivalent to the path of being – and the root rigor of identification is constituted by the living artistry of *Ineinsbildung* which constitutes essential identity as “the one-in-all and all-in-one” (397/411).

Here we may rebound from the preeminence of this element to our original point of departure and reprise briefly the decisive place of imagination in the identity philosophy. Intent on furnishing a system of knowledge anchored in an unconditional principle, Schelling’s focus on the productive capacities of intuition and the activity of spirit led him to establish a connection between the for-itself nature of spirit and the for-myself nature of self-consciousness. So doing, the proximity between ontological genesis and intuitive production disclosed the possibility for absolute identity, namely an intellectual intuition of the harmony intrinsic to spiritual volition. Self-consciousness came to name the standpoint from which every intuitive act echoed the striving of spirit, and this entailed the sensuous experience of mediation and production in a way necessarily alert to identity. What made this deduction of identity possible was a sustained elaboration of the power of imagination in a discourse of ontological, not merely logical or metaphysical, proportions. At the same time, inquiry itself turned a profound aesthetic corner, taking on the sensuous, kinetic cast shared by spirit and imagination alike. The work of productive imagination in the *Treatise* was followed by the decisive work of creative imagination in the *System*. As the account of generative unity and mediation broadened to include not just subject and object, but nature and intelligence, intuition and production, the sought for standpoint of identity came to encompass history, nature, and knowledge. Identity bore the accent of a higher harmony, and the assumption of such identity in the self bore the necessity of bringing forth knowledge of the conscious and unconscious in harmony. Schelling, here again, recalled philosophy to its aesthetic sense while investing it in the activity of the artistic imagination. The essential unity of the absolute was disclosed through an appeal to creative imagination broadly, and the production of the genius specifically. The precise kinship between philosophy and poetry, accordingly, was evident insofar as imagination now named the primordial potentiality at work in
intuition. Indeed, in the Darstellung and Philosophy of Art Schelling underscored the artistic inner essence of philosophy and broached the imaginative life of the absolute as a movement of Ineinsbildung commensurate with the telling production of Einbildung in intuition. Bruno and the Fernere Darstellung translated the inwardness of intuition and inquiry into the fellowship of divine creation, essentially inviting the philosopher to follow the genius by reasoning through images in accordance with the harmony of the finite and infinite.

If pressed to classify this system of the absolute, we do best to regard it as an ontology of imagination according to which the absolute standpoint of reason is as sensuous and aesthetic as the harmony it intuits. In short, Schelling’s philosophy of identity is in each progressive articulation a philosophy of the imagination. The system of the absolute names the work wrought by philosophy whereby thought itself belongs to the movement of imagination and is exercised along an aesthetic, indeed poetic, course.
Chapter Three
The Divine Imagination and the Question of Ground in Schelling’s Freiheitsschrift

SOLELY because God brought order to the disorderly offspring of chaos and proclaimed [ausgesprochen] his eternal unity into nature, he opposed darkness and posited the word as a constant centrum and eternal beacon against the anarchical movement of the principle bereft of understanding . . .
-F.W.J. Schelling

Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom (1809)

We ended the last chapter by highlighting the character of Ineinsbildung in Schelling’s conception of absolute identity and absolute cognition. By virtue of this informative movement of “the one-in-all and all-in-one” (FP 397/411) the philosophy of identity attained a point of connection between the unifying essence of the absolute and the constructive essence of philosophical inwardness. Stamped with an image of eternity, reason is minted in the press of a divine schematism and thus capacitiated to share in the artistry of the absolute. To say that Schelling’s more rigorous and logical deductions of identity effectively jettison the intellectual and aesthetic intuitions in favor of sheer ‘absolute reason’ in the period of the Darstellungs is to oversimplify his conception of standpoint and overlook the central poeticization of identity. Based upon his lectures on The Philosophy of Art, his constructions in the Further Presentations, and his dialogical studies in Bruno, Schelling’s system ambitions in this post-System (1800) period do indeed assume a philosophical Erkennen rooted in the indifference standpoint of absolute reason, but the quality and performance of this knowing are shaped by an increasing appeal to the imaginative, creative life of the absolute. The law of unity, though exhibited logically in the proposition A=A, is thought in terms of the productive potency and differentiation within the determinative life of absolute being and primordial knowledge. Nothing is settled by assuming the standpoint of indifference or absolute reason. Even the aesthetic attunement of intuition (in play at least since the System, 1800) echoes in the attunement of reason to the eternal Ineinsbildung, and the ambition of system is to attain “an aesthetic view of the world” (Art 88/465), a conversion of reason into what Schelling will in 1809 call an ‘inspired’ (from
Begeisterung) and ‘productive’ (erzeugenden) dialectical science helmed by a ‘word’ of ‘measure’ (Maß) befitting the whole.¹

The purpose of the present chapter is to elucidate the weight and work of the imagination, together with the increasingly aesthetic bearing of philosophical reason, in a moment whereby Schelling’s system faces its most strenuous self-assigned task. Our primary text is Schelling’s Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom and Matters Connected Therewith (1809). Taking his 1807 address, Concerning the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature,² as a point of departure, we will clarify the meaning of an ‘essential’ investigation and underscore the significance of nature, genesis, and whole for Schelling in the years leading up to 1809. We will then trace the singular importance of the divine imagination in the Freedom Essay’s account of God’s self-revelation, the poietic framework for Schelling’s ground/existence distinction in this account, and the priority of the ‘word’ in sustaining the inspired unity of the ‘whole.’ With the theme of Ineinsbildung abiding in the background to these elements, we will track how the question of freedom provokes in Schelling a reorientation in inquiry from intuition and abstraction to dialectic and poiesis, a reappraisal in system of the meaning of identity and ground, and yet a profound renewal of the creative, productive, and poetic imagination in the life of the absolute and in the reason it inspires.


I. Essence and Connected Matters

In God. Some Conversations (1787), Johann Gottfried Herder presents the following exchange between two characters preoccupied with the mystery of a system of forces by which nature subsists under the authority of an all-encompassing law:

_Theano_: For a few moments I would like to be a higher spirit in order to observe this great workshop in its inner workings [in ihrem Innern].

_Theophron_: Do not wish for this, Theano. The spectator from outside is better off, perhaps at least more comfortable than the observer from inside, who, however, also could never gain a synoptic view [übersehen] of the whole.\(^3\)

The wish and admonition together reflect the tension one faces when longing to glimpse the full measure of a system he has envisioned. Ten years later Friedrich Hölderlin’s Hyperion confesses to his friend, Bellarmin, a similar predicament concerning his beloved Diotima: “I can speak only here and there a word about her. I have to forget what she is in her completeness if I am to speak of her at all . . . if her living image is not so to overwhelm me that I perish in rapture and woe…”\(^4\) The lover, like the inquirer, stands in a position of having to retreat from the whole in order to regain it. _Eros_ and _logos_ ‘know’ their objects, but making them known in full is another matter altogether. This is the situation of Schelling in his _Freedom Essay_. He comes to a question of essence with a system in hand, yet with a matter in view that requires a new way of speaking if he is to display the ‘inner workings’ of the whole.

Read commonly as a _theodicy_ in the traditional sense of the term, or as a “theodicy of reason” in a more penetrating sense,\(^5\) Schelling’s _Freedom Essay_ pits the gathering force of his

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\(^3\) Johan Gottfried Herder, _Sämtliche Werke_, ed. B. Suphan, vol. 16 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1881-1913) 552-560. Love and Schmidt include Herder’s text as an appendix to Schelling’s _Freedom_, and the passage in question may be found at 129. In a similar vein, Heidegger concludes his 1920-21 lecture course on _The Phenomenology of the Religious Life_ by saying this with respect to Theresia von Jesu and the Sermones Bernardi in canticum canticorum: “Demand: Always see the innermost and the whole of the castle, not the mere sequence and adjacency of rooms—see totally and with understanding” (254/GA 60:337).

\(^4\) Hölderlin, _Hyperion_, 48.

\(^5\) Translators’ note at _Freedom_ 82, my emphasis. Describing ‘Pantheism debate’ – _Pantheismusstreit_ of 1780s – the quotation in full reads: “Schelling never sought to abandon the authority of reason for revelation and, in this respect, became one of Jacobi’s most ferocious critics. Rather, when Schelling seeks to defend system, as he does in the _Philosophical Investigations_, he is seeking to defend reason against its enemies and, of course, against its most formidable enemy, evil, which could be said to draw more to revelation and disgust with reason than any other fact
identity philosophy against a harrowing problem: the supposed contradiction between the very notion of system and the feeling or fact of human freedom. Two comments by Schelling’s contemporaries illustrate the elementary reach of this problem on the heels of the famous Pantheismusstreit of the 1780s. In 1789 Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, observes: “Among living beings we know only man to be endowed with that degree of consciousness of his self-activity, which carries within itself the calling and impetus toward free acts.”7 In 1807 Franz Xavier von Baader remarks that “there is nonetheless evil—an evil spirit—in man, the recognition of which is independent of all theories and histories: How did this evil spirit come into man or arise in him?”8 How, in other words, is a theoretical and practical system of the absolute – a system undergirded by a conception of absolute necessity – commensurate with the evident experience of freedom and evil? The question is shaped by Jacobi’s intensified polarity between reason and immanence on one side, and revelation and transcendence on the other. But this context is best understood as a touchstone for Schelling’s more ambitious integration of his system with the “deeper disclosures” required of a “complete, finished . . . whole” (Freedom 4-5/333-34). The touchstone is a catalyst for this larger disclosure because its critical force centers on the authority accredited to an opposition. Parrying the implicit charge of a Spinozistic rationalism and atheism is one thing, but enabling “the higher, or rather, the genuine opposition [to] emerge, that of necessity and freedom, with which the innermost centerpoint of philosophy first

of human life—this is the sense in which Schelling’s defense of reason is also very much a theodicy of reason.” Rationality in this sense, the editors continue, “has much to do with his philosophy of nature; this concept emphasizes dynamic tension and interplay, the constant activity of opposed forces, a dialectic rather than an axiomatic model of rationality” (translators’ note, 82, 84).

6 The weight of this problem may be compared to the question of what reality inheres in representations – the formative question of his early period. The problem is, more broadly, a primary catalyst for what will be Schelling’s so-called turn toward a more ‘positive’ philosophy – what Jason Wirth calls S “one of the first attempts to philosophize in a way that did not simply cede the last word of philosophy to Hegel” (Wirth, Schelling Now, 5).


8 Franz Xavier von Baader, Sämtliche Werke, 33-38. Love and Schmidt include von Baader’s text, “On the Assertion that there can be no Wicked Use of Reason,” as an appendix to Freedom, and the passage in question may be found at 101.
comes into consideration” (4/333) is the aporetic heart of the matter. The language of ‘centerpoint’ is a shibboleth for the discourse of ‘indifference’ and the underlying motion of Ineinsbildung we have noted. But to recover and reveal this centerpoint in its full aporetic light Schelling must do more than reason from the immediacy of intuition, the stages of spirit, and the deductive and constructive elaborations of abstraction. He must, as his title indicates, undertake an investigation of ‘essence’ (Wesen).  

What is the sense of Wesen in this context, and is it a question Schelling’s identity philosophy has anticipated? In his Presentation (1801) Schelling characterized absolute identity as an ontological necessity in which each individual being is “a determined form of the being of absolute identity” (Presentation 361/131). He likened this identity to a line representing the essential indifference of A=A on one hand, but also the differentiation and potency of A=B on the other. Questions of essence were thus answered through accentuating the standpoint one takes on identity as a fusion of essence and form, real and ideal. In his Further Presentations what is essential amid the differentiation of beings and the streams of cognition was likewise folded back upon the absolute totality as the essential unity of absolute knowing and reason-intuition. Divisions of form and essence, though necessary for nature and cognition, were embedded in a larger comprehension of particularity and universality, a comprehension of the informing artistry of Ineinsbildung which intellectual intuition could apprehend as the creative identification of form with essence. The essence of absolute identity ‘to be’, as it were, was the consideration in which all other matters of philosophical inwardness would find their assurance. When, at the outset of the Freedom Essay, Schelling maintains that the “unwavering, the diligent and the inner are again being sought”

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we have no cause to believe he has withdrawn from the earlier standpoint on identity. Absolute identity remains a line through which form and essence are woven.

However, to investigate the essence of human freedom by disclosing a terrific ‘opposition’ is to entertain a place in the line’s determinative course that would appear to splinter in multiple directions. It is to allow that there is another dimension in which the line (absolute identity) must be viewed, indeed tested, by a standpoint in which a particular essence of a particular being may well contaminate the fusion of essence and form in the informing life of identity. It is in this light that we must understand the stakes of the Freedom Essay not simply as a resolution of the freedom-necessity contradiction, but rather an investigation of ‘essence’ oriented toward what Bernard Freydberg calls a moral and aesthetical “unfolding of the whole.”

Furthermore, the difference between the ‘line’ and the ‘whole’ has everything to do with the ‘matters connected’ to the question of essence – matters irreducible to A=A or A=B formulations, but which nevertheless stand as the very Sachen intrinsic to revealing the meaning of the ‘whole’ in the arché and logos of the divine life and creation. The matters of ground, existence, and word, in particular, are connected to the question of essence in what we will call an originary and ontological way, not as subsequent argumentative considerations. Only by grasping this connection may one understand the work of the investigation as ultimately “the articulation of freedom” as “the articulation of system,” and how this will require a “radical transformation of the understanding of the whole.”

The quality of belonging attained under the motion of Ineinsbildung is to be ‘said’ from the ground up, imbued in a word of Wesen that is...

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11 Freydberg, 9, see 88. Peter Warnek explains: “As both the articulation of the demand and as the failure to satisfy that demand, Schelling’s text can be said to confront the crisis of reason at an extreme moment. It is utterly necessary to consider how reason issues this demand not simply because philosophy, as a human practice or construction, has to articulate itself rationally and in terms of conceptual necessity. System names here not simply the philosophical presentation of what is brought into a systematic and rational ordering; it names the integrated and living unity of all that is in its unity. . . . The demand of reason, as the demand for system, is therefore only the unity of being itself (οὐ = ἐν). Only secondarily, or in a derivative sense, can system be referred to the philosophical presentation of that unity” (Warnek, “Reading Schelling after Heidegger: The Freedom of Cryptic Dialogue” in Schelling Now, 174).
irreducible to ratio or cause. Distinct from the philosophical constructions of reason-intuition and from a logical-mathematical outline of absolute identity, we must anticipate how Schelling will present these connections by way of a mode of explanation (Erklärung) appropriate to disclosing the living and positive ‘word’ of divine yearning and personality, and to deriving ‘one being’ (Ein Wesen) for all opposites. But such anticipation is fraught with difficulties. In the least, it requires one to understand how to question the ‘essence’ (Wesen) of human freedom is to perform a work of thought oriented to the essential and not merely the conceptual. What ought one expect from an investigation of essence?

An Aesthetic Prolegomenon

Schelling’s address, Concerning the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature (PA) is not concerned directly with the problem of necessity and freedom but is nevertheless a telling rehearsal of a philosophical investigation into ‘essence.’ Under the auspices of a commentary on theories of art and the historical stages of artistic development, it displays the orchestrated elements of his philosophy of nature, his conceptions of eternal ideas and creative force, and his view of the person in light of the whole. Specifically, Schelling’s remarks exhibit a prognosis of the failure to think the theme of artistic production from the standpoint of a “living centre [lebendigen Mitte]” (PA 324/392). He will raise a similar concern in the Freedom Essay when he cites the failure to think themes of freedom and immanence from the standpoint of the “ruling centerpoints [herrschenden Mittelpunkte]” (Freedom 9/336) of a “living ground [lebendigen Grund]” (27/356). In 1807 the summary obstacle to ‘essence’ is an overreliance on ‘form’, and in 1809, the leading obstacle will be an overreliance on abstract conceptualization; both are, we shall observe, failures of the imagination. By virtue of its subject matter, the Plastic Arts address also reveals the aesthetic accents moving at

12 See Freydberg, 110, 89. Later we will observe how Heidegger, in the Beiträge, presses still further beyond the scope of traditional Erklärung in order to reconfigure philosophical questioning as an alertness to Beyng’s word: Ereignis. So doing, he will also radicalize the Schellingian question of Wesen as a grounding question (Grundfrage) of Wesung.
the root of Schelling’s philosophies of nature and creation – elements crucial to the Freedom Essay yet introduced obscurely. We will consider briefly just a few of these distinctions before returning to the question of essence, ground, and imagination in 1809.

Ascertain the essence of art depends first of all on understanding a relationship and its governing necessity. Artists, theories of art, and most of all nature are party to this relationship: “The whole of this treatise demonstrates that the foundations of art, and hence of beauty as well, lie in the vitality of nature” (PA 361n.7). To speak of foundations is to position the question of essence within a field of necessity – “to make the inter-relationship of the whole structure of art [Zusammenhang des ganzen Gebäudes] manifest in the light of a higher necessity” (325/393). So doing, one must disclose the origin or ground of a relational whole as primal and forceful. Schelling employs an array of organic metaphors such as art’s “wellsprings,” “fountainhead [Urquelle]” (324/392), and “fundament [Grund]” (347/416) to solicit this disclosure. Most artists, however, “seldom achieve a conception of what nature’s essence is” (324/392), and thus stand detached from “the world’s holy, eternally creating primal energy [schaffende Urkraft der Welt], which engenders and actively brings forth [hervorbringt] all things out of itself” (325/393). Philosophers have obscured this fundamental relationship by maligning nature as “a dumb . . . dead image, to which even inwardly no living word was innate” (325/393). Art’s essence will show itself only to a proper pupil of nature. Plastic art and poetry, he explains, occupy “the position of an active link between the soul and nature” (324/392). To honor this link, an “inspired investigator [begeisterten Forscher]” (325/393) is needed, a “spiritual eye that penetrates [the] husk” of artworks “and feels the force at work within them” (327/395). The criterion is not rhetorical but is rather imperative to a sensuous communication of essence beyond the privilege of mere form: “If we do not look at things in terms

13 Schelling added this note, and others, in the 1809 publication of the text: Schelling, *Philosophic Papers* vol. 1 (Landshut, 1809).
14 Here one may be tempted to charge Schelling and his ‘line’ of indifference as deadening absolute identity in a similar way, though this is far less evident than the fact that his philosophy of nature was already in place and readily assumed at the time of the *Presentations*. 
of their inner essence, but only in terms of their empty, abstracted form, they in turn say nothing to our inner being [so sagen sie auch unserm Innern nichts]" (326/394, my emph). That is not to discount all formal appraisals of works of art or philosophical problems, but rather to correct a problem of the direction taken by the inquiring standpoint. To ‘intensify the relative’ and cloak essence beneath an enthusiasm for form is to remain adrift from “the absolute,” and “the spirit” that is “essential and ultimate” (328/396).

How does one know when the ‘inner essence’ of a work of art speaks to his ‘inner being’? Here Schelling does not appeal to intuition, feeling, or reflection, but rather speaks of attunement, imagination, and beauty. To apprehend essence in form is to derive a “spiritual” unity through an attunement to the science of nature’s ‘wellsprings.’ One will grasp a unity of idea and deed, a unity “conducted by a super-powerful spirit” (330/399) and most evident in man. In its creative motion nature’s science expresses the designs of an eternal, divine program. “Every thing,” Schelling explains, “is ministered over by an eternal idea, designed in the infinite intelligence” and delivered into reality through the “creative science [schaffende Wissenschaft]” of the artist (331/400). One is on the path of the essential when he is attuned to the infinite and creative. In the case of Greek art, the path is delivered through “profound convulsions of the imagination [Erschütterung der Phantasie]” (337/406). Specifically, the imagination hosts an eruption wherein an apprehension of non-

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15 In context, Schelling is chiding a methodology of art criticism that “strives to proceed from form to essence,” a mistake Schelling calls the “mere intensification of the relative” (328/396).
16 In his 1801 Presentation he allowed that identity as essentially A=A could be viewed as A=B from the standpoint of being and production, in which case one could focus on beings and form relative to the indivisible line of identity provided one maintain that the relative or formal is such only by virtue of a different modality of the same primary ‘A.’ To inquire by way of abstraction is to privilege the ‘B’ term, and indeed isolate it from the life of the ‘A.’
17 Hölderlin’s Hyperion captures something of such convulsions. Hyperion writes to Bellarmin of the silence and darkness of man’s life, then observes: “We are like fire that sleeps in the dry branch or in the coal, and ever we struggle and seek for an end to our cramped confinement. But they come, they make up for aeons of struggle, the moments when we are set free, when the divine shatters the prison, when the flame bursts from the wood and flies up over the ashes, ah! When it is with us as if, its sorrows and its servitude forgotten, the unshackled spirit were returning in triumph to the halls of the Sun” (Hyperion, 41). He is not speaking of artistic creation per se, but it is significant that he goes on to speak of the “living presence” of what is highest in “this circle of human nature and of things” – “Its name is Beauty” (41). And “the first child of human, of divine Beauty is art . . . . thus it was among the Athenians” (65). Schiller, as well, holds: “The beautiful is to be neither mere life, nor mere form, but living form, i.e., Beauty; for it imposes upon man the double law of absolute formality and absolute reality” (Letters, 107).
sensuous beauty is brought to sensuous representation as an “unfalsified natural force of creation” (331/400). ‘Convulsions’ in this case conveys a sense of the imagination being overwhelmed by a higher, albeit natural, force. In keeping with his earlier conception of aesthetic production, Schelling explains that the highest art often results from a “unanimity and mutual interpenetration” of unconscious force and conscious activity, a collaboration of nature’s potency with man’s creativity. Instead of appealing to his own philosophy of symbolism (presumably because symbolism would not capture the full force of nature), Schelling emphasizes the necessary and magical (see 328/396) movement of “the living idea” which runs like a thread from the eternal idea, through the unconscious force and conscious activity, into the work, and then back to nature (332/401).18 His language is that of an expansive spiritual mimesis, not ‘intuition’; the artist is to “emulate this spirit of nature, which is at work in the core of things” (332/401), and artistic beauty “is essence, the universal, the vision and expression of the indwelling spirit of nature [inwohnenden Naturgeistes]” (332/401).

Schelling no doubt assumes that infinite intelligence and eternal ideas arise as portions of a whole that, considered as a whole, must be beautiful. Beauty is also won from a field of striving and strife; the artist, like nature, must wrestle with form, and must fashion “into a world of its own, a genus, an eternal prototype [ewigen Urbild]” (335/404) so that the work might “emerge consummate and beautiful in the whole” (336/405).19 Beauty is an event in a work that conveys what is essential in nature and also stands for “full and complete existence” (332/402). It is not an isolated errand of a whimsical deity, but a living typology of the whole, a creative cooperation with the energy of

Schelling and Hölderlin he points to the Greeks in order to then reflect: “we find ourselves at one and the same time in a state of utter repose and supreme agitation [der höchsten Bewegung], and there results that wondrous stirring of the heart for which mind has no concept nor speech any name” (Letters, 109, my emphases).

18 Paul Valéry’s study of a palm tree is apt: “Wonder at how it sways. . ./The attraction of the ground/And the weight of the firmament!” (“Palm,” 279).

19 Schiller writes: “To make Beauty out of a multiplicity of beautiful objects is the task of aesthetic education” (Letters, 113). Schiller’s larger concern, not unlike Schelling’s on this score, is to recover beauty as a “living image” irreducible to “material life” and “abstract form,” and to then return the “sphere of speculation” to “the terrain of experience [auf dem Feld der Erfahrung fortzuschreiten]” (Letters, 121).
nature’s spirit such that one finds “a certain fullness of beauty... the whole choral melody [vollstimmige Melodie] of beauty at once” (335/404). In the works of Raphael and Leonardo, for example, and in Homer’s *Iliad*, beauty emerges from its essential “roots” and “come[s] into being” (338/407) by masters who understand how to “bring forth [hervorzubringen] living beauty” (341/409).

The appearance of *hervorbringen* is specific, but accentuates a broader conception of *poiesis*, a revelatory work of the “creative spirit [schaffende Geist]” wherein the “spirit of nature” realizes a “kinship with the soul” (342/410). Opposition and antitheses are vital components of this bringing forth; essence must negotiate form, sculpture must perform a “complete corporeal expression of the spiritual” (348/416), artists such as Correggio will show the fusion of light (soul) and dark (matter) principles as they elevate the corporeal “to the level of the spirit” (351/419). And the highest works, to be sure, show the essence of art by virtue of their speaking a “bond of... divine love” together with an image of “eternal necessity” (351/420). Anticipating a pivotal theme of the Freedom Essay, Schelling adds that such *poiesis* is not limited to artistic production or beauty, but is emblematic as well of “the primal energy of thought [*Urkraft des Gedankens*]” (343/412). The force of Schelling’s discussion is in fact most profound when he announces the unity of phantasy and spirit, philosophy and poetry, in the person of Raphael:

The flower of life at its most cultivated and the fragrance of phantasy, together with the savour of the spirit, breathe in unison from his works. He is no longer a painter, he is a philosopher, a poet at the same time. Beside the power of his spirit stands wisdom, and as he portrays things, so they are ordered in eternal necessity. In him art has reached its goal, and because the pure equipoise of

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20 Hölderlin meditates on the beauty of thought as follows: “Without beauty of spirit, intellect is like a willing journeyman who constructs the fence out of rough timber as it has been sketched out for him and nails the sawn and planed posts together for the garden that his master intends to plant. The entire business of intellect is makeshift. By its ability to sort out, it saves us from folly, from injustice; but to be safe from folly and injustice is, after all, not the highest level of human excellence. ... But once the light of the divine ἐν διαφερον εαυτω, which is struggling reason’s ideal of Beauty, shines out, it does not demand blindly, it knows why and to what end it demands” (*Hyperion*, 68). As for ‘choral melody’: Hyperion says to Diotima: “So long as one melody still sounds for me, I fear not the deathly stillness of the wilderness under the stars; so long as the sun shines, and Diotima, there is no night for me” (54-55).

21 We will note Heidegger’s attention to sculpture as an exercise revealing the spatial and dimensional, not spiritual per se, in chapter six (see “Art and Space”).
divine and human can hardly exist at more than one point, the seal [Siegel] of uniqueness is set upon his works. (PA 351/420)

The answer to the question of the essence of art, one could say, lies in the poetic imagination of Raphael. Recalling Kant’s sense of genius as a gift bestowed by nature, “this spiritual generative power” (353/422) is vested by nature in man, and “like every spiritual worker, the artist can only obey the law which God and nature have inscribed in his heart, and no other” (355-56/427). 22

The Plastic Arts address has clarified the meaning and manner of an investigation into essence in several ways. First, a consideration of essence requires that the “vitality of nature” (361n.7) and not the abstraction of form constitute the primary attunement for inquiry. Nature is the spring-like source of creative power, and ascertaining art’s essence requires ‘inspiration’ in philosophy much the same as high art requires the striving inspiration of natural, creative force in the artist. Second, essence is to be disclosed under the living rubric of the ‘whole’ and governed by an ‘eternal idea’ for which a communication between the ‘inner essence’ of a work and the ‘inner being’ of a person is vital. An essential work, one could say, speaks a creative bond between the eternal spirit and intelligence of nature and the human imagination, a bond revealed through beauty to be good and loving. Third, whereas the productive force in nature and the energy of the artist consist in a moving, sensuous negotiation in matter and soul, the essence of art lies in a poietic bringing-forth that figures the ‘extraordinary’ through opposition, the “transfigured [sich verklärt]” (353/422) through limitation (language recalling the informative motion of Ineinsbildung). Finally, what is essential is so on account of a spiritual generative power whose point of consummation rests in a divine-human balance, a balance manifested concretely by the fusion of dark with light and body with soul.

22 The production of essential art depends on a consummation of prototypes furnished by art’s “absorbing nothing from outside itself” (PA 364n.8).
II. The Mechanizing Imagination and the Being of the Copula

To follow a lecture on the essence of fine art with a treatise on the essence of human freedom is not *per se* to exchange one matter for another. It is to raise a more difficult question, but one that will require a wager of inspired investigation adopting and refining the elements deployed in the first study. To investigate the essence of human freedom is to discipline thought toward a standpoint of the whole, to work in terms of that necessity which subsists in the system’s center or living ground. In the art address Schelling did this by tracing the passage of natural, primal necessity through art to beauty and the consummate bond of phantasy with spirit, human with divine, the work of the imagination with the work of nature. He steered the investigation of essence through the philosophy of nature, overlaying the discourse of vitality and creative force with one of infinite intelligence, eternal ideas, and spiritual work. In the Freedom Essay the rendering of the whole in terms of necessity is more taxing, for the instrumental necessity itself appears to problematize the notion of human freedom. As in the artistic correspondence between idea and deed, design and execution (see *PA* 330/399), the essence of freedom will consist in the unity of act with inner necessity: free, says Schelling, “is what acts only in accord with the laws of its own being and is determined by nothing else” (*Freedom* 50/385). And though freedom is irreducible to causal connectedness just as artistry is irreducible to form, to say that “inner necessity is itself freedom” (49-50/383-85) is to color the creative force of the person (and of God) in more penetrating hues. Where the wrestling with form and limitation is fundamental to artistic production and unity, the wresting of “actuality from potency” (54/390) in the human will is a seed of potential discord and imbalance. To disclose the essence of human freedom, then, is also a matter of tracing the possibility for disharmony and sin in the very ground of human being. This play of disclosure and possibility is a preliminary indication of

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23 So doing, notes Denker, Schelling will step “into the true abyss of human reason: the essence of freedom” (Denker, 401).
24 Here the closest approximation to anything like disobedience or sin is the betrayal of essence in the misguided appeal to form.
25 Necessity and freedom, says Schelling “are in one another as one being [*Ein Wesen*] that appears as one or the other only when considered from different sides, in itself freedom, formally necessity” (*Freedom* 50/385).
the two levels of ‘bringing-forth’ operative in this study: the investigation must bring forth a standpoint capable of seeing necessity and freedom as Ein Wesen (50/385), and the matter under investigation ‘is’ itself somehow an originary bringing-forth.

Toward these ends, Schelling advances the elements of his philosophy of nature toward God and, more specifically, nature in God. The discourse of nature’s wellsprings, productive force, primal energy, and infinite intelligence will be located in God, reconfiguring the metaphysical God of conceptual determinism into the primal being of will, personality, ground and existence. The sense of nature as the fountainhead of creative, spiritual striving will be transposed into the sense of God as primal yearning and divine imagination. The bond of the whole and the governance of inner necessity shall remain paradigms for these advances, but the very life of necessity will become more creative and the ‘word’ of the bond more active so as to account for the positive risks essential to freedom. Since our chief interest lies with the status of the poetic imagination in this work we will focus on Schelling’s disclosure of ‘essence’ by way of the articulation and imaging he reveals within the life and motion of the ‘connected matters.’ Especially, we will account for the “creative” unity he inscribes in the law of identity (Freedom 17/345) and the imaginative production brought forth from what he calls the primal will (Urwille) of/as the primal Being (Ursein, Urwesen) (23/352, 21/350). The question of human freedom’s ‘essence’, we shall learn, has everything to do with the poiesis of what he terms the “divine” or “true” imagination – a force of imagination engaged in the procession (Folge) of beings from God, the immanent “differentiation [Spezifikation] of beings in the world” (18/347), and the yearning and unity of “the Word” (29-30/359) as the “bond of living forces” (34/366) in nature and spirit.

Difference in Identity

Where the discussion of art’s essence required an initial critique of the overreliance on form, the discussion of freedom’s essence requires an initial critique of conceptual abstractions, specifically “the mechanistic kind of representation [Vorstellungsart]” (Freedom 4/333) prevalent in inquires of
nature and essence. Misguided abstractions result from the errant habits of the inquiring imagination. As form had to be properly situated in the outworking of eternal ideas through beauty, concepts must be corrected in terms of the “driving force [Triebfeder] of all striving for knowledge” (10/338), and, we shall discover, the beauty intended by “representations [Repräsentationen] of the divinity” (18/347). Failing to understand this work of critique and restoration handicaps any effort to understand Schelling’s appraisal of the human imagination, as well as his deeper sense of the creative, inspired task bestowed upon philosophy itself. Why is the spirit of abstraction a problem for Schelling? It is a problem because it substantiates a misguided view of necessity, dependence, and becoming – elements central to any system associated with immanence. To simply assume an incompatibility between freedom and system, for example, is to presume the clarity of conceptual judgment in lieu of arguments “drawn from the essence of reason and knowledge” (10/338).

Schelling attributes to such an assumption “a level of dialectical immaturity” (14/343) inclined to treat the relationship of things to God as one of consequence to ground, and to assume that dependence abolishes independence. Hence, abstraction and mechanistic representation are logical and speculative instruments ill-disposed toward an ontological subject-matter. An essential investigation, by contrast, will be interested in the very Wesen of the copula, (‘is’), in the creative

In Schelling’s novel by the same name, Clara aptly remarks: “There are so many complaints about the nonsense put forward by philosophical systems and theories; but doesn’t it mainly stem from the artificial language they use? . . . whoever is able to represent the matter within a cosy and nonexternally contrived discussion must really hold the matter, penetrate it, and themselves be completely penetrated by it.” F.W.J. Schelling, Clara: Or on the Relationship Between Nature and the Spirit World (1810), trans. Fiona Steinkamp (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002) 66/91. Steinkamp’s translation follows the edition printed in K.F.A. Schelling’s Sämtliche Werke Band 4. I will refer to Steinkamp’s English pagination, followed by German. Clara’s words anticipate the illness Paul Valéry’s Eryximachus will bemoan amid the rationalist universe: “The soul appears to itself as an empty and measurable form. . . . What are mortals for?—Their business is to know. Know? And what is to know?—It is assuredly: not to be what one is.—And so here are humans raving and thinking, introducing into nature the principle of unlimited error, and myriads of marvels! . . .” (Valéry, “Dance and the Soul,” 316).

Schelling’s sense of this necessity resembles Schiller’s position on abstraction where the issue of a correct concept of beauty is at hand, but Schelling is even more concerned than Schiller appears to be in the following decision: “[A] pure rational concept of Beauty, if such could be found, would therefore. . . have to be discovered by a process of abstraction, and deduced from the sheer potentialities of our sensuso-rational nature. . . . True, this transcendental way will lead us out of the familiar circle of phenomenal existence, away from the living presence of things, and cause us to tarry for a while upon the barren and naked land of abstractions. But we are, after all, struggling for a firm basis of knowledge which nothing shall shake. And he who never ventures beyond actuality will never win the prize of truth” (Letters, 69-71, my emphasis).
nature of the ground, in what a distinction between being and becoming brings to the question of dependency, and in the self-revelation of the living God (17/18/345-47). To understand these imperative points of difference we must account for a discussion that was pertinent to the plastic arts address but not treated in detail: Schelling’s renewed appraisal of the law of identity.

The being and meaning of the copula (‘is’) is the pivot on which the relationship between necessity and freedom, system and person, turns. The meaning of the copula is of course central to any logical judgment and is the critical, if unreflective, touchstone for those (like Jacobi) who hear in all Spinozism, pantheism, and immanence a system of absolute identity that “abolishes all individuality” (15/343). Thanks to a “complete ignorance regarding the nature [Wesen] of the copula,” Schelling explains, identity has been misconstrued as sameness (Einerleiheit) (13/341-42), when in fact it is grounded on a preservation of difference (Differenz). The ‘is’ in the statement “the body is blue,” for example, obviously does not mean the body is blue and only blue, and that blue is body and only body. By the same token to say that the individual ‘is’ in God or that knowledge is knowledge ‘of’ the absolute (genitival meaning) need not imply a wholesale mechanistic subsumption of all entities and all knowing into a lifeless absolute. The copula, to be clear, “does not express a unity which, turning itself in the circle of seamless sameness [Einerleiheit], would not be progressive and, thus, insensate or lifeless” (17/345).

But this misunderstanding is one reason why idealism (generally understood) fails to think freedom in an essential way. Thinking the meaning of the copula as sameness leads only to a “general” and “formal” concept of freedom, whereas thinking

28 Though in an altogether distinct milieu of reflection, poet E.E. Cummings devotes a chapter of his novel, The Enormous Room (1928) to reinvigorating the copula in a similar way. In chapter nine, “Zoo-Loo,” he celebrates the verbal life of the copula by describing a fellow prisoner of war as follows: “There are certain things in which one is unable to believe for the simple reason that he never ceases to feel them. Things of this sort – things which are always inside of us and in fact are us and which consequently will not be pushed off or away where we can begin thinking about them – are no longer things; they, and the us which they are, equals A VERB; an IS. The Zulu, then, I must perforce call an IS. . . who Himself intrinsically and indubitably escapes analysis.” Later, Cummings describes how “his perfectly extraordinary face (a face perfectly at once fluent and angular, expressionless and sensitive) told me many things whereof even The Zulu might not speak, things which in order entirely to suffer he kept carefully and thoroughly esconced behind his rigid and mobile eyes.” Where Schelling vies with determinate reducibility in matters of the logical, divine, and primordial, Cummings celebrates the irreducible mystery of a fellow inmate (E.E. Cummings, The Enormous Room (London: Jonathan Cape, 1930) 239-40, 257).
the being of the copula as difference and unity in concert will point toward “the real and vital concept. . . that freedom is the capacity for good and evil” (23/352).

This connection between the being of identity and the positive capacity intrinsic to freedom marks a vital step in Schelling’s deepening conceptions of both system and necessity. The immediate result of animating the identity principle is a recapturing of the dependency issue from abstract representations. Identity may no longer be used to buttress a view of dependency that privileges the logical relationship of consequent to ground, predicate to subject. But there is a further, more radical result. Schelling remarks that “the law of the ground [Gesetz des Grundes]” is a “creative” domain that is “just as original” as that of the copula (17/345-46). One could well say that he is pressing the coin of logic into the currency of ontology, even raising the value. Under this new economy, the task is to think this semblance of identity and ground both in terms of the ‘difference’ that will capacitate human freedom and in the progressive, life-giving ‘unity’ of the whole which governs being and becoming.29 The task is to raise anew the question of dependency in terms of “the divine being itself” and the “procession” [Folge] of creatures from this being. The being, of course, is God – not a mechanistic or causal deity, but rather the divine in its precise mode of “self-revelation” (18/347). To enact this task Schelling must further translate dependency into becoming and inflect the issue of necessity into that of divine freedom. The radical retrieval of identity and ground has prepared this development, but moving into the terrain of self-revelation will involve more daunting maneuvers from within the very limits of German Idealism.

To begin, Schelling speaks of the course of necessity flowing forth from the primal will (Urwille, 23/352). It is important to note that his statement, “Will is primal Being [Ursein]”

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29 What distinguishes this project, explains Warnek, is that Schelling’s “transformation of the traditional concept of ground, as it is handed down in the project of onto-theology (metaphysics), like his reinterpretation of the possible meanings of pantheism, must alter and unhinge the traditional sense of reason and system” (Warnek, “Reading Schelling after Heidegger,” 174-75).
is a point of departure in the *Freedom Essay*, and not a point of discovery.\(^{31}\) The ontological primacy of the will marks idealism’s “first complete concept of formal freedom” \(^{(21/351)}\), but even a positive concept is, as the case of identity has shown, not adequate; Fichte’s “in-itself,” for example, attains a “completed system for itself,” but for such a system and such a concept to again become “real” in a deeper sense it must show that “everything real (nature, the world of things) has activity, life and freedom as its ground” \((22/351)\). Thus attuned to the corroboration of the ‘real’ with the ‘ground,’ Schelling sets in motion the primacy of the will so as to transpose the generative force of nature into the becoming of God. The intimacy of God and nature was assumed in the arts address, though left unspecified. Now, the very ability of system to account for necessity and freedom turns on a descent into the essence of divine freedom made manifest in the creative force of divine self-revelation.\(^{32}\) Schelling sounds this radical note when he explains that the “point of view [*diejenige Ansicht*] which is fully adequate to the task to be undertaken here can only be developed from the fundamental principles of a true philosophy of nature” \((26-27/356)\) then cites mystics as models of this undertaking.

But why gather generative nature in divine becoming by way of the *Ursein* that is Will? In simple terms ‘will’ denotes freedom and act, and in ontological terms ‘primacy’ of the will denotes necessity.\(^{33}\) Together, these qualities suggest that the ‘contradiction’ between freedom and necessity is always already a productive opposition even as it disarms the authority of blanket conceptual formulations. Schelling believes that God, as a God of “the living” \((18/347)\) (and not blind necessity), emerges by way of an internal, natal necessity – a birth from the matrix of originary activity in which opposition is enabling, not debilitating. Idealist generalities, says Schelling, have...

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\(^{30}\) See *Freedom* 143, for more on this development issue.
\(^{31}\) This distinction will matter little to Heidegger, who finds will’s primacy in this text to be a problematic point of departure and return.
\(^{32}\) The *Erklärung* for freedom and evil will concern nature, though without mechanistic reduction, and God, though without metaphysical dogmatism.
\(^{33}\) In the *Treatise* (1797) he privileged the act of will as “the supreme condition of self-consciousness” \((98/395)\).
abstracted God as *actus purissumus*, effectively removing God from nature, limiting him to a moral world order, and indeed detaching nature itself from a “living ground” (26/356). Whether or not primal will is in fact also a lingering abstraction is a question we shall revisit with Heidegger. For the moment we allow that Schelling’s deity is not yet itself, properly or absolutely speaking. It is not manifest as a magisterial or authoritative subject predicated of through the traditional array of divine superlatives (omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience). It is not even an agent spirit ‘hovering over the waters’ (Genesis 1:2) on the brink of its commanding word. This is the divine before the ‘beginning,’ the eternal productive impulse bereft of any complete *logos*. Primal will names the ambiguous freedom from which the divine is born.

**III. The Divine Imagination and the Being of Two Mysteries**

Schelling’s remarks concerning the principles of identity and ground, the nature of dependency and becoming, the difference between a formal and a capacitating view of freedom, and the more living conception of God have accomplished two things. First, they dispel the charge that immanence opposes freedom. Second, they comprise a course of conceptual correction through which Schelling prepares the grounds for his investigation into essence. Recalling our earlier point about the poiesis of inquiry, each element serves to attune the standpoint or point of view (*Freedom* 26/353) required for carrying the discoveries of his natural philosophy into the site where the roots of a system of the absolute and the birth of divine existence itself share in the same original, generative motion. But the real challenge of Schelling’s study now comes to the fore: To speak of an “essential dependence” or of any basic “connection between God and beings” (23/355) in terms of a real disclosure of the primal will is to invite the challenge of explaining the reality of evil without destroying the integrity of the divine. If human freedom is to consist in a capacity for good and evil,

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34 Descartes, Leibniz, and even Spinoza all failed to draw idealism and realism into a “living whole” (26/356). “If a philosophy is lacking this living foundation,” Schelling explains, “which is commonly a sign that the ideal principle was originally only weakly at work within it, then it loses itself in those systems whose abstract concepts of aseity, modifications, and so forth, stand in the sharpest contrast with the living force and richness of reality” (26/356).
and if beings become in the becoming of God, then God’s self-revelation seems itself poised on the rim of an estranging abyss. Two decisive themes arise through this puzzle. First, since God, born of primal willing, is capacitating but not evil in nature, Schelling deduces that freedom “must have a root [Wurzel] independent of God” (24/355). This point stands as an early insinuation of difference in the being of divine self-revelation, one that complicates any recourse to standard conceptions of emanation (25/354, see 18/347), and it points toward Schelling’s central distinction between ground and existence ‘in’ God.35 Second, to understand the relationship between capacity and self-revelation Schelling posits the poietic cornerstone of his inquiry: the divine imagination. Unlike the human imagination which “grants merely ideal reality to created beings [Schöpfungen],” the “representations [Repräsentationen] of the divinity” are necessarily independent beings, “things in themselves” (18/347). In this way, the divine imagination performs the noted differentiation of beings. The distinction is not a dismissal of that human or artistic imagination which Schelling has long privileged, but a means of hastening the inquiring standpoint to that generative side of the divine ground which is as obscure in origins as it is unheralded in philosophy.36 The act of divine self-revelation will in fact unfold through the divine imagination as a genealogy of the real (reell). The reformulation of dependency will be accomplished by recovering the sense of God’s “look” (Repräsentation) at things in themselves as a creative, capacitating look. We will examine these elements of ground and existence and divine imagination in concert since the text offers no means of detaching them.

35 Boehme considers “an eternal being in two mysteries” (at Freedom 89). Krell rightly notes that “this distinction in the divine essence between existence and ground of existence, with the latter (der Grund) taken to be the source of all life, will be the mainstay of Schelling’s philosophy to the very end” (Krell, The Tragic Absolute, 78). Undertaking what he calls a “peripheral reading” of Schelling’s text, Krell treats the existence/ground distinction in terms of Scheidung (scission) – as castration, emasculation, and self-mutilation (see Krell, 75f). Hellmers is more direct: “By ground, Schelling means the foundation for a thing; by existence he means not only what is, but what is generated into being, and by being he means identity. His philosophy is then fundamentally a philosophy about the genesis of the world from its foundations and the process whereby this generation takes place, rendered necessary by the identity of the process as a whole. . . Schelling conceives of being itself as having a jointure” (Hellmers, 144).

36 Failure to attend to the necessity of divine self-revelation and the efficacy of divine imagination is, it would seem, one reason why ‘systems’ subjugate all beings “under a blind, thoughtless necessity” (Freedom 19/348).
Imagination and Ground

Tracing the generative agency of the divine imagination in the course of self-revelation depends disclosing the primal potency of nature in God. Schelling’s positive argumentation toward the essence of freedom begins in the following statement:

Since nothing is prior to, or outside of [außer], God, he must have the ground of his existence in himself. All philosophies say this; but they speak of this ground as of a mere concept without making it into something real [reell] and actual [wirklich]. This ground of his existence, which God has in himself, is not God considered absolutely, that is, in so far as he exists; for it is only the ground of his existence. It [the ground] is nature—in God, a being indeed inseparable, yet still distinct, from him. (Freedom 27/358)

The passage contains a statement of standpoint and a specification of task. The standpoint will concern the generative nature in God and not God regarded in the full consciousness and unity of his absolute existence. The decision for this standpoint is justified on the basis of what has been said regarding dependency as ‘becoming,’ though here the standpoint faces an immediate puzzle. Human beings are beings “for whose Being there is no ground other than God but who are as God is” (18/347), yet the individuated being of all things depends on a division from God – beings “must become [werden] in a ground different from God” (38/371). Since, Schelling reasons, “nothing indeed can be outside of God, this contradiction can only be resolved by things having their ground in that which in God himself is not He Himself, that is, in that which is the ground of his existence” (28/359). A similar necessity bears upon God. If we allow that God (considered absolutely) is a creator of creatures who bear his likeness, receive his revelation, and yet remain free, then we must allow, with Schelling: “God himself requires a ground so that he can exist; but only a ground that is not outside but inside him and has in itself a nature which, although belonging to him, is yet also different from him” (42/375).

The task is to make this ground ‘real’ and ‘actual’; a decision, as well, to embrace the disorienting danger the early Schelling attributed to Wirlichkeit at the abyssal limits of intuition.37

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37 See Schelling LDC 184/324.
Das Wirkliche, from wirken, denotes actuality in the sense of “to have an effect,” as opposed to, for example, Abgeschlossenheit (“something that is finished, completed”). The task is, in other words, to disclose in God the same creative difference and unity ascribed to the laws of identity and ground (see above), and thereby present the act of divine self-revelation in accordance with the same primal potency and striving manifest in nature. Doing so, moreover, will establish the parameters for thinking “the severability of the principles” (33/363) – the capacitating root for the possibility of evil, and thus the comparison of divine and human selfhood through which the essence of human freedom will be understood. One is hard-pressed to imagine a more difficult route of inquiry. However, it is by honoring this difficulty that the poiesis of inquiry comes to comport with the poiesis of its matter. The means of elucidating the distinction between ground and existence (which is not a “heuristic aid” but is in fact “very real” (69-71/408-09) consists in a play of ontological necessity and divine affectivity informing both the standpoint and the task. The status of identity presents one example: we must understand the statement, “God is,” to mean both “the yearning [Sehnsucht] the eternal One

38 The etymological clarification belongs to Fiona Steinkamp in her translator’s notes to Clara (Clara 95n.1). The passage in question appears at the beginning of chapter five, when Schelling’s characters are travelling to an old woodland chapel and discussing the aesthetic essence of natural waterways. It reads: “The river is more a picture of real life [des wirklichen Lebens]: it draws our imagination along with it into unrestricted bounds, as into a distant future. The lake is a picture of the past, of eternal peace, and of isolation [Abgeschlossenheit]” (67/92).
39 Excepting Boehme, whose comments regarding the ground/existence distinction no doubt inform Schelling’s treatment. Boehme explains: “And thus we recognize what God and nature is, how both exist from eternity without united ground and beginning, for it is always an eternally lasting beginning” (at Freedom 88). He speaks in terms of the two principia as nature-life and spirit-life and, recalling both Parmenides and Ezekial, likens their relationship to a round sphere or wheel turning “in one eternal primal state” (at 88). Contained by the “eternal essence,” the principia are “two beings [that have] been from eternity. . . . the spirit-life stands turned inward into itself and the nature-life stands turned outward from and before itself. . . . And the spirit-life is a complete fullness of the nature-life and it is yet not seized by the nature-life, and these are two principia in one united primal state since each has its mysterium and its effect” (at 88-89).
40 God becomes according to need in self-revelation, and entities become according to this same need. To speak of a real (reell) ground of existence in God (nature in God) is not to delineate an order of priority or time in the being of the absolute, but to attend to that “inner ground” of God’s existence that “precedes him in existence” without upsetting the prius or actus existence of God (Freedom 28/358-59). To speak of a ground for becoming in God is to summons this same distinct ground from the side of existence and differentiation. “And if we speak in this way,” writes Schelling in Clara, “we are by no means saying that God and nature are one and the same” (Clara 54/75).
feels to give birth to itself” (28/359) and the grounding movement by which beings become. Let us consider how this collaboration between necessity and affectivity unfolds as a work of imagination.

Schelling likens the relation in God between the being of his concealed ground and the being of his absolute existence to the relation between gravity and light. The point is more than an illustration: as the eternal “dark ground” of light, gravity is not itself actual (actu), but it is “absolute identity” manifest in the position of “potency [Potenz]” (27-28/359). Potency applies to the ground in God in the same way – gravity and ground take eternal precedence over existence and light, but not in the causal or temporal sense of priority. The eternal potency always already accompanies the full existence of God, as eternal act that (like gravity) is never finished or set aside, and through which existence (like light) becomes itself. Freydberg rightly observes that ground and existence are equiprimordial without being equivalent, for “there is excess in the ground that has no counterpart on the side of existence.” But what of this natal quality of ‘yearning’ and the events of differentiation stowed within potency and excess? As in the case of gravity, with yearning Schelling assimilates an analogy into the matter itself; we must appreciate his doing so as an exercise against the false representations of the abstract imagination, an exercise that will allow a discourse necessarily

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41 We will discuss the significance of die Sehnsucht (yearning) as we proceed. Owing to the term’s peculiarity, it will serve to note that Warnek understands it to mean “unruly longing before all willing” (Warnek, “Reading Schelling after Heidegger,” 166). Krell takes a somewhat different tack, rendering Sehnsucht “languor,” and emphasizing it as “the central notion of Schelling’s account of the primal and originary divine essence” in the Freedom Essay and the larger Ages of the World period (Krell, 84). Schelling, Krell explains, “employs die Sehnsucht to translate the Latin word of which languor is the precise cognate, namely, languor, from langueo, related to the Greek ληγω, ‘I cease and desist, I refrain from.’ Langueo means to be without tension and force, to be inert and inactive, even benumbed” (86). The term, he continues, “designates a reality that we can no longer observe in and of itself,” a mystery Schelling means to accentuate. “The primal will, as yet unconscious and devoid of intellect, wants to give birth to itself as intellect and will proper. . . . Languor longs for the intellect, of which it is only vaguely aware. It bestirs itself and orients itself in the direction of the understanding” (90). Heidegger will use Regung (bestirring) to capture the meaning of Sehnsucht (see Krell, 101n25).

42 Freydberg, 47-48. At the same time, we must bear in mind that the excessive ground “is the living genesis of all things, but is not itself a ‘thing’ and can never be exhausted by its animating function” (Freydberg, 48). As well, The notion of the unruly remainder is new since the Presentation. This qualification is one reason Schelling prefers to speak of ‘becoming’ and not immanence as the basis for apprehending the nature of things. Immanence stands overwrought, reduced to a “dead containment of things in God” (Freedom 28/358), and thus incommensurate with the circle of eternal activity noted between God as prius and actu. Becoming accords with the standpoint attuned to genesis as differentiation.
tethered to an exhausted metaphysical lexicon to nevertheless proceed. Schelling describes his own point as a treatment of “the essence of yearning” (29/359), stripping it of any illustrative distance. The feeling of yearning is ascribed to the existent God in the mode of prius, but the yearning itself lives and moves as “will” in the dark ground (28/359). This will is not the complete will – the will with “understanding” – but is “a divining will [ahnender Wille]” that belongs to the understanding in the same way that “anarchy” belongs to the form that orders it (28-29/359-60). Such yearning is the very ground of self-revelation and therefore creaturely becoming, the “indivisible remainder” that precedes the bond and order of understanding but “remains eternally in the ground” (29/360) (like potency’s excess). Yearning bears witness to the side of the primordial will which craves understanding and completion in the way darkness craves light. One could say that the yearning is a desire for the birth of that authority captured in the dynamic unity of the copula. But could one also say that it resembles that “irresistible urge” (System 222/614) in the nature of the artistic genius who, though “unconscious in regard to product” (14/351), nevertheless intuits the design by which the harmony of the subjective and objective are “rendered wholly objective” (232/629)?

In a certain sense, the combination of darkness with yearning (Sehnsucht) in an “irrational principle” (Freedom 41/374) echoes a theme Schelling has been plying for some time. In his System (1800), for example, there was the formative irrationality of “nonconscious activity” (System 12/348) in the constitution of self, nature, and history (14/351-52). In his lectures on the Philosophy of Art he spoke of the birthplace of the artistic imagination as an eternal “region of darkness and formlessness” and of the “primal chaos” that marks the “inner essence of the absolute” (Art, 37/394, 88/465). In the address of 1807 he alluded to the darkness of matter brought to inspired fusion with the light of soul.

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43 One should also consider the mythological component at work in these discursive maneuvers. See, for example, Schelling’s 1815 treatise on “The Deities of Samothrace” (trans. Robert F. Brown, AAR Studies in Religion 12 (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1977, 1974).

44 It is also possible that Schelling’s attention to yearning is informed by a statement with which his acquaintance, Franz Xavier von Baader opened his address, “On the Assertion that there can be no Wicked Use of Reason” in 1807: “Every drive already possesses its own wisdom, its own understanding or, as the ancients said, its wit (every craving has its own cunning) and is therefore an artistic drive” (at Freedom 99).
(PA 351/419-20) and the striving of art to attain consummation with the eternal prototypes of beauty (364n.8). Discursive contexts no doubt distinguish these allusions. But if our interpretations in prior chapters are correct, we are justified in expecting of ‘darkness’ and ‘yearning’ a similar association with the work of the imagination that was found in our accounts of the ‘unconscious’ and ‘striving.’

This expectation is verified by a consideration of the creative work of divine representation in yearning and the resulting emergence of understanding and man.

God’s Look

The productive ascent of the ‘divining will’ in yearning begins as “the first stirring of divine existence” (Freedom 29-30/359). This stirring is manifest, remarkably, as a movement of representation: “an inner, reflexive representation is generated in God himself through which, since it can have no other object but God, God sees himself in an exact image of himself” (29-30/360-61). In a 1941 course Heidegger will speak of this motion as “the essential God completely in his ground, elevated into image;” the phrase he employs is “Einen Anblick seiner selbst sich geben—»Bild«” [Giving to himself a view of himself—“Image”] (GA 49: 125). The unfolding of divine self-revelation thus depends from the start on a figuration, a representation. But what is reflexive has no traction in the realm of the conscious or the ordered, for these elements have not yet appeared. The imaging obtains from within the darkness, the “anarchy of the ground” – the remainder Schelling famously describes as “the incomprehensible base of reality in things” (29/359-60) – der nie aufgehende Rest. To recognize understanding in anarchy and will in yearning, the divine

45 What distinguishes the Freedom Essay is the interest in qualities of this irrational ground in God, a new approach to the nature of the absolute that will ultimately yield a conception of divine personality and hence a different accent on the life of the system and the creative vocation of philosophy.

46 For Boehme, ‘stirring’ is the activity of craving (as nature) in the primal will aroused by understanding (at Freedom 86-87). On account of this stirring, “a word or echo” of understanding’s reign is born in the will. Specifically, the gestation of this word occurs as “spirit” in the “imagination” of will. Here Boehme calls spirit “the eternal knowing [Wissenheit] of the non-ground” (at 87, my emphasis), a term which Schelling will later thematize.

47 Though the generative passage from darkness to light was noted in the Plastic Arts address, this sense of an anarchic remainder would seem to complicate the stability of eternal ideas or prototypes. Schelling, however, is working at a greater depth of ground, a depth from which he means to recast the story of how the bond of understanding and love emerges between God and man. Further, darkness and anarchy do not imply estrangement in
imagination exercises its creative capacity through a willfulness not yet fully formed. Representation, as it were, marks the delivery of *logos* and not the other way around. God does not calculate the merits of a creative project, but rather in his very self-imaging already enacts a word and will of loving formation; such self-imaging marks, at once, God’s coming into existence with the creation of the world. Creation, in this sense, is, as Heidegger will observe, “not as a making but rather as allowing-to-become [*Werden-lassen*]” (GA 49: 125-26). Will, as primordial *being*, obtains in this longing. God’s reflexive representation

is at the same time the understanding—the Word—of this yearning and the eternal spirit which, perceiving the word within itself and at the same time the infinite yearning, and impelled by the love that it itself is, proclaims the word so that the understanding and yearning together now become a freely creating and all-powerful will and build in the initial anarchy of nature as in its own element or instrument. (*Freedom* 29-30/360)

Darkness moves toward light, anarchy toward word, by way of a unifying “impression” (*Einbildung*), an “awakening,” an “idea” (31/361), yet without sundering the remainder through a figurative abstraction: “The understanding is born in the genuine sense from that which is without understanding. Without this preceding darkness creatures have no reality; darkness is their necessary inheritance” (29/360). The becoming of the understanding and will of God *in* God is thus not a tale of reason’s evolution, but of the formless longing for form, the reflexive longing for image, the imagination longing to be creative, and, ultimately, the loving word of formation. (In the next chapter we will explore, with Heidegger, the questions resulting from this pairing of *das Sein der Schöpfung* with the “becoming-image as ‘work of the understanding’ [*Ein-bildung als »Wirken des*"

the strict sense; they are the conditions of yearning, yearning is the quality of the ground in God, and the ground is the motion of all emergence, the seed of birth into light and understanding. Here one may charge Schelling and his metaphors (his “human terms,” *Freedom* 28/359) with mystical enthusiasm; but one should tread lightly, for he would then have to answer for his own genealogy of conceptual abstraction. A better observation is that the elements arrayed at the level of origins are found to be in perpetual, productive motion; and precisely the same case was found, albeit under a different discourse and with different ambitions, in the transcendental imagination.

49 Continuing, and with a view toward the place of man in such becoming, Heidegger reports: “The true creation [*Das eigentliche Geschöpf*] is that which is properly in itself separated from God yet remains for and thus in God—Human kind. Not independence from, but rather that which is within Creation, is most free; ‘human freedom’ and the quality of being like [the quality of being a precise-image] the Absolute. The true Creation of ‘God’: that which God, as himself, allows to become” (GA 49: 125-26).
Verstandes«]” (GA 49, 125-26) and thus the primacy of a willful logos in Schelling’s constellation of Werden-lassen.)

A similar activity of imagination is found in the account of man’s emergence in this eternal act of divine self-revelation and from this dark ground. In this account, the tension between that which brings forth and that which “rises up [sträubt sich]” (man’s arrogance) (29/360) is a more pronounced event within the play of dark and light, and with a view toward the necessary severability of principles. Schelling’s attention to necessity and affectation remains in his disclosure of the ground in God as the ground for man’s becoming. By way of reflexive impulse, the emergent soul is brought forth not simply as a likeness of the absolute deity, but through a “division of forces” – darkness (yearning, anarchy) and light (understanding/unity) – which take root as a “a dual principle in itself” (30-31/361-62) in the human being. But we must be careful not to speak too quickly of an individuated human will; the principal player in this birth remains yearning – yearning at the productive threshold between ground and existence. With and as the soul’s emergence, yearning turns covetous. An image of unity emerges in the dark yearning, a “resplendent glimpse of life in the darkness of the depths” (30/361), and this proves intoxicating for the yearning.49 Aroused by the figure of unity and light, yearning holds fast to the ground as though tugging on the side of the remainder against the force of existence. The tension is necessary to the division of forces and the act of individuation, but it ultimately means the emergence of the “soul” as “something inner [als Inneres] out of the ground” is stamped as an emergence of something “independent of the original understanding” (31/362).50 The ensuing tension is this: understanding’s division effects a “genuine

49 Schelling is drawing on Boehme. Boehme describes a state of revolt in which the imagination of craving seizes upon the mirror of unity, “guides it into its imagination” (90), effectively breaking the mirror through an act of turba [disruption/discordance] as a dying of the seized life” (90). Within the realm of “the eternal nature” (90), then: “With creation is fury [Grimm] brought into motion” (89). But the motion is necessary to awakening the disclosure of the primal essence: “And it is known well to us how the imagination of the eternal nature has thus the turba in the craving, in the mysterium, but how it is impossible to wake it up unless the creature as the mirror of eternity should wake it up itself as the fury that lies hidden in eternity in the mysterium” (90).

50 “Recalling the discussion of the Timaeus, the most appropriate way of speaking of the relation of the divine to the human is not in terms of causality but in terms of imagination. The reason for this insistence should now be clear.
impression [*Ein-Bildung*], since that which arises in nature is impressed [*hineingebildet*] into her,” but with this there arises the soul as “a particular and self-sufficient being” (31/362). Though the proclamation of the word (of existence and unity) is a “transfiguration of the initial principle of darkness into light,” creatures have their ‘inheritance’ as well as their delivery; there is the self-will of the dark principle and the universal will of the light principle (31-32/362). The principles are not per se reducible to moral counterparts; they are two sides of one act of self-revelation that persists necessarily in man, an oscillation between the act of impression and separation and the act of transfiguration (cf. *PA* 353/425) and unity. Schelling explains:

> This raising of the deepest *centrum* into light occurs in none of the creatures visible to us other than man. In man there is the whole power of the dark principle and at the same time the whole strength of the light. In him there is the deepest abyss and loftiest sky or both *centra*. The human will is the seed—hidden in eternal yearning—of the God who is present still in the ground only; it is the divine panorama of life, locked up within the depths, which God beheld when he fashioned the will to nature. In him (in man) alone God loved the world, and precisely this likeness of God was possessed by yearning in the *centrum* as it came into opposition with the light. Because he emerges from the Ground (is creaturely), man has in relation to God a relatively independent principle in himself; but because precisely this principle—without it ceasing for that reason to be dark in accordance with its ground—is transfigured into light, there arises in him something higher, *spirit*. For the eternal spirit proclaims unity or the word into nature. (*Freedom* 32/362)

Notice that Schelling overlays the organic (‘seed’) and the figurative (‘panorama’) when speaking of the human will. The allusions carry forward the conception of man’s independence and the principles’ separability in God, and yet also stand situated in a larger bringing-forth – transfiguration as the spiritual word of unity. Schelling is reminding us that the broader life of identity between God and nature (the revelation of God’s spirit through principles which are distinct yet “indissoluble” in God (as existing *actu*) (32-33/362-63)) is a story of moving through image to word, representation to proclamation; we must not think of this motion as something sequential, but

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51 We will encounter a different conception of ‘transfiguration’ in chapter six when we consider §192 of Heidegger’s *Beiträge*. 

The relation of the divine to the human, of the simultaneous to the successive, is one of need. The divine cannot come to manifestation at all without the human. The human is, in a basic sense, the divine come to life” (Freydberg, 50-51). Hölderlin observes: “But man is a god as soon as he is man. And once he is a god, he is beautiful” (*Hyperion*, 64).
as a genesis of fullness or completion transcending ontic time. At the same time, the ‘whole’ in man also entails the severability of the principles in the human will as the possibility of a selfish (selbstisch) personality in man, and therein the capacitating possibility of evil at the heart of the essence of human freedom.

These steps in Schelling’s discussion echo the account of necessity and motion found in the Plastic Arts address, though the organic metaphors and aesthetic dynamism of this primordial register accompany a more focused movement of the imagination on several levels. To summarize: first, the representations (Vorstellungen) of the inquiring imagination stand bracketed beneath a more essential course of conceptual correction; second, the divine imagination stands distinct from the human imagination by virtue of having Repräsentationen that arouse real existence (reell) through Spezifikation, not just ideality; third, the operation of divine self-revelation (and all becoming therein) in and through the motion of ground and existence stands specified as a Folge rooted in figuration, impression and ongoing transfiguration before any determinative decisions of the understanding. Modal qualities of potency, reflexivity, and yearning, moreover, stand attached to these events of imagination in an original and originating way. The primal act and formation of will, in God and in man, is likewise inexplicable apart from instantiations of image, illumination, and word. Short of commenting on Schelling’s discussion in full, we now want to explore how the appearance of evil in man, the decision of man at the summit of creation, and the larger sense of the ‘whole’ in this system of freedom are indicative of an elemental operation of imagination and a vocation of poietic measurement bestowed upon man and his reason.

52 The issue of the word, for Schelling, of course stands at the center of this question of motion and genesis. We cannot provide a full discussion of this matter here, as it would entail a prolonged study of how Schelling understands and employs the Trinitarian Johanine conception of logos, as well as a deeper consideration of the relationship between the voice of language and the unity of nature. But we may at least note that Schelling is alert to the unity accomplished between the silence of God (the consonant) and, so to speak, the sound of nature (the vowel). Language belongs to the word, completing the ‘image’ in both its unruly freedom and its ruly measure. My thanks to Jason Wirth for helping me appreciate the depth and difficulty of this issue.
IV. The Measuring Imagination and the Word of Man

To appreciate the capacity for freedom as a capacity for evil we must anticipate a further tension between the divine and human imaginations, a tension in many ways more constitutive of the essence of human freedom than a doctrinal or dualistic moral discord. Schelling will treat the problematic activity of human representations on the primordial plane of principled movement and becoming, yet encompass this with the work of the divine imagination in passing from representation to word, from the life-giving genesis of images to the life-giving measure of logos. On the side of genesis, we already know that ground and existence (dark and light principles), though never separate in God, stand opposed in a way that is necessary for the unfolding of divine self-revelation.

In this dialectical matrix real unity depends on severing, real love on discord (Freedom 41/373-74). To say that human will is a ‘seed’ and ‘panorama’ of divine life is to tether human being’s emergence to the emergence of God actu, and to allow that the human soul is ‘of’ the same nature in God. Measure (in the sense of a ‘rule’) belongs to genesis in the form of the intended proclamation of the ‘word’ of unity – as akin to a band – over the whole, but the fate of measure has everything to do with the path of the principles in human will. Crucial to understanding Schelling on the possibility and actuality of evil, we will see, is elucidating the divine imagination’s wager on the imagination of man.

Letting-Be and its Counter-Measures

The work of the divine imagination in divine self-revelation is a work that aspires to “divine measure and balance” (Freedom 34/365). The proclamation of the word over the division of forces is to maintain this measuring unity of dark and light principles. Evil, however, is primordially capacitated from the “elevation of self-will” and “collapse” (Zerrüttung) of understanding’s bond of unity (34/365). The failure to sustain the measure is not the fault of “finitude” (38/370) or creaturely “deprivation” (36/368), but of the volition of selfhood in raising itself to spirit by imprinting a “false unity” over the division of forces (38/371). Owing to the aforementioned covetousness of yearning,
man’s soul arises in the same motion as the will of the ground rises up. Thus, man’s situation in the larger account of becoming is as follows:

Man is placed on that summit [Gipfel] where he has in himself the source of self-movement toward good or evil in equal portions: the bond of principles in him is not a necessary but rather a free one. Man stands on the threshold [Scheidepunkt]; whatever he chooses, it will be his act: but he cannot remain undecided because God must necessarily reveal himself and because nothing at all can remain ambiguous in creation. (Freedom 41/374)

The dark and light principles must be in man; whether they remain bonded or dissolved is a matter of human freedom – a matter of whether the will of the self preserves the harmony native to divine poiesis. Man’s incumbent decisiveness will no doubt have a moral outcome, but the site of this summit and the life of this bond owe their origins to a positive “letting the ground be active” (42/374, 45/378) of the divine will, and to the “arousal of the irrational or dark principle in creatures” required by the essential will to revelation (43/375). Schelling thus speaks of a “a general evil” (47/381), a capacity for evil that is necessary for disclosing the capacity for good. The site of the summit is thus attained, in part, by the positive capacity for evil, but since there is already in the ground a desire to master the glimpse of unity in the will’s darkness (see 44/377, 47/381) it may appear as though man stands disposed to evil. The pivotal dilemma is whether or not the ‘letting-be’ of the ground will remain productive of real unity or compliant with yearning’s covetous mastery over the image of unity. Though Schelling insists that the ground does not “make evil as such,” for “evil remains always an individual’s own choice” (48/381), he means existent evil, evil’s “appearance in man”

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53 This same line of reasoning is expressed more clearly by a character in Schelling’s Clara: “[S]houldn’t we suppose that a divine law prescribed that nature should rise up first to man in order to find within him the point at which the two worlds are united; that afterwards the one should immediately merge with the other through him, the growth of the external world continuing uninterrupted into the inner or spirit world? . . . God did not want a lifeless or necessary tie (between the external and inner world), but a free and living one, and man bore the word of this link in his heart and on his lips. Thus the whole of nature’s elevation, too, depended on man’s freedom. It rested on whether he would forget what was behind him and reach toward what lay before him. Now, however, man reached back (how this happened and why God permitted it, I do not ask); man even called for and hankered back to this external world, and by stopping not only his own progress, but that of the whole of nature, he thereby lost the heavenly world. . . . The strength that had emerged fully and powerfully, ready to rise up into a higher world and to reach its point of transfiguration, withdrew back into the present world and consequently suffocated the inner drive toward life” (Clara 24/31-32).
The manifestation of *sin* in fact appears as a counter-measure: “sin strives to break the word, touch the ground of creation, and profane the mystery” (55/391, my emphasis).54

To sin, in this sense, is something different from an utterly volitional revolt. Sin is manifest through the will’s uprising, but this happens on the basis of what Schelling, following the Platonic expression, calls “the false imagination [*falsche Imagination*] (*logismōi nothōi*), which is sin itself” (54-55/390).55 The structure of this matter is the same as the dark ground’s covetousness of the image of unity. The dark principle in man’s selfhood, aroused to actuality in the unfolding of God’s self-revelation, catches sight of actuality amid potency and tries to wrest it from the intended loving bond of forces. The imagination then “borrows the appearance of Being from true being” and “strives by means of mirrorlike images” and “the radiant glimpse of life in the depths” to raise self-will to selfhood (55-56/390-91). The peril of sin is thus instigated by a collusion of the dark principle and the creaturely imagination. The consequence is a contamination of the whole gathering of ground and

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54 Boehme’s sense of profanation is similar. He describes his own “*mysterium,*” like Schelling’s ‘whole,’ as “a miracle in figures” (*at Freedom* 92). The ‘magic’ of this mysterium yields place to evil, but does not cause it: “Thus evil as by magical craving has always sought and found itself in the *mysterium,* and it is revealed at the same time without God’s intention. . . . For the first revealer, as God, did not command malice into the regime, but rather reason and intelligence, which were supposed to reveal the miracles and become a guide for life” (*at 92-93*). The relationship of evil to word is also similar. With regard to will in the essence of the whole being, “The word is its *centrum* or residence and stands in the middle as a heart” (at 88). But in the division and multiplication of wills there arises the fury for oneness wherein each will “seeks again the ONE [*das EINE]*” (at 91) in a violent *turba.* The result is a multiplicity of languages detached from the “the nature-language that is the root in all languages” (at 93).

55 Plato uses the phrase in his *Timaeus* (49a2, 52b2) to underscore the difficulty one faces when trying to speak or reason about the nature of the cosmogonical site or paradigmatic receptacle of all origins, *khōra.* The problem for Socrates and his interlocutors is that *khōra* ‘is’ in the mode of withdrawal and cannot be predicated of directly, and this amounts to what Krell calls “the baffling aporia (*Verlegenheit*) from which philosophy never escapes” (Krell, 91n.16). *Khōra* is a site (*topos*) of eternal, generative work, but its mode of birthing beginnings and spatializing being comprises a third *genos* to which a kind of *logos* that is neither *nous* nor right opinion must comport itself. In this Platonic sense, a *logismo notho* is necessary and involves a species of imaging and recollection. Schelling’s usage likewise arises within a context of generation and imagination set at a distance from conceptual abstractions. But why must the bastard *logos* be equated with the *falsche Imagination*? Freydberg poses the problem as follows: “In the *Timaeus,* speaking of the dark principle in a ‘bastard *logos*’ was surely said to be difficult and obscure (Freydberg, 49a2), but never false. Nor does the *khora* represent anything remotely like ‘evil,’ or like ‘sin’” (78). Freydberg reasons that the false imagination’s error is that it misconstrues the bond of light and darkness as strife, not love. The *logos,* in this case, would be “misbegotten” because it arises from “humanity’s elevation of the dark basis of his selfhood to the place where the universal will should be,” and this subordinates “complete understanding” to darkness (78-79). Further, to speak of a false imagination is to pair the imagery of the *Timaeus* with that of the *New Testament,* to maintain the need for the divine to be “seen in a vicarious image” and to gesture toward the “second beginning of history (presented by Schelling as the advent of Christianity)” in which the “unities of nature and of history are themselves joined in the unity of appearing” (79-80). See also Freydberg, 41-43, 61-62, 78-80.
existence. “Thus is the beginning of sin,” says Schelling, “that man transgresses from authentic Being into non-being [das Nichtseiende], from truth into lies, from light into darkness, in order to become a self-creating ground and, with the power of the centrum which he has within himself, to rule over all things” (55/390). It would not be at all amiss to say that transgression is an offense against transfiguration, in which case it attenuates the course of Ineinsbildung as well. To speak of a Fall from grace is to speak first of a fall from harmony into discord, Being into non-Being. It is not simply to break a word of command, but to break the word of the bonded whole, the “bond of creaturely existence” (55/391). The integrity of the word as measure of the whole thus depends on the use or misuse of imagination, a fact further evidenced by what the opposition in sin nevertheless reveals: “the most inner bond of the dependence of things and the being of God” (55/391).

Restorative Measures

Though the human will is disposed toward evil in a general sense, and the human imagination prepares the choice for actual evil, Schelling doubles the initial and eternal procession between ground and existence with an equiprimodial and salvific restoration of the measure.\(^5^6\) He does so in terms familiar to his long-standing interest in the artistic imagination. To understand this possibility in full we must navigate a passage from the striving of the false imagination to the striving of the measuring imagination; we must grasp the movement from representation to word.\(^5^7\) The practical site of concern here is the being of the summit – man – and, though Schelling does not use the term, it is advisable to think this summit as the site wherein Ineinsbildung is to be measured out in accordance with the ligaments of divine love. For the life of the summit to begin anew from eternity the “relation of the ground to God” must be reestablished, or indeed, ‘let-be’ such that the “ligature

\(^{56}\) Schelling explains: “The first beginning for the creation is the yearning of the One to give birth to itself or the will of the ground. The second is the will of love, whereby the word is spoken out into nature and though which God makes himself personal” (Freedom 59/395).

\(^{57}\) The movement is specific but also involves our own engagement with the text. Warnek explains: “As Schelling’s text is read, as it addresses the movement out of the dark ground, as the movement of bringing to word the event of freedom, what is revealed in this movement must be allowed to bear upon the reading of the text itself” (Warnek, “Reading Schelling after Heidegger,” 177).
of the dark principle (selfhood)” is restored “into the light” (Freedom 46/380). There is a “true good” belonging to the divine bond, and a “divine magic” (56/391) intent on combating discord. The realization of salvation also bears specifically on language – a “living word” is to reign over the chaos of Babel (46/380). But what of man’s activity in this site? Schelling speaks of a conscientiousness (Gewissenhaftigkeit, religiousity) enacted as a “resoluteness” superior to any “enthusiasm” in the negative sense (57/392). Man is to be “an enduring being” who grounds his portion of yearning in the “bright consciousness” of spirit (70/408). In this way man’s life under the bond of unity and love requires something much like divine artistry, in one sense, and artistic resoluteness in another. To speak of “a supreme clarity of moral life [arising] in grace and divine beauty” (58/394) is to transpose the essential experience of artistic consummation in 1807 into the redemption of human freedom and the recovery of harmony between the principles. It is to envision the standing of man at the intersection between will’s beginning in yearning and becoming and will’s more complete beginning in love. To be resolute in this standing is to turn from yearning’s contamination of unity and measure toward the unity sheltered in the divine personality.

To disclose such standing in view of these restorative possibilities is to further the poietic bearing of the investigation’s subject-matter. As we have noted, Schelling often joins to such moments of concentration a corresponding caution against the representational habits of philosophical inquiry. In this case the disclosure of God’s self-determining personality (Persönlichkeit) as “a living unity of forces” requires a renewed disavowal of God as “a merely logical abstraction” (59/394-95). If the Gewissenhaftigkeit of man’s standing in the summit is precisely at issue, and if the human imagination is misleading on the level of representational inquiry

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58 This sense of resolute enduring echoes in Schelling’s Clara: “Whoever does not take hold of himself will before long take hold of something else. Whoever does not want to go onward, sinks back. And evil consists even now in a backward motion of human nature, which, instead of wanting to raise itself up into its true being, always clings onto and attempts to realize what should be only a condition of its activity and only a quiet, immobile basis of its life. What causes illness other than churlishness toward development, other than the individual strength not wanting to continue with the whole, not wanting to die away with the whole, but obstinately wanting to be for itself? Consequently, we should strive against the condition more than anything else” (Clara 26-27/36).
and false on the level of original becoming, then it stands to reason that Schelling is addressing the possibility of measure and word both as an ontological matter as well as a matter of philosophical standpoint. He cannot mollify the appearance of evil in men, but he can reorient the philosophical imagination toward the full standpoint of divine imagination and proclamation, resulting in a further disclosure of that life of the word meant to redeem and shape the philosophical task. And to attune the inquiring standpoint to the personhood (Personalität) of God is to draw closer to the eternal and salvific life of the bond in which yearning and understanding, ground and existence subsist.\(^\text{59}\)

These poietic possibilities are evident in the standpoint won for man by reflection on the will of love. In basic terms, the will of love in the second, salvific, beginning serves to free the will of the ground, and so doing, to rescue the appetite of man from the vulnerabilities of his false imagination and reinstate him in the life of the word. The possibility of evil, we recall, arose in the primal ground (Urgrund) of existence ‘as’ the striving of this ground “toward actuality in created beings” (44/378), a reaction of the ground to the image of unity and a desire to own this unity in its own dark will (47/380-81). Conversely, to envision God as personality is to pair the anarchy of the ground with the “archetype [Urtypus]” (62/398) accompanying the Ursein but hitherto concealed beneath the exercises of the false imagination – the archetypal beauty, goodness, and love.\(^\text{60}\) The manifestation of evil in man at his summit position ‘looks’ like a result of a ground that is “the originator of evil” (63/399), but this view is at least as inadequate as the image of unity coveted by yearning, and the creative assertions of the false imagination. This point of view, one could say, is like examining a work of art’s detail yet neglecting the work’s whole. Man’s resoluteness at the summit requires a

\(^{59}\) Schiller’s treatment of personality presents an interesting backdrop for Schelling’s. He treats personality as the highest, most enduring (das Bleibende), element in man and the point of unifying perdurance in the godhead. Personality and condition are “ultimate concepts” won through the work of abstraction (Letters, 73), a subtle indication that Schelling as well may be resorting to abstraction in this case. Schiller holds: “In the Absolute Subject alone do all its determining Attributes persist with the Personality [Persönlichkeit], since all of them proceed from the Personality. What the Godhead is, and all that it is, it is just because it is. It is consequently everything for all eternity, because it is eternal” (73).

\(^{60}\) See also PA 355-56/426, 364n.8 for precedent.
glimpse of his essential image in the personhood of God, a glimpse whereby one sees that “[t]he
same thing that becomes evil through the will of the creature (if it tears itself completely free in order
to be for itself), is in itself good as long as it remains wrapped up in the good and in the ground”
(63/400). Whether man will enjoy and sustain the panoramic measure of goodness, beauty and love is
a question of whether he will opt for non-Being and unreality (67/404-05) or the “bright
consciousness” (70/408) of a bonding word. Man’s ontological inheritance and moral opportunity
alike are rooted in the poietic fecundity of the divine imagination, a force of production and
proclamation in which image and word conspire to inspire the life of the whole.61 Essential works of
art, we recall, must ‘speak’ to our ‘inner being’; formation ‘is’ a saying. To grasp a bonding measure
in a figuration of archetypal beauty and grace is to hear the word of unity over the whole:

Solely because God brought order to the disorderly offspring of chaos and proclaimed
[ausgesprochen] his eternal unity into nature, he opposed darkness and posited the word as a
constant centrum and eternal beacon against the anarchical movement of the principle bereft of
understanding . . . (Freedom 65/402)

Curiously, at the very point at which one would expect Schelling to extend this standpoint of
the summit to the more practical function of man’s essential freedom in sustaining this word of
measure, he tasks himself with an ontological descent into a matter that is before all divine creation
and imagination: “a being before all ground,” an original “non-ground [Ungrund]” (68/406).
Presumably, this move toward the “absolute indifference [Indifferenz]” which “precedes all
opposites” (68/406, cf. 73/412) is an attempt to reckon with that deeper capacitating force which may
necessarily lie beneath the absolute identity of the whole, beneath the “one being [Ein Wesen] for all
oppositions, an absolute identity of light and darkness, good and evil” (68/406), “the one being [that]
divides itself in two sorts of being in its two ways of acting” (71/409). Is this a final conceptual

correction of the absolute? A reconfiguration of the primal will in view of personality? A figuration

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61 Freyberg thus asks: “With the remark that the highest transformation of moral life emerges in grace and divine
beauty, can one not discern the movement of the Freedom Essay as a movement through which the rigorously
conceived whole becomes seen most profoundly as an aesthetic whole? And can one not therefore conclude that an
image of humanity may be a vicarious image—a graceful and beautiful image?” (Freyberg, 84).
of the impetus for his eternal beginnings that is avowedly non-causal? Or, more plainly, is it a final
homage to any system’s need for an original principle? (Here we arrive at what will be a crucial
matter of criticism for Heidegger, but for the sake of consistency in our reading we will refrain from
absorbing his problematic until the next chapter). If we begin by appreciating Schelling’s task on this
score as itself a resolute entry into what is most ‘inner’ (as opposed to external) to a system of
freedom then we will better understand the culmination of his treatise as at once an appeal to the life
of the whole and to the measuring imagination of man.

The Artistry of Antecedent Indifferenz

First, it is important to regard the full span of difficulty associated with questioning the origin
of the being which informs ground and existence in God. As Freydberg observes, it “requires
apprehending the origin before all unification as well as before all duality.”62 A system, he continues,
requires an origin, but “How indeed can one designate this peculiar indifference, which itself has no
predicates but which allows of non-antithetical predication?”63 How can any logos approach that
which precedes all ground and is manifest, if manifest at all, in a mode of withdrawal?64 The
difficulty is exacerbated by the fact that this Indifferenz is of a different character than the
indifference-point treated in the Presentation (1801) – which, in spite of its representing the absolute
identity of essence and being (transcendental philosophy and philosophy of nature) in the form of an
indivisible line, was not yet a full question of origin. Neither is Indifferenz equivalent to the primal
will (which Schelling does not mention in these remarks), but rather appears to ‘be’ the origin of

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62 Freydberg, 98. Concerning the relation of the Ungrund to the principles of ground and existence, Freyberg notes:
“The unground is wholly in each in the sense that in its total withdrawal (as indifference), both principles can
emerge as distinct and different” (99).

63 Freyberg, 98.

64 On this point see Freydberg, 98f, and his attention to the erotic unity of indifference. He explains how the
withdrawal of the unground is linked to the human being and calls forth philosophy. The “difference that announces
the division of the principles also discloses the whole within which they divide” (101). And so, “It also provokes the
desire in the human being to fashion this twofold revelation into an intelligible whole, whether rational, aesthetical,
or a joining of the two. That is, it provokes the desire to fashion a system” (101). The point may also be made more
simply, for, as Warnek explains, the “unground” (indifference) is that which “defies all predication, which resists
every word that would name it,” and is thus a “question of the ground before ground, of difference before
difference” (Warnek, “Reading Schelling after Heidegger,” 181).
even this originary act.\textsuperscript{65} In the present case, moreover, Schelling offers no figurative correction to abstract concepts, but simply speaks of the non-ground as the “the inner core” (das Innere) of system and “indeed the only possible concept of the absolute” (73/411-12, my emphasis).\textsuperscript{66} Echoing his own characterization of ‘spirit’ cir. 1797, he calls the non-ground “the absolute considered merely in itself” (70/408) – that which overrides all the inadequacies of a rational system. The non-ground is thus rendered on the basis of what it enables and effects. It is before “the identity of opposites” (68/406) yet exceeds mere neutrality, it is the original division of the two eternal beginnings, and it is the condition of possibility for “life and love and personal existence” (70/408). The being of the non-ground also effects is own transformative trajectory over and through the life of “spirit” in yearning and consciousness to, as it were, accomplish the “general unity” of the whole in a loving act “which is all in all” (70/408). We may then say, in the least, that to speak of the being of the non-ground is to exercise the deepest possible standpoint on the whole without compromising the essential course of differentiation, severability, and opposition so crucial to the capacitating sense of freedom.

If one desires a conceptual approximation to \textit{Indifferenz} in Schelling’s oeuvre thus far, the best candidate is a term never thematized in the treatise: \textit{Ineinsbildung}. The sense of ‘mutual informing into unity’ has colored every major elemental motion in the life of the ‘whole’ (as \textit{hen kai pan}) Schelling has sought to disclose. Though it first appeared in the context of his conception of

\textsuperscript{65} The temptation to align \textit{Indifferenz} with primal will is understandable, but is a slippage we should be cautious of. Hellmers, for example, holds: “The purest and most absolute form of will for Schelling is the \textit{Ungrund}, a presently absent version of the absolute in which the primal will that grounds both nature and the good is wholly indifferent to any particularity, an opaque unity that is only complete in providing a primordial indifference that divides from itself for difference to emerge as good and evil” (Hellmers, 143). The necessity for differentiation is right, but it is not clear that Schelling means \textit{Indifferenz} as the superlative form of will.

\textsuperscript{66} The conceptual allowance is made against the backdrop of necessities introduced in the existence/ground distinction. Krell explains: “If ground and existence never interpenetrate and share no midpoint, the inevitable result is dualism and the collapse of every system of reason. Science must therefore strive to find that Mittelpunkt. It cannot be found in the absolute identity of opposites. . . inasmuch as absolute identity would mean stasis, the dull decrepitude of all such systems. Science must therefore insist that at the very stroke of one there is but one essence, one essence \textit{prior to} every ground and prior to everything else that exists—although, presumably, such priority can be thought in terms of neither time for causality nor ontological eminence. What else can we call it, Schelling asks, than the \textit{primal ground}, or, rather, the \textit{nonground}? In Schelling’s text. . . the primal, primordial, incipient, originary ground and the nonground are brought into the closest possible proximity: only a single letter distinguishes them, and not even an entire letter, inasmuch as here it is merely a matter of expanding a single stroke of one letter, extending the arc of the \textit{r} in \textit{Urgrund} to the \textit{n} of \textit{Ungrund}” (Krell, 94).
artistic creation (the art lectures), it then surfaced again in the *Further Presentations* as the “living artistry” of “the one-in-all and all-in-one” (*FP* 397/411), a phrasing similar to the “all in all” ascribed to the loving beneficence of *Indifferenz* (*Freedom* 20/348). If we read Schelling by way of Boehme then a potential relationship between *Indifferenz* and *Ineinsbildung* is all the more plausible. Boehme opens his *Mysterium Pansophicum* by contending that the non-ground “is an eternal nothing but forms an eternal beginning as a craving [*Sucht*]” (at *Freedom* 85). Though in one sense this pertains to Schelling’s aforementioned conception of yearning (*Sehnsucht*) in the dark ground, Boehme goes on to speak of the “being of all beings” as a “magical being” that not only births the will, but “from whence all things, evil and good, originate, namely from the *imagination* into the great *mysterium*, since a miraculous essentialistic [*essentialistisch*] life gives birth to itself” (at 89). The formative, essential movement of the imagination – and not simply yearning – reveals the non-ground to be “an eternally lasting beginning” (for God and nature) in addition to “an eternal nothing” (at 88, 85). The difference, to return to Schelling, is that *Ineinsbildung* stands rooted in absolute identity as divine artistry, and *Indifferenz* consists in the being of the un-ground before the divine itself is born. But there remains a similarity of outcome: both concepts point to the human being (as artist and as thinker) as the site in which the unity of the whole is imaged, reasoned, and spoken.68

Among the first matters addressed on the heels of the un-ground discussion is the privileged role of man in the system, the very point left in the wings since “highest point of the entire investigation” (*Freedom* 68/406) found man standing in the light of divine personality. Why align a

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67 Freydberg explains: “The account of indifference points toward both the source of and the goad to philosophy. The source is our distance from wisdom, and the goad is also our distance from wisdom. We find this distance imaged in the division of principles in us. The division of the principles reveals the condition (the depths) that we can never fully overcome. However, the experience of this division makes possible the vision and the presentation of the system of the whole. In this vision and presentation, one principle holds and permeates all: *hen kai pan*” (Freydberg, 102).

68 But whether or not the outcome qualifies as a resolution is a question Heidegger will raise. Krell’s account is indicative of this concern: “No predicates adhere to the undifferentiated essence, especially not those of ‘good’ or ‘evil.’ The essence in its nonground is, if we may say so, quite beyond good and evil—or, if not beyond, then well on the hither side of them. Yet Schelling shrinks from the consequences of such indifference; he quickly calls for a restoration of sorts” (Krell, 95).
brief yet provocative treatment of the being before and ‘of’ the whole with a singular appraisal of man’s position in it? The reason, so it appears, is to situate the measuring word in view of the measureless origin. Attuned to Indifferenz, Schelling means to pass once more the very ‘word’ of the whole through the dark, irrational principle of the ground, the contingencies of the selfish imagination, and onward to the mediation of God and nature within the whole. “Only man,” says Schelling, “is in God and capable of freedom exactly through this Being-in-God [in-Gott-Sein]” (72/411). Man’s capacity positively concretizes something of the sheer ‘inner core’ of what must remain in withdrawal. Man is a creature born in the birth of God from the being of indifference.\(^69\) Though vulnerable in his propensity toward self-assertion, he is the being of the word that will mediate nature and its “typology [Vorbilder]” and God. The absence of figuration in the Ungrund stands matched by the presence of articulation in the word. “The word that is fulfilled in human beings,” says Schelling, “is in nature as a dark, prophetic (not yet fully pronounced) word” (73/411). We know this word to be the word of unity and love, the bonding measure of the whole. We also know that the movement from darkness to light occurs by way of an Ein-bildung amid divine self-revelation, and that the understanding’s generative division allows this idea or awakening to be hineingebildet (impressed) into nature. What the depth of indifference enables and anticipates, it seems, is the eventual transfiguration of what is Vorbilder and what is Ein-bildung at the summit of man. The word in man is invested with the vocation of announcing the ordering of nature and ‘bringing-forth’ the anticipated mediation with nature in God.

Not incidentally, Schelling passes through this point about the word to a more concrete point about the vocation of reason (74-77/412-16). One of the effects of Indifferenz as a matter was that it

\(^{69}\) Schelling raises a similar point in Clara: “It seems, Clara said, that man is in this way like a work of art. Here, too, what is delicate or spiritual receives its highest worth only by asserting its nature through mixing with a conflicting, even barbaric, element. The greatest beauty comes about only when gentleness masters strength. I remember, I said, having heard before about just this from the northern visionary, too, whose speeches on this point gave me the greatest joy. He thought that the Lord wanted to be born on this Earth for the sake of the Word, for only here could it have been multiplied materially and written and preserved to the letter” (Clara 77/108-09).
arrested all speculation, abstraction, and representation. In this sense, Schelling chastened reason in order to then retrieve it as a measure. But what kind of measure is reason? A system “of reason” is a system in which human reason recognizes itself in an accord with divine understanding (74-75/413-14). Reason is the business of inquiry, but is also an agency at work in the life of the system – the logos or word ‘of’ the whole. We have seen this agency in motion as “the understanding that develops what is hidden and contained in [the] ground” (75/413), a dialectical drive that is in the act of divine self-revelation and in the investigation disclosing it. And we have seen it delivered into the voice of human being. Human reason is by no means the apotheosis of divine understanding (for personality still reigns) but the agent spirit of personality is to be active in inspiring the science and dialectic of systematic reason.70 Human reason must be inspired, artistic. Inspiration (Begeisterung) “in the genuine sense is the active principle of every productive [erzeugenden] and formative art or science,” what Schelling in 1807 called the “innermost energies” by which spirit “is diffused through the whole” (PA 355/426). In view of this there must be “a dialectical artistic drive” and a “dialectical philosophy” (Freedom 75-76/414). The point is not to heap together philosophy and art, but to recover for the science of reason its own distinct inheritance – it is inspired by the same creative spirit which authors the procession of things from God. Specifically, this means reason is, like the word, “the measure and, so to speak, the general place of truth [das Maß und gleichsam der allgemeine Ort der Wahrheit]” (76/411).71 Just as the human being may well run afoul of the word, human reason may shirk the archetypal principle by which it measures. The mark of an inspired dialectics, on the other hand, consists in its ability to perform a task also invested in the word – to interpret the typology (Vorbilder) of nature and thereby surmount the oldest opposition on behalf of

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70 As Freyberg notes: “The system of freedom is a vicarious whole, a living image. And in this way, the whole receives measure, determinacy, by the very deed of its being brought to logos. There is only one system, the system of the world, and in this regard the deed of system-making at once images and is imaged by the one system” (Freyberg, 101).

71 For Schelling, “reason itself is pulled into the unaccountable whole that, after a fashion, it measures” (Freyberg, 106). In later chapters we will discover in Heidegger a similar concentration on ‘measure’ but an altogether different mode of inspiration and dimension of truth.
the whole. The answer to the question of the essence of human freedom lies in this capacitated measuring which marks the life of man at the summit. The task of the thinker is a task of freedom, but also a deed allotted for the sake of a necessary whole. Could it be that Schelling means for philosophy to exhibit the same “flower of life” he finds in Raphael, whose works show things “ordered in eternal necessity” and bear the seal of one who is “a philosopher, a poet at the same time”? (PA 351/420).

Conspicuously absent from Schelling’s Freedom Essay is the ensemble of systemic possibilities and accomplishments hitherto orbiting around the identity philosophy’s emphasis on intuition. If in chapter two we based the primacy of the productive, creative, and artistic imaginations for Schelling on the project assigned to intuition, do the present investigations require us to speak of a different Schelling and a different imagination altogether? As I stated at the outset of this chapter, the Freedom Essay envisions a task distinct from those of ascertaining the unconditioned principle or attaining the standpoint of absolute reason. To broach the tension between necessity and freedom is to enter the matter of absolute identity through the cellar door – to set aside all deductive or logical renderings of the structure and test the very foundations of the ‘whole’ from the bedrock of possible harmony. Do the primacy of intuition and identity fall to the side? Yes. Is Schelling now averse to his prior hopes for a system of knowledge? No. As in Kant’s First critique, the decision for the Freedom Essay marks a decision to treat the work of thought at its elemental level. In Schelling’s case this means coming up into the unity of the whole by means of matters invested in the integrity of its very life, not its slated coherence. We may call this a new stage in Schelling’s philosophical work, a departure into the Ages of the World period, but while this is useful from the point of view of an external catalog it does little to report on the inner agitations of his thought. Even as we highlight the new – indeed, radical – considerations of ground, identity, and the irrational genesis of all things in this essential inquiry, Schelling’s orientation to and from the imagination here binds the intensity of his thought, the character of his subject-matter, and the style of his argumentation to those elements
of imagination in his prior works. Schelling remains a thinker of standpoints consistently attuned to the real and ideal, primordial and performative, work of the imagination. The primacy of intuition and identity in his idealism is not so much overcome in the Freedom Essay as displaced by the rising force of imagination’s ontological currents. Not only philosophy, but the life of primordial principles becomes sensuous, aesthetic. The poetic imagination is, for Schelling, alive in the genesis of God and man, and afoot in the poietic resolve of reason itself. Figuration precedes logos in the drama of self-revelation, and measurement must repair understanding in the sojourn of thought. All things point to the creative life of the word, both in Schelling’s history of ontological becoming and in his vision for inspired reason.
Chapter Four: Heidegger on Schelling’s Impulse and Poetizing Impasse

The fundamental event of modernity is the conquest of the world as picture. The word ‘picture’ now means the formation of presenting production. Within this formation, the human fights for the position in which he can be that being that provides the measure for all beings, and draws up the guidelines.

-Martin Heidegger
Ages of the World Picture (1938)

Near the end of Schelling’s narrative, Clara, the characters ascend to an old chapel then seat themselves at the edge of a nearby forest.1 Here the protagonist relates a story of his youthful passage through a literal understanding of the height of the planets and heavens to a more relational conception of universal forces:

There was nothing anywhere other than an immeasurable depth and, fundamentally, nothing more than a mere underneath. But a heaven as a higher and more excellent place was no longer there at all; rather, there were nothing but worlds, each of which had its own underneath again in a sun similar to ours, and even those suns were probably drawn to a yet bigger body. And so it went on deeper and deeper into a quite immeasurable abyss, but always downward. . . . However, I now became completely strengthened in my belief: I assumed a true above and below once more, and first of all I endeavored to remove the deadly uniformity that erudition had brought to the world. (Clara, 69-70/96-97)

The confession is a recovery of the living system of nature from the abyss of lifeless erudition. The emerging resolve in the statement marks an arousal of the word in man, the bonding logos Schelling envisions at the end of the Freedom Essay, the word of Ein-bildung again impressed and transfigured in the Vorbilder of nature by which it speaks the necessity of the whole. His character continues:

“What is completed is generally more excellent and magnificent than infinity; in art it is even the seal of perfection” (Clara 70/97). The haunting specter of the ‘immeasurable abyss,’ like the trembling thought of the un-ground, is drawn upward into the assured completion of the divine in man’s measuring word. But is the depth of the immeasurable raised too easily into a harmony with the divine above, a decision in man’s words for the seal of perfection in a divine logos – a reluctance, perhaps, to stand in the between that separates abyss and completion?

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1 Schelling writes: “We delighted for a long time in the beautiful view of this area that was coming back to life and then we slowly moved across the glade and up to the old chapel, where we didn’t stay long because it was still quite cold and damp” (Clara 69/95).
In his *Introduction to Metaphysics* (1935), Heidegger refers to a passage from Knut Hamsen’s *The Road Leads On* (1934) in which a different protagonist, August, sits alone high in the mountains:

He sits here between his ears and hears true emptiness... On the ocean (earlier, August often went to sea) something stirred (at least), and there, there was a sound, something audible, a water chorus. Here – nothing meets nothing and is not there, there is not even a hole. One can only shake one’s head in resignation. (at 29/GA 40: 21)

Both passages stand their characters in a scene of removal and decision. Beings are removed, withdrawn in an immeasurable abyss or a true emptiness, a planetary depth or a manifest nothingness. And with the corresponding loss of measurement a space of decision is opened – in Schelling a decision for renewing the frame of completion and perfection, in Hamsen a resignation in which lingers the memory of the audible chorus, perhaps the sound of unity. The comparison is not reducible to a difference between theism and agnoticism, system and *existenz*, or metaphysical construction and ontological questioning. Their shared impulse is too great, instantiating their heroes in a mysterious dimension from which the task of thinking as measuring begins anew. Understanding the significance of Heidegger’s encounter with Schelling must begin from this point of proximity in standpoints, even if, and perhaps so that, we become more mindful of the different moods and measures they bring to this experience of the between.

In this chapter we resume our study of Heidegger by tracking a pronounced tension crystallized in his encounter with Schelling – the tension between a poietic, asystic, and fugal impulse arising at the very limit of metaphysics, and a poetizing, representational essence of reason which holds this impulse at an impasse. Turning directly to Heidegger’s 1936 lecture course, *Schelling’s Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom,* we will discover that his dictum, “all great

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2 Martin Heidegger, *Schelling’s Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom* (1936), trans. Joan Stambaugh (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1985). Hereafter ST. The translation is based on *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 42. Stambaugh includes an appendix containing manuscript and course notes for Heidegger’s seminars on Schelling 1941-43, excerpted from *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 49. Hereafter ST 49. In both cases pagination appears as English/German, though when referencing GA 49 passages not provided in Stambaugh translations are my own.
thinkers think the *same [dasselbe]*" is especially true where the impulse to primordial jointure and the strife of ontological questioning is concerned, but also leaves room for pronounced differences in carrying out this impulse. I will argue that though Heidegger celebrates (and is inspired by) Schelling’s impulse *beyond* willful subjectivity and will to system *toward* the open occurrence between ground and existence in the jointure of Being, he finds in Schelling’s thought a point of necessary arrest best understood as a problem of production and therefore imagination. Drawing on material from his Nietzsche Lectures, I will situate this problem under the orbit of what he calls the *poetizing* essence of *reason* in order to show that the implication of the imagination is specific and severe, though by no means final. Manifesting the precise nature of Heidegger’s strained relation to the imagination is, I will conclude, *the* condition for the possibility of understanding his contemporaneous transformation of poetizing reason as a representing, concealing force into the poetic imagination as a revealing, *poietic* force (a matter for chapter five).

In a 1926 letter to Karl Jaspers Heidegger remarks: “Schelling ventures forward philosophically much further than Hegel, even if he is more disorderly conceptually. I have only begun to read the treatise on freedom. It is for me too valuable than whatever I might pick up in a rough first reading.” His readings continued, resulting in the lecture course of 1936, a seminar of

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4 Hellmers provides a useful orientation: “The question of system will be rethought later by Heidegger to become the thinking of the jointure (*Fuge*), a joining together into a unified multiplicity that is not comprised in terms of rationality, but is a thinking that begins in the 1936 lecture course on Schelling” (Hellmers, “Reading in *Ereignis*,” 139). I would add, however, that Heidegger’s ‘thinking’ along such lines is specifically alert to the problem of will and willfulness in the reasoning imagination, and not simply rationality broadly construed.

5 The following claim by Cornelius Castoriadis, for example, is too severe: ‘with respect to the ‘recoiling’ Heidegger imputes to Kant when faced with the ‘bottomless abyss’ opened up by the discovery of the transcendental imagination, it is Heidegger himself who in effect ‘recolls’ after writing his book on Kant. A new forgetting, covering-over, and effacement of the question of the imagination intervenes, for no further traces of the question will be found in any of his subsequent writings; there is a suppression of what this question unsettles for every ontology (and every ‘thinking of Being’)’ (Cornelius Castoriadis, “The Discovery of the Imagination,” *Constellations*, vol. 1, no. 2 (October 1994)). The effacement concern is well-taken, but to insist Heidegger shows ‘no further traces’ is, as we will see, short-sighted.

1941, and informing the focus of seminars in 1943. What, precisely, did Heidegger find in
Schelling’s treatise that warranted such sustained attention? Two passages provide a hint. At the end
of his 1936 course Heidegger summarizes the experience Schelling provokes: “man is experienced in
the insight into the abysses and heights of Being, in regard to the terrible element of the godhead, the
lifedread of all creatures, the sadness of all created creators, the malice of evil and the will of love”
(ST 164/GA 42: 284). In later notes, it is “the experience of how the history of Being penetrates us
and thus bears us to unattained regions of dwelling in which a decision to ground the truth of Being
must be made” (ST 169/GA 49: 140). In short, Schelling’s work opens up an experience of man in
which man is not the author and arbiter of all things. There is an agency beyond the subject and a
history of Being in which man is instantiated. And the thought which brings forth this experience
itself stands within an impulse of inquiry exceeding the faculties of understanding and reason, an
impulse kindred to what Heidegger, in 1935, characterizes as an inceptual leap into questioning:

[G]iving up the ordinary and going back into questioning interpretation is a leap. Only one who
takes the right running start [den rechten Anlauf nimmt] can leap. Everything is decided by this
run, for it means that we ourselves actually ask the questions again, and that we, in these
questions, first create the perspectives. However, this does not happen in wavering arbitrariness,
nor in relying on a system that has been set forth as the norm. Instead, it happens in and from
historical necessity, from the urgency of historical Dasein. (IM 188/134) 8

To what extent is Heidegger’s Schelling engaged in this ‘running start’? To what extent does
his ‘system’ stand in the way of the leap and its ‘urgency’? And does the imagination, for Heidegger,
furnish the footing for the leap or the wavering which hinders it? Heidegger’s Kantbuch remains an
instructive preface to this 1936 encounter. Where the former is a ‘deduction’ of the thinking of Being
in fundamental ontology by way of the ‘transcendental imagination’ (Einbildungskraft), the latter is

Heidegger’s ‘Sein und Zeit,” in Schelling: Zwischen Fichte und Hegel, Bochumer Studien Zur Philosophie, Band 32,
Herausgegeben (Hrsg.) von Christoph Asmuth, Alfred Denker, Michael Vater (B.R. Grüner Publishing Co.,
Amsterdam/Philadelphia, 2000), pp.287-302: 293n.8
7 Heidegger’s mention of “godhead” signals a theme of Zwischen and measure-taking we shall return to in the
Beiträge and “Poetically Man Dwells.”
8 Martin Heidegger, Introduction to Metaphysics (1935), trans. Gregory Freid and Richard Polt (New Haven and
London: Yale University Press, 2000). Hereafter IM. The translation is based on the 1953 edition of Einführung in
die Metaphysik (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer) and the text is included in Gesamtausgabe Bd. 40. Pagination appears as
English followed by German of Niemeyer edition.
best understood as a ‘deduction’ of the thinking of the history and jointure of Being by way of ‘appropriation’ (*Ereignis*). In both cases Heidegger risks the ‘violence’ of a reading that seeks to make explicit the implicit, though decisive, aspects of the works in question. This entails a “creative transformation,” an entry into the “new beginnings” and “impulses [*Antriebe*]” opened up by the work. In both cases, however, an impulse is initiated, then resisted. In Kant it was the failure to follow the logical unity of intuition and thinking “out beyond itself” to imagination taken as the structure of possibility in ontological knowledge; in Schelling the failure will be to follow the freedom inquiry “beyond itself” to the “openness of Being” in which “creative [*schöpferisches*] *Dasein*” takes its stand (*ST* 11/18, 98/169, 105/183). The task for the remainder of this chapter is to identify the main impulses Heidegger finds in Schelling, distinguish the shape of the experience he privileges, and demonstrate how the imagination becomes an implicit problem for Heidegger in this encounter.

I. Creative Transformations

The initial allure of Schelling’s treatise is, for Heidegger, that its inquiries are “driven beyond man [über en Menschen. . . hinausgetrieben]” (*ST* 9/15). In light of the singular position of man and the measuring task of man’s reason noted in our Schelling discussion the comment appears strange. How does Heidegger understand and applaud this accomplishment? To go ‘beyond’ implies both a departure and a recovery. What is surpassed is the traditional regress to subjectivity. We have observed this in our discussion of the meaning of an ‘essential’ investigation in terms of the matter’s ‘whole.’ As a question of essence, then, freedom becomes for Heidegger not the property of man, but the other way around: Man is at best the property of freedom. Freedom is the encompassing and penetrating nature, in which man becomes man only when he is anchored there. That means the nature of man is grounded in freedom. But freedom itself is a determination of true Being in general which transcends all human being. . . . the nature of true Being [*eigentlichen Seyns*] as the nature of the ground for beings as a whole. (*ST* 9/15)

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9 *Ereignis* comes from the root, *eignen*, as in *aneignin* – to appropriate. This term will become increasingly important as we proceed.
There is a precedent in Heidegger’s itinerary that supports his enthusiasm for this reversal. In *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (1927)\(^{10}\), for example, he traced Kant’s understanding of being “in the sense of being-produced [*Hergestellsein*]” and of the subject in an “ontological mode of extantness [*Vorhandenheit*]” (*BPP* 147/GA 24: 209) back to the ancient and medieval conceptions of *eidos* and *ousia* so as to position the question: “What positive problems grow out of this problematic situation in which the subject is primarily determined by means of subjectivity, self-knowing, so that the question of its ontological constitution still remains fundamentally neglected?” The question of determining “the being of the being that we ourselves are” in light of an “original concept of being” (153-54/218-19) would thus have to overcome the notion that “being equals extantness” (176/251) by working through the “diversity of being as a *multiplicity of ways of being*” (154/219), the structure of Dasein’s being-in-the-world, and the disarming mystery of the “indifference of being [*Indifferenz des Seins*]” subsisting beneath our everyday understanding of beings (175-76/251). Early in *Being and Time*\(^{11}\) he observed that the meaning of Being is “veiled in darkness” (*BT* 23/6), incommensurate with “dogmatic constructions,” yet fundamentally attached to Dasein’s pre-ontological understanding such that the whole analytic of Dasein consists in a questioning of what is ‘beyond’ (or rather,}

\(^{10}\) Martin Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (1927), trans. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988). Hereafter *BPP*. The translation is based on *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann and appearing in *Gesamtausgabe* Bd. 24 (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1975). Pagination will be English/German. One could also emphasize the precedence in Heidegger concerning the meaning of ‘freedom’ between 1927 and 1936. Hellmers, for example, says of the above 1936 position: “It is this idea that freedom implies ground, influencing the generation within being, and that evil can be intrinsic to being itself that are some of the most significant findings in Schelling for Heidegger. The essence of human freedom is the foundation of the system for Schelling, and it is also the foundation of truth for Heidegger. These views are not so far apart as they may seem. . . What Heidegger ultimately is able to then discover in Schelling is that system understood specifically as freedom is the very foundation of truth” (Hellmers, 142). I am more interested in the way Heidegger accentuates the ontological primacy of freedom as a way of going beyond the ‘subject.’ To assert that freedom is the ‘foundation of truth’ is an ambitious claim, but requires a clearer statement of Heidegger’s distance from liberalism and any praxis rooted in the liberties of the so-called subject.

‘before’) even though it is ontically closest.\(^\text{12}\) To investigate the meaning of Being, then, is first of all to allow an altogether implicit understanding to “show itself in itself and from itself” (36-37/21-22).\(^\text{13}\)

In the years following his 1936 Schelling course, Heidegger likewise explains: “That man . . . becomes the executor and trustee and even owner and bearer of subjectivity in no way proves that man is the essential ground of subjectivity.”\(^\text{14}\)

In like manner, what is of decisive importance in the 1936 course is that Schelling’s inquiries are ‘driven’ (getrieben) – as though something about the matter itself propels the inquiries beyond man as their gravitational center. Just as Schelling’s copula ‘is’ before man in the procession toward actual existence, matters pertaining to identity and essence are beyond man’s interrogative position.

The Cartesian res cogitans and the Kantian transcendental subject, for example, cannot perform an essential inquiry from their own necessary points of departure. Schelling’s position affirms Heidegger’s contention that “We philosophize only when the position of our human being becomes the real need [wirklichen Not] of the question about Being as a whole” (ST 11/18). What is the meaning of this need? The answer, in part, is revealed through Hegel’s misreading; Hegel, says

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\(^\text{12}\) Says Warnek: “The question of the truth of being—which unknowingly haunts philosophy—arises in or out of a historical thinking whereby this ‘phenomenon’ shows itself in its withdrawal or non-appearance” (Warnek, “Reading Schelling after Heidegger,” 170).

\(^\text{13}\) There is, of course, a broader context for this specific focus of fundamental ontology: Heidegger’s departure from the focus on ‘consciousness’ not only in Kant and German Idealism, but as well in Husserl’s doctrine of intentionality. Consciousness is no longer of central importance to Schelling by the time of the Freedom Essay, and this is perhaps one reason why Heidegger privileges the text. Still, a word from Taminiaux serves to remind us of Heidegger’s general itinerary conceived as a reaction to the traditions privileging the cogito and the Erkenntnislehre: “Heidegger shatters the problematic of consciousness by insistently addressing a question that was not even raised in phenomenology: the question of Being. Conceived as the attempt to answer this question, the fundamental ontology of Sein und Zeit stands on a terrain quite different from that of consciousness—the terrain called Dasein, whose mode of being is less the immanence of self-presence than the ecstatic relation to the world and time. Man holds himself out within an ec-static relation to Being while Being is in excess of all beings and Being in return is destined to man and attunes man to himself. Finitude defines this double movement, this originary reciprocity of receptivity and spontaneity” (Taminiaux, Poetics, Speculation, and Judgment, 37). It will be of interest to us to track the developments of the question of Being for Heidegger, as well, in the period of his Schelling reading.

\(^\text{14}\) Martin Heidegger, “The Essential Determination of Man, and the Essence of Truth” in Nietzsche, Volumes III and IV: The Will to Power as Knowledge and as Metaphysics; Nihilism (1940; 1961), trans. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1987, 1982) IV: 139/260. The translation for vol III follows Gesamtausgabe Bd. 47; vol IV in part follows Gesamtausgabe Bd. 48. Hereafter Nietzsche III and Nietzsche IV. He continues: “In Being and Time, on the basis of the question of the truth of Being, no longer the question of the truth of beings, an attempt is made to determine the essence of man solely in terms of his relationship to Being. That essence was described in a firmly delineated sense as Da-sein” (Nietzsche IV 141/260).
Heidegger, fails to see that freedom “was not single for Schelling, but was thought and developed as the essential foundation of the whole, as a new foundation for a whole philosophy” (13/22). As soon as the question of human freedom becomes a question concerning the nature of true Being, the matter ‘needs’ to be understood (and is so driven) from within a horizon that exceeds man:

Because it asks about the whole of Being, we cannot find anything outside of it from where we could, in addition, particularly explain why the inquiry deals with freedom. For the sufficient reason for the question of Being as a whole lies in Being itself and there alone. But man cannot withdraw from Being as a whole. For he is what he is, only be standing in the middle of beings as a whole and perduring [Innehält] this stand. (ST 10/16)

In the moment the question of ground and grounding enters Schelling’s discourse, one could say, man and his inquiry are displaced into a horizon of the whole which already anticipates a creative transformation in the inquiring agent, and which may in fact take Schelling’s own project “beyond itself” by way of a “hidden, but disturbing force [Kraft]” (11/18, 13/22).

The inquiries are also driven to the limit of system itself, a motion we have noted in Schelling’s comments on dependency and becoming, living ground and divine personality. But Heidegger’s position is critical in a broader historical sense. He understands “the system” to be “the decisive task of the philosophy of German idealism” (19/24), and likewise appreciates the challenge Schelling faces in overcoming the supposed incompatibility of system with the concept of freedom (“Freedom excludes the recourse to grounding”) (22/26-27). But in order to facilitate the larger creative transformation of understanding into the ‘need’ of Being Heidegger must identify and isolate the cargo of idealism that the force of Schelling’s project will, initially at least, jettison. So doing, he continues a critique of German idealism that has been underway since his early work and is related to his noted concerns about subjective determinacy. When, in the 1936 course, he identifies “the self-certainty of pure thinking with regard to its correctness” (31/54) as a condition for system formation, he is extending his earlier observation that “in an extreme version of Kant’s or Descartes’ thought, German idealism (Fichte, Schelling, Hegel) saw the true actuality of the subject in self-consciousness
[Selbst-bewußtsein]” (BPP 152/216). The confidence of a self-understanding “equated formally with a reflected ego-experience” (175/248) in a thinker such as Fichte, when added to the Kantian impetus to represent the world as totality makes for a “flight to the objective” (Essence of Reasons 97/GA 9: 161-62) under the auspices of a self-certainty poised to decide “what ‘is’, as a principle and thus fundamentally” (ST 30/53). The developmental conspiracy of self-consciousness and self-certainty thus position an “external manipulation” (26/45) of beings, a “will to system” in which “thinking understands itself as the court of judgment over Being” (32/56-57). As a consequence, Heidegger later notes, metaphysical systems ultimately “merely attest to an accelerating flight in the face of the unknown ground” (Nietzsche IV 155/286).

Heidegger is no doubt critical of the will to system, but this is different from an indictment. In his Schelling course he means to nuance the difference between an external and manipulating approach to system (the Weltanschauung contrived to satisfy the aspirations of the Wissenschaft, ST 16-18/26-29) and an internal disclosure of “the jointure [der Fuge] and coherence of Being itself” (28/50). To philosophize from a position of ‘need’ with respect to Being as whole is not utterly distinct from systematizing from within a position of reason’s own creative demand. In 1928 and 1936 alike Heidegger appreciates the drive to system by way of reference to Kant’s First critique. In 1928 he quotes directly: “But by system I understand the unity of the manifold items of knowledge under an idea. This idea is the concept, produced by reason, of the form of the whole” (CPR, A832, B860; Essence of Reasons, 65-67/149-50). In 1936 he paraphrases:

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15 According to the 1927 course, the dialectic of self-consciousness furnished idealism with an apparent means of getting “behind the mode of being of the subject and of mind” (BPP 152/GA 24: 217). When Fichte says “Gentlemen, think the wall, and then think the one who thinks the wall” (at 162/231), the appeal to self-consciousness assumes an ontological distinction between res cogitans and res extensa (ego and non-ego) such that thought is capacitated to reflect on the thinking subject in spite of the “contexture” to which thinker and wall belong. Heidegger will make use of this same example when underscoring the significance of ontological difference in 1944-45 (see TP 37/129-30).

16 See The Essence of Reasons, 1928, 63f/148f, 74-75/152-53.

17 It is in this way, John Sallis observes, that “the possibility of system and the philosophical will to system belong to the essential constitution of the modern age” (Sallis, “Schelling’s System of Freedom,” 158).
Reason is what makes all the actions of our understanding ‘systemical’ (A664, B692). Reason makes us ‘look out’ from the very beginning for the unity of a fundamental connection with everything we meet (A655, B683). Reason is the faculty of looking out into a view, the faculty of forming a horizon. Thus reason itself is nothing other than the faculty of system, and reason’s interest is concerned with making evident the greatest possible manifold of knowledge in the highest possible unity. (ST 37/64)

In each case there is a sense of reason’s necessary drive to system, and in each case the drive obtains by way of production and formation. The later statement is more pronounced, emphasizing the visual and constructive elements of the system demand. Indeed, he goes on to cite Kant’s appeal to a “focus imaginarius” in which reason is the faculty “of anticipatory gathering,” an ‘art’ of logos, legein in reason itself (ST 37/65). The visual and architectural sense is crucial, for in it lies the incipient difference between exercising system as an “absolute requirement” (35/61) rooted in an intellectual intuition purporting to possess a “nonobjective knowledge of beings as a whole [which] knows itself as the true and absolute knowledge” (45/77), and understanding system as “the jointure of Being itself” (39/68). These different accents on system reveal Heidegger’s position regarding the tension between external and internal deployments of reason to be a result of the Kantian legacy of creative knowing. In the leading sense, the movement from without to within wagers on Kant’s determination of reason as “a creative faculty [schöpferisches Vermögen]” (41/72), an “art” (37/64) of gathering still poised to overtake the “idealistic shaping of system” and its totalizing assumptions (42/74).

Attuned to inner jointure, not external manipulation, creative reason may pursue “the nature of true Being . . . the nature of the ground for beings as a whole” (9/15). The immediate tension, however, is that the ‘creative’ shape of reason is also implicated in the way system has contrived its “framework

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18 In his Nietzsche Lectures Heidegger describes an important, concealing consequence of this ‘look’ for the matter of ontological difference: “The differentiation of Being from beings appears here to depend on and consist in looking away from (‘abstracting’) all the particularities of beings, in order to retain the most universal as the ‘most abstract’ (the most removed). With such differentiation of Being from beings nothing is said about the inner content of the essence of Being” (Nietzsche IV 156-57/287).

19 Intuition, in this sense, assumes the standpoint of a knowing prefiguration belonging to the Absolute, a knowing of the Absolute “in the double sense that the Absolute is the knower and the known, neither only the one nor only the other, but both the one and the other in an original unity” (ST 47/81).
of knowledge of beings” (39/68), a production of reason performed according to the view that system alone “guarantees the inner unity of knowledge, its scientific character and truth” (42/74).²⁰

Heidegger thus reads Schelling’s Freedom Essay from a horizon of great anticipation: the nature of Schelling’s problematic is poised to re-task the will to system with an obligation to the whole of Being, an obligation that will displace the external construal of “unified fullness” (39/68) in favor of a more primordial ontological attunement. The critical question is how to adjudicate the agent of prefiguration in creative reason – is it the eidetic figuring of the subjective knower or is it the primordial legein of thought in and of the whole of Being, the whole in which man “stands” (45/77)? Heidegger’s anticipation is thus tempered by the suspicion that the will to system, even in Schelling, will prove unable to forsake the manipulative use of reason’s representational and determinative legein. Will the shape of the whole be drawn forth in terms of the ground and inner jointure of Being or will it be prefigured from a position of withdrawal and elective totality? These questions ask whether the pitfalls of the inquiring imagination in fact run deeper than Schelling realized, to the point where even the resoluteness of man and his reason are beset by an irresistible course of representation and production.

II. The Poetry of Thought: The Open Occurrence and the Primordial Band

Eclipsing man and system with a position recovered within Being’s own need is, as we have begun to see, an impulse that Heidegger finds specified in elements of philosophical questioning and ontological jointure. Heidegger observes that Schelling establishes the possibility that the system (of freedom) will be present in the “divine understanding,” in which case the course of prefiguring the whole will be attributed to a ground of being, as theos, in God. This means the systematizing standpoint is passed through a “theological” turn such that the question of freedom “essentially

²⁰ Thought through to its end, however, even this position of reason already signals a drive “to know and grasp a prefigured whole in its prefiguration from the very basis and more primordially” (ST 50/87).
moves within the realm of this primordial theology of Being” (ST 50-51/87-88). Though this bearing is fundamental to the new impetus Schelling’s elaboration of jointure will perform, we may rightly expect that the decision for theological comprehension shall remain a limiting factor. But the appeal of the turn toward divine understanding is that it establishes a question about “beings as such, about the essence of Being in general” (51/88). There must be a primal ground of Being (for Schelling: in God), an ontological relation in which man stands and from which man’s knowledge of manifest beings unfolds. The necessity thus situates human cognition in a ground which capacitates the knowledge of beings, says Heidegger, and the very “grounding of Da-sein” itself (53/93). The potential for being driven beyond man thus begins in the position of the grounding relation of the whole: “Schelling must deal namely with the question of what man is in relation to beings as a whole, what this relation is and what this relation of one of the beings (man) in the whole means for beings” (53/92). Heidegger believes Schelling realizes this initial necessity by transferring the force of intellectual intuition to the genitival and generative knowledge ‘of’ the divine understanding. We apprehend a likeness to which we belong, a primal being that exercises an understanding prior to cognition, yet in which the strife between necessity and freedom proves fundamental to disclosing “a new path and a new horizon to the relation of beings in general,” a path of emergence in which philosophy itself arises “from a fundamental law of Being itself” (58/100).

The spirit of such a remark evidences Heidegger’s intention to capture the primordial bearing of Schelling’s standpoint without concerning himself (for the moment) with its theological milieu. The tension between necessity and freedom presents system with a reflection of philosophy’s own constitutive position as “intrinsically a strife [Widerstreit] between necessity and freedom” (58/100). Here the term ‘strife’ is captured from Schelling’s oeuvre and set in the motion of primordial

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21 Schelling’s inquiry is “in a unique sense ontological and theological at the same time” (ST 51/88).
22 Heidegger stresses the interconnected play of the theological (the ground of beings as a whole) and ontological (the essence of beings as such) in Schelling’s inquiry, but hastens to add that Schelling’s discussion of pantheism necessarily highlights the questionable status of “ontotheology” (ST 66/113-14).
questioning. As this strife philosophical questioning attains the intention to draw "the truth of Being.

. . . out into the open [ins Frei]" (57/100), to the region in which strife’s unifying course is enacted.

On this new path of questioning from the law of Being, then, this interest in the ‘open’ translates into a path of return to the horizon of the “world occurrence [Weltvorgang]” wherein “the world itself arises anew in its actual origins and rules as world” (58/100). Somewhat ambiguously, Heidegger likens such an enactment to “the poetry of the poet” in the essential sense of opening upon the primordial and not reworking the knowable realm (58/100). 23 To think from the basis on which necessity and freedom arise in a primordial strife is then to think from the occurrence, from the “unconditioned [Unbedingte]” (60/105) ground of beings and not, for example, from a delimitation of freedom under the province of practical philosophy. Schelling’s ‘realm’ recalls systematic knowing to the position that Heidegger has, since Being and Time, ascribed to the being of Dasein – that position for which the meaning of being is an issue. 24 Positioned thus, inquiry will no longer assume any distinction between Being and knowledge of being but will heed a more fundamental ontological difference. Heidegger characterizes what Schelling’s standpoint has won as follows:

The question of the principle of the formation of system is thus the question in what does the essence of Being consist, in what does Being have its truth? And that is the question in which realm something like Being can become manifest at all and how it preserves this openness for itself and preserves itself in the openness [Offenbarkeit]. . . . The real question of beings, the primordial ontological question, is that of the essence of Being and the truth of this essence. And now we recognize that to search for the principle of the formation of system means to ask how a jointure is grounded in Being and how a law of jointure [Gesetz der Fügung] belongs to it, and that means to think about the essence of Being. Searching for the principle of the formation of system means nothing other than asking the real ontological question, at least striving toward it. (ST 64-65/110-112) 25

Schelling’s gesture toward the divine understanding shares with pantheism a theological formulation of the question of ground in which “The question of Being in general is meant [Gemeint ist die Frage nach dem Seyn überhaupt]” (80/142). In the search for system’s principle he allows a

23 The reference to poetry will be clarified in the next chapter in terms of Heidegger’s engagement with Hölderlin.
24 “Dasein. . . is ontically distinguished by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an issue for it” (BT 32/16).
25 We will investigate a later, more decisive, instance of this problem of ‘principle’ in Schelling in chapter six.
more dialectical and primordial impulse to flow in and over the idealist currents of intellectual intuition and external systematizing. In this way, Schelling’s path, for Heidegger, exchanges the immediate egoistic occurrence of idealist intuition for the eventful world occurrence of Being’s truth. His work returns the creative art of reason to interior strife of all productive gathering. But here an inevitable question arises: Why is Heidegger willing to embrace, for the moment, a primordial strife of questioning toward the question of Being under the auspices of a systemic standpoint? Why allow the grounding of Da-sein and the path of occurrence to enjoy the traction of an inquiry into the necessary origins of divine understanding?

The answer consists in the manner by which Schelling’s question of Being is meant. This does not say the question is implicitly alluded to or stowed in the cargo of system formation. It says, rather, that Schelling’s standpoint marks the domain of the question and that his thought advances as far into this domain as his standing in the inheritance of Kantian creative reason could allow. Specifically, the question is meant – is allowed to become meaningful – insofar as the attunement toward thinking this grounding occurrence arises through the poiesis of the copula, for Heidegger understands Schelling’s treatment of the law of identity as an opening through with the question of the meaning of Being may be asked. The creative life of the copula accords with the ‘open’ into which the truth of Being is drawn. Identity, Heidegger observes, “is the belonging together [Zusammengehörigkeit] of what is different in one. . . the unity of a unity and an opposition” (77/133), and this relational significance positions the question of Being’s meaning in terms of a ‘unity’ that is “directly productive, ‘creative’ and progressing toward others. . . in truth a progression and a bringing forth is contained there” (78-79/136-37). Heidegger goes so far as to say that “the true metaphysical accomplishment” of Schelling’s treatise is “the grounding of a primordial concept of Being—in Schelling’s language the more primordial grounding of absolute identity in a
more primordial ‘copula’” (85/147). Primordially then, identity becomes “a band and a binding [als Band und Bindung],” and thus a conceptual opening toward “the possibility of a more primordial understanding of Being in general” (89/154). Schelling understands the nature of the band as spiritual – as divine will engaged with God as “creative life [schöpferisches Leben]” (87/150) – and thus casts the band of Being as an emergence of “what is creative, and that always means what gives measure [Maß-setzenden giss]” (90/150). And yet, it is at this precise moment in his reading that Heidegger sides explicitly with Schelling’s impulse and against Schelling’s idealist milieu: Schelling has transferred “the foundation of his philosophy to a deeper ground,” a depth which requires idealism “to be shattered [soll erschüttert werden]” (91/157).

The Shattering

Namely, what is to be shattered is the idealist preoccupation with an eidetic, representative interpretation of Being: “Idealism is the interpretation of the essence of Being as ‘Idea’, as the being represented of beings in general” (ST 92/158). As we have begun to note, this representational bearing, formalized as act of freedom in Kant, purports to capture beings on the basis of the ego and as “beings’ appearing to themselves in absolute knowledge” (95/164). What is to be shattered, then, is the presumption that the will to representation assures the ontological acumen of absolute knowing. Until now the indications were that Schelling’s treatise was already an accomplice in this shattering. In a certain sense this remains the case. At the same time, however, Heidegger observes that Schelling’s system of freedom is itself founded in a questionable concept of Being – “primal being is will [Ursein heißt Wollen]” (96/165) – and thus one wonders if Schelling’s own adherence to

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26 This is by no means the first time Heidegger thematizes the law of identity as a matter for investigation. See, for example, Part One chapter Four of BPP (179-226/225-320). It does appear to be, however, the first time he treats Schelling’s appraisal of the principle.

27 In his Nihilism course, Heidegger notes the Platonic background to this formulation: “Plato therefore says that Being as presence in the unconcealed is idea, visibleness. Because Being is presence of what endures in the unconcealed, Plato can therefore interpret Being, ousia (beingness), as idea. ‘Idea’ is not the name for ‘representations’ that we as ‘I-subjects’ have in our consciousness. . . . Idea is the name for Being itself. The ‘ideas’ are proteron tēi physei, the pre-vious as presencing” (Nietzsche IV 162/293-94).
will must, like the representational will, necessarily fail to pose the question of Being “in a sufficiently primordial way” (96/166).²⁸ Heidegger’s interpretation is caught between the promise of one impulse and the derailing influence of a more historical, modern impulse. Schelling stands beyond the ‘I represent’ idealist drive of Descartes, but to some extent within the ‘I am free’ drive of German idealism. His system of identity combines idealism and realism, but does he escape the circle of will and representation?

The system of Idealism is a ‘system of freedom’ because the principle of forming the system, the determining ground for the fundamental structure²⁹ of Being [der Bestimmungsgrund für das Grundgefüge des Seyns], ‘the Idea,’ is understood as freedom. It is not a matter of chance that the last section of Hegel’s Logic, on general metaphysics in German Idealism, is entitled ‘The Idea.’ Idea has now long since ceased to mean the outward appearance of objective beings which we see. Rather, it means the being represented of beings [die Vorgestelltheit des Seinden]—represented, on the way through Descartes’ ‘I think.’ That means that this representing of being represented represents itself [selbst vorstelt]. (ST 95/163-64)

²⁸ Two instructive repetitions of this point occur in Heidegger’s Nietzsche Lectures. In The Will to Power as Art the ontological primacy of the will is a clear heuristic for Heidegger’s understanding of the metaphysical tradition: “The conception of the Being of all beings as will is very much in line with the best and greatest tradition in German philosophy” (Nietzsche I 34/GA 43: 42). It is in the context of this very point that Heidegger famously remarks: “all great thinkers think the same [selbe]” (35-36/43). The reason is that “true thinking lets itself be determined by what is to be thought” (35-36/43), namely the Being of beings. But ‘sameness’ in this regard appears to entail the same dynamic motion Schelling has brought to the principle of identity, in which case thinking ‘the same’ does not mean thinking identically, but cooperating in the “bringing forth [Hervorbringen]” (ST 78-79/137) of the matter to be thought. Heidegger thus continues: “Yet this ‘same’ [selbe] is so essential and so rich that no single thinker exhausts it; each commits all the others to it all the more strictly” (Nietzsche I, 35-36/43). This point speaks to Heidegger’s relationship to Schelling on the matter of will—how will comes to be thought. In Heidegger’s lecture, “Who is Nietzsche’s Zarathustra?” (1953) he names Schelling’s Freedom Essay as the site in which “the essential coinage of Being comes to language” in Schelling’s statement: “Will is primal Being” (Wollen ist Urseyn) (at Nietzsche II 222/113) (the lecture was published originally as “Wer ist Nietzsches Zarathustra?” in Vorträge und Aufsätze (Pfüllingen: G. Neske, 1954) pp. 101-26, and Krell includes it as a supplement to Nietzsche II). The verbal motion (‘comes to language’) conveys something more than a decision—something, rather, of a necessary though limited movement of the matter of Being into language. Heidegger continues: “Here the word willing names the Being of beings as a whole. . . . No amount of erudition will ever uncover what it means that Being appears as will. What it means can only be asked in thinking; as what is to be thought, it can only be celebrated as worth asking about; as something we are mindful of, it can only be kept in mind” (222-23/114). His invocation of ‘mindfulness’ is not a thinly veiled statement of critical distance but rather an assignment of question-worthiness. It is a way of assigning thought the task of ‘questioning’ evoked through the very impulses of Schelling’s treatise. The vital difference is that Heidegger does not believe the matter of ‘will’ is settled, exhausted. He means to draw this coinage and appearance back toward the deeper necessity and agency of Being in which man “is held” (223/114). Where Schelling goes astray, Heidegger believes, is in assuming the authority of predicating Being (will) as ‘eternal’ and ‘independent from time’ (225/117), and thus settled as a matter for thought in a way incommensurate with the dynamism otherwise granted the identity principle.

²⁹ Though Stambaugh translates das Grundgefüge as “jointure” I believe ‘structure’ is more appropriate. Heidegger does at times use Fuge in his Schelling course, but it is not clear his full thematization of ‘jointure’ is yet in place. This thematization occurs more fully in the Beiträge.

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The problem will and Idea pose to the impulse is the leading edge of a larger hesitation in Heidegger, and thus an interpretive difficulty for the reader. To be clear, Heidegger has applauded Schelling’s intentional absorption of the striving his subject matter requires – the dissolution of the egoistic conception of Being’s unity in the deeper currents of a primordial jointure. The advent of a higher realism upsets the reign of a representational absolute knowing, and portends the manifest “boundary [Grenze]” (96/166) beyond which idealism cannot pass. And yet the extent to which Schelling consciously orchestrates the revision in deterministic thinking is unclear, almost beside the point. Schelling is something of a vehicle for a “new kind of questioning” (99/171), a questioning through which the reality of evil will necessarily “split open [gesprengt]” (98/170) the ambitions of system. Indeed, Heidegger borrows from Schelling the language of ‘beginnings’ then accredits the problem itself (and not the thinker) – evil – with determining a “new beginning in metaphysics. . . a transformation of the question of Being” (97/168, see also 103/180). In Schelling the question of the ground of beings “as a whole” is “raised anew” (96/167), yet in Schelling one also finds a necessary point of arrest, a failure to sustain the question of Being. At the same time, it seems we are faced with a preponderance of elemental engagements between Heidegger and Schelling and yet none pertain explicitly to the imagination. Heidegger is alert to the poietic bearing of Schelling’s copula and band, and the poetic path of thinking from the need of Being, but has yet to address the divine imagination or the measuring word in depth. Either our topic is at an impasse or is submerged within the shattering transformation of questioning.

III. The Mood of the Moment
Clues to resolving these predicaments begin to appear as Heidegger deepens his sense of the “essential impulse [wesentliche Stoß]” (ST 98/169) by focusing more rigorously on the attunement of questioning and the creative occurrence of the jointure. First, the impulse presses for continued questioning, and it is through questioning that the “openness of Being” becomes manifest (98/169). Schelling’s system of freedom “wants to answer the fundamental question of the essence of Being in
a sense which comprehends all impulses to thought [alle Denkantrieb]” (104/181). Rightly attuned, the motion of questioning evokes the “primordial fundamental mood [Grundstimmung]” which shall “ignite [entzündet]” the release of forces intrinsic to “creative Dasein [schöpferisches Dasein]” (105/183). The mood, that is, and not the resolution of the system, is the decisive matter. Just as Schelling is interested in moving inquiry into the motion of divine self-revelation, Heidegger is interested in holding thought in the motion of an open inquiry. Heidegger confesses a “one-sidedness” (106/185) in this approach to Schelling’s text, but even the question of evil’s inner possibility seems to require of Schelling the ‘open’ question: “What belongs to the determination of a self-contained being?” (107/186). “As with every actual interpretation of a work of thought,” Heidegger explains, “it is true here that it is not the opinion which a thinker ends up with that is decisive... Decisive rather is the movement of questioning that alone lets what is true come into the open [das Wahre ins Offene kommt]” (106/185).

Second, the distinction between ground and existence marks an impulse toward primordial occurrence that must remain a matter for questioning. As Heidegger understands it, as Schelling’s ground is a non-rational substratum, existence (as Existenz) is “what emerges from itself and in emerging reveals itself” (107/187). Both principles serve the unity of the Wesen understood as self-contained Being as a whole, and abide as a distinction in the will. The motion of the jointure then, is irreducible to objective presence, and the occurrence of this motion does not obtain in temporal succession. The being of the principles, rather, happens as a “Moment [Augenblick]” of simultaneity, a “true temporality [eigentlichen Zeitlichkeit]” understood “poetically” as “the most primordial temporality” (113/197). Distinct from the ‘immediacy’ of something like intellectual intuition, this simultaneity measures the being of the jointure, the Wesen of the primordial whole. Heidegger also characterizes it as a moment of “clearing [Lichtung]” (114/199) for the “possibility” of creation

Following Schelling’s impulse means taking up “the necessity of an essential returning to a great basic mood [eine große Grundstimmung]” (ST 105/183-84).
(118/205-6) as the self-revelation of God. We have then a motion of questioning poised to capacitate
*creative Dasein*, and a matter of such questioning that opens forth as a temporal depth and
capacitating *creation* in the clearing of the jointure.

With these points the impulse in Schelling returns again to the threshold of will and, so
doing, specifies the questionable status of the imagination in Heidegger’s reading. To think together
in the primordial occurrence the force of creative Dasein and the creative moment of the clearing is
to embrace two elements within the jointure’s world occurrence. Being ‘is’ as a whole *and* as an
issue for the poetic impulse here situated. But is the elemental creation here afoot going to remain an
‘open’ question of the open or will the will of system (and to system) confuse the course? Schelling’s
sense of artistry and creation in the motion of divine self-revelation is now at hand in a specific way,
and Heidegger’s interest in this aspect of the jointure’s occurrence is uncertain. In one sense, he
cautions against recourse to “the idea of *production* [*Herstellens*] which all too easily obtrudes itself”
(118-19/207, my emphasis).31 But who is the target of this caution – Schelling, his interpreters, or
both? Evidently, Heidegger means to advance a distinction between *production* and *poiesis*, between
creation in the sense of willful manipulation and creation in the sense of gathering and saying. Their
difference is not yet explicit. He allows that, on Schelling’s view, understanding becomes as a
“clearing [*Lichtung*]” (119/207, see also 140-41/244, 128/223) in which imaging and utterance
obtain. God’s reflexive self-representation is a ‘gathering’ (*legein*) of image as word (126/219), a
word of longing and love by which the “the jointure [*Fuge*] of Being is uttered [*augesprochen*]”
(128/223). Seen this way, creation in the jointure’s moment “is not the manufacturing of something
which is not there, but the bending of the eternal will of longing into the will of the word, of
gathering [*Sammlung*]” (130-31/226). The nuance allows Schelling some distance from the
deterministic instruments of absolute idealism. But the will of the jointure and the will of its thinker

31 The original reads: “Und es ist in diesem Zusammenhang von Bedeutung, den hier gar zu leicht sich
vordrängenden Gedanken des Herstellens fernzuhalten” (GA 42: 207).
remain an obtrusion, and any path of primordial questioning must also tread carefully. The being of Schelling’s jointure is creative insofar as it concerns “what becomes in willing” (131/227), in which case we are again put on watch to wonder whether such a primordial band of necessary freedom is an adequate treatment of the clearing and its moment.

The Moment of Language and Justification
As if to read Schelling’s account of evil as evidence for this very worry, Heidegger finds in the impetus to dis-jointure (Ungefüge) a more primordial obtrusion of production, specifically in the saying measure of man. Evil is capacitated amid the clearing of light and dark principles as a counter-utterance and a presencing of man. Man “utters himself and becomes present in language [spricht selbst und west in der Sprache],” elevating himself over the universal will by uttering the ‘light’ of understanding (141/245). Dis-jointure arises as a ‘turn’, a “reversal,” an “upheaval against the primal being” (143/247-48). This possibility is ‘prefigured’ in the ground, but the free knowing that “wills in the will” (158/274) becomes adversarial in a collusion of language, light, and presencing. This is a fair reading of Schelling, but we must hear in Heidegger a focus on the willful and productive which stops short of characterizing man’s ‘rising-up’ in terms of sin (145/248). The integrity of the jointure’s creative work comes down to a specific situation of utterance and production – both in the primodial ‘igniting’ of Dasein, it would seem, and in the question that attends to this world-occurring clearing. Still, how and why Heidegger implicates Schelling in misguided ‘idea’ of production needs clarification.

We have already noted Schelling’s own concerns with the Gedanken des Herstellens in the emergence of man’s self-assertion, the covetousness of yearning, and, from a different angle, in representational abstraction. Heidegger’s concern on this point is with the way Schelling purports to resolve this issue by retreating from the problem of production and disjointure into an enterprise in justification. The retreat, as it were, marks a missed opportunity to hold in question the tension between the creative life of the jointure and the representing will impressed upon it. Such questioning
would inevitably interrogate (and potentially refine) the productive character of the imagination, both in the moment of jointure and in the thought which strives to comprehend it. But Schelling, by Heidegger’s reading, decides to justify the basis of necessary freedom and evil by appealing to a higher unity on the basis of divine production and will. Schelling’s original “impetus” and “questioning,” says Heidegger, diminish as the “more primordial interpretation of being [ursprünglichere Auslegung des Seyns]” (159/276) falls beneath the “polemical” (161/278) account of divine personality. A metaphysical gathering deflects questioning from the more essential gathering sought by the impulse. Schelling’s “impasse” (Scheitern) thus arises in its most specific form when he attempts to limit ‘system’ to the being of existence in God, and thereby advance the larger being of God as a life, a life in which the bond of unity is assured (160-61/279). The drive toward unity, in short, distances the principles of jointure and occludes the opening in which questions of production, creation, and will could persist. Heidegger explains:

At this stage of the treatise on freedom it is not yet clearly evident to Schelling that precisely the positing the jointure of Being [Seynsfuge] as the unity of ground and existence makes a jointure of Being as system impossible. Rather, Schelling believes that the question of system, that is, the unity of beings as a whole, would be saved if only the unity of what truly unifies [die Einheit des eigentlich Einigenden], that of the Absolute, were correctly formulated. (ST 161/279)

The impulse is lost beneath an ensuing apologetic, one that resorts to the same determinative instruments and will to system it has already placed in question. System requires unity, unity is best secured on the side of existence (the principle of light), and existence is itself assured in the life of divine personality. The internal impetus gives way to external assurance. The dark remainder of ground falls by the wayside, and with it the fundamental ‘between’ of the two principles – the precise opening within the jointure. Schelling’s elusive discussion of Indifferenz, moreover, confirms the shape of this impasse as a misguided production of gathering. Thought, as strife, is lost in a comprehending act of divine love. Where the “knowing perdurance [wissendes Innestehen]” of all beings (162/281) wrought in the primordial opposition of ground and existence should have pointed to a finite essence of Being and of what stands in Being, Schelling elides the standing destiny of
historical being in favor of a transcendent indifference positioned to author absolute unity. It is as though Schelling fell into a visible representation of the necessary, primordial strife of the jointure, then modeled an assurance for the word of unity in a still more primordial seat of systemic determination. The move to indifference is thus an effort toward comprehending and representing the incomprehensible essence of freedom which “transposes us into the occurrence of Being [Vollzug des Seyns]” (162/281). At the same time, Heidegger believes indifference and personality reflect a lingering appeal to the absolute on the basis of anthropomorphic analogies which, ironically, occlude the underlying question of finitude. All told, the investigation shrinks before the weight of destiny otherwise attached to historical, finite beings.

IV. Imagination at a Poetizing Impasse?
Although Heidegger’s interpretation, particularly on the matter of Indifferenz, is open to questioning and merits more rigorous interpretation on the basis of his other works since Being and Time, our immediate concern is to ascertain whether Schelling’s impasse marks an impasse for what we have called the poetic imagination. Clearly we do a disservice to Heidegger and to Schelling if we reduce the impasse to a cul-de-sac of ontotheology, then leave the matter to the side. According to Heidegger, Schelling fails to relinquish the will to system and remain within the primordial clearing, strife, finitude and moment of the jointure. In broad terms, his error is not in reaching the impasse by way of misdirection, but in resisting the moment of the impasse as an “occurrence of Being [Vollzug des Seyns]” (162/281) in which thought/questioning may take an essential stand. The impasse marks that site in which the necessity of a second beginning for thought is to arise through the

32 Schelling’s subject matter “is the Absolute, creation, nature, the essential factors of Being, pantheism, and idealism,” and yet “all of this speaks only of man, and the highest determinations are gained from an analogy to man” (ST 162/282).
33 As John Sallis observes: “The accomplishment of the system of freedom is simultaneously a failure—that is, it runs aground in such a way as to surpass, through the will to system, the very demand for system which governs all of modern philosophy. It is this failure, which is, at the same time, a surpassing, and in the reference of this failure back to the beginning of Western philosophy that Schelling’s thought portends the necessity of a new beginning” (Sallis, 1972: 163).
34 See Freydberg, 97-108 for one avenue of critique.
transformation of the first. In more narrow terms, Schelling’s path of primordial questioning becomes a vulnerable account of creation, representation, understanding, and measure. From Schelling’s point of view the ontology of will is framed between the indifferent depths of the un-ground and the assuring heights of the divine personality, a frame that accomplishes a system of human freedom while enlivening the very meaning of system. From Heidegger’s point of view, Schelling loses sight of the fundamental “disruption of Dasein” (164/292) disclosed in the capacitating ground for freedom and evil, and the deep moment of temporality there manifest. The ontological primacy of the eternal will, in effect, obfuscates the ek-static essence of time (an impulse from BT) as well as Dasein’s sojourning Inständigkeit (instantiality) in relation to the be-ing of beings.35

The specific balance of these critiques is this: the obtrusion of production within Schelling’s essential impulse stirs in Heidegger a resistance to the imagination in the very moment in which he envisions a more poetic bringing-forth for thought. Curiously, the promise of the imagination stands in a position of withdrawal beneath the gathering of systemic reason, yet the poetic gathering of questioning in and from the open jointure unveils the creative measure-giving of both Being and thought. While we are forced to admit that Heidegger’s early devotion to the impulse of the productive imagination has waned, we must also recognize that the very touchstones of the impulse beyond man, system, eidetic configurations of being, and toward the open event of fugal jointure are constituent elements of the imagination, particularly the Schellingian imagination: creation and poiesis, measure and utterance. In short, the status of the imagination at the ‘end’ of metaphysics and on the brink of a ‘leap’ into inceptual thinking is not easy to ascertain. One is tempted to minimize the issue for Heidegger, consign it to closing stretch of transcendental reflection and absolute identity, and characterize the turn through fundamental ontology to inceptual thinking as turn from imagination in the meaning and thinking of Being to poetry in the open disclosure of Being and

truth. I believe our discussion thus far shows such a temptation to be simplistic and misleading. The poetic impulse in Heidegger (only briefly noted in this text, though contemporaneous with it) is indeed vital and will concern us in the following chapter, but in order to grasp this impulse in full and regard it as a possible reorientation of the imagination we must further specify the source of Heidegger’s hesitation over *Einbildungskraft, Ineinsbildung*, and the fleet of representational maneuvers through which Schelling’s ‘essential’ inquiry discloses its matter.

*The Critical Lacuna*

Based on the 1936 course, it appears as though Heidegger did not deign to treat or explicitly embrace Schelling’s formulations of the imagination because the sense of becoming, creation, measuring, and inspired reason stood contaminated by the obstinate instruments of *willful production* and its externally-bound ‘ideas.’ In this sense Schelling’s treatment of, and vision for, the imagination confirm Heidegger’s longstanding worries about the Kantian tendency to understand *being* as producedness (*BPP* 150/213-214) and *reason* as a productive *legein* (*ST* 37/64). The fault is not properly Kant’s, but belongs to an ontological orientation in Kant which the age of idealism rectifies in its will to system. To be clear, production (and its ‘obtrusion’) names a problem with two tiers: the assumption that the meaning or essence of primordial being is will, and the exercise of willful production in the thinking that treats the primordial. Heidegger’s texts of the 1930s offer many avenues for parsing this concern. But the best treatment for our purposes – the most troubling

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36 Žižek, for example, argues that “Heidegger’s late ‘thought of Being’ enacts an analogous false resolution of the inherent deadlock of the original project of *Being and Time*. . . . what Heidegger actually encountered in his pursuit of *Being and Time* was the abyss of radical subjectivity announced in Kantian transcendental imagination, and he recoiled from this abyss into his thought of the historicity of *Being*” (Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, 22-23). This view is too rigid, even if it is the basis for Žižek’s interest in focusing on the aspect of the political as a heuristic for Heidegger’s ‘recoiling.’ Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei is more circumspect: “Although Heidegger provides a generous ontological account of the imagination in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, he generally abandons the terminology of the imagination when he attends later to art and poetic language, because he is unable to dissociate the imagination from metaphysical (Cartesian) subjectivity. And while Heidegger occasionally refers to images in poetry, he expresses . . . hesitation with regard to the visualizable element of poetic language, a hesitation no doubt due to the metaphysical alliance between images and representational consciousness” (*Heidegger, Hölderlin, and the Subject of Poetic Language* (NY: Fordham University Press, 2009) 252). Still, I believe we must press the matter of ‘dissociation’ further, elucidating Heidegger’s predicament as one of poetizing and will.
diagnosis of the imagination on the face of it— is found in his course lectures on Nietzsche (1936-40). If in prior years (works of 1927-29 noted above) Heidegger identified the Kantian deployment of the creative character of reason, so too in his *The Will to Power as Knowledge and as Metaphysics* (1939) and *Nihilism* (1940) he surveys the movement through Plato, German Idealism, and Nietzsche of this reciprocity between Being as “at bottom experienced as will” and subjective reflection’s assumption of willfulness in ontological, theoretical, and practical domains. Through this itinerary, says Heidegger, “man first of all comes to know himself as a willing subject in an essential sense on the basis of a still unelucidated experience of beings as such in the sense of a willing that has yet to be thought” (*Nietzsche IV* 205). In the directional vector of these emphases through absolute identity, the *beingness* of beings was regarded in terms of effectiveness (actuality) and objectivity (181/314-15)– ultimately consummating the subjectivization of beingness. To ‘think’ this larger experience, Heidegger adopts the phrase, the “poetizing character of reason *[Das dichtende Wesen der Vernunft]*” (in his *The Will to Power as Knowledge and as Metaphysics*, §15) (*Nietzsche III* 97/GA 47: 177) as a title for the fate of the transcendental imagination in Kant, a doctrine he still regards as an “incomparable” step (96/180). How might the tensions within such ‘poetizing’ serve to situate the concerns about production in the Schelling course and clarify Heidegger’s silence on the Schellingian imagination?

In the section thus entitled “The Poetizing Essence of Reason” the interpretive point of departure is an isolated remark in Nietzsche’s “On the Advantages and Disadvantages of History for Life” (1873). Nietzsche notes: “The development of reason is adjustment, invention, in order to make similar, identical—the same process that every sense impression goes through!” (at *Nietzsche III* 94/177). Poetizing denotes a necessary inventiveness in the exercise of reason which “must always occur before there can be thinking in the usual sense” (95/178). This has little to do with a ‘poetic’ essence; it does, however, suggest how the fictional bearing of poetry (which Plato resisted in *Republic* Bk. X) is always already operative in the prefigurative and categorical constitution of
entities by reason in encountering them. But in what sense is poetizing a term of necessity and not, per se, a term of prognosis? In simple terms, reason finds itself thrown into a situation in which it has a task to perform, and if the situation is first manifest as a surrounding sensuous field, then it will take the cues for this task from its default comportment to this field. Nietzsche’s insight is that reason is underway as a commanding force invested in efficacy by way of securing order and constancy in the entities it determines. This accounts for the appeal of constitutive ‘Ideas’ in the Greek sense, a “higher origin [höheren Ursprung]” (95-96/181) to which objects may be referred, figured, and drawn into the sphere of the “utility” (97/181) of a reason “intent on something constant” (99/183). Descriptively speaking, poetizing is a choice for order over chaos, and reason requires order if it is to attribute purpose or finality to the purportedly “actual” (100/185) field of experience. Heidegger repeats a consistent point of reference:

Kant first explicitly perceived and thought through the creative character of reason [dichtenden Charakter der Vernunft] in his doctrine of the transcendental imagination. The conception of the essence of absolute reason in the metaphysics of German Idealism (in Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel) is thoroughly based on the Kantian insight into the essence of reason as a ‘formative’, creative ‘force’ [‘bildenden, dichtenden Kraft’]. (Nietzsche III 95-96/179)

Kant is by no means the author of this character, but formalizes a necessity which expresses “what had to be said about the essence of reason on the basis of modern metaphysics” (96/180). By ‘basis’ Heidegger means the correlation between subjectivity and reason previously noted in terms of the reflection of the ontological will in the commanding willfulness of subjective knowing, and here identified as “the self-certain representing of beings in their beingness, that is, objectivity” (96/180). But did not the Schelling interpretation already treat this tendency as a problem manifest in production? How can this sense of poetizing be necessary and problematic at the same time?

Calculative Representation

Before answering this question we must consider how Heidegger finds in poetizing a scope of necessity that attaches to reason’s representational drive. Representing as the offspring of

37 As, for example, ‘Machenschaft’ will be for Heidegger contemporaneous to these reflections.
subjectivity’s self-understanding in modern metaphysics wrought in terms of willing. The target of representing of course becomes objects (beings), but the character of reason which enacts this representing is, one could say, derived from (and derivative of) the appearance of Being as will. Representing is reason’s way of attaining the traction required for its certain determinations of beings and Being. Accordingly, the willful and creative character of reasoning further capacitates itself as a faculty – as the transcendental or intuitive receptacle in which appearances of beings are, so to speak, schematized into objectivity. Heidegger’s statement to this effect merits quoting in full:

Representing [Vorstellen] must be self-certain because it now becomes the re-presenting of objects that is established purely on itself, that is, as bound up with a subject. In self-certainty, reason makes certain that with its determination of objectivity it secures what is encountered. It thus places itself in the scope of a ubiquitously calculable certainty. Thus reason becomes more explicitly than ever before the faculty that forms and images to itself everything that beings are. Hence it becomes the imagination [Einbildungskraft], without qualification, understood in this way. If we emphasize that Kant ‘only’ more clearly foresaw and expressed this essence of reason for the first time as a whole and in terms of the actual dimensions of its capacities as a faculty, this ‘only’ should in no way diminish the Kantian doctrine of transcendental imagination. The only thing we wish to do and can do here is to concentrate on rescuing this step of Kantian thinking by noting that it is incomparable [Unvergleichliche]. (Nietzsche III 96/180)

The passage is perplexing. If one comes to it by way of the Kantbuch the destiny of reason as imagination, and the need to ‘rescue’ this step, is plausible. If, however, one comes to it by way of “The Essence of Truth” and Introduction to Metaphysics (texts we will soon discuss in chapter five), the conspiracy of imagination and ‘calculable certainty’ appears starkly opposed to the conception of truth as aletheia. Read by way of Heidegger’s 1936 course, one cannot help but hear in representation and calculation the external, manipulating, and mathematical approach to system and thus Being as a whole which Heidegger’s Schelling, to his credit, opposed. In what sense is Kant’s step ‘incomparable’? And in what sense is the representational, poetizing force indeed ‘essential’ in reason? If this is the Wesen of reason then the creative character of thought would seem in the very least incongruent with the celebrated structuring of freedom’s essence in and from the open jointure of Being. The schematizing subject of such imagination seems more an acolyte of Wissenschaft and Weltanschauung than the ek-sistent Da-sein instantiated in the ecstatic expanse of the jointure’s
moment. Perhaps what Heidegger means to rescue is Kant’s foresight – that reason’s stake in representation would accelerate down a path of self-fulfilling determination, and so doing amass in itself a quantifiable, schematizing decisiveness. The more reason, as a faculty, wagers its authority on the ability to represent standing objects in their beingness, and Being as Idea or “representedness,” the more it must strive to equate its grasping and seeing of beings (its thea and horan) with a “beingness of beings” (as ousia) presumed to be “the a priori, the prius, the prior” (Nietzsche IV 157-58/288-89). Creative reason finds itself in the aftermath of a deal brokered with representation and representedness, in which case the so-called faculty of reason must avail itself of its productive, poetizing resources.

It is by virtue of being alert to this sense of necessity in poetizing (though without affirming it as the only possible sense of poetizing or, for that matter, thinking) that Heidegger further elaborates the pressure toward identity and constancy in the performance of representational determination. Combining the sense of Kantian transcendental function with Nietzsche’s use of categories of reason, Heidegger announces that “Nietzsche too must retain the poetizing character of reason, the ‘pre-existent’, that is, preformed and prestabilized character of the determinations of Being, the schemata” (Nietzsche III 97/181). Sense impressions require of the rational subject a poetizing stamp of “identity and sameness” if the sensuous is to be gathered and secured as permanent: poetizing “first clears for what is encountered that free place from which and upon which

38 See Kiesel, 296.
39 Heidegger clarifies this predicament in the Nihilism course (Nietzsche IV) by posing a rather critical question: “How is it, then, if there comes a moment when man frees himself to himself, as to the one being who represents by bringing everything before himself, as the tribunal of continuance? Then the idea becomes the perceptum of a perceptio; becomes what the representing of man brings before itself, precisely as what makes the to-be-represented possible in its representedness. . . . Representedness as beingness makes what is represented possible as the being. Representedness (Being) becomes the condition of the possibility of what is represented and presented-to and thus comes to stand; that is, the condition of the possibility of the object. Being— Idea— becomes a condition over which the one representing, the subject, has disposal and must have disposal if objects are going to be able to stand over against him. Being is conceived as a system of necessary conditions with which the subject, precisely with regard to the being as the objective, must reckon in advance on the basis of his relations with beings” (Nietzsche IV 174/305-06). This is the very sense in which poetizing ‘is’ essential, but is also a posture of reason under which “the truth of the essence of Being as physis, aletheia, withdraws into concealment” (170-71/303).
it can appear as something constant, as an object [Gegenstand]” (98/183). But the “pressing ‘tumult’” of sensations, says Heidegger, are already a “fictionalized manifold,” what Nietzsche understood to be an advance representation of something “as something re-presented” (98-99/183-84). In short, reason, intent on constancy, ‘produces’ beings and categories for determining them – ‘effecting’ them and, in turn, further substantiating the ongoing course of “poetized schema[s]” (99/184) such as ‘finality’ for Nietzsche. Nietzsche’s own preoccupation with the ‘developmental’ and ‘biological’ essence of reason, as well as the “fixation” of knowledge in art, further reveals the “subjective compulsion” (102/194) to grasp the world through reason and thus secure a certain permanence in life.  

The inventiveness of poetizing, observes Krell, is but one way by which Nietzsche may capture the tense situation in which truth, masquerading as “correctness of assertions about beings,” is in fact an illusion, “an illusion that is essential yet also inimical to life.” Of course, the judgment which terms something an illusion assumes some alternative measure of correctness.

In view of these insights, the sense of poetizing as both necessary in terms of reason’s character, and problematic as ultimately a “projection of the beingness of beings as permanence and presencing [Beständigkeit des Anwesens]” comes down to the phenomenological experience of reason when it discovers itself thrown amid a sensuous field of entities. Reason must take is cue from something, and since the tradition of ontology has disposed it to keep knowing and Being separate, to understand both in a representational way, it takes its cue from what appears to be most immediate – the sensuous field. This necessary state of affairs is comparable to the average everyday understanding of Being charted in Being and Time. But as in the analytic of Dasein, we may expect to learn that what appears most immediate is neither most authentic nor indeed what is ‘closest’ to the inquiring entity. Poetizing’s figurative, representational track proves to constitute an illusory

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40 See Krell’s discussion of this point in his “Analysis” following Nietzsche III/IV, 255f.
41 Ibid., 256-57.
42 Ibid., 259.
legein, but it would accomplish something far different, and far more creative in the poietic sense, if it oriented its questioning to and from the ‘open occurrence’ of the primordial jointure.

How then does it stand with the imagination? In this chapter and the last we have asked this question in the context of (1) Schelling’s pursuit of human freedom’s essence in the fugal ground of what he advances as a living system, and in (2) Heidegger’s engagement with this essential impulse and his strained relation to the course of representation and production in the systematization of this creative jointure. If, in Kant’s CPR, Heidegger found “an advocate” for fundamental ontology’s question of Being, in Schelling Heidegger finds an advocate for recalling philosophical questioning to the primordial strife of the ground. The criterion for advocacy is (in the very least) a resolve to think what is ‘inner’ on the bases it determines, bases before and beyond the external determinations of logic, abstraction, and externalizing ideas. Where Heidegger’s Kant revealed the power of imagination “as the ground for the inner possibility of ontological synthesis” (KPM 94/131) in a transcendental sense, but ultimately placed his signature beneath the mastery of the understanding as opposed to the “primordial productivity [ursprüngliche Produktivität] of the ‘subject’” (MFL 211/272), Schelling vested in the divine imagination and the measuring word a far more original and originating capacity for creation of and order for the ‘whole.’ But Heidegger’s Schelling is not quite the fulfillment of what was found wanting in Kant, and this state of interpretive affairs is not reducible to a difference of interest or project in Heidegger’s Wiederholung. Schelling’s impasse is more subtle than Kant’s, for the ‘mastery’ is given not to a faculty of understanding but to imagination in the role of production – to creative reason as a poetizing force of willful questioning presumed to accord with a willful primordial Being. The imagination that slipped through Kant’s fingers is grasped all too tightly in Schelling’s systemic gathering.

Our consideration of poetizing has elucidated this quandary, but it has also allowed us to consider an important possibility: the reason Schelling “had to get stranded” (ST 97-98/168) in his

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43 KPM xv, 1973 Preface.
service to the ‘impulse’ is because he in fact typifies, for Heidegger, a betrayal of the imagination, or what the imagination might have become. Heidegger’s specific affinity for the capacitating creativity of the jointure, for the strife of questioning, and for the originary sense of measurement and saying stand as indicative remainders of an imagination that must be rescued from the concealing productions of poetizing. If in Schelling they comprised the footing for a ‘running start’ for the leap into questioning which nevertheless staggered, it remains to examine the traction they provide for a leap by way of a different question of essence and a different path of poetizing – that of poetry and art.

Gosetti-Ferencei takes a similar view: “The productive imagination is responsible for original ‘images’ that form the conditions of possibility of presenting objects for understanding: for instance, that of continuous substance. . . . For this reason a new phenomenology of the imagination must be outlined in response to Heidegger’s disqualification. The poetical imagination, understood not in subordination and service to cognition, is not part of a static anatomy of the subject; it is not a ‘faculty.’ Rather, I argue that the imagination signifies the multiplicity of those disclosive strategies by which for Dasein a world – and Dasein as self, appear with features of being both knowable and unknowable, both present and ungraspable, and by which competing possibilities are held in abeyance in order to enrich an understanding of the real” (Gosetti-Ferencei, 252). I would only argue that Heidegger does in fact position the meaning of imagination here desired. We will explore this point more fully in the following chapter.
Chapter Five:
The Word Springs Forth: Schelling’s Shore, Heidegger’s Hölderlin, and the Aletheiac Imagination

Perhaps the one is still coming who will sing the greatest heroic poem, grasping in spirit something for which the seers of old were famous: what was, what is, what will be. But this time has not yet come.
-F.W.J. Schelling
The Ages of the World (cir. 1815)

And once more I looked back into the cold night of men, and shuddered and wept for joy that I was so blessed, and I uttered words, I think, but they were like the roar of fire when it flies up and leaves the ashes behind.
-Friedrich Hölderlin
Hyperion (cir. 1797)

Art lets truth originate. Art... is the spring that leaps to the truth of beings in the work.
-Martin Heidegger
The Origin of the Work of Art (1935)

In Leo Tolstoy’s story, The Forged Coupon, a prisoner, Stepan, decides to spend his solitary confinement learning to read. He asks his guard to bring him a copy of the Gospels.

The guard brought the book, and he got down to work. The letters he recognized, but he could not join anything together. However much he struggled to understand how letters join together in words, nothing came of it. . . .

“What, you still haven’t got there?” the guard asked him once.
“No.”
“Do you know the Our Father?”
“Yes.”
“Well, read it then. Here it is,” and the guard showed him the Our Father in the Gospels. Stepan started reading the Our Father, comparing the familiar letters with the familiar sounds. And suddenly the mystery of joining letters together was revealed to him, and he started to read. This was a great joy. And from then on he started reading, and the meaning that gradually emerged from the words he put together with such effort acquired still greater significance.¹

At the juncture of language and literacy there is a jointure of letters with words, words with meaning.

A measure beyond the person (in this case a prayer) comes to stand in the measure of the page, and a place of confinement becomes a site of open joy. An enterprise that would seem elementary gives

way to an emergence of elemental significance. What has the imagination to do with such a work of jointure and openness?

In the last chapter we sought both the central work and implicit threat of the imagination in an investigation of essence and in a retrieval of an essential impulse. If in chapter two we followed the opening of the imagination in the question, “what reality inheres in our representations?” these recent investigations have followed this opening to the more ontological question, “how is the being of the divine, of man, and of thought constituted as reell in a living ground and as a living system?”

In Schelling’s Freedom Essay the generative work of the divine imagination and the inspired vocation of human reason constituted two creative elements intrinsic to the essence of human freedom at its primordial origin and in the life of the ‘whole.’ Heidegger’s course on this text affirmed the fundamentally poietic bearing of this fugal occurrence, but hesitated over the productive character assigned to Being and afoot in the creative reason which gathered this occurrence under the unity of divine personality and for the unifying command of poetizing. Schelling’s ‘impasse,’ I argued, was as an impasse for the imagination on account of the entrenched habits of representational determination and the figurative efficacy of a systematizing legein. The imagination was manifest in the being of the copula and between the being of ground and existence, yet proved too much of an accomplice in concealing the emergence of Being in a primordial clearing, the capacitating ground for creative Dasein, and the strife of philosophical questioning.

Our present task is to consider the possibility that the imagination, though still very much in question, remains a constitutive part of Heidegger’s own service to the ‘essential impulse’ and in his endeavors to twist free of the poetizing essence of reason. This means we must be prepared to treat the imagination as ‘underway’ in conjunction with the momentum of the ‘right running start’

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2 Compare Plutarch’s reflection on his early immersion in Latin authors: “Upon which that which happened to me may seem strange, though it be true; for it was not so much by the knowledge of words, that I came to the understanding of things, as by my experience of things I was enabled to follow the meaning of words” (Plutarch’s Lives vol. IV, 365).
foresen for the leap into inctual thinking. As in our previous discussion, here we shall work from within operations of imagination that are intrinsic to questions of essence: the essence of truth, the essence of poetry, and the origin of the ‘work’ of art. The primary texts will be Heidegger’s Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry (1936) and “The Origin of the Work of Art” (1935/36).

Understanding the orientation of these texts will also require some discussion of Introduction to Metaphysics (1935) and “On the Essence of Truth” (1930), as well a brief consideration of two later Schelling texts. I will argue that the focal texts, as one sustained project, disclose the elements through which Heidegger intends a reorientation and re-tasking of the poietic bearing of the imagination, even at a moment in which he leaves the term (and its cognates) at Schelling’s impasse. Among these elements stand the need to resolve the dilemma of production by way of the creative bestowal of projection, to specify the fugal event as an event of the poetic and artistic work, to oppose the measure of poetic naming and workly strife to figurative representation and aesthetic reductionism, and to retrieve in the endurance of poetic work a basis for the resoluteness of Dasein’s dwelling and thought’s questioning. By tracing the motion of these elements in Heidegger’s discourse, and accentuating the affective shape of his phenomenological entry into the essential work of poetry, I will account for a poetizing impulse which allows the imagination to be at once questionable with respect to ascertaining the essence of projection in a poetic work’s disclosure, and question-worthy with respect to fixing and figuring the clearing of truth as the openness of beings.

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and the founding of Beyng in a work. To appreciate the instantiating, preserving capacity of language as intrinsic to the need of truth and the need for poietic work, we must follow Schelling’s fugal impulse into Hölderlin’s poetic impetus, and thereby recover Dichtung as the event of aletheia and the instigation of Denken’s measure. We begin by allowing Schelling to speak, on his own terms, to the shape of the impasse in which Heidegger has left him.

I. Asystic Form and the Truth of the Mirror

In his 1935 *Introduction to Metaphysics* Heidegger clarifies the “higher order” of philosophy, as compared to the sciences, by likening it to poetry: “Only poetry is of the same order as philosophical thinking, although thinking and poetry are not identical” (*IM* 28/20). Their likeness has to do with their ability to “talk about Nothing” – as opposed to fixing beings in their beingness as something – and this is a mark of superiority, for “the poet always speaks as if beings were experienced and addressed for the first time” (*IM* 28/20). To speak of the Nothing is to enact expression on the brink of a beginning within the relational whole of being. This is the kinship Heidegger had in mind when, in his Schelling interpretation, he likened the impulse beyond man and system into the origins of a world occurrence to “the poetry of the poet” (*ST* 58/100) – a venture into the open terrain of the primordial as opposed to the manipulation of the knowable. The higher order of poetry and philosophy cannot be understood apart from this more prevailing tendency toward willful representation and subjective production. The distinctly expressive abilities of philosophy and poetry cannot be appreciated unless held in tension with the objectivizing expressiveness that intends constancy and fixation in the will to truth. But Schelling, as well, likened what is highest in thought to the poetry of the poet.⁴ Might this interest signal a portion of the ‘essential impulse’ that is shared by the two thinkers? Is there an orientation in Schelling that in fact did not ‘get stranded’ and may support Heidegger’s efforts to rescue the poietic bearing of the imagination from the concealments of production and system?

The Indefinable and Originary

On the face of it, Schelling’s 1821 lecture, “On the Nature of Philosophy as Science,” sounds decidedly unhelpful to Heidegger’s distinction between philosophy and the sciences. Upon closer examination it reveals a moment in which Schelling strains to step through the impasse toward the strife of philosophical questioning, thereby affirming Heidegger’s interpretive concerns and gesturing, in its own way, toward the ‘right running start’ he envisions. Recalling the necessary place of the dark ground beneath the being of all existence and actuality, Schelling opens his lecture by pointing to a necessary asystation (in the Greek sense of a matter in internal conflict) prior to any system. The difficulty inherent in any attempt to locate human knowledge within a system evidences the fact that knowledge “originally and of itself” is not in a system (NPS, 210/209), but is in a state of disharmony longing for harmony. The aspiration to ‘one’ system of knowledge thus assumes one original discord beneath all systems. Schelling explains: “Hence the idea of the system as such presupposes the necessary and irresolvable conflict of the systems: without the latter the former would not arise” (212/211). How then does the “principle” (215/214) of a system’s possibility arise? Though the grounding principle would seem to require a “subject” of movement that must “proceed through everything and cannot remain in anything” (215/215), this subject is difficult to ascertain. Descartes’ cogito ergo sum and Fichte’s I am I, for example, are failed principles because they substantiate systems of mere laws, as opposed to a “living system” (216/216). Moreover, the search for the subject of the principle is itself misguided as a question of quid – ‘what’ the principle ‘is.’ A

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6 Wirth provides a helpful clarification and raises an interesting possibility: “In analyzing Schelling, Heidegger located an impossible tension between system and freedom; in the end Heidegger claimed that Schelling had to fail because of his emphasis on the system. In emphasizing the system and insisting on its strictures, Schelling is kept at bay. Otherwise he would have already been Heidegger. Perhaps Schelling could not so easily be held back” (Wirth, Schelling Now, 7).
question of definition cannot treat “the indefinable itself” (216/216). The point recalls the difficulty inherent in treating Indifferenz noted in the Freedom Essay. ‘Whatness’ assumes delimitation and form, but the basis for a system of knowledge must resist all limitation and form – must be “truly infinite” (217/217). The principle which moves in the disharmony of asystation cannot be finite, cannot be an entity, and indeed cannot even be God. What appears to be a basic exercise in presenting the necessary conditions for the possibility of system thus amounts, quite remarkably, to a bracketing of the ‘absolute’ subject and the divine personality.

The asystic principle must maintain mobility and infinity. It must, potentially at least, ‘be’ everything. Though Schelling does not here thematize the ‘Nothing,’ he does allow that the principle must have a capacity to be both God and not God; and “in this respect it is above God” (217/217) and before all determinative footholds. But is not the question of a principle for system itself a question of logical deduction asked from a horizon of systemic, determinative reason? Possibly so, but to his credit Schelling is speaking from the edge of all systems, from the preparatory limit of Idealism, from the line between system and asystasy, coherence and conflict, ‘God’ and the ‘superdivinity’ (217/217). He avers that if the necessary possibility of a system of knowledge requires as its principle something unlimited, and if thought is to apprehend this principle, then this means the philosopher of such a system must enter a realm of ‘being’ beneath the ground of any system. Philosophical

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7 Schelling’s critique of such questioning anticipates a long-standing Heideggerian preoccupation with what he will in the Beiträge call the ‘guiding question’ (Leitfrage) of the metaphysical tradition. Schelling’s work upon/against such questioning resembles what Heidegger will later call “reflection” (Besinnung) (see TP 36f/128f). In a representative later passage Heidegger observes: “Essenz” is the abbreviation for the name of a key concept in Western metaphysics: essentia. Whenever it is asked—and thinkers of metaphysics are continually inquiring in this way—quid est ens? ‘what are beings’?, essentia provides the answer to the quid-esse of beings. . . . The word that has become the standard in German for ‘essenz’ and essentia, the whatness [Wassein], is ‘essence’ [Wesen]. The German word ‘essence’ [Wesen], which verbally means the being of beings, is immediately interpreted in the traditional sense of metaphysics, which we can better signify with the name ‘substance’ [Wesenheit]” (TP 36/128). The question, of course, is whether Schelling’s Besinning on the approachability of the infinite ‘principle’ remains invested in an ‘essential’ basis for system.

8 With similar resolve for this new range of inquiry, Schiller, before Schelling, surveys the heights to which the human powers of reflection have armed the mind with “a glass for peering into the Absolute” and yet wonders: “But will such a mind, dissolved as it were into pure intellect and pure contemplation, every be capable of exchanging the rigorous bonds of logic for the free movement of the poetic faculty, or of grasping the concrete individuality of things with a sense innocent of preconceptions and faithful to the object?” (Letters, 41-43). This concern, to be sure,
questioning, one could say, must take a stand in the space between ground and existence, darkness and light:

Those, then, who want to find themselves at the starting point of a truly free philosophy, have to depart even from God. Here the motto is: whoever wants to preserve it will lose it, and whoever abandons it will find it. Only those have reached the ground in themselves and have become aware of the depths of life, who have at one time abandoned everything and have themselves been abandoned by everything, for whom everything has been lost, and who have found themselves alone, face-to-face with the infinite: a decisive step which Plato compared with death. . . . It is a grim step to take, it is grim to have to depart from the final shore. This we can infer from the fact that so few have ever been capable of it. (217-18/217-18)

The passage is notable in the way Schelling’s structure of abandonment and departure anticipates what Heidegger believes to be essential to poetry and art, as well as the depths of plight and foreboding we will consider in Heidegger’s Beiträge. But the assumption that the ground is to be found ‘in’ the ‘self’ and in an encounter with the ‘infinite’ (as opposed to the abgrund or Nothing) keeps us mindful of a telling difference from Heidegger’s step of departure.⁹ But it is with this sense of necessary departure, Schelling explains, that the turn from ‘negative’ to ‘positive’ philosophy is positioned. Instantiated in the space of the infinite, philosophy faces the possibility for system in the freedom to, or not to, take up form. The principle for system is an activity, a will: freedom.¹⁰

Schelling is quick to insist that this “pure absolute freedom itself” is not a freedom ‘from’ determination but at once a freedom ‘for’ form (existence) – it is “eternal, pure ability,” “pure will itself,” and indeed “complete indifference” (220/220). The point is consistent with his discussion of indifference in the Freedom Essay, and confirms my sense of the unground as an emergent force conceived in terms similar to those of imagination. Heidegger, had he commented on this text, would

is shared by many poets. Consider, for example, how A.R. Ammons (1926-2001) echoes this sensibility in a prefatory remark to his Ommateum collection: “These poems, then, mean to enrich the experience of being: of being anterior to action, that shapes action; of being anterior to wider, richer being” (Ammons, Ommateum: With Doxology (New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006, 1955) 23.

⁹ Still, Schelling’s position regarding the ‘self’ in this passage is worthy in its own right, and anticipates the laudable ‘danger’ Heidegger will ascribe to poets. As Kierkegaard notes in The Sickness Unto Death: “. . . for a self is the thing the world is least apt to inquire about, and the thing of all things the most dangerous for a man to let people notice he has it. The greatest danger, that of losing one’s self, may pass off as quietly as if it were nothing” (Fear and Trembling and Sickness Unto Death, trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954) 165).

¹⁰ “Freedom. . . is the essence of the subject [the principle], or the subject itself is nothing but the eternal freedom” (NPS 220/220).
likely mark this asystic quality of freedom and formation as further evidence of Schelling’s ‘productive’ impasse. And though Schelling here affirms a freedom “antecedent” to human subjectivity (242/245), and speaks of the “open space” where “wisdom can still search for and mind itself” (224/224-25) – even to the point of distinguishing ‘thought’ (as free) from ‘knowledge’ (242/245) – the way in which the science of philosophy becomes “aware of this eternal freedom” (221/221) involves the same constituent elements of imagination that provoked Heidegger’s ‘poetizing’ hesitation: likeness, recognition, production, creation, light, mirroring, and artistry.

Though the features of Schelling’s ‘impasse’ remain evident in the stated turn toward positive philosophy, the sharpening of the asystic path of philosophical questioning underscores those elements of the Freedom Essay that Heidegger applauded. Schelling is intent, once more, on the mystery of original discord and darkness, on the open horizon beneath determinative reason, and on unsettling the pretensions of logical or categorical inquiry. Whether or not he is as alert to the risks of poetizing as Heidegger would like depends on how he would understand this primordial collaboration between freedom and form. There is, however, a later confirmation of his intensified interest in pressing philosophy toward the matter of originary meaning and a poetic sense of ‘ground.’ In the Historical-critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology (1842), the Greek sense of asystation is found embodied in Greek mythology’s performance of “a certain meaning as originary [Bedeutung als ursprünglich]” which mirrors the “immemorial. . . question of meaning [Frage nach der Bedeutung]” in philosophy (PM 10/10). The association presses the far boundaries of philosophy as a ‘science.’ The way Schelling proposes to treat this element of mythology is much like the way he approached the essence of human freedom in the Freedom Essay, and of equal kinship with Heidegger’s basic phenomenological devotion to letting-be his own matters: Schelling’s intends “an immanent development, a development of the matter itself” (20/22). Specifically, the

intent is to allow mythology’s “free art of poetry [Dicktkunst]” (19/21) to exhibit the “ground from which it springs forth [dem sie entspringt]” (13/14). The method and the matter, then, appear at considerable remove from the ontology of will and obtrusive production. Schelling does not speak of representation in this context, but of how mythology “mirrors a meaning for us [euen Sinn verspieglet]... or points to it in the distance, but a meaning that itself perpetually withdraws from us, after which we would be compelled to hasten without ever being able to reach it” (13/15). Mythology thus enacts the position of departure from the ‘final shore.’ There is a sense of showing or shining within the work to which a poetic look attunes itself: “The poetic view [poetische Ansicht] is able to allow for the idea that natural phenomena shine forth [hindurchschimmern] through the figures of the gods. It can believe to perceive in itself the first experiences concerning powers operating invisibly in human things—why not even religious shudders [religiöse Schauer]?” (14/15). As a scene of mirroring and withdrawal, then, a poetic attunement hosts an illumination of the creative possibilities in man.12 The work of mythology – like a ‘convulsion’ of the imagination noted in his Plastic Arts address – is thus a springing forth of meaning and a shining forth of possibilities. And not only poets, Schelling elsewhere writes, “but also philosophers, have their ecstasies.”13

A Resoluteness Before Willing

To qualify as a recovery of his own essential impulse, Schelling’s departure from the shore of system and divine assurance would, for Heidegger, require a new species of resoluteness and a new horizon of questioning in the neighborhood of what is ‘nearest.’14 A willful resolve must become an “open resoluteness [Ent-schlossenheit],” the essence of which “lies in the de-concealment [Ent-
borgenheit] of human Dasein for the clearing of Being and by no means in an accumulation of energy for ‘activity.’ . . . But the relation to Being is letting. That all willing should be grounded in letting [im Lassen] strikes the understanding as strange” (IM 22-23/16).¹⁵ Schelling’s sense of departure and abandonment is apt, but it would require specification as a “questioning that pushes us into the open [Offene], provided that it itself, as a questioning, transforms itself (as does every genuine questioning), and casts a new space [neuen Raum] over and through everything” (32/23). What arises as ‘strange’ yet vital, is the nature of this open space as a site in which one experiences “things as they are in whatever may be nearest [Nächtstbeliebigin]” (32/23) and one stands in the truth as “the openness of beings [der Offenbarkeit des Seienden]” (23/17).¹⁶

To continue our comparison, an attunement to the asystic would hasten a question of the truth of Being without ready recourse to ‘being’ or beings in the available sense of the Greek to on or ‘beingness’ as to einai (esse) (33/24). The open space thus reopens the question “where in all this is the Being of beings, and what does it consist in?” (IM 34/24). For Heidegger, this question of Being’s originary meaning is also, at the same time and in the same space, a question of the essence of truth, of “the one thing that in general distinguishes every ‘truth’ as truth” (OET 136/73). Both inflections of the question ought to arise in the departure from determinative poetizing and the withdrawal from all that creative reason takes to be ‘obvious,’ but the strife incumbent upon such movements is not so easy to sustain. Heidegger notes that though German idealism is, on the ordinary view, lauded for its “originary questioning about grounds and the bonding [Bindung] to such grounds” (IM 48/34), it is still of an irresolute age in which “[a]ll things sank to the same level, to a

¹⁵ Heidegger refers the reader to Being and Time §44 and §60, and ‘On the Essence of Truth,’ 1930.]” (IM 22-23/16). The strangeness of ‘letting’ becomes immediate when we appreciate Kierkegaard’s observation: “When the will becomes fantastic, the self likewise is volatized more and more” (Sickness Unto Death, 164).
¹⁶ What Heidegger later says of the wandering of thought in this realm of ‘nearness’ holds on this score: “[We] must never remain at a fixed interpretation. For all genuine thinking and thinging—along with a thinker is a wandering, indeed the wandering into that which, as the simple, lies near. Experience only exists in such wandering. Only in experience do we become more experienced” (TP 17/106-7).
surface resembling a blind mirror that no longer mirrors, that casts nothing back” (48/35).  

Heidegger, like the later Schelling, returns through Greek thought to Greek tragedy, Heraclitus and Parmenides in order to capture the roots of this reflex toward poetizing measure as well as the alternative possibility that the originary is that which springs forth (Ursprung als Entspringen) in a way that “‘belonging-together reciprocally are apprehension and Being’” (to gar auto noein estin te kai einai) (154-55/111). Schelling’s Freedom Essay was already an exercise toward thinking this reciprocal belonging-together, and his later emphases on the experience of asystasy in the face of the infinite imply a continued resolve, but what Heidegger wants to spring forth and shine forth from his ‘mirror’ in the scene of open withdrawal is the manifest essence of Being and truth (a scene which the Beiträge will distinguish in the verbal sense of die Wesung des Seyns). This means we may supplement our understanding of the production/poetizing concern from the last chapter with the insight that one of the reasons Schelling ‘had to get stranded’ – had to resign his impulse to the poetizing essence of reason – is that he failed to let the immanent development of his ‘matter’ turn his questioning back toward a deeper consideration of the essence of truth. Where the divine imagination, in one sense, and the inquiring imagination, in another, are bent on representing beings in their ‘beingness,’ the measure of letting-be gives way to a measuring will, and the opportunity to “engage oneself with the open region [das Offene] and its openness into which every being comes to stand [hereinsteht]” and “reveal themselves with respect to what and how they are” (OET 144/84) as an event of truth in the Greek sense of aletheia is passed over, forgotten. An ‘open resolutenes’ is required in the scene of departure and withdrawal because it honors the ‘freedom’ of the scene to

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17 The irresoluteness of the age, for Heidegger, is conveyed by the term verwirklichen (realize) – “to implement, to set-into-work, and in Greek corresponded to energein. . .” (see Jacques Taminiaux, Heidegger and the Project of Fundamental Ontology, trans/ed. Michael Gendre (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991) 215).
18 In Heidegger’s “The Age of the World Picture” (1938) Parmenides’ statement is rendered: “the apprehension of beings belongs to Being.” See this text in Veith translation, The Heidegger Reader, ed. Figal: 219/90-91. Hereafter AWP. The translation follows Gesamtausgabe Bd. 5. Pagination appears as English/German. Such movements to and from the Greek milieu confirm Kierkegaard’s observation that “every more profound thinker, every more serious artist still rejuvenates himself in the eternal youth of the Greek people” (Kierkegaard, Fear and Trembling, ed. C. Stephen Evans and Sylvia Walsh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) 48).
19 For clarification of offenbar and das Offene see Sallis’ notes to OET at Pathmarks, 372n7.
emerge from the side of the matters as a disclosure of the eventful meaning ‘of’ Being and the standard for the truth ‘of’ beings. Questioning arises in the interest of disclosedness, in the opening of the open region as being upsurges into presence and as “every measure [jegliches Maß]” (145/85) for being and truth.

To depart for the strange nearness of beings is to attune oneself to the essential needfulness of Being and truth. Schelling approximated this sense of need in his account of divine self-revelation and in man’s service to the unifying ‘word’ of order over the whole. So doing, he assumed a life of truth moving in and from the jointure but failed to pair man’s original becoming and instatiation in the ‘summit’ with the question of truth’s essence, a question the immanent development of the open between ground and existence ought to disclose. If his “On the Essence of Truth” is any indication, Heidegger expected the account of Dasein’s essential capacitation and creative force to allow for a retrieval of truth’s bearing on human being and freedom. He explains:

‘Truth’ is not a feature of correct propositions that are asserted of an ‘object’ by a human ‘subject’ and then ‘are valid’ somewhere, in what sphere we know not; rather, truth is disclosure of beings through which an openness essentially unfolds [west]. All human comportment and bearing are exposed in its open region. Therefore the human being is in the manner of ek-sistence. (OET 146/86)

The jointure’s ‘open’ does not simply belong to a movement of will through divine becoming and into inspired reason, but must also be understood as aletheia’s clearing, the Lichtung in which “Beyng appearsoriginarily in the light of concealing withdrawal [verbergenden Entzugs]” (OET 154/97). If Schelling fails to let-be the question of the truth ‘of’ being in the being of jointure and neglects his own ‘remainder’ of the dark, discordant ground in favor of justifying the unity of system under divine personality, Heidegger finds in the illumination of Lichtung both an open disclosure of measure for the ek-sistent Dasein and “this innermost need [innerste Not] that thinking has” (152/95), as well as a doubling back into the region of concealment and withdrawal. Truth names the “sheltering that clears [lichtendes Bergen] as the fundamental trait of Being” through which any measure of accordance between knowledge and beings is to unfold (153-54/96-97). Before the logos
of unity may be ‘said,’ proclaimed, or presented, freedom must be understood through a comportment toward accord before all assertions of correctness – a freedom “for what is opened up in an open region [and] lets beings be the beings they are. Freedom now reveals itself as letting beings-be [das Sein-lassen von Seiendem]” (144/83). In this way the matter of the essence of human freedom and the ‘connected matters’ of primordial ground/existence alike point toward an erscheinen of ursprünglich truth which would have preempted the poetizing tendencies toward production and efficacy.

In view of these considerations, it is evident that the question of the essence of truth must participate in and shape the question of the meaning of Being, and indeed the question of the essence of freedom. Any ‘immanent development’ of a matter of essence – any questioning willing to risk the unheimlich experience evoked through letting beings be – turns on an open “attunement” to aletheia’s disclosedness and thus an “ek-sistent exposedness [Ausgesetztheit] to beings as a whole” (OET 147/87). What we have thus far said regarding the Gedanken des Herstellens in reason’s poetizing command may now be paired with the “knowing pro-duc-ing [Hervor-bringen]” (IM 18/13) of the will-to-knowledge in assuming that the truth of beings is thought on the basis of a correct conformity of object representations to their beings. If creative reason tends toward poetizing, determinative truth tends toward technē – in one aspect, a privileging of beingness as the expense of beings (18/13). Neither poetizing nor technē are essentially crippling or misguided, but when detached from a mindfulness of their grounds they adapt to a damaging course of hervorbringen.20 Truth becomes the “certainty of presentation” anchored in a view of being “defined as the objectness [Gegenständlichkeit] of presentation” (AWP 216/87), and the understanding of beings as a whole

20 Regarding the positive possibilities for technē, Taminiaux goes so far as to suggest: “[T]here is now room for a techne which, instead of being limited to everyday circumspection, is of the same rank as the resoluteness (Entschlossenheit) by which Dasein accepts its most authentic possibility for being, and which is of equal rank to theoria, the thinking of Being which authentic action (Handlung) culminates. The thinking of Being is not merely the highest form of praxis, but also essentially the highest form of poiesis” (Taminiaux, Heidegger and the Project of Fundamental Ontology, 216).
“shifts” to accommodate the human as “subjectum. . . . the referential center of beings as such” (217/88). But just as Being necessarily withdraws from the gathering grasp of poetizing, it also retreats from the arresting grasp of technē (OET 149/90-91). What Heidegger says of this predicament on the side of truth holds as well for the side of production:

Yet the seeming glimmer of aletheia that remains no longer has the sustaining strength and tension to be the determining ground for the essence of truth. And it never became such a ground again. To the contrary. Ever since idea and category have assumed their dominance, philosophy fruitlessly toils to explain the relation between assertion (thinking) and Being by all possible and impossible means – fruitlessly, because the question of Being has not been brought back to its adequate ground and basis, in order to be unfolded [entfaltet] from there. (IM 203-204/145)

He goes so far as to speak of the “collapse of unconcealment,” a “happening [Geschehnis]” effected by a failed resolve which in turn calls for “a thoughtful re-trieval” (IM 204/145). The collapse itself must be retrieved and “displayed,” and, done ‘thoughtfully,’ the glimmer of unconcealment too may well “happen” in a specific kind of work – “the work of the word as poetry, the work of the stone in the temple and statue, the work of the word as thinking” (204/146). Where the dominance of doxa as “a type of logos” has deprived beings “of the possibility of turning themselves toward apprehension, appearing on their own right” (204-5/146), an artistic work (as an ergon “pro-duced into unconcealment [Unverborgenheit her-gestellt],” 205/146) is a “striving for

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21 This mention of “the question of Being” may beg the interpretive question concerning Heidegger’s relation to ‘ontology’ at this time. Taminiaux’s explanation is apt: “Even though Heidegger claims that he has given up the term ‘ontology’ for his current inquiry [in IM] in order to dissociate it from all past metaphysics, we can still claim that the lecture course is the affirmation and continuation of fundamental ontology in light of the insistence with which he distinguishes the primordial questioning activity and its leap from everydayness, more specifically distinguishing what the Rectoral Address calls ‘the resoluteness toward the essence of Being’ (Entschlossenheit zum Wesen des Seins) from the various forms of decadence (Verfall). As in Sein und Zeit, such a resoluteness is understood as knowledge and relies on a primordial Stimmung” (ibid., Taminiaux, 215).

22 In “The Age of the World Picture” Heidegger’s broader diagnosis of the standardization of beingness includes a similar emphasis on this neglected possibility: “Beings as a whole are now taken in such a way that they solely and initially exist insofar as they are set in place by the human that presents and produces. Whenever we have a world picture, an essential decision occurs concerning beings as a whole. The Being of beings is sought and found in the presentedness [Vorgestelltheit] of beings. . . . [However, the] being does not first acquire Being by nature of the human looking upon it, in the sense of a presentation of subjective perception. Rather, the human is the one who is looked upon by beings—the one who is gathered by self-opening beings into presence with them” (AWP 218-19/89-91).
the unconcealment of beings” (204/146, my emphasis). Where the *pseudos* of *doxa* “distorts beings and twists them,” the “struggle for truth. . . becomes the struggle for the *a*-pseudos, the undistorted, the untwisted” (205/146-47). In broader terms, when we speak of Heidegger’s concern to ‘twist free’ of the concealments wrought by poetizing and *technē* this means, in effect, to straighten the path and focus the view toward the unconcealment of beings. In a very significant sense, it is to pair the striving of thought (last chapter) with the striving of a ‘work.’ But we must first understand such a pairing as a dilemma for Heidegger, rather than a clear decision for instantiation in the aletheiac opening. The dilemma arises in the desire to recover or adapt the direction of *pro-duction* as a measure of truth and being without falling into procedural *Erklärung* (see AWP 211/80), to honor the ‘happening’ of unconcealment without sliding into that *pre-senting* (*Vor-stellen*) of beings that forgets the simultaneous concealment of beings as a whole (216/87). How can the strife of questioning and the strife of a work bind itself to the open region without prefiguring the event of disclosure by way of a measuring outline (*Grundiss*) or presentiment for the objective (*Gegenständigen*) (see 209/77, 219/90-91)? It seems we do not depart from the final shore so much as we are delivered from it, and this too requires a crafted vessel, a work.

II. The Measure of Poetry’s Quivering Half-Light

If reason is a work of language, as Schelling’s *legein* of the whole is a work of word and measure, and if philosophy occupies a ‘poetic’ position above the sciences, then do creative reason and proclaiming saying stand in the inheritance of a poetizing imagination that *pro-duc-es* unconcealment without allowing the *ideas* of production to obtrude themselves? Can we speak of a poetizing impulse in language which intends an ‘open’ event or happening yet resists the

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23 To avoid confusion, when I speak of ‘pro-duction’ or of truth as ‘pro-duced’ in this chapter and the next, I have in mind this poetic work of *ergon*, as opposed to the ‘production’ of poetizing in the concealing and willful sense of representation. By the same token, I will at times contrast ‘poetizing command’ or ‘poetizing production’ with ‘poetizing prod-uction’ or ‘poetizing projection.’ The difference between these modalities will become more pronounced in the following chapter.
schematizing immediacy of determination? Being, Heidegger reminds us, is never a being but “because Being and the essence of things can never be calculated and derived from what is present at hand, things must be freely created, posited, and bestowed [geschenkt. . . freie Schenkung]” (HEP, 124/GA 4: 41). This necessity amounts to a dilemma which only a certain form of imagination and a certain event in language may resolve: to adapt the sense of creation to accord with bestowal.

In the portion of Being and Time’s first division that explores the shape of being-in as applied to everyday discourse Heidegger’s treatment of the existential-ontological foundation of language contains an oblique reference to the poetic possibilities in spoken expression. He notes: “In ‘poetical’ [dichtenden] discourse, the communication of the existential possibilities of one’s state-of-mind can become an aim in itself, and this amounts to a disclosing of existence [das Erschließen von Existenz]” (BT 205/GA 2: 216). In the comparative section of his course, History of the Concept of Time (1925) he similarly observes: “The discoveredness of Dasein, in particular in the disposition of Dasein, can be made manifest by means of words in such a way that certain new possibilities [neue Seinsmöglichkeiten] of Dasein’s being are set free. Thus discourse, especially poetry [vorallem Dichtung], can even bring about the release of new possibilities of the being of Dasein” (HCT 272/GA 20: 375). Language – as having to do with Dasein’s expressive character (Sichaussprechens) – assumes a range of discursive possibilities, but poetic speech or poetry is especially capacitated with the means of disclosing something beyond mere declarative propositions and indications of one’s mood. To poetic disclosure belongs a capacity for disclosing existence itself in a liberating way. At the end of chapter one we noted Heidegger’s more pronounced assertion in Basic Problems of Philosophy that “Poetry [Dichtung], creative literature, is nothing but the elementary emergence into words [das elementare Zum-Wort-kommen], the becoming-uncovered [entdecktwerden], of existence as being-in-the-world. . . . the world first becomes visible by what is thus spoken” (BPP
Together, these comments convey something of the capacity of poetic creation to disclose both the existential being of Dasein and the shape of Dasein’s world. Poetical discourse is already ‘beyond man’ regarded as willing subject. The question is to what extent the essence of poetry is already beyond or before the will to prefigure and poetize beings and world into the utility and permanence of the objective. “True art stands in rank with the first reality,” writes Russian avant garde poet Daniil Kharms, “it creates the world and is its first reflection. It is necessarily real. . . . It seems to me that these verses have become a thing, and one can take them off the page and throw them at the window, and the window would break” (1933). Things or not, the words of the poet stand poised to break open a world that is otherwise enclosed.

Impetus Toward Openness

In Heidegger’s 1936 address, “Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry,” there is a singular orientation not just to the disclosive capacity of poetry, but to a poet who “because of an excess of impetus [Ubermaß des Andrangs], poetically thinks through to the ground and center of being” (HEP 128/GA 4: 47). Hölderlin’s ‘impetus’ is of the same fashion as Schelling’s ‘impulse.’ This is not simply a result of the contemporaneous standing of the Hölderlin text and the Schelling course, but is indicative of the fact that Heidegger is very much in dialogue with Schelling while reading Hölderlin. The sense of ‘excess,’ however, implies that the poet, more than the thinker, is so overwhelmed and

24 Alert readers will note that Heidegger’s mention of the ‘visible’ echoes his emphasis on Lichtung in Being and Time. In his Engaging Heidegger, Richard Capobianco has done us a great service but analyzing the role of Lichtung in this period, as well as in Heidegger’s later thought. For the moment, the following clarification will add to our understanding of the role of the ‘visible’ for Heidegger at the time of BPP: “The decisive observation is that Heidegger does not reject this metaphor of light in elucidating Dasein’s activity of disclosing beings and world; quite the contrary, he takes it up as his own. His complaint is not that the older metaphysical figurative characterization of the human intellect as the lumen is inaccurate or inappropriate, but only that it is ontic. . . . In Heidegger’s view, the metaphor of the ‘natural light’ had been inextricably linked to this metaphysical understanding of the human being. . . . Therefore, in (fundamental) ontological terms, Dasein simply is die Lichtung – figuratively, this ‘lighting’ – and not the ontic reified ‘light’ spoken of in the metaphysical tradition . . . . It is apparent, then, that Heidegger’s concern . . . is not to refuse or reject the metaphysical metaphor of light in speaking of Dasein, but rather to take it up in existential-ontological terms. He appropriates the trope of the lumen naturale in his own way, and the sense of the passage compels us to translate die Lichtung as ‘the lighting’ – and not as the spatial ‘clearing’” (Capobianco, Engaging Heidegger (Toronto & Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2010) 90-91, with reference to 177 of BT).

provoked down the path of the essential that impasse is not an option. Hölderlin is a poet whose imagination risks the hour of “the quivering half-light” and stands in the night of “the fantastical” (die Schwärmerische, die Nacht kommt) – dwelling in the space of the ‘enthusiastic’ (Schwärmerei) imagination that Kant warned against and Schelling reclaimed. Is this the space in which creation is also a bestowal? If the stated purpose of the inquiry is to uncover that which is essential in poetry by considering what Hölderlin’s poems evoke within and about language, the deeper aim is to escape the above ‘dilemma’ by allowing our “standing within poetry’s sphere of influence [inmitten der Offenheit von Seindem zustehen]” (HEP 118/34) to become a “standing in the midst of the openness of beings” (121/38). But what does the ‘fantastical’ have to do with the ‘openness of beings’? The language of instantiality recalls the promising (if unsustained) movement of Schelling’s questioning into the clearing and moment of Being’s occurrence in the jointure, and evokes a sense in which poetry’s essence will bring forth an opening for Da-sein to stand in language. Heidegger thus positions himself astride two parallel pathways of instatiation – one owing to the decisions of the thinker, the other owing to what stirs in the poet. These are not so much rival paths as they are different accents on the same resoluteness.

Where Schelling’s Freedom Essay arose within a time of estrangement between reason and revelation in the specter of immanence, between reell being and abstraction in the Hegelian apotheosis of system, and with a view toward the divine ‘need’ in self-revelation, Heidegger’s turn to Hölderlin’s poetry arises in a historical “time of need” (128/47) – an age of poetizing blindly detached from the deep ‘Moment’ of temporality disclosed in Schelling’s jointure. Being, defined as ousia (in the sense of constant presence) and, in turn, substantia (IM 207-8/148) has become “intangible as a vapor” (41-42/30), logos as katēgoria “has become the court of justice over Being” (216/154), questioning prefers counting and calculating to “the right moment and the right endurance” (221/157, my emphasis), and under the “purview of aesthetics” the work of art “becomes

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an object of experience and is consequently considered an expression of human life" (AWP 208/75). The ‘need,’ in short, surmounts the boundaries of culture and Wissenschaft: to maintain the impulse of questioning appropriate to the aletheiac essence of truth and the instantiation of Da-sein within the jointure, thought must navigate the impasse of metaphysical willfulness in general and poetizing in particular. Select phrases from Hölderlin’s corpus will comprise an “emergency route [Notwege]” (HEP 118/34) that accords with the ‘right running start’ for the leap through Schelling’s impasse; along this route thought will pass before the innocence, danger, and expression that together deliver language into “the midst of the openness of beings” (121/38). The time of need, in short, needs a truer measure. This in turn means an untwisted production, a ‘straighter’ poetizing that is like the fugal ‘saying’ of Schelling’s jointure but distinct from Schelling’s justifying production of God.

The promise and risks of poetic poetizing turn on the nature of human dwelling in language and the course of imagination there proffered. For Hölderlin, poetizing is the “most innocent of all occupations” (at HEP 119/35). Poetry is a playful making, a production which, says Heidegger, “freely invents its world of images and remains lost in thought in the realm of the imagined” (119/35). It is “harmless” and “without effect,” and “has nothing in common with the deed, which immediately intervenes in what is real and changes it” (119/35). These qualities stand Hölderlin’s poetizing in marked anticipatory contrast to the poetizing character of reason highlighted in Heidegger’s commentary on Nietzsche. The latter poetizing is also inventive, but deploys representation in the service of determinant effect, thereby exchanging the ‘tumult’ of impressions for the stability of beingness and the compass of categorical knowing. Poetry is a saying in the domain of imagination, and not a prefigurative imaging of the apparent world as actual (wirklich).

27 This element of playfulness is not incidental. Heidegger will advance through it toward the foreboding yet expansive scene of der Spielraum in the Beiträge and the spirit of ‘gathering’ evoked in “Poetically Man Dwells.” Indeed, artistic ‘play’ has an important history for the milieu in which Hölderlin writes, as we have noted in Kant’s understanding of taste. Friedrich Schiller observes: “But how can we speak of mere play, when we know that it is precisely play and play alone, which of all man’s states and conditions is the one which makes him whole and unfolds both sides of his nature at once? . . . . with beauty he plays” (Letters, 105-107).
But poetry also works from within the realm of language, and in this function it delivers a dangerous good. The free inventiveness belongs to a poetic imagination that, following Hölderlin, “dwells in huts” (at 119/35), an imagination set apart by virtue of being exercised in a human being. Dwelling thus overlays the form of play with a testimonial vocation – the human is the creature who “must bear witness to what he is” and must “stand” for this attestation (120/36). In the assumptions constitutive of poetizing reason the human creature thought himself the representative of Being as will, in which case the ‘whatness’ of human being was answered by the commanding nature of subjectivity. Put in mind of his dwelling, however, human testimony must concern not “an additional expression of human being” but rather “belongingness to the earth” (120/36). Language, for Hölderlin, arises as a divine gift, a gift which equips the human to command through “the freedom of decision,” yet tasks the human with testifying to the “belongingness to beings as a whole [Zeugesein der Zugehörigkeit in das Seinde]” (120/36). Language, the very mode of attestation, is dangerous because its expressive capacity can as much preserve this belongingness as attenuate it. Language poses a threat to both Being and itself insofar as it is the creative site in which the intimacy between Being and beings either appears essentially or withdraws under the deceptive ambitions of understanding. “Wake me up strong for the battle with meanings/,” writes Kharms, “and quick to the governance of words.” Ensconced in danger, language, says Heidegger, “is tasked with making beings as such manifest in works and preserving them” (120/37).

We are already alert to the dangers of this vocation because we have noted how the poetizing drive to re-presenting beings in beingness amounts to a coercive neglect of Being’s own primordial and determinative agency. The word, says Heidegger, “never offers an immediate guarantee as to

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28 Gosetti-Ferencei notes: “Heidegger inherits his understanding of dwelling from Meister Eckhart’s notions of detachment (Abgeschiedenheit) and letting-be (Gelassenheit), which denote for Eckhart a detachment, for instance, from worldly goods and influences” (Heidegger, Hölderlin, and the Subject of Poetic Language, 10). I would add that Heidegger’s emphasis on ‘standing’ also amplifies the place of ‘decision’ amid this Gelassenheit.
29 Cf. Parmenides’ statement at IM 154-55/111, noted above.
30 Kharms, 152.
whether it is an essential word [*wesentliches Wort*] or a deception” (120/37), even though the word of reason, and the appearance it creates, trusts itself as the intelligible guarantor of the sensible. How then is the word an agent of creation and bestowal? As with the case of everyday discourse in *Being and Time*, Heidegger accredits language as a ‘good’ for communicating “moods” and facilitating “understanding” in which case it maintains an instrumental value. But language is also a good “in a more primordial sense” insofar as it grants the “possibility” not just of Dasein’s being-in the world, but of “standing” at the very site of the world’s origin for Dasein in history (121/37-38). Adapting the sense of ‘word’ used by Schelling to convey the immediacy of will and becoming in the jointure of ground and existence, Heidegger calls language “that event [*Ereignis*] that has the highest possibility of human being at its disposal” (121/38, see 123/40). The appearance of this term, *Ereignis*, in conjunction with a sense of ‘possibility,’ marks a crucial moment in our investigation of the imagination since chapter one. It allows us to formalize a theme that has been implicit across a range of considerations: the immediacy of the mediating work of the productive imagination and the schematism in Kant’s *CPR*, the ‘convulsions’ of the imagination in Schelling’s appraisal of Greek artistry, the reflexive and creative representations of the divine imagination, the proclamation of the measuring word, the reflection of originary meaning in the mirror of mythology, the capacitating ‘moment’ Heidegger finds in Schelling’s jointure, the ecstatic, and the unconcealing event of truth.

What qualifies an event ‘of’ language as *Ereignis* is not yet clear, but as we have sought the imagination in transcendental, artistic, and ontological contexts we have encountered steadily a sense of ‘happening’ or ‘occurrence’ that overwhelms temporal order and supersedes rational determinations with a disclosure of possibilities. These eventful possibilities lack the fullness Heidegger will ascribe to *Ereignis* but concern the human being and often arise through the human being, but are always already underway ‘before’ the human subject. In like manner, a statement from *Introduction to Metaphysics* sets the bar for what we want to understand of language as event: “Being is the fundamental happening [*das Grundgeschehnis*], the only ground which historical
Dasein is granted in the midst of beings that are opened up as a whole” (IM 215-26/154). We thus meet the appearance of Ereignis as a term for what is essential in language with the anticipation that Heidegger will recover in poetizing a resolute letting-be that stands attuned to an event of opening and bestowal.

The Poetic Event

There are two essential ways in which poetry allows for the event of language. Both are crucial to resolving the apparent tensions between the fantastical imagination and the openness of beings, and the creative and bestowing. The first event is constitutive, and is evident in Heidegger’s statement, “language is only essential as conversation” (122/38). In the everyday sense language, like reason, is an exercise in combination. But in the act of conversation we observe how language is in fact what “mediates the coming-together” (122/39) of interlocutors and the matter of which they speak. A conversation is a unity wrought through words, and if, following Hölderlin, we humans ‘are’ a conversation, then our mutual constancy and endurance require that “the essential word [wesentlich Wort] must remain related to what is one and the same” (122/39). There is an appeal to Schelling’s understanding of identity behind this remarks, as well as an application of what must be the ‘same’ in the enduring ‘unity’ of conversation to the ecstatic nature of time – the historical opening of time toward the “present, past, and future” across which we move in conversation (122/39). Whatever is brought forth through conversation across the opening of “torrential time” (at 122/40) already assumes a belonging-together of humans and gods in conversation.  

The second event essential to poetry maintains the sense of poiesis in language, but replaces the Schellingian paradigm of ‘becoming’ with that of ‘enduring’ (das Bleiben). This event is the

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31 This sense of the event as ‘conversational’ anticipates the more pronounced discussion of Ereignis we will find in the Beiträge, particularly the play of a directive call, an attunement and saying, and a belonging-together of Da-sein and beings in the openness of the open. To speak of conversation and belonging is also to anticipate the treatment of hearing, measure-taking, and dwelling in the poetic imagination of Poetically Man Dwells.

32 This distinction appears in IM: “Being, in contradistinction to becoming, is enduring [das Bleiben]” (IM 216/15). My point is that Heidegger’s understanding of the poetizing event amounts to an elucidation of this distinction.
simultaneous appearance of gods, world, and language in the moment of divine address and poetic naming. Again following Hölderlin, Heidegger pairs the earlier testimonial stand of human belongingness to earth with the divine instantiation of the ground of human existence in the decisions of conversation. Humans arise (stand as Da-sein) in a response-ability to the divine address and measure out the time of belonging through “naming the gods” and promising or denying ourselves to them (123/40). The emphasis on decision echoes Schelling’s sense of man as a summit in the motion of all becoming, here transposed into a decision to bring the divine into word, into the open of conversation. The response-ability of the word is not a question of man’s moral destiny, but of the ontological decision to name “the gods. . . and all things with respect to what they are” (123/41).

Poetic naming, like poetizing reason, concerns the deliverance of beings, gods, and indeed Being into the appearance or standing by which they will be known, but the sense of need and event informing this motion adapts the movement of ‘becoming’ into the spirit of ‘enduring.’ What remains (bleibet), says Hölderlin, is founded [stiften] by the poets (at 123/41). This accredits the word with a privilege over presence, for what appears to knowledge as present is in fact “fleeting” (123/41), and even what “is simple can never be directly seized from the chaotic” (124/41). Roman mythology offers one instance of this tension between what is fleeting and what is founded. When, in Virgil’s Aeneid, Helenus charges Aeneas with visiting Sybil, the prophetess of Cumae, he describes the scene as follows:

Deep in her cave of rock she charts the fates,
consigning to the leaves her words and symbols.
Whatever verses she has written down
upon the leaves, she puts in place and order
and then abandons them inside her cavern.
When all is still, that order is not troubled;
but when soft winds are stirring and the door,
turning upon its hinge, disturbs the tender leaves, then she never cares to catch the verses
that flutter through the hollow grotto, never

33 In the following chapter we will see these element of response-ability and endurance deepened under the considerations of measure-taking, steadfastness, and dwelling in the Beiträge and “Poetically Man Dwells.”
recalls their place or joins them all together.

Later, Aeneas pleads with Sybil:

. . . Only do not entrust
your verses to the leaves, lest they fly off
in disarray, the play of rapid winds:
chant them yourself, I pray. . . 34

Virgil’s Aeneas, like Heidegger’s Hölderlin, knows the urgency for measuring words. But where Aeneas beseeches words of divine fate, Hölderlin appeals to the striving freedom of poetic work, to Schelling’s Dicktkunst as the reflection of “a certain meaning as originary” (PM 10/8). Poetic naming, like reason’s schematizing, is a creative event performed in the interests of security, constancy, and measure.35 But naming is an opening in Being “so that beings might appear,” in which case “the poet’s naming first nominates beings to that which they are,” not as objectified but as “the essence of things coming to expression so that they first shine forth [aufglänzen]” (HEP 123-24/41).36

The naming saying of the poets, then, is a founding [Stiftung] understood as a “free bestowal [freie Schenjung]” (HEP 124/41) and not an expression of beingness, as though a universal concept of Being were already grasped then parceled out amid the appearing entities of experience. Founding, in simple terms, is a mode of creation but not an act of gathering in the sense of legein we have noted. Moreover, as a free bestowal, this founding event is not an act of the subject upon an object made present, but is an opening in Being whereby Dasein itself “is brought into a firm relation and

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35 In a supporting contrast, Hölderlin’s Hyperion says of his despair: “as I am now I have no names for things and all before me is uncertainty” (Hyperion, 126, my emphasis).
36 Lest we allow a sense of authority or command to obtrude itself in this conception of poetic naming and founding, it is important to appreciate how the power of the word’s event also carries the human being into a shining forth. Hölderlin’s Hyperion, for example, confesses: “How was it with me, then? Was I not like a shattered lyre? . . . . We are like fire that sleeps in the dry branch or in the coal, and ever we struggle and seek for an end to our cramped confinement. But they come, they make up for the aeons of struggle, the moments when we are set free, when the divine shatters the prison, when the flame bursts from the wood and flies up over the ashes, ah! when it is with us as if, its sorrows and its servitude forgotten, the unshackled spirit were returning in triumph to the halls of the Sun” (Hyperion, 41, my emphasis). The alternation in this account could be likened to the turn from poetizing reason to the possibilities of the poetic imagination.
placed on a ground” (124/41). In this way, to say that the essence of poetry “is the founding of Being in words” (124/42) is to suggest that poetic utterance anticipates the relational whole within which the human dwells, and this is something altogether distinct from anticipating the figurative representation of Being or beings which the will to knowledge, truth, and system gathers in a calculative way. The poetic word, like Schelling’s word of unity and proclamation, is a word ‘of’ emergence and poiesis, but Heidegger lays his emphasis more on the poet’s care for the shining forth of beings from this ground than on the loving measure of divine understanding or the categorical gathering into idealist ‘Ideas.’ We may simplify the importance of these distinctions by returning to Schelling’s own analogy; essential poetic saying is what happens in the departure from the final shore. Set adrift from instrumental representations and productive assumptions, thought endures the strife of the abyss and abandonment by crying out in language – a cry of alarm that is, in the poet, a call of rescue; not a return to the shore but a rescue of buoyancy, so to speak, amid the open ground. Hamsen’s ‘water chorus’ here resounds, as does Hyperion’s insistence that “one melody still sounds for me.”

37 Hölderlin, *Hyperion*, 54. Similar themes and imagery are found in work by Daniil Kharms. His “What are we to Do?” (1934), for example, reflects:

While the dolphin and the sea-horse
Played silly games together,
The ocean beat against the cliffs
And washed the cliffs with its water.
The scary water moaned and cried.
The stars shone. Years went by.
Then the horrid hour came:
I am no more, and so are you,
The sea is gone, the cliffs, the mountains,
And the stars gone, too;
Only the choir sounds out of the dead void.
And for simplicity’s sake, our wrathful God
Sprung up and blew away the dust of centuries,
And now, freed from the shackles of time
He flies alone, his own and only dearest friend.
Cold everywhere and darkness blind.
of things,” poetry thus evokes the sense of existence as being ‘poetic’ in its ground (124/42). The creative, poietic response-ability of the poet notwithstanding, such existence is a “gift” (124/42). The gift obtains, as it were, in the dwelling – in the position of standing “in the presence of the gods” and being “struck by the essential nearness of things” (124/42). Nearness is assured because, through poetry, “everything first steps out into the open” (125/43); and noble tones, writes Hölderlin, “must yet sound again in the symphony of the world’s course.”

Heidegger’s arrangement of these elements is curious. In one sense, he has retraced Schelling’s steps into the emergence of will and word within the play of ground and existence in divine becoming. Naming and founding, on this view, correspond to the yearning of the dark principle to attain an image of standing unity, and that expressiveness by which things ‘shine forth’ corresponds to the reflexive self-representation of the divine imagination which delivers God and man into real existence. In still another sense, and insofar as Hölderlin’s deities are outside the scope of the metaphysical God, Heidegger’s emphasis on founding is removed from the horizon of becoming or divine self-revelation, and the concern is to establish poetry as “the primordial language” that capacitates Being and everyday language (rather than freedom and evil). Common to both views is the sense in which Heidegger, like Schelling, has pledged his inquiry to a question of essence (of poetry in his case, of human freedom in Schelling’s), and the impulse of the matter itself in turn brings thought to a standing position in the gathering of the jointure. What was, nevertheless, lacking in Schelling is, to a certain degree, available in Hölderlin.

It is not by accident that Heidegger says of a letter by Hölderlin: “The excessive brightness drove the poet into darkness” (126/44). As a man, Hölderlin may arise at the ‘summit’ of God’s creative production, but as a poet he dwells amid both the gift and danger of the dark ground – he is “gathered into” existence, has “caught sight of the completed whole,” and yet the brightness ‘shining

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38 Heidegger will echo this conception of ‘gift’ in both structure and quality when, at the conclusion of “Poetically Man Dwells,” he speaks of ‘kindness.’
39 Hölderlin, Hyperion, 51.
forth’ from the Being his poetic word has founded is a ‘quickening’ and ‘exhausting’ force (126-27/45-46). Poetic freedom is, like human freedom, essentially a “supreme necessity,” and just as Schelling’s God brings man to a point of decision Hölderlin’s gods “bring us to speak [uns zur Sprache bringen]” (127/45). Schelling’s man is tasked with a word that measures the unity and love wrought by divine necessity, but Heidegger’s poet, though “mindful” of the belongingness of beings to a whole, stands “cast out. . . into that between, between gods and humans” (128/47). Since Heidegger takes no recourse to Schelling’s divine personality or indifference, he is again disposed to link this standing, this dwelling, to a more historical “time of need [die dürftige Zeit],” a time marked by “a double lack and a double nothing: in the no-longer of the gods who have fled and in the not-yet of what is to come” (128/47). To say that the essence of poetry “anticipates an historical time” is to withhold the assurance of a salvific eternal beginning, and instead reckon with the ‘need’ of a time measured in the thick ‘moment’ of “the nothingness of this night” (129/47-48).

Hölderlin’s poets are “. . . like those holy priests of the wine-god/Who traveled from land to land in holy night” – they are expectant of what is to come and bear the signature of a divine birth, but they remain between the dark and light principles, needful of “divine fullness” (at 129/48) but unable to bear it or trust understanding to measure it in full.

So what has Heidegger’s engagement with Hölderlin’s performative reflection on the “essential essence of poetry” (118/34) won for the dilemma of pro-duction in the retrieval and preservation of the aletheiac opening? Notice that in asking this question we do not ask what the valid concept of poetry now is (see 118/34, 128/47). Heidegger has not sought a course of conceptual correction. Neither has he sought in poetry a mere device for substantiating the recovery of truth as aletheia. The question of the essence of truth led necessarily to the encounter with the essence of

40 Hyperion describes the feeling of being “so utterly in the clutch of the Nothing that governs us,” and yet, more ambiguously: “the poets are right, there is nothing so little and of so little account that man could not know rapture by it” (Hölderlin, Hyperion, 35-36).
41 This ‘time,’ we will observe, is the deeper sense of the time marking the standpoint of thought in the Beiträge, the time of plight and the being-historical moment on the verge of another beginning.
poetry, to the ‘work’ (ergon) of a poet who, by untwisting the distortions of poetizing and technē, stands attuned to the need of truth and thus spoke to a time of need.\(^42\) We have learned that the direction of the asystic impulse, if pressed beyond the recourse to poetizing reason, comes to a path of the a-pseudos in poetic saying, naming, founding. Poets such as Hölderlin, one could say, lack the ‘will’ to neglect the perdurance of the dark remainder. Their path is an emergency route because they risk the refusal of Grundiss and Gegenständigen, turn toward Ereignis in lieu of complete Erklärung, and enact the creative as the bestowing. This does not mean the poetic imagination is a passive accomplice in the happening of Being and the truth of this occurrence. What shines forth in the ‘between’ springs forth in words, thereby eliding the short but consequential step toward presence and re-presentation. Hölderlin’s words do a measuring work. His poems are a production of and for an event, a work of imagination irreducible to authorship or utility, mimetic cooperation or wistful wanderings of fancy.

Though the standing of the poet clearly outstrips the a priori position of the faculties, Kant’s Einbildungskraft remains an instructive element for understanding this sense of poetic poetizing. More than a minor support in an outmoded transcendental structure, it is that indispensable event of receptivity and mediation which creates and bestows – an opening ‘beneath’ cognition and (arguably) before all sensible/intelligible dualisms that mirrors the poet’s standing in the open region ‘beyond man’ and before the willful measures of understanding. In essence poetry, for Heidegger, shelters this elemental event even as it extrapolates its schematic character into the mindfulness of the poet’s measure. The difference between the Kantian and Hölderlinian imaginations, however, is of course

\(^{42}\) Pertinent to this point, Gosetti-Ferencei understands projection (Entwerfen) as “the activity of interpretation of the given, which is aided by discourse (Rede) as a creative relation of poetical Dasein to its world” (Gosetti-Ferencei, 247). In general, however, she believes that “a reconception of the poetical imagination” is “neglected in the post-metaphysical poetics” of Heidegger (25), and that “we need to expand the sketch of poetical Dasein to include creative production and its ontological spontaneity” (251). It is not clear to me whether such a ‘need’ is stated on the basis of what Heidegger begins or as a remedy to his shortcomings. My own point (in this chapter and the next) is that the ‘reconception of the poetical imagination’ is underway in Heidegger, though at times implicit and thus ‘neglected’ by his readers.
meted out as a difference between creative horizons and instrumental functions. To think the essence of poetry is to allow for a magnetism between the strife of philosophical questioning and the strife of a poetizing imagination that withholds itself from the poetizing essence of reason. The work of reason lets-be a work of *ergon*, an unconcealing production in poetry which in turn reflects upon thought a course of aletheiac retrieval. To think the full measure of the poetizing imagination in *art* – “as setting-into-work of truth” (*OWAI* 144/17; cf. *IM* 204/146) – is, likewise, to think by way of a “leap [Sprung]” and raising a question of *origin* as a way of “making the right jumping-off [Ab-sprung] for this leap” (*OWAI* 133/8). In Kant the artistry of productive imagination in the soul later bloomed into the play of imagination in artistic taste. In Heidegger the *herstellend* word of the poet is the well from which the *Hervorbringung* of the work of art draws its truth. But how is the essence of poetry also the essence of art more generally? And on what grounds, if any, may we still speak of the imagination when we speak of art as an origin [*Ursprung*] that “can only begin as a leap [Sprung]” (*OWAI* 148/21)?

III. Truth in the Poetizing Work of Art

To draw philosophical questioning into the matter of the essence of poetry is to straighten what is twisted by the poetizing essence of reason and retrieve a more fundamental poetizing that comports with the aletheiac essence of truth. If we want to speak of what is at issue, for Heidegger, at the limit of metaphysics then we must understand this straightening retrieval as a project of attuning all poetizing to the play of truth in the deeper sense of ποιεῖν – to ‘bringing-forth’ as *hervor-bringen*

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43 Heidegger’s usage of *Ursprung* (origin) is of course of decisive importance to our discussion. It does not mean ‘cause.’ As Miguel Beistegui explains: “Origin differs from cause in that while it does point to the thing in the sense of its existence, or of its coming-into-existence, it also points to the thing from the perspective of its being and its essence, that is, from the perspective of that which allows it to be or unfold in its essence, that which allows it to work and to continue to work as the work it is. Thus, the origin of the artwork is to be found not outside the work, but in the very way in which the work works, in the work-character of the work (*Werksein des Werkes*)” (Beistegui, *Thinking With Heidegger: Displacements* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003) 128). As for the mystery and meaning of the origin’s disclosure, Desmond explains: “The origin may show itself, but as showing itself it is also self-concealing, indeed for Heidegger doubly concealing, since this self-concealing itself gets concealed by the showing itself, and by the focusing of our attention on what has come into manifestation, rather than on the happening of manifestation as such, and what withdraws into hiddenness even in this happening” (Desmond, *Art, Origins, Otherness*, 229).
and to ‘pro-ucing’ in the sense of her-stellen. But is the imagination an accomplice or a hindrance in this sense of preserving the relationship between ποίησις and aletheia? When Heidegger comes to the question of the origin of the work of art this same project persists in the form of two directive necessities. First,

the determination of the essence of poetry as projecting does not exhaust its essence. Without a glimpse into the full essence of poetry—i.e., of art—we also do not grasp the becoming of truth. We particularly do not grasp how something like the work is necessary for the becoming of truth. (The ground of the necessity of each work is its origin.). The full essence of poetry comes to light in the statement: Poetry—the essence of art—is founding of Beyng [Stiftung des Seyns]. (OWAI 146/18-19)

To be clear, the statement does not say that art is the ‘only’ way in which truth occurs. Heidegger’s emphasis, rather, is on the emergence of truth in the work’s essential ground. This focus holds in our second passage, simply put: “The most concealed ground for the necessity of the artwork, its most authentic origin, is the essence of truth itself” (OWAI 148/21). That is not to say that truth somehow ‘depends’ on works of art in something like a causal relationship, but that the question of art’s origin is the question of poetry’s essence, and that the work of a work of art is a founding of Beyng and an occurrence of truth. Thus, we begin to see that “On the Essence of Truth,” “Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry,” and “The Origin of the Work of Art” are texts joined by one project. The project concerns the gathering significance of a poetizing projection (dichtender Entwurf) for a time of need and for truth’s own need. Schelling’s fugal and asystic impulses are alert to these needs, and are indeed framed by an ‘essential’ interest in the plastic arts, tragedy, and mythology. But to discover in art “the poetizing founding of Beyng” requires that the ground from which ideas of production obtrude be reclaimed by a pro-duction of “the openness of the there into which all beings and nonbeings stand” (146/19). In one sense this Da is the poet’s word. In the same sense, more ‘fully’ explored, it is the ‘work’ of art – the ergon through which art lets the origin of truth originate. Stylistically, Schelling has taught us that matters of inquiry attain clarity by way of permitting them a course of strife and opposition. Heidegger’s language of impulse and impasse,
impetus and exhaustion, has put this lesson to use and accentuated it as a course of necessity within the needful history of Being. His study of art’s ‘work’ will do the same, allowing its inceptual, poetizing significance to emerge in sharp relief against the background of concealing conceptions – namely, those of creation, representation, expression, and object-being. If and how ‘imagination’ should be included in this list is a question that must remain open.

Alert to these points of departure, what we want to ascertain in Heidegger’s a-pseudos of art, truth and Beyng can be represented by aligning a passage appearing early in the first (Freiburg) version of OWA with a caution appearing near the end of the full version.44

Truth is never read off from that which is already at hand. Rather, the openness of beings occurs by being projected, by being poetized [gedichtet]. All art is in essence poetry, i.e., the breaking-open of that open in which everything is otherwise than usual. By virtue of the poetic projecting [des dichtenden Entwurfs], what prevailed until now and was usual becomes non-existent. Poetry is no wandering contrivance of something random, no drifting-off into the unreal. The open that poetry, as a project, opens up (projects ahead) and holds open, first allows beings as such to enter and brings them to shine [Leuchten]. Truth, as the openness, occurs in projecting—in poetry [Dichtung]. (OWAI 144/17)

If we fix our vision on the essence of the work and its connection [Bezug] with the happening of the truth of beings, it becomes questionable [wird fraglich] whether the essence of poetry, and this means at the same time the essence of projection [Entwurfes], can be adequately thought in terms of the power of imagination [von der Imagination und Eindbildungs kraft]. (OWA 197/60)

Why and how does the poetic essence of art amount to a projection which casts the imagination in a questionable light?45 To answer this question three avenues pertaining to the

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44 Taminiaux addresses the broader differences between the two versions by focusing on Heidegger’s relationship to Hegel, which is more pronounced in OWAI: “What this text shares with the young Hegel and the mature one, is the idea that so far there has been only one kind of great art: Greek art. Such an art gathered the entire people around its gods and permanently shaped the destiny of this people. The temple, the statue of the god, and the tragedy: these are the topics around which this text gravitates” (Taminiaux, Heidegger and the Project of Fundamental Ontology, 222). But there is more to this relationship: “What the first version of The Origin of the Work of Art also shares with both the young and the mature Hegel is the idea that art is only properly art when it manifests beings in their totality and their foundation, in short—to borrow from Hegel’s terminology which, incidentally, is used by Heidegger—when it corresponds to an ‘absolute need’. . . . But what differentiates Heidegger from the young Hegel is the fact that his language is in no way one of nostalgia, and what differentiates him from the mature Hegel is that he does not speak the language of Erinnerung, commemoration, but rather the language of decision (Entscheidung). . . . Art is the implementation, the setting-into-work of truth as a striving between the world and the earth” (222-23). For further discussion of this and related matters pertaining to the OWA project, see Taminiaux’s “The Origin of ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’,” chapter nine in his Poetics, Speculation, and Judgment. Taminiaux begins this chapter by recalling a remark by Heidegger concerning how “the meditation on the origin of the work of art had played a decisive role in the Kehre” (153).
question of art’s origin must be explored: (1) the manner in which a distinction between object-being and work-being confronts aesthetics with a reorientation toward the emergent actuality of art’s work; (2) an entry into the experience of two works of art which reveals the pitfalls of a poetizing determination and, by contrast, discloses the essential event of truth and the openness of beings in the clearing of a work; (3) the relationship between the originary strife of the open region and the play of disclosedness and seclusion through which truth exposes all measure-taking in its name.

Object-Being and Work-Being

The first constitutive matter signaled by the passages above is the tension between grasping truth from the at-hand and glimpsing or fixing the essence of poetry as the essence of artistic work. We have tracked this tension already with respect to the being of truth and the originary standing of the poet, and have highlighted it as a tension between poetizing in the sense of determination and poetizing in the sense of possibility. How does the tension stand with respect to works of art more generally? The everyday at-hand disposition to grasping artworks conceals a more essential relationship by masking the elemental with elementary assumptions. Foremost among these is the assumption that artworks are objects having a “thingly character [Dinghafte]” (OWA 145/3) and originating from the artist’s creative determination. We speak of a ‘piece’ of art, a thing having an “object-being [Gegenstandsein]” (OWAI 131-32/6-7), and we handle such works according to the equations of the art industry, all the while praising them (if such is the case) on the basis of an aesthetic experience oriented to the thing’s “createdness [Erzeugstein]” (OWA, 145/3; OWAI 132/7). This state of affairs specifies the reduction of beings to ‘beingness’ or ‘representedness’ under the domain of poetizing reason. Heidegger is not so much concerned in indicting this disposition as he is in manifesting its astonishing distance from “the work-being [Werksein] of the work” (OWAI 45).

45 I do believe ‘questionable’ is the appropriate term here, as opposed to ‘exclusion’ in Gosetti-Ferencei’s view that “a phenomenology of the imagination, in its resonance with metaphysical aesthetics, was necessarily excluded from Heidegger’s theory of art and language” (Gosetti-Ferencei, 251).
Obviously concrete works of art are created, are brought forth through an artist’s presentation (Hervorbringung) (131-32/6-7), but structuring an aesthetic or enterprising view of a product on this basis will attain nothing of “the immediate and full actuality of the work [die unmittelbare und volle Wirklichkeit des Kunsterkes]” (OWA 146/4).

The critique is similar to Schelling’s concerns about an overreliance on form in his Plastic Arts address. Art theory and aesthetics, says Heidegger, attempt to grasp the thingly element by treating the work in terms of “matter (hyle), [and] form (morphē)” in a sensuous synthesis focused on appearance (eidos) (OWA 152-53/11-12). This representational framework, in effect, prevents what is ‘actual’ in the work from arising “undistorted” in a “free field” (151/10) (an early allusion to what will become, more significantly, the ‘open region’). Aspiring to attain ‘the actual’ (Das Wirkliche, as opposed to Abgeschlossenheit) is, as well, a risk of inquiry reminiscent of Schelling’s own endeavor toward the being of the ground (see Freedom 27/357, 42/375). When Heidegger speaks of the “undistorted presencing [unverstellten Anwesen]” (OWA 151/10) of a work’s character it implies an exercise upon the manner in which “the traditional interpretation of beings” (148/6-7) shapes a subjectum-based approach to works, much the same as Schelling’s intended disclosure of the essence of freedom rooted in the being of ground and existence implied an exercise on mechanistic and representational abstraction. But Heidegger’s parameters for ‘actuality’ are more severe – either we naively allow the work to vanish as a thing, or we seek it in its mode of steadfast “self-containment [Insichruhen]” (152/11). Just as poetizing reason cannot resist the reduction of beings to beingness, thus serving the interests of utility and calculation, an equipmental notion of beings falls prey to

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46 Taminiaux explains that art “is not attached to current affairs, to what is present now before the hand (vorhanden). Instead, it is poiesis characterized by the terms formerly reserved to the project of praxis in Sein und Zeit. Every art is Dichtung, poesy, or poietic project, extending beyond what is usual, common, current, vorhanden. Such a project presses a call to the Dasein of an entire people, it casts itself forth (zu-geworfen). . . . Art confronts us with the unfamiliar and the disquieting, only so as to bring Dasein back to itself” (Taminiaux, Heidegger and the Project of Fundamental Ontology, 223-24).

47 On the contrary, notes John Sallis, “In a work of art there is essentially something more than its being produced by a certain kind of activity, something more than its correlation with the productive artist, an excess that opens the circle [of artist and work of art]” (Sallis, Echoes: After Heidegger (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990) 173).
dictates of sensation and utility in apprehending the *ens creatum* as the “thingness” of the thing [Dingheit des Dinges] (156/17). Conceptual instruments masquerading as the self-evident presentation of thingness in “the unity of a manifold of sensations, as formed matter” must be bracketed if we are to allow the thing, or the work, to “rest in its own self.”48 But letting a thing be turns out “to be the most difficult of tasks”; the “unpretentious thing,” says Heidegger, “evades thought most stubbornly” (156-57/15-16). Though Heidegger would care little for the comparison (on this score), thought is here challenged in the same way Schelling evoked the challenge of thinking the *Ungrund*: to think toward the indeterminate condition of possibility for the being of the ground and the being of existence is a structural foreshadowing of the challenge to think art as the “third thing” which somehow constitutes the being of the artist and the being of the work. If, then, the question of the origin of the work of art “asks about its essential source” (143/1), and if this asking intends a passage into “the workly character of the work [*Werkhaftens des Werkes*]” (157/16), then a project that would have seemed manageable under the auspices of a poetizing ‘aesthetics’ becomes utterly frustrated. What and how, Heidegger asks “is a work of art?” (144/2, my emphasis). How does a work come from art? The question of origin, as a question of actuality, effectively jettisons both subjective command and artistic creation (in the causal sense). For the inquiry to proceed at all, a strenuous phenomenology is required, a freeing of the work and then a ‘procession’ from the work (see *OWAI* 131/6).

**Openings**

A second constitutive matter following from our focal passages is the connection between a poetizing projection of the openness of beings and the happening of the truth of beings. We have already met this connection in terms of the essence of poetry, where the *Ereignis* of Hölderlin’s production consisted in a creative bestowal which enabled the appearance of beings to shine forth

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48 Heidegger will make a similar allusion to this sense of ‘rest’ when, in “Art and Space” (1969, trans. Veith in *The Heidegger Reader*), he treats ‘things’ as sheltered in *Gegnet* (“that-which-regions”). Here “the open is urged to let each thing unfold into its resting in itself” (*AS* 308-09/207-08 my emphasis).
through a naming, founding word, and also instantiated Dasein itself ‘in’ the open region of nearness, need, and dwelling. But the connection is by no means exhausted, and we now want to ascertain its ‘fullness’ by turning to works of art that allow an experience of “truth setting itself to work [Sich-ins-Werk-Setzen der Wahrheit]” (OWA 162/22). So doing, we will also learn how and why the work-being of an artwork transcends the possible, though limited, determination that art originates in a transfer from artistic “imagination” into artistic “product” (OWAI 131/6).49 In his first version of the text, Heidegger treats this connection between openness and happening rather directly, speaking of the “worlding [weltenden]” (135/9) instantiation won by the setting-forth (Herstellen) and setting-up (aufstellend, in the sense of Errichtung and Erstellung) of the work’s work-being before treating any concrete examples (136/10). In his later version he first evokes the connection through a phenomenological description of two works – a Van Gogh painting and a Greek temple – then formalizes the ‘how’ (as opposed to the ‘what’) of truth’s ‘work’ by gathering together a more emergent collection of ‘matters connected’ to our experience of the poetizing projection. One reason for prolonging the discussion in this way is that he means to place us in the passage through the equipmental bearing and into the workly character of these works. This approach affords a more immediate experience of how the ordinary pursuit of a work’s ‘actuality’ reaches an impasse that, as it were, opens our inquiring vision in a way appropriate to the essential opening of truth in the work. As with any case of phenomenological description, one goal of bringing thought into the experience of these artworks is to reveal the stumbling block of unquestioned prejudices, the pseudos of doxa noted above. In this case, the interpretive matrix of ‘use’ and ‘representation’ must become questionable through the return to the work’s projected openness, and this experience will begin to attune us to the motion by which truth takes a stand in the work.

49 Beistegui makes the general and appropriate observation that truth, at work in this arrangement, must be understood “not as an activity of Dasein, but as the work’s ability to make manifest in and from itself, as a distinct disclosive power.” Such a view amounts to a break with traditional aesthetic positions on poiesis and mimesis (Beistegui, Thinking With Heidegger, 127).
Heidegger’s entry into Van Gogh’s *painting* of the ‘peasant shoes’\(^{50}\) occurs in the context of magnifying the distinctive meaning of ‘letting-be’ beneath the thingly-oriented sense of ‘use.’ We may understand this context as a specific study in two trajectories of poetizing – poetic projection on the one hand, objective command on the other. Peculiar to the painting is the fact that the shoes (the matter) *stand out* without any clear indication of where they stand. Heidegger’s entry into the painting has nothing to do with form and matter, beauty, or symbolism, but focuses on “the dark opening [*dunklen Öffnung*]” within the shoes (OWA 159/19); this phrase marks a development of the “free field [*freies Feld*]” (151/10) solicited for the display of a work’s character (the development will continue toward the “open region”). The shoes are a piece of equipment, and justifiably so, but through our nearness to this opening we are led to hear “the silent call [*Zuruf*] of the earth” (159/19), and thus a sense of ‘belonging’ to the earth encompassed by the *world* of their wearer. Heidegger deliberately avoids any mention of ‘representation’, instead drawing us into “the abundance of an essential Being of the equipment” (160/20) as a step toward ascertaining the ‘actuality’ of the work.\(^{51}\) Our viewing intentions join with the wearer’s own standing in earth and world, their mode of assuming the security and reliability of the shoes in the context of their lived engagement with both. We thus pass through the equipmental bearing into the “workly character of the work,” a passage by which the artwork “lets us know what shoes are in truth” (161/21). Such a passage rivals the representational side of poetizing production because neither we the viewer nor Van Gogh the painter have presumed to set upon “anything already standing and objective” (OWAI 140-41/14). Rather, the experience of visible and audible ‘nearness’ to the matter is paralleled by a dynamic and living sense

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\(^{50}\) Heidegger may have this wrong. Jacques Derrida believes the shoes are in fact Van Gogh’s (see Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1987). I do not believe the question disturbs Heidegger’s reading, for either way we may surmise the shoes were ‘worn’ by one who ‘toiled.’

\(^{51}\) That is to say, the material of the work stands out, is not reduced to usefulness but is instead brought forth as “the horizon or the origin whence worldly things and the world itself unfold” (Bestegui, 132).
of how the matter ‘is’, how the shoes ‘are’ – terms proper to a determinative approach to truth have become kinetic, underway.

By letting-be the work we find a work of truth in the painting that brings its matter (the shoes) to stand. Afforded a ‘free field,’ the ‘dark opening’ in the artwork thus “opens up in its own way the Being of beings” (OWA 165/26, my emphasis). Poetizing’s distorting measures are straightened by an emergent ‘standing’ measure. The shoes’ opening shows the belonging of the equipment, and, accordingly, the work’s opening shows the happening of truth, art as “truth setting itself to work” (165/26). Passing from description to reflection, we realize that Heidegger has allowed the pursuit of the actuality of the work, in terms of its thingly substructure, to highlight the impasse a more determinative poetizing would reach, wherein “we force the work into a preconceived framework by which we obstruct our own access to the work-being of the work” (165/26). Letting-be (as a letting-stand), by contrast, enables “the pure self-subsistence of the work” to display itself (165/26). There is a sense in which our inquiring vision must be opened in a way commensurate with the openings of the work, an indication that Heidegger’s phenomenological mode of questioning, though distinct from representation and willful production, is an exercise in and upon faculties commonly associated with the imagination.

But how does a work’s standing self-subsistence comprise a happening of truth in which world and earth – traditional touchstones for poetizing measurement write large – emerge in a way resistant to representational depiction or mastery? By turning to a Greek temple, Heidegger elects to describe an experience in which the viewer is already standing in the ordinary sense, and an architectural work which by its very nature elides all representational mastery over it. Such a work

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52 As Beistegui puts the matter: “So, although we cannot deny that the artwork is actually produced by an artist, what characterizes the artwork qua work, the being of the work (as opposed to its sheer existence), is entirely disconnected from the activity that governed the coming into existence of the work” (Beistegui, 128).

53 We have noted, following Taminiaux, Heidegger’s similarity to Hegel in focusing upon Greek art. We might add that both also exhibit an interest in the ‘between,’ a point we will continue to pursue with Heidegger. Desmond explains: “If Heidegger does seek the between, one might say Hegel does too, but the qualification is: in the latter,
maintains its own tremendous physical standing, its presence as an “all-governing expanse of this open relational context [waltende Weite dieser offenen Bezüge]” of its historical world (OWA 167/28). The temple stands as a unity that is fitted together, and by virtue of its standing “brings to radiance the light of the day” and “makes visible the invisible space of air” (168/28). The work of such a work, then, is to ‘illuminate’ man’s “dwelling [Wohnen]” within physis, upon the ground of earth as the site of all “arising” and “sheltering” (168/28). The opening of the peasant shoes is magnified by this opening of the temple: “The temple-work, standing there, opens up a world and at the same time sets this world back again on earth, which itself only thus emerges as native ground” (168/28, my emphases). It is vital to note that this opening is, Heidegger continues, what “first gives things their look [Gesicht] and [gives] men their outlook [Aussicht] on themselves” (168/29). The remark stands in contrast to the ‘look’ (noted in the N. Lectures) by which man, as subject, looks upon Being as will then represents himself in subjectivity as willful reason. We may also hear a precise instance of letting-be – the work of the temple “lets the god himself be present and thus is the god himself” (168/29). As in the case of Hölderlin’s gods, the religious context of the temple affords Heidegger a way of speaking of holiness in the openness of the structure’s presence. The consecrated presence is not so much contrived as it is discovered. The poet priests of “holy night” find shelter in the consecrated work of the temple, in the “guiding measure” (169-70/30-31) granted

we find the speculative self-mediation of the between, in the former, the happening of the between cannot be entirely self-mediated” (Desmond, Art, Origins, Otherness, 227).

54 We will address the matter of strife more closely as we proceed. The relationship of ‘dwelling’ to ‘world’ and ‘earth’ is well-stated by Beistegui: “We dwell in the world, the world is all around us, yet precisely to that extent the world is never present to us as such. In the work, the world itself comes to be gathered, and our experience of it is precisely the experience of this gathering, as when, faced with an ancient Greek temple, we cannot help notice the way in which the Greek world, a world made of mortals and gods, unfolding between sky and earth, between the political community and wild nature, comes together in the temple. In the temple, the world is allowed to world, it is brought to presence without being represented” (Beistegui, 131).

55 Desmond observes: “Of course, it is with respect to Holderlin, and the inaugural power of the poet, that ‘being religious’ comes again. The poet is the namer of the holy. This is a sacred mission. One must not forget this when the end of art is broached. One of the most important considerations here is to remember that everything turns upon being religious. . . . Heidegger was not always as forthcoming about ‘being religious’ as one would like” (Desmond, 231).
by the glowing splendor of this open. A look and a measure are thus given in the spatial grandeur of the temple’s free field.

Such an event amplifies the happening of truth in poetic naming and founding. Heidegger speaks of the same work obtaining in “linguistic work” such as tragedy – an artistic letting-be which transforms a people’s “saying” into a “living word [wesentlich Wort]” that contends for the standing of the holy (OWA 168-69/29). The work of the temple and the work of language transcend subjective createdness and poetizing, and open the Da of historical Dasein in the same decisive way. In his first version of the text, Heidegger treats the temple’s towering motion in a verbal manner: “the temple opens the there in which a people comes to itself, i.e., enters the decreeing power [fügende Macht] of its god” (OWAI 139/12). The crossing of the spatial and verbal in a fugal event recalls Schelling’s instantiating word of measure in the jointure. Towering manifests the fuller essence of naming, for there occurs in the work of language the naming and saying through which the Beyng of things first comes to be expressed, and through which the unspeakable enters the world with the speakable. In the poet’s naming of this kind, a people’s great concepts of beings as a whole are prefigured [vorgeprägt]. The work of building, saying, and shaping exacts the there, the diffuse and rooted center in which, and out of which, a people grounds its historical dwelling. (OWAI 139/13)

In his later version of text, Heidegger similarly pairs the gift of the measurable with the sayable. The work-being of the temple is a setting-forth that holds “open the open region of the world [hält das Offene der Welt offen],” transporting Dasein “into Being” in the same way that the work-being of the poem exercises “the naming power of the word [die Nennkraft des Wortes]” (OWA 170-71/31-32).56

Exposure and Strife

It is through this sense of a measuring word that the third constitutive element derived from our opening passages unfolds: truth’s exposing work in the work’s happening. To elucidate the shape of this event and its broader meaning for philosophical questioning, we must appreciate a more subtle

56 Beistegui stresses the importance of language in this regard: “What does the artwork, a painting, for example, have to do with language? Nothing at all, apparently. . . Unless the essence of language turned out to be the very language of essence, that is, the language of the historical and destinal unfolding of truth itself” (Beistegui, 133).
manifestation of seclusion and concealment intrinsic to the towering motion and fugal decree of the temple. As we have begun to note, to the temple’s work-being belongs a setting-up of world and a setting-forth of earth (OWAI 137/11). Heidegger calls the accomplishment of these two motions strife (138/12; OWA 174E/35f). This does not mean earth and world emerge (through the work) in a dialectical overcoming of conflict. Neither is setting-up and setting-forth directly commensurate with a play of form and essence. We do better to appreciate this sense of contestation basic to work-being as the artistic disclosure of the ‘field of opposedness’ and the freedom of the ‘open region’ noted in “On the Essence of Truth.” The path of untwisting the distortions of truth here proceeds by way of a play of “arising” and “sheltering” (OWA 168/29-30) within the dwelling illuminated by work-being – a sense of constitutive disclosure and concealment amid the physis of measure-taking. With a view toward these elements, Heidegger’s question is thus: “In what way does truth happen in the work-being of the work, which now means to say, how does truth happen in the instigation of strife [Innigkeit des Streites] between world and earth? What is truth” (175/36).57

With respect to the temple, what is set forth is set forth “into the open region of the work’s world” (OWA 171/32), and with this there obtains a setting back of the work into material which allows the earth as the ground of dwelling to emerge. In this sense the work “moves the earth itself into the open region of a world and keeps it there,” but the ensuing disclosure of the earth is also a concealing of the earth from “every attempt to penetrate it” (172/33). This means the production underway is one which also reveals the “impotence of will” in the face of an earth which “shrinks

57 Andrew Bowie believes finds this account of truth questionable. “[T]he crucial aspect of art here,” he maintains, “is that, in a world of the increasingly ‘ever-same,’ it makes something new happen by bringing things to unconcealment” (Bowie, From Romanticism to Critical Theory: The Philosophy of German Literary Theory (London & New York: Routledge, 1997) 179). This is a weak reading. Bestegui is more nuanced: “Something takes place, something happens, and the work is nothing outside this taking place or this happening. Thus, the work is not just a thing; it is also an event. An event of what? Of truth . . . . In order for the work to be envisaged qua work, and not as the end-product of a process of production understood in terms of truth, the work needs to develop its own relation to truth, it must itself be a site for the happening of truth. . . . The decisive move, then, consists in raising the question of truth with a view to the work qua work” (Beistegui, 129). Truth, then, is found in the work as the strife (Streit) between clearing (Lichtung) and concealing (Verbergung): “Truth, Heidegger tells us, is indeed a process: not a thing, not a fact, but the eternal struggle between clearing and concealing, the primitive scene of an irreducible chiaroscuro” (ibid).
from every disclosure and constantly keeps itself closed up” (172/33). To set forth (her-stellen) the earth, Heidegger explains, “means to bring it into the open region as the self-secluding [Sichverschließbare]” (173/33). The situation of this manifestation resembles that of letting-be in OET, where the disclosedness of beings is also a concealment. It is tempting to regard such setting-forth as a species of poiesis, but the sense of production and createdness associated with ‘bringing-forth’ risks diminishing the non-objectivity (Ungegenständlichkeit) (OWAI 135/9) so crucial to the letting-be and seclusion Heidegger means to preserve. This is why, in the first version of the text, he says that the Stiftung des Seyns “is not the bringing-forth of beings” (146/19), and why any lingering terms of production and figuration through work and word are ensconced in a language of violence and upheaval rather than a discourse of intentional formation. Herstellung is herstellend in a forceful, shattering [Erschütterung] way (142/15), not as a creative command of reason but as an insistent resistance to poetizing, to the subjective determinacy that has forgotten its own impotence. In a primordial sense, a “rift” (138/12) arises as world “grounds itself on the earth” and earth “juts through world” (OWA 174/35). Their kinetic opposition, concretized in the work, allows the elements to “raise each other into the self-assertion of their essential natures” (174/35). Each striving, moreover, is bound to the other by belonging together through the open region, the very site of Dasein’s dwelling and corresponding “agitation [Bewegtheit].” Beneath the apparent “repose” (173/35) of a work of art, then, lies an instigation of strife between world and earth, a revelation of

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Taminiaux explains: “Obviously understood as aletheia, truth was connected in the 1935 text to the ‘there’ (Da) which the historical existing of a people, and it alone, is entrusted to take upon its Self. Such a perspective has faded away in the 1936 text. The locus for truth is no longer Dasein. Unconcealment is now a ‘clearing’ in the midst of beings in their totality, a clearing to which humans belong and are exposed more than one they institute. . . Consequently, resoluteness (Entschlossenheit) undergoes a deep change of meaning: it forsakes its initial call to the will, its project of being a Self. Now it means ‘un-closedness’ (Ent-schlossenheit), i.e., an exposure to the reserve and the enigma present at the core of Lichtung” (Taminaux, Heidegger and the Project of Fundamental Ontology, 226). Capobianco’s account of Lichtung, though otherwise instructive, seems to overlook this development.

59 Thus, Beistegui observes, “the work also provides a place for that which resists being drawn into the Open, for that which, by its very nature, withdraws in the very drawing forth of the world. In a strange and surprising way, the work is said to set forth precisely that which of itself sets itself back, withdraws from the setting up of world” (Beistegui, 131).
the “intimacy” intrinsic to this strife’s elements (175/37), and the intimation that the poet’s word and
the dwelling of Dasein alike stand in the inheritance of this strife.⁶⁰

As for truth, if it is an event unfolding in the work-being of the work, then it too is a work of
strife – a ‘how’ and an ‘as’ of open exposure and not a unity wrought by correct representations.
When thus Heidegger asks, “What is truth [Wahrheit]?” (OWA 175/37), the question is posed from
the horizon of a work’s ‘actuality’ as opposed to a metaphysical or transcendental interrogative.⁶¹
The question is a parody in one sense, and a profound retrieval in another. And though any alert
reader of OET already knows the question to be a gesture toward aletheia, we must not forget that
Heidegger’s use of the copula (‘is’) squares precisely with, and is indebted to, the reformulation
Schelling brought to the law of identity. Continuing, Heidegger speaks of the essence of an entity as
“what the entity is [ist] in truth,” italicizing the copula so as to remove it from the sense of
“conformity of knowledge with the matter” and to reappropriate it under the measure of
unconcealment – the showing and standing forth of the entity (176-77/37-38). When he then
explains, “The essence of truth which is familiar to us—correctness in representation—stands or falls
with truth as the unconcealment [Unverborgenheit] of beings” (177/38), the aletheaic trajectory is his
own, but the urgency of the matter is a reflection of a path opened up by Schelling’s own ‘is.’
Applying his copula to the principle of ground, Schelling exposed a flash of primordial ‘openness’
before the generation of unity and understanding. Heidegger’s accentuated use of the copula denotes

⁶⁰ There is an important historical dimension to this strife as it bears on both the meaning of ‘world’ and the position
of the human being. Says Beistegui: “This primitive scene stages the encounter between World, as the drive towards
the Open, towards the manifest and the phenomenal, and Earth, as the drive towards sheltering and concealing, as
the other side of the phenomenal. And from this en-counter, from this strifely assemblage, actual historical
configurations are born, and what we generally call the world opens up. . . . In this context, the artwork, while
coinciding with the event once reserved to designate the being of the existent being (the human Dasein), does not so
much ex-sist or stand out into the Open as it in-sists, or lets the Open itself stand in the work. It is a mode in which
truth comes to stand, an in-stance of truth” (Beistegui, 130).

⁶¹ Readers such as Žižek and Bowie are not convinced, and raise concerns about Heidegger’s so-called political
rationality undergirding this view of truth. Bowie, for example, holds: “The importance of art as the ‘putting into the
work of truth’ is at this level merely a gross inflation of the significance of particular art works in modernity,
perhaps on the model of the possible constitutive force for the polis of Greek tragedy. . . .” (Bowie, 182). Such a view
is short-sighted and fails to appreciate the more central continuities between “On the Essence of Truth” and OWA.
a recovery of this moment from two co-constitutive sides: to say that “[i]n the midst of beings as a whole an open place occurs [eine offene Stelle]. There is a clearing [Lichtung]” (178/40) is to say that the clearing is to the essence of truth what the open region has been to the essence of the work. The answer to the question of the origin of the work of art lies in our ability to grasp these opens as the same grounding and granting center.

This sense of proximity and difference between Schelling and Heidegger on the dynamism and possibility subsisting within principles of identity and ground begs the larger question: how does Heidegger’s arrangement of these elements now stand with respect to dark upheaval afoot within Schelling’s fugal account of primordial becoming and creation? On one hand, there is a similar play of darkness and shining in Heidegger’s open region, and darkness and light in Schelling’s opening

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62 The following statement says as much and may be heard as a counterweight to the poetizing essence of reason and the system ambition of idealism, as it bears on both the question of being and the question of truth: “There is much in a being that man cannot master. There is but little that comes to be known. What is known remains inexact, what is mastered insecure. Beings are never of our making, or even merely our representations, as it might all too easily seem. When we contemplate this whole as one, then we apprehend, so it appears, all that is—though we grasp it crudely enough” (OWA 178/40). Regarding the treatment of offene Stelle and Lichtung above, I believe the sense of ‘openness’ here complicates Capobianco’s typology of Lichtung as a movement from ‘lighting’ to ‘clearing’ (see Capobianco, 99-100); it is not clear to me that the spatial emphasis on ‘clearing’ requires or anticipates the elision of ‘light’ or illumination from the domain of Lichtung.

63 Here we might consider Thomas Sheehan’s general view that “[t]he most extraordinary thing about all of Heidegger’s thought, both early and late, is his unwavering insistence that human being is that ‘open’ and thus is ‘the thing itself’ [die Sache selbst]. From the beginning to the end of his career, he never got beyond that point” (Sheehan, “A Paradigm Shift in Heidegger Research,” Continental Philosophy Review 34 (2001): 193, cited at Capobianco, 114). Does not OWA complicate this view of the ‘open’? I agree with Capobianco on this point: “Dasein is by no means the whole of the clearing; rather, it belongs to the clearing” (Capobianco, 116). Still, we might go further in clarifying how it is that the ‘open’ is thought in terms of ‘clearing.’ As Heidegger works through this ‘clearing’ it becomes evident that all the elements of its eventful aspect accord with the open region arising in works, and, moreover, that he is intensifying his own similar account of aletheia in OET. The clearing is the site in which beings “stand out” as beings, just as the temple stands out from its rocky valley and the earth cries out from within the peasant shoes. In the clearing beings stand un concealed yet also ‘withhold themselves’ (OWA 178/40) in a “curious opposition of presencing, just as in the shoes there is the security of world and the thrust of earth, and through the temple’s portico there is the world is opened yet set back again on earth. The self-concealment of beings in truth’s clearing marks or enacts “the beginning of the clearing of what is cleared” (179/40), just as in tragedy common speech is held back so that living words might enter the fray on behalf of the holy. Truth’s clearing is “never a rigid stage. . . on which the play of beings runs its course” but an event of “double concealment” (179/41), as the world set-up by a work is “ever-nonobjective” (170/31) and as the work’s earth is “essentially self-secluding” (173/33). Finally, the strife of world and earth’s belonging in a work, and the resulting agitation gathered in a work, is not simply paralleled by strife in truth, but is itself (it seems) grounded in truth’s essential “concealing denial” – the opposition between “clearing and concealing” that is “the original strife” (180-81/41-2). Heidegger explains: “The essence of truth is, in itself, the primal strife in which that open center is won within which beings stand and from which they set themselves back into themselves” (180/42). It is with this point that earth and world arise in both the essence of the work and the essence of truth: “Earth juts through the world and world grounds itself on the earth only so far as truth happens as the primal strife between clearing and concealing” (180/42, my emphasis).
toward unity. Heidegger’s emphasis on eventful, agitating motion likewise recalls the movement of yearning in Schelling’s account of divine self-revelation, and perhaps even the striving of the genius in aesthetic production. We thus find traces of Schelling amid Heidegger’s encounter with Hölderlin. On the other hand, we find several instructive differences. First, Heidegger’s leading ‘essential’ interest concerns the aletheiaca essence of truth, a problem Schelling did not take up in a ‘straightening’ way. Incumbent upon this interest is the concern to recover the ‘actual’ in the work of art, not the divine actu or the nonconscious impulses of the absolute. Second, Heidegger allows the path toward ‘actuality’ to move through the work as an instigation of this strife, and not beneath the primal will or eternal indifference that, though ontologically profound, conscripted Schelling’s impulse (for Heidegger) in an account of justification. Third, primordial, poetic, and artistic strife must be thought in reference to the work-being of art as truth underway, not createdness or inspiration, or as a gift of nature or nature’s primal potency. Finally, Heidegger’s artist, like the poet, is not concerned with resolving this strife from a summit position or in a word of legein, but with enabling it to “remain” (OWA 175/37) (the full meaning of which will not be clear until we turn to “Poetically Man Dwells” in the following chapter).

The similarities and differences alike are compelling, especially when we appreciate how Schelling and Heidegger, as thinkers of measure attempting, in their own ways, to twist free of poetizing reason. Even though Heidegger’s dialogue with Schelling in OWA and HEP is not direct, allowing the question of measurement to be posed from within a fugal impulse necessarily involves both thinkers in an engagement with elements of the imagination at both the level of inquiry and the level of primordial production. And yet, if and how there is a consequential difference between production in Schelling’s work and productivity in Heidegger’s ergon – a difference ultimately

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64 I agree with Capobianco’s general sentiment that “For Heidegger, nothing less than a fundamentally transformed sojourn in the world for human beings lay in the offing of naming, thinking, and experiencing die Lichtung” (Capobianco, 87), though I think our passage through the Beiträge to “Poetically Man Dwells” will reveal substantial developments in the relationship between dwelling and Lichtung prior to the 1960s.
bearing on the adherence between createdness in the *reell* and creative measure-taking in thought – is a question not entirely settled. Against the backdrop of the three orienting elements treated above, we are now able to return to the questionable standing of the imagination in Heidegger’s position on the full projective essence of art as poetry.

**IV. Poiesis, Projection, and the Preserving Imagination**

If the meaning of *poetizing projection* has been underway in the matters charted above, ascertaining its distinct essence and resulting implications for the poetic imagination requires some reflection on how Heidegger has advanced his discussion, and how this advance itself informs the shape of projection in a way that reinstates and reinvigorates elements traditionally ascribed to the poetizing imagination. More evident in the full version of Heidegger’s text than the first, projection is not only the point of departure into the origin of art from the essence of poetry, but is also the point of return after having passed through equipmental being to work-being, and the phenomenological exposure to the strife of the open as the happening of unconcealment and seclusion in truth’s own clearing (*OWA* 178/40). Why and how does Heidegger double back to the question of poetizing projection after having satisfied his inquiry with the discovery that *art* is the origin of the work of art insofar as “truth happens” in the work “as the primal strife between clearing and concealing [*der Urstreit von Lichtung und Verbergung geschieht*]” (180/42)? One hint later arises when he dovetails an emphasis on the requisite “preserving [*Bewahrung*]” (191/54) of unconcealment in the work-being of art with the vocation of poetry as a “clearing-projection” which unfolds truth’s projection and *figures* it, allowing “the open region [to] bring beings to shine and ring out” (197/60). To understand this preserving work of poetizing projection as a positive *measure* of and for unconcealment we must take stock of how Heidegger has thus far untwisted poetizing on the side of thought’s own attunement, then trace his remarkable reinstatement of elements of the imagination thus far in question.
As we have seen, the original question, “what and how is a work of art?" (OWA 144/2) led to the need to establish how truth happens in a work, which in turn required a further elaboration of how truth happens as unconcealment. As a result, every term in the question has undergone an essential modification. Even the grammatical form of the question has been uprooted from its elementary guise and transferred to an elemental horizon as we stand in the ‘actual’ experience of the painting and temple. Thinking may well be “a craft” (144/2) but the at hand poetizing instruments we might use to speak of the essence of these works have been set out of reach. Representation, as either an aesthetic concept or epistemic function is inadequate, for example; and will – the principle drive in subjective and creative knowing – stands impotent before the active elements of the works. Even so, the fact of these elisions assumes we are not disarmed entirely. Though Heidegger says very little with respect to our ‘intentionality’ as viewers or thinkers, his discussion consistently assumes our affectivity in receiving what the matter shows us. We are ‘exposed’, ‘placed’, faced with beings that stand ‘for us,’ and the being of the entities (be they the works, earth and world, or truth itself) are phenomena which affect us visually and audibly: truth ‘flashes out’ (176-77/37), matters ‘show themselves’, the painter’s pigment ‘shines forth’ (173/34), things attain their ‘look,’ the temple ‘figures’ (167-68/29-30), our ‘vision’ is ‘opened’ (164/24), the painting ‘speaks’ (161/21).

However truth ‘is’ at work in the work of art, our ability to apprehend (or rather, undergo) it depends on an affective attunement in our questioning. The work-being is not ‘constituted’ by our standing position per se, but we may at least say that our ability to let-be the being and truth of the artwork must require something like the poetic freedom of the poet who stands in the open region and names what remains. Such a consideration lends justification to the more positive implications noted in the

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65 These terms do not imply representation of mimesis, even if an ‘imaging’ is afoot. As Beistegui notes: “The work is indeed perhaps an image, but precisely in the sense of a shining, and not of a copy. Truth is not a model, something given in advance and outside the work, but what takes place in the work, whose work-character consists in making room for truth, in clearing a space for the unfolding of truth. And if the work is beautiful, it is not because it resembles truth, not because it reproduces a model faithfully, but because in and through it truth itself shines forth” (Beistegui, 132).
closing sections of the work and the direct return to the essence of poetry. Our general undoing is of course pivotal to recovering the actuality of work-being from beneath all thingly consideration. But with the exposure of object-being and the retrieval of Offenbarkeit there is a subtle rebuilding of the poetizing function which allows Heidegger to reinstate its primary terms.

Evidence of this turn first appears when Heidegger speaks of beauty to characterize the temple’s shining, unconcealing work: “Beauty is one way in which truth essentially occurs as unconcealment” (181/43). Some twenty pages prior, Heidegger placed beauty in abeyance as the obsession of an aesthetics that cared little for truth (see 162/21-2). The term’s return is cautious, but in ascribing it to the luminous event of what is “joined in the work” (181/43) Heidegger initiates a chain of reinstatements that will secure the full sense of poetizing projection. Next, notions of ‘creation’ and ‘efficacy/constancy’ (and their cognates), and even technē are recovered under the banner of the work’s ‘belonging’ to truth. Heidegger admits that his own delay in addressing the “activity of the artist [Tätigkeit des Künstlers]” and “the essence of the creative process [Wesen des Schaffens]” is “curious” (183/45), and indeed it is. And though we have suspected the presence of these matters under the many allusions to setting-forth (Herstellung), the skeptical note concerning ‘bringing-forth’ (Hervorbringen, poiesis) in the text’s first version left us in a state of hesitation. Heidegger now comes to the phrase in the form of a question: “We think of creation as a bringing forth [Hervorbringen]. . . . But what is it that distinguishes bringing forth as creation [als Schaffen] from bringing forth in the mode of making [Anfertigung]?” (183/45-46). This is a question we began asking in the last chapter as a way of sheltering the imagination in general, and the poetic imagination more specifically, from the fate of representational willfulness. It is the very question which must be resolved if there is to be a significant difference between the poetizing essence of reason and the poetizing pro-duction (following IM 204/145-46) of the poet.66

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66 It should now be evident that such questions pertain broadly to the matter of origin. Desmond’s account is helpful: “Heidegger became more aware that the momentum of modern subjectivity leads not just to a rational culmination in
On the basis of what Heidegger has argued thus far, we could say that creation (in an acceptable sense) would be an action of the work-being whereas making is an action of a craftsman. But the action of work-being is itself enabled by the letting-be of the artist, the viewer, and the poet who names. We are speaking from a position ‘beyond man,’ but of an event of projection which obviously involves man, and even depends on man’s craftsmanship with words and workable materials. Heidegger’s question thus requires two elements that would appear to be in tension: an aletheiaca constitution to bringing-forth and a capacitating technē on the side of the artist. His embrace of technē is, however, conditional. He argues that it denotes “a mode of knowing” rather than a “practical performance” (OWA 184/47), thus appropriating the term in its essential (as opposed to ordinary or traditional) aspect. Accordingly, we must expect less of craftsmanship on this score and more of knowing, but a kind of knowing that is rightly attuned to the role of appearance (in the Greek practice) in truth’s play of concealment and unconcealment. In this sense, Heidegger recaptures technē as “a bringing-forth of beings in that it brings forth what is present as such out of concealment and specifically into the unconcealment of its appearance [ein Hervorbringen des Seinden, als es das Anwesende als ein solches aus der Verborgenheit her eignis in die Unverborgenheit seines Aussehens vor bringt” (184/47). This semblance is a different craft of knowing and a different notion of ‘presence’ than that arising through the Kantian creative character of reason. Though we are not speaking of an inspired or mastering subject, Heidegger allows that the artist “a technitēs” – one whose skill serves the presencing aspect of unconcealment. Technē and bringing-forth thus return to the poetizing fold insofar as “the setting forth of works [Herstellen von Werken] and the setting forth of equipment occur in a bringing forth that causes beings in the first place to come forward and be present in assuming an outward aspect” (184/47). This account of

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Hegel’s thought thinking thought, but to a ‘voluntaristic’ acme in Nietzsche’s will to power, to will willing will, one might say. . . . The power of art, and poetry in particular, is very important here. The origin cannot be will willing will: something more is given, more like an inspiration communicated from the other; and something more is asked of us, more like the wooing that awaits the gift of the gracing word” (Desmond, 230).
creative production resembles Schelling’s 1807 emphasis on the primal potency of nature inasmuch as Heidegger accentuates “the being that surges upward, growing of its own accord, physis” (184/47), but Schelling’s spiritual essence of art is outstripped by Heidegger’s insistence on the work’s essence determining the essence of creation (185/48).67 Art remains the origin of the artist. To characterize creation as “to let something emerge as a thing that has been brought forth” may well suggest an artist who ‘lets’, but in fact refers us back once more to the essential happening of truth (“It all rests in the essence of truth,” 185/48). Poiesis is party to “the primal strife” of truth wherein “the open region is won within which everything stands and from which everything withholds itself and withdraws itself as a being” (185-86/48-49).

The reinstatement of bringing-forth also has implications for man, the entity instantiated in the open region yet scarcely mentioned in the discussion. The service poiesis renders the poetizing projection is incomplete without a commensurate treatment of truth’s establishment, and the instantiation and constancy of truth in/as the openness of the open region depends on “some being” (186/49). This necessity concerns primarily truth’s “possession” of the open region (which, in view of technē, must afford unconcealed beings with a concrete presencing) and is not a deduction of the need for an artist. But what ‘being’? Presumably any being, any entity which, as a “clearing of the There” serves the “establishing [Einrichtung]” of truth (186/49). Heidegger refers the reader to section 44 of Being and Time, thus putting us in mind of the Da of Da-sein. We should also hear a reference to Da-sein’s standing in the world-occurrence of Schelling’s jointure, the historical igniting of Da-sein’s creative possibilities (see ST 105/183). The mode of truth’s establishment, Heidegger explains, is that it “comes to shine forth [in] the nearness of that which is not simply a being, but the being that is most in being” (OWA 186-87/49-50). Not incidentally, truth’s establishing also happens

67 Heidegger appears to reply to Schelling’s positions in 1807/1809 in the following remark: “True, there lies hidden in nature a rift-design, a measure and a boundary and, tied to it, a capacity for bringing-forth—that is, art. But it is equally certain that this art hidden in nature becomes manifest only through the work, because it lies originally in the work” (OWA 195/58).
in “the thinker’s questioning, which, as the thinking of Being, names Being in its question-worthiness” (187/50, my emphasis). Together, these modes of establishment underscore the connection between the poet’s naming and founding and the work of thought noted in the HEP. The reference is verified when Heidegger, continuing, aligns truth’s ‘need’ for constancy with “the impulse toward the work,” an impulse to bring forth the openness of beings by way of a work in which truth establishes itself “in a being in such a way, indeed, that this being itself takes possession of the open region of truth [Offene der Wahrheit]” (187-88/50-51).

The character of this establishing is, as we have seen, strife. As an instigation of strife, bringing-forth reveals “the hidden necessity of measure and decisiveness” (188/51). In plain terms, truth is invested in poiesis in part because through it truth is able to bring measure to the “rift” at the heart of earth and world’s unity. And it is on account such measuring possibility that createdness (Geschaffensein) may be reinstated in the essential sense of poetizing projection. Createdness serves the strife of establishing by virtue of accomplishing “truth’s being fixed in place in the figure [Gestalt]” of the work (189/51, my emphasis). Bringing-forth is thus a way of figuring the measuring essence of truth. But are not fixing and figuring actions proper to the determinative side of poetizing which, as it were, conceal primordial discord and strife? Schelling, we recall, exposed thought to the image of unity coveted by the dark yearning of the ground, yet genuinely accomplished in the word as measure. Heidegger’s measure is of like importance and quality, but serves the jointure in a different way. “Figure,” he explains, “is the structure in whose shape the rift composes itself. This composed rift is the fugue [Fuge] of truth’s shining” (189/51). The shining of truth is in this sense something different from the imaging of the divine imagination, as is the free bestowal of poetic naming from the proclamation of the word of measure in Schelling.

The advance toward man and questioning is not lost in this recovery of createdness and fugal measure, but turned back through truth’s need for establishment and the work’s need for what Heidegger has called “preserving.” Bringing-forth pertains to the figuration of truth in the composed
rift from one direction, and to the Dasein’s “standing within the openness of beings that happens in a work” from another (191-92/53-54). The fate of the measure for truth and for thought is decided in their juncture. Why is this so? Preservation concerns the createdness which remains in a work. Further adapting the element of ‘efficacy’ noted earlier, createdness is “expressly created into the created being” such that it may be discovered and experienced “explicitly in the work” (190/53). Createdness is a point of reference, referring “us” to the factum est of artistic bringing-forth as unconcealment, a witness to the “thrust [Stoβ]” – the “that it is [Daβ]” of the work-being (190/53). It is a point of resistance to the pull of “oblivion [Vergessenheit]” (192/54) otherwise threatening the work and the standing of thought. One could allude to a Cartesian ‘hallmark’ in this regard, but we have a better precedent in Schelling’s own ‘remainder’ – the eternal subsistence of the dark ground even ‘after’ the accomplishment of existence and understanding. A factum est of divine production in its own sense, this remainder was poised to prevent the reduction of becoming to a cause-effect mechanism of creation, a logical sense of identity casting immanence in a deterministic light. Even if the dark ground remains as a fundamental principle in man, and is sometimes experienced by man in the ‘grim step’ toward abandonment in the ‘depths of life’ (NPS 217-18/218), it was, on Heidegger’s view, lost beneath the will to system and justification. Its loss, moreover, spelled the loss for thought of the ‘between’ so crucial to the jointure. Heidegger’s interest in the remainder of createdness is not equivalent to a preservation of the dark, irrational ground, but is nevertheless a means of assuring our continued standing in the event of the fugal rift figured in the “steadfastness [Beständigkeit]” of the work (OWA 190/53). This is a remainder that shines without binding its measure to divine personality, a poietic ‘offering’ of the work-being (like the ‘gift’ of language and dwelling in poetic saying, see HEP 120/36-7, 124/42) that abides by transporting us “into the openness of beings” and “out of the realm of the ordinary” (OWA 191/54). Createdness, to press the matter, preserves our standing, our letting-be, and marks the genuine efficacy of the work which we, in turn, must preserve. The possibility of our dwelling “in the work’s truth,” our “resoluteness” (Entschlossenheit)
in the ecstatic “openness of Being” (192/55), and indeed any ‘straighter’ poetizing depends on this: “To submit to this displacement means to transform our accustomed ties to world and earth and henceforth to restrain all usual doing and prizing, knowing and looking, in order to stay within the truth that is happening in the work. Only the restraint of this staying lets what is created be the work that it is” (191/54). The work of art preserves the Da of our standing, our exposedness to truth and Being, and we preserve this capacitating work in our knowing, questioning, and naming.

The larger accomplishment of this reorienting and reinstating a work’s efficacy under the rubric of preservation is that it allows the bringing-forth of truth in art to subsist in a mode of “thrownness” (Geworfenheit), and it is in this vein that the work’s opening of the open region is “projected” (Entwurf) (196-97/59). Geworfenheit’s appearance suggests that the motion of truth through the work-being of the artwork resembles the way the Dasein of Being and Time was given over to itself in its facticity. And if in the existential character of the human being, Entwurf denotes the drive toward possibilities, then we understand the movement of truth in and through the artwork as a becoming of truth in terms of its own possibilities. This is the deeper sense of the work’s ‘composure,’ and insofar as it presents the origin and essence of truth in terms already applicable to Dasein, we may surmise that the dichtender Entwurf poses the possibilities of Being and Time’s poetic discourse (noted way above) in a more primordial way. The artwork is a ‘thrown project’ which Dasein, as Da-sein, must ‘let happen.’ This is the basic sense in which all art “as the letting happen of the advent of the truth of beings, is as such, in essence, poetry [als Geschehenlassen der Ankunft der Wahrheit des Seienden also eines solchen im Wesen Dichtung]” (197/59).

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68 See translator note at OWA 196-97.
69 On the meaning of art as Dichtung, we may return to a point we have already begun to develop with Beistegui: “Dichtung, a word that would designate the operation proper to all types of artworks, says something of the process of composition or configuration thus understood. Dichten designates the work-character of the artwork, and not the creative process. It is impersonal, and points in the direction of an event that exceeds mere boundaries of human creation. It does not presuppose the artist. Once again: the cause of the work must be distinguished from its origin. Art is an impersonal field in which truth happens. Art is the voice of truth” (Beistegui, 134). To understand art in this way is to also appreciate the transformation of language: “[Language] no longer designates speech as the ability to articulate sounds producing meaning. Rather, it now designates this primordial and infinitely repeatable openness
poetic essence of truth conspires with the poetizing projection, as a preservation – truth’s endurance happens, most decisively, in the *Entschlossenheit* of the poetic imagination.

And yet, Heidegger’s culminating discussion interrupts this chain of reinstatements elucidating the poietic possibilities of poetizing with a pronounced hesitation. Can the reader bear the difficulty in sheltering this essential work from its traditional association with the “whimsicalities” (197/59) of the poetic imagination? This is the point at which the *imagination*, bracketed early in the text’s first version, is mentioned in the full version. It is the only mention, a fact which in the very least suggests that it ranks with ‘genius’ on Heidegger’s watch-list of notions that might adversely disorient his discussion. Let us hear the statement again in full:

> If we fix our vision on the essence of the work and its connection [*Bezug*] with the happening of the truth of beings, it becomes questionable [*wird fraglich*] whether the essence of poetry, and this means at the same time the essence of projection [*Entwurfes*], can be adequately thought in terms of the power of imagination [*von der Imagination und Eindbildungskraft*] (OWA 197/60)

What does this say? The aim is to understand the essence of *projection* – the tipping point for an authentic mode of poetizing. We now know that projection is precisely what effects the recapacitating of Being as the ‘measure’ for the truth of beings. We also know that a poetizing projection abhors any flight “into the realm of the unreal” (197/60). Thinking projection adequately means standing resolute in the actuality of the work. Heidegger thus situates us in the moment of *viewing* the essence of a work; his pronouns, ‘we’ and ‘our,’ are already unusual in the discursive economy of the text. Situated thus, the ‘power of imagination’ seems like a ‘questionable’ means to ascertaining what is already a difficult disclosure – the essence of projection. The hesitation has two sides. *First*, to speak of the ‘power of imagination’ is to make reference by way of Kant to imagination as a transcendental faculty which, pressed into the service of German Idealism and
to beings in their disclosedness. . . . In language, it is in the end not so much the voice of Dasein as the murmur of being that speaks” (135). Bowie is more skeptical: “In Heidegger’s terms, the language of *Dichtung* happens to be ‘of being’ in the subjective genitive, but we are offered no serious way of engaging with this notion beyond engaging with the *Dichtung* itself” (Bowie, 185-86). It is not clear to me what alternative kind of ‘engagement’ Bowie desires, or what he means to suggest by granting *Dichtung* the definite article.
aesthetic theory, has become a power of so-called Romantic flight. If we are truly interested in letting truth be in the work and be projected through the work, then we should be cautious of summoning old instruments that delimit the possibilities intrinsic to Entwurf – instruments used for ends such as schematizing the manifold for the understanding and determining beauty. On this score, we must admit that Heidegger shrinks back from Einbildungskraft and Ineinsbildung for specific reasons that mirror his more general resistance to the poetizing essence of reason. Second, to say that the imagination’s work is ‘questionable’ in this regard is not to say that all poetic or creative productions or dispositions are per se misguided. Fraglich denotes a position of doubt or reticence. But, questionability is, as we know, a spur to continued thought: “Each answer remains in force as an answer only so long as it is rooted in questioning” (195/58). Following this remark, Heidegger says that the very essence of poetry is itself “something worthy of questioning [Frag-würdiges], something that still has to be thought through” (197/60). It is thus one thing to say that the essence of projection is irreducible to elucidation on the basis of imagination as a cognitive faculty, but must this preclude us (or Heidegger) from continuing to think through imagination as a more productive, projective poetizing power? Has not our whole affective entry into the work-being of the artwork and the Ereignis of aletheia – the very path of disclosing the full essence of poetry – already assumed a reorientation of the imagination from the fate of poetizing reason to the possibilities of poetizing projection?70

If we are going to continue speaking of the imagination in the context of Heidegger’s essential sense of poetizing in this period, then it must be on the side of language’s projective work in

70 Sallis poses the predicament as follows: “Certainly, granted the analysis of art that ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’ has developed, one would not be inclined to think poetry as a matter of imagination in the sense of mere phantasy, or mere imagining as an entertaining of images. And yet, it is Heidegger, perhaps most of all, who has provided the means for surpassing such impoverished concepts of imagination, especially through his interpretation of the Kantian transcendental imagination, which radicalizes imagination to the point where it merges with Dasein itself. If one notes, too, that the entire discussion of poetry and of projection in ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’ serves essentially to elaborate the opening of the Da, the opening of the space of truth, then it is doubly surprising that Heidegger, in effect, sets imagination aside. Even more so, if one considers the possibility that imagination, sufficiently deconstructed, would seem eminently fit to name that peculiar active reception that Heidegger has shown to characterize artistic creation” (Sallis, Echoes, 185-86).
and from the clearing “as” of Ereignis and not under the determinative ‘is’ to which Einbildungskraft succumbs at the impasse of poetizing reason.\(^71\) The imagination, that is, may no longer be allowed to furnish the representational mastery thought to justify reason’s command over standing beings or being as a whole. Einbildungskraft, to be sure, brought the manifold of intuition into the mediating occurrence of schematism, but language alone, says Heidegger “brings beings as beings into the open for the first time” (198/61). If imagination is to be ascribed to the work of poetry and the instantiating experience of work-being, then it must be grasped in terms of the way truth “directs itself into work” (199/62) and happens in the clearing of language, not in terms of the way beings stand against the cognizing subject, or spirit’s eternal archetypes come to stand and shine through the absolute’s

**Ineinsbildung.** The conclusion of OWA thus returns to the impulse of HEP, to the sense in which the saying of poetry is a founding and preserving of truth, a clearing in language which encompasses the “special poetizing” (199/62) of art. A poetic imagination, moreover, would have to evoke the manner in which the creative bestowing of poetry, and the instigating work of work-being, accentuate ‘founding’ as a ‘beginning.’\(^72\) The poetic imagination would be an attunement to the beginning as a thrust of measure through the site of dwelling, a “fixing in place [*Fest-stellung*] of truth in a figure” that “lets truth originate” (200-02/64-5).

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\(^71\) Beistegui clarifies the sought-for ‘as’ of Ereignis in terms of the transformation in position and language: “[T]he truth of being that occurs in language, even though it is always there, with us, coextensive with our very being, becomes what is most foreign and unfamiliar, what is least worthy of questioning and thought. . . . language is *where* we are: it is the site at which we are, the site at which we begin to be; at the same time, it is this ‘there’ that we are or exist” (Beistegui, 136). But to turn back to this ‘where’ as a site of dwelling entails a turn of “our ownmost self. Only thinking at its deepest, and poetry at its highest, Heidegger claims, can carry out such a conversion” (136). To be sure, he continues, “the essence of language is nothing other than the language of essence, that is, the ability to disclose the very event of disclosedness itself, truth. In thus experiencing and bringing forward the essence of language, poetry and thought open themselves to the openness of world in its strife with earth, and dwell among things as if for the first time. There, every word becomes an event, or an offspring born of the event of being. Language itself becomes the epiphany of being” (137).

\(^72\) What Gossetti-Ferencei calls for near the conclusion of her project seems, here, to be anticipated by Heidegger: “In the new poetics there is a place for Dasein’s self, albeit fragile, as the eccentric ungrounded self among beings in the world, a self not merely statically present, but a horizontal-imaginative nexus of possibility, creation, and preservation. In being itself, poetic Dasein accepts this nexus as the space of its own specificity and freedom” (Gossetti-Ferencei, 256).
Chapter Six

Thought in the Meantime: Imagination as the Measure of Crossing

Words do not yet come to speech at all, but it is precisely in failing us that they arrive at the first leap. This failing is the event as intimation and incursion of Beýng. This failing us is the primordial condition for the self-unfolding possibility of an original (poetic) naming of Beýng.

-Martin Heidegger
Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis) (1936-38)

Dicite, felices animae, tuque, optime vates, quae regio Anchisen, quis habet locus?
-Virgil, Aeneid

And now tell me, what refuge remains?
-Friedrich Hölderlin
Hypertion (cir. 1797)

When, in Goethe’s novel, Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship, the playwright protagonist at last receives the scroll containing his certificate of artistic apprenticeship, it begins thus: “Art is long, life is short, judgment difficult, opportunities fleeting. Action is easy, thinking is hard. . . . every threshold a point of expectation.”¹ Hölderlin’s Hyperion declares “Life has great hours,” then sets out to measure the length of his moment as he wanders amid Calaurea’s “dark laurel woods.”² Virgil beseeches the Greek muse: “O you, Calliope . . . do you, I pray, inspire me!” just as his priestess Sibyl appeals to Musaeus of Attica, “the best of poets” to show the paths of Elysium.³ Hesiod speaks of the “prompt-voiced daughters of great Zeus” who “gave me a staff, a branch of strong laurel,/ a fine one, and breathed into me a voice/ divine, to celebrate what will be and what was.”⁴ Amid the urgency of life’s moment there thus appears the endurance of art and the path of the poet. What remains in the shortness of life, in the sojourn of men and poet priests “beneath the curve of the upper world”?⁵ What is there, in the ecstasy of the hour’s threshold, to name by way of the artist’s scroll and the poet’s staff? In Antiquity, scroll and staff, words and wood, comprised a work of measure and

² Hölderlin, Hyperion, 62, 127.
⁴ Hesiod, Theogony, trans. Richard S. Caldwell (Cambridge, MA: Focus Information Group, 1987) 31, lines 29-32. The daughters are the Olympian Muses, who “know how to speak the truth” (line 28).
⁵ Aeneid, p.157, Book VI, line992.
jointure. Spartan Ephors, for example, encoded orders to their generals on Scytales. “And this scroll,” Plutarch explains, “is called a staff, after the name of the wood, as a thing measured is by the name of the measure.” The artist and poet, one could say, is thus apprenticed to a work of measure in a time of need, to clear the path of dwelling and name what refuge remains. Suppose thought were likewise apprenticed?

Based on the essential elements of poetic projection highlighted in the last chapter, it is evident that the language of ‘turn’ (Kehre) so readily applied to Heidegger’s thought of the 1930s must, in substantial part, denote a turn of poetizing toward the measure of poetic saying and the work-being of artistic works. To retrieve and sustain the impulse toward the being of ground and the experience of the ‘between’ in the open occurrence of the primordial jointure, the path of philosophical questioning turns from the impasse of willful production and ontology to the aletheiac event of truth, the instantiation of Dasein amid the clearing of beings, and the strife of thought arising in the strife of earth and world. Poetizing reason stands down, apprenticing itself to poetizing projection (dichtender Entwurf), and thereby returning through the creative remainder of works to a bringing-forth that is genuinely pro-ductive and resolute in preserving. Art is long, time is short, but the time of what remains may be an ecstatic hour of enduring possibility and appropriation under the founding name of Beyng: Ereignis.

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7 As we have seen, this turn may be specified in terms of the emphasis on Dichtung, and thus on the sense language as “what is most dichtend. . . what most has the ability to bring things into the Open as if for the first time, what is most able to open up the world and bring us close to everything in it” (Beistegui, 134).
8 That is not to suggest that ‘jointure’ enjoys an identical meaning in Heidegger and Schelling. Hellmers, for example, generalizes the matter by saying jointure “is a merging into a larger structure for both Heidegger and Schelling, highlighting the extent to which Heidegger’s usage of the term demonstrates a debt to Schelling as well as the importance of Schelling to the Beiträge” (Hellmers, 158n.30). I will not quibble with the matter of a ‘debt’ to Schelling, but I would caution that the sense of ‘a merging into a larger structure’ cannot imply, for Heidegger, an understanding of being as “totality” (see Hellmers, 146). Hellmers is right to dissociate Heidegger’s jointure from a ‘system’ ambition, but it is misleading to at the same time claim that the Beiträge aims “at the understanding of the whole historical sweep of being” (146). To venture a ‘primordial’ inquiry of and as an experience of the ‘between’ is to forgo from the outset any comprehensive or totalizing aspirations.
In the present chapter I will explore how the ‘crossing’ into ‘another beginning’ Heidegger envisions and attempts (versuchen) in Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)⁹ (1936-38) arises as a ‘work’ of the poetic imagination, an apprenticeship of thought to the path and place of poetizing projection. Having noted the reinstatement of poiesis and its attendant elements in the last chapter, and having positioned the fate of the imagination as a question of measure pursuant to Da-sein’s Inständigkeit, Beyng’s founding, and the fugal junction and rift composed and preserved in a work’s site, we want to elucidate how the fugenmäßigen of the Beiträge intensifies thought’s Gelassenheit as the measure and strife of questioning proper to enacting the task for thinking Heidegger found incomplete in Schelling. Drawing as well upon Basic Questions of Philosophy¹⁰ (1937/38), Heidegger’s later Schelling Courses (1941-1943),¹¹ and with a view toward “Poetically Man Dwells”¹² (1951), I will focus on four movements by which the work-being of thought carries forth a repositioning of philosophical questioning intended to recalibrate the gauge of essential measuring: (1) the distinction between philosophy’s guiding (die Leitfrage) and basic (die Grundfrage) questions as the historical framework for a passage from poetizing reason to poetizing thought; (2) the function of plight (die Not) in this passage as the creative release of basic measures; (3) the projection of the Da of Da-sein as the grounding exposure to imagination as the domain of transfiguration; (4) the essential gathering of thought and poetizing in the ascending and assenting measure-taking of poetic

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⁹ Martin Heidegger, Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis) (1936-38). Gesamtausgabe Bd. 65 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1989). Hereafter CP. English quotations are based on the forthcoming translation by Richard Rojcewicz and Daniela Vallega-Neu (Indiana University Press?); pagination refers to a manuscript draft (not proofs). Pagination appears as English/German section.


¹¹ As noted in chapter three, excerpts of these course notes and manuscripts (1941-43) are included as an appendix to Martin Heidegger, Schelling’s Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom (1936), trans. Joan Stambaugh (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1985), following Gesamtausgabe Bd. 49. I will continue to abbreviate this reference as ST49. Pagination appears as English/German, though when referencing GA 49 passages not provided in Stambaugh translations are my own.

dwelling. Tracking these movements will by no means win for us a full understanding of the Beiträge, but will reveal the decisive means by which the phrase ‘poetic imagination’ justifiably names the character of thought engaged in the meantime of the crossing.

More than in prior chapters, our present work requires two preliminary lines of critique and clarification. The first is a reflection on the tenability of the ‘poetic imagination’ as a heuristic for interpreting Heidegger’s work here in a period where the right ‘running start’ for a leap of questioning would appear to assign us to more explicit components of his so-called Kehre. The second is a forward-looking claim on the ongoing importance of Schelling to Heidegger even after his decisive 1936 course, a claim meant to derive from this importance several points of orientation for our reading of the Beiträge. I will treat these preliminaries briefly in the following section then return more ably to the matters at hand.

I. Preliminaries: A Path of Necessity and a Light Surmised

First, with the phrase, ‘poetic imagination,’ I have sought to preserve the sense in which the turn of poetizing amounts to a reorientation of the imagination from an instrument of determinative command and objectifying representation to a measuring force of poetic founding, fixture, and figuration attuned to the tremorous work of unconcealment. Without diminishing the obvious importance of Heidegger’s reluctance to embrace imagination on either the side of inspired or mimetic artistic intent or in the counter-projective habits of reductive aesthetic reception, I have suggested that his entry into the poetic sphere of influence and the primordial ‘good’ of language, his appeal to affectivity in the experience of truth ‘at work,’ and his reinstatement of poiesis in workly production and preservation signal an imagination very much underway in the questioning of essence/origin and in the creative attestation of poetic works and poet’s words.

But are we not, under the name of suggestion, protesting too much on imagination’s behalf? Must we hazard this difficult course of poetizing and wager this emphasis on the poetic imagination when, so doing, we discover those elements which justify a simpler account of the turn from the
impassable to the inceptual – the passage from fundamental ontology to being-historical thinking, from the meaning and sense of Being to the truth and essence of Beyng, from the interrogative Frage to the instantiating Ereignis? Our course is not a blithe insistence on behalf of the Schellingian imagination nor the horizon of the Kantbuch. The turn of attention beyond man, his faculties, and his systems, and toward the fugal happening of aletheia and dwelling, is not an isolated decision on Heidegger’s part but a response in view of developments issuing from the immanence of the matters themselves. In recent chapters we have appreciated the shape of impulse and impasse, impetus and inception, production and projection according to terms with which our thinkers find them, terms inseparable from the imagination even as the imagination is questionable in one sense, question-worthy in another. If question-seeking is guided by what is sought,\textsuperscript{13} then any account of the transformations or turns in Heidegger’s thought does well to proceed by way of an alertness to how his matters shape the disposition of his asking. I have sought to shelter this alertness and refrain from typological earmarks even as I have maintained an interest in the poetic imagination as an interpretive problem, possibility, and indeed a path of exegetical necessity. Nonetheless, how does this alertness square with the more common touchstones for what is, in Heidegger, a turn of thinking underway? Without repeating the findings of prior chapters, it will serve to retrace briefly the salient components which illuminate Heidegger’s question-seeking as a path bound up with the matter of poetic imagination.

As we have seen, circa 1926-27 Heidegger find’s in Kant’s advance toward the ontological structure of personality a lingering reliance on traditional ontological assumptions regarding the subject as hupokeimenon, an orientation toward extant givenness which (i) forgets to question “the mode of being of the whole being”, and (ii) fails to raise “the question of the being of the Dasein”

\textsuperscript{13} Heidegger is frequently alert to this theme from Plato’s \textit{Meno}. More than a descriptive fact regarding inquiry, it names a condition of possibility attending all question-posing. Early in \textit{Being and Time}, for example, Heidegger introduces his consideration of the formal structure of the question of being by remarking: “Every inquiry is a seeking [Suchen]. Every seeking gets guided beforehand by what is sought” \textit{(BT}, 24/5). A similar point appears in his lecture course of 1944-45 where it is focused on the question of ‘comparing’ (see, for example, \textit{TP} 42/137).
Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel sustain these failures in treating “the mode of being of the ego” and further reveal “that the interpretation of this being which we ourselves are is the least obviously evident and the most subject to the danger of being located in the wrong horizon” (153/218). A better horizon, and thus an enactment of the questions above, will take its cue from “the basic constitution of being-in-the-world” (175/249). The question of a ground-laying for metaphysics is an appropriate question, but one which ought to point toward the constitutive task of a more fundamental ontology. In 1927-29 Heidegger accredits the problem of synthetic a priori knowledge as a gesture toward the problem of finitude and the meaning (as opposed to the principle) of ground, and privileges the transcendental power of imagination as the innermost structure of possibility of Dasein’s transcendence – the root-Being (Wurzelsein) for the theoretical faculty (KPM 106-7/151). The concern, however, is that this radical, original sphere of grounding and primordial productivity – already ascribed as the work of “occurrence [Geschehen]” and “innermost drive [innersten Zug]” (146-47/214-15) – is lost beneath the mastery of the understanding, thereby specifying the missed opportunity for questioning the being of Dasein and the meaning of being as a whole. To retrieve, and not retreat from, the discoveries of this innermost path, thought must twist free from the logical weight pressing upon and predetermining all questions of identity and ground. To think this field of occurrence and finitude signaled by the productive imagination thought must raze its foundations by raising the question of the essence of truth in a way that allows the happening of truth to overwhelm the supposedly grounding decisions of judgment. The spontaneity of transcendental synthesis, anchored in imagination, signals a temporality manifest as a springing forth with which the measure of truth as Ereignis must comport and encompass. Attuned thus, the question of the meaning of Being will shirk the habits of extantness and representedness, and experience Being as a fundamental happening which grounds historical Dasein and opens the field of beings as a whole (see IM 215-16/153-54).
Schelling’s *Freedom Essay*, we noted, brings thought to the fugal verge of this turn but cannot relinquish its service to the mastery of system and the assurance of divine personality. His failure puts Heidegger again in mind of the poetizing risks which accompany the creative character of reason ably deployed in Kant yet rendered irresistible to the willfulness of his aftermath. If thought is to sustain the passage beyond man and system and let-be the very matters in question for fundamental ontology (and indeed now exceeding its analytic methodology), it must exchange the course of commanding determination for that of instantiating possibility. Language, word, and measure comprise the elemental touchstones for this turn, and questions of essence the traction. The glimpse of poetic, discursive possibility in 1926-27 returns to the fore to pair with the primordial possibility of these elements in Schelling, but more forcefully in Hölderlin. The becoming of truth in the open (again echoing, though revolutionizing, the occurrence of imagination at the root of the faculties) is the concern proper to the full essence of poetry. Once broached, the matter of poetic projection and the work of art prove more fundamental, in an immediate sense, than the very questions of fundamental ontology. “Poetry—the essence of art—is *founding of Beyng* [Stiftung des Seyns]” (*OWAI* 146/18). Letting-be is not a means to an interrogative end, but a mode of dwelling “in the work’s truth” and *in* the ecstatic “openness of Being” (*OWA* 192/54). The being of the very ‘there’ (*Da*) which questions is, by the force of its matters, set back into the ‘there’ of truth and Beyng’s *Ereignis* – a position which surmounts the metaphysical circulation between the beingness (*die Seiendheit*) of beings and the purported totality of beings. The transcendental ‘occurrence’ of the power of imagination is likewise recalled to a more originary site of exposure and preservation. To turn, or rather ‘return,’ the *Da* to its most native ‘ground’ *in* what work-being projects necessarily displaces the commanding instruments of creative reason, even as our “resoluteness” (*Entschlossenheit*) in holding to this dwelling has been catalyzed by the ‘createdness’ fixed and figured in poetic work. The turn toward the inceptual is, in its most precise form, a turn within the fabric of poetizing. This is why the language of imagination is as dangerous as it is inevitable. In
sum, we do not protest too much on its behalf, but preserve a level of interest adequate to understanding a path which will find Heidegger holding, as he does in the *Beiträge*, this mysterious position: “Da-sein, as the projecting-thrown grounding, is the highest reality in the domain of imagination. . . as the event itself, wherein all transfiguration oscillates” (*CP* 312/GA 65: §192).

Our second preliminary consideration in part justifies the place of Schelling in the above itinerary but, more importantly, furnishes a framework for remaining alert to Heidegger’s modes and matters of question-seeking in the *Beiträge*. Course notes from 1941-43 are evidence enough that Heidegger remains preoccupied with Schelling’s Freedom Essay even after his own guarded venture into inceptual thinking, and even as he maintains the habit of ‘signing’ his texts with a Hölderlinian postscript. Why is this so? Why hover over the Scheitern (impasse) when the measuring force of poetic projection and the entry into the inner essence of the work of art have already set the “preparation for another thinking” (GA 49: 28) on its way? Presumably because the post-metaphysical “premonition” (*ST49* 190) of the poet and the “acme” of the metaphysics of German Idealism (165/1) present two sides of a moment in the history of Being which must be held in concert if the urgent exposure of man and thought in the Seynsfuge is to spring forth as a leap into another beginning. How this is the case remains to be seen, but by noting several sharpened elements Heidegger brings to bear on Schelling’s ‘impulse’ in these later interpretations we may begin to orient ourselves to those aspects of the *Beiträge* that will prove most decisive for our project.

First, as with his prior interest in the reformulation of identity, Heidegger notes the manner in which Schelling’s system of human freedom draws one into “essential relations to that which ‘is’” (*ST49* 168/9). The discovery of difference and movement within the unity of the copula draws forth the question of Being. Here Heidegger accentuates the experience of these relations in a way more consistent with his emphasis on the one’s entry into the work-being of a work of art, though inflected to a still starker register: “We experience that and how we ‘are’ in such relations, we experience the abandonment of Being by beings and man’s forgottenness of Being [Seinsverlassenheit des Seienden
– Seinsvergessenheit des Menschen” (168/9, my emphasis). These phenomena indicate a decision on Heidegger’s part to transpose Schelling’s account of fugal discord, self-assertion, and the endurance of the divine band into the predicament besetting Dasein’s standing in the strife of the open. His engagement with Schelling thus begins not via a general exposition of system and the purported paradox between necessity and freedom, but precisely from the horizon of man’s situation too swiftly encompassed through the moral position of the summit and the promise of the salvific beginning. Whereas in his first course Heidegger stood with Schelling on the side of that promise for a new thinking which the deconstructed copula (together with the principle of ground) opened up, in his later treatment Heidegger stands within a certain world-historical situation affected in man as the creature who indwells the instability of the ‘is.’ Both readings focus on the occurrence of ‘separation’ within the unity of Being, but the later treatment poses more pointed questions concerning the justification for the “belonging-together [Zusammengehörigkeit]” of ground and existence, not simply in God, but in “the jointure [Gefüge] of every being” (169-70/82). Pressing Schelling’s own insistence on ‘standpoint,’ Heidegger asks the question which ‘man’ would ask in his experience of the essential relations constituting the ‘is’: “How is every being as such joined in this way? Where is the distinction of ground and existence rooted? On what path do we meet the root [Wurzel] of the distinction?” (170/82).¹⁴ Such are the questions the poet would ask from the depths of emergency and withdrawal, and the temple’s visitor would ask when drawn into the uncanny experience of the strange nearness of things.

The second element maintains the initial concern with Schelling’s subjectivizing understanding of primordial Being as essentially “will” (168-70/83-86, citing Schelling: “Wollen ist Ursein”), but in this later form the charge is more direct and presented in terms more readily

¹⁴ The use of Wurzel in these questions recalls Heidegger’s attention in KPM to Einbildungskraft. The later concern is that one cannot question the ‘root’ of the jointure in Schelling without immediately falling into the primacy of will. He explains: ‘‘Root’ means that the distinction originates from the will, and what is distinguished has the character of ‘will’” ['Wurzel’ soll sagen: Die Unterscheidung entspringt aus dem Wollen, und das Unterschiedene hat den Charakter von ‘Wille’] (GA 49: 89).
consistent with the genealogy of poetizing in the negative sense. Here, citing an overarching path toward “systasis” (178/), Heidegger shows little evidence of having reflected on Schelling’s later, more asystic impulse, but the balance of possibility remains as problematic as we speculated in the prior chapter. Schelling “asks about the Being of beings” but is all to willing to “determine” Being by thinking it as subjectivity (176-77/), reducing the being of the ground to a mode of divine presence and constancy without remaining adequately with the problem of “groundlessness” (170/86). The orientation toward ontological difference thus gives way to a Cartesian emphasis on actus, and with this the assimilation of a metaphysical tendency to treat human subjectivity as the striving to represent oneself for oneself. Will, Heidegger reiterates, is “the title of the modern interpretation of Being” (178/). And Schelling’s God is a fitting partner in such striving because he beholds his own will in the image of man’s becoming and supplies the “spiritual light” that enables the work of representation on which self-reflection depends (180/190). The collaboration of will and representation maintains the metaphysical understanding of Being as ousia, as the sense of presencing (idea) by which reflection may represent the predicates of Being. We do well to hear in the phrase ‘spiritual light’ a conscious distinction from the shining of truth’s composure in the work of art.

Third, as in the early interpretation, Heidegger again transposes Schelling’s language of eternal ‘beginnings’ into a conception of beginnings which structure the situation of the impasse for thought. But the accent at present rests with the return to the question of ontological difference according to a ‘naming’ and ‘saying’ of Being which recalls the essential, grounding import bestowed on these actions in his reading of Hölderlin. In the “first beginning,” says Heidegger, physis and aletheia were the names of Being (187/189-90). A specific and underlying ontological question, together with an implicit appeal to poetic projection, thus recaptures the thought of

15 Heidegger explains: “Schelling’s idea of identity and groundlessness as in-difference is more primordial within the absolute metaphysics of subjectivity, but only within it. A merely negative thought [ab-sagen]” (ST49 193).
incipience from the concealing deference to eternal beginnings. The question is reinscribed in that tremorous moment of fugal createdness. Heidegger pairs his own historical moment with the deep temporal moment of the between:

By asking in terms of the first beginning (springing into the truth of Being \([\text{Einsprung in die Wahrheit des Seyns}]\)), all questions of metaphysics arising from analogy and dialectic are especially overcome. Hence the discussion from beginning to beginning is starting now. The Saying of Being becomes completely different \([\text{Das Sagen des Seyns wird ein ganz anderes}]\). . . the distinction of Being and beings must first be recognized as such, questioned and taken back \([\text{die Unterscheidung von Sein un Seiendem als solche erkannt, erfragt, und zurückgenommen werden}]\). (ST49 187/189-90)\(^{16}\)

To resume the \(\text{Zwischen}\) of ground and existence, in one sense, is to take a questioning stand between the naming-saying of \(\text{physis}\) and \(\text{alethia}\) and the measuring words of \(\text{ousia}\) and \(\text{idea}\). Both pairs comprise terms of measurement, but the latter mark the components of measure that will be reformulated or restrained on the basis of a more primordial regard for the former. In a related sense, Heidegger admits that the questioning of \(\text{Being and Time}\), though “more primordial” than Schelling’s (187/189), was not yet able to attain the new saying of Being in a way fully shaped through the return to the Greek names. Fundamental ontology was right to ask the question of ontological difference from the horizon of Dasein’s being-in-the-world, but a continued primordial path of such questioning must arrive at a more creative bestowal of founding saying.\(^{17}\) To be ‘taken back’ does not just imply ‘reclaimed,’ but also suggests a carrying back \(\text{into}\) the instantiation subsisting before the instruments of creative reason. It is in view of this task that Heidegger presents the chief distinction between the thought of the impasse and the thought which returns through it to the essential fugal impulse: there is the metaphysics of German Idealism which maintains “will-full reason” in a determinative

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\(^{16}\) Heidegger raises this same point in \(\text{Beiträge} \S 277\) on “‘Metaphysics’ and the Origin of the Work of Art.” Noting how the question of the origin of the work of art is intrinsically connected to “the task of overcoming metaphysics,” he explains: “Overcoming metaphysics means giving free rein to the priority of the question of the truth of Being over every ‘ideal,’ ‘causal,’ ‘transcendental,’ or ‘dialectical’ explanation of beings. Yet the overcoming of metaphysics is not a repudiation of philosophy hitherto but, instead, is a leap into the first beginning of that philosophy, though without wanting to reinstate that beginning” \((\text{CP} 498/\S 277)\).

\(^{17}\) Notes from 1941 read: “I am not saying that \(\text{Being and Time}\) has become something past for me. I have still not ‘gotten any further’ today because I know with every increasing clarity that I must not get any ‘further,’ but perhaps I have gotten closer in some things to what was attempted in \(\text{Being and Time}\)” \((\text{ST49} 189)\).
questioning, and there is “the thinking of the history of Being of Appropriation” (190-91). But these matters are not simply rival paths. Part of the ‘work’ of the distinction is to disclose what is concealed in the metaphysics of the Absolute: “the illusion that Being is being questioned” (192). The ‘subjectivity’ of the Absolute, in effect, names the concealment of “the abandonment of Being.” The impasse, thus regarded, is the situation of a questioning tethered to “the metaphysics of unconditional subjectivity (Hegel, Schelling, Nietzsche)” (191), a situation which the saying of appropriation will unconceal and thus disclose the movement from speculative construction to poetic projection in thought.

Drawn from Heidegger’s ongoing engagement with Schelling’s decisive work, we have then the following points of critical orientation for matters a reading of the Beiträge must clarify: an abandonment/forgottenness amid the fugal experience, a representational drive attuned to an ontology of will and presence, and the saying of Being in the between of beginnings. These elements are indicative of a continued task of a-pseudos intent on our “standing-in the ecstatic expanse” of the jointure’s moment and our “sojourn without cease in the essentializing relation to the Beyng of beings.”

The thinking ‘of’ Dasein and Beyng must untwist the entanglements of poetizing and take back this position to the pro-ductive and projective occurrence of truth, the strife and possibility of the ‘is’ before the foundering of Beyng and beings under the ‘are.’ But this task, as with the emergency decisions of the poet (see HEP 118/35), has no formulaic guarantees. Thinking, like artistry, is a craft, but neither is strictly mimetic and both, to be essential, require a trajectory and manner exceeding the scope of one’s own designs and production. This is a lesson Heidegger continues to learn from Schelling – that that “which one ‘knows’ in the realm of thinking which attempts to think Being is, after all, each time only a light surmised which hovers over Something

which far outreaches the thinker” (*ST49* 189). What is surmised is far from what is commanded, whether or not the savants of representational reason and aesthetic science see the shadow of uncertainty behind the brightness of their *subjectum*. But if the task is rightly attuned and the reflection rightly apprenticed, the motion of thought shall, as Heidegger noted in his first reading, “ignite” the release of forces intrinsic to “creative Dasein” (*ST* 105/183). As he likewise observes in *Ages of the World Picture*: “Humans will know the incalculable—that is, safeguard it in its truth—only in *creative* questioning and *forming* from out of the power of genuine reflection. Reflection transposes the human of the future into that ‘in-between’ in which he belongs to Being and yet, amidst beings, remains a stranger” (*AWP* 222-23/96, my emphases).

II. Basic Measures: Between Supposing and Sounding

*Contributions to Philosophy* is a difficult text consisting of an initial ‘Preview’ (*Vorblick*), six studies or variations on thought’s being-historical (*seynsgeschichtlicht*) dimension, and a closing reflection on ‘Beyng.’ It is a text composed of many overlaying voices. Lest we assume its difficulty results from an exercise in intentional obfuscation and mytho-poetic argumentation, we do well to ask why and how its interpretive difficulty is indicative of our standing in the task it intends. Early on, Heidegger describes his attempt to elucidate the jointure of Beyng as a “work of thought” (*CP* 2/§1) undertaken in a specific time. He continues:

> The epoch of ‘systems’ has passed. The epoch of the working out of the essential form of beings from out of the truth of Beyng [*die Wahrheit des Seyns*] has not yet come. In the interim, in transition to the other beginning, philosophy needs to have accomplished something essential: the projection, i.e., the grounding and opening up [*Eröffnung*] of the playing field of time-space of the truth of Beyng. (*CP* 3/§1)

Evident in this passage is the consternation that will greet any reader hoping to understand this ‘jointure’ and this ‘crossing’ on the basis of standard metaphysical terminology. Such an exegetical

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19 The statement is more a recognition of the irreducible and ungraspable truth of Beyng (in its fullness) than a wistful word of critique. In his 1969 “Art and Space” Heidegger repeats this same sensibility by inflecting the sense of ‘light’ into that of resonance. He quotes Goethe: “‘It is not always necessary that what is true should embody itself; it suffices for it to float about intelligibly and evoke harmony as it drifts through the air like a serious but friendly sound of a bell’” (at *AS* 309/210).
problem is reminiscent of the challenge faced in reading Schelling’s Freedom Essay – the need to appreciate how the matter of a text compels the ‘work’ of the text to press the limits of the discursive lexicon in which it stands. There is a movement of language, one could say, which accelerates the more language itself is at issue. If we want to establish a point of entry into the Beiträge, we must first understand how the straining motion of ‘projection,’ ‘grounding and opening up,’ and ‘playing field of time-space’ coincides with the timing of this work ‘of’ thought. It is a time in which thought reckons with how the Cartesian and Idealist interpretive drive, fixed upon the perceptum, means “the question of the truth of Beyng cannot be raised (CP 253/§135); a time which makes evident that “the crudest misunderstanding of the truth of Beyng . . . would lie in a ‘logic’ of philosophy” (87/§44), the “semblance of mastery” of reason “must be shattered some day” (335/§212); a moment anticipating the time of “[l]anguage and the great stillness” (33/§13).

If we have understood the project of “On the Essence of Truth,” “Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry,” and The Origin of the Work of Art appropriately, then our interpretive position is better prepared for the challenges and ‘timing’ of the Beiträge than if we simply came to the text straight from Being and Time, or from any one of the above texts in isolation. That is to say, any traces of Beyng treated as beingness, truth as correctness of representation, beings as objects, man as subject, beingness as constant presence, or comprehension as measure, and so on, ought to strike us as confounding and misguided. In short, the conceptual instruments sharpened by the poetizing essence of reason should feel to our grip like tools from a different time. Heidegger’s ‘audience’ for the

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20 The ‘epoch’ of the Beiträge obviously coincides with the time of a restorative ‘turn’ of terms underway in Schelling and supported by Heidegger’s 1936 course. Here we saw that Being (Wesen) is not quite ‘essence’ but rather the self-contained wholeness of beings; Ground elides the sense of ‘ratio’ and now speaks of a substratum or nonrational basis; Existence is no longer captured in terms of objective ‘presence,’ but becomes “what emerges from itself and in emerging reveals itself” (ST 107/186). On Heidegger’s side, more specifically, we have also immersed ourselves in, for example, a movement from eksistence to Inständigkeit (Kiesel, 296), from Sein to Seyn.

21 Writing from the horizon of his own time of need, Friedrich Schiller raises concerns similar to Heidegger’s basic historical concern. He remarks that “the frontiers of art contract the more the boundaries of science expand” (Letters, 7) and: “The dead letter takes the place of living understanding, and a good memory is a safer guide than imagination and feeling” (35). But Schiller, like Heidegger, also understands the time to be one of poetic possibility: “Even before Truth’s triumphant light can penetrate the recesses of the human heart, the poet’s imagination will intercept its rays, and the peaks of humanity will be radiant while the dews of night still linger in the valley” (57).
Beiträge (if we may speak of such a thing) would be those on the path of questioning whom stand displaced from an epoch of poetizing command, unsteadied by a representational comportment to beings and truth, cut loose from the assurances of self-consciousness and system, and placed in the space and time of a work of thought that, like a work of art, brims with the uncanny urgency of a moment and movement of shattering possibility. Heidegger writes for the sake of the between (das Zwischen) as a matter of course, but also for those brought to the brink of the between by a ‘work’ exceeding themselves.

The Beiträge, in this way, assumes a practical point of departure (something it has in common with German Idealism). It is a text for a time of need, addressed to a questioning borne aloft from a determinative position, and apprenticed to a thinking which intends a fugal ‘rebuilding’ without recourse to the tempting devices of systasis and actus. The work is practical and even systematic, though not quite ‘procedural’ in any traditional sense. Heidegger asks, for example: “Which procedure is most likely to bring about reflection on Beyng? The saying of the truth; for truth is the between [das Zwischen] for Beyng’s holding sway and the beingness of beings. This between grounds the beingness of beings in Beyng” (CP 11/§5). In the very least, the statement turns all procedural ambitions back toward an alertness to the saying of truth in and as the grounding of Beyng. It recalls the way in which Hölderlin’s voice and danger – his “work and most unique poetic domain [Dichtertum]” – becomes “our necessity” (351/§226). The timing of this necessity, as we shall continue to see, transposes the question of the meaning of Being into the history of Beyng – the history belonging to the Wesung of Beyng as opposed to the history of metaphysical ‘progress’

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22 Cf. HEP 128/47.
23 A similar sense of folding the scope of the procedural into a deeper historical time is found in Heidegger’s 1944/45 winter semester course, “Introduction to Philosophy: Thinking and Poetizing” (TP, GA 50). He asks: “But what would it be like if we were to look for poetizing and thinking where they encounter us at a peculiar necessity of their historical interrelation. . .?” (6/96). The realm of reflection passes beyond the sphere of merely methodological analysis: “All real reflection [Besinnen], with each of its steps, immediately progresses deeper into the realm of the question worth [Fragwürdig]” (47/143).
performed on the basis of a priori Being. Practical and alert it may be, but do passages such as these not suggest an enthusiasm (Schwärmerei) running wild after fugal, aletheiac, and instantiating Ereignis? Heidegger’s text, again, is an exercise of thought for which a stamp of exegetical ‘clarity’ would signal a failed apprenticeship to poietic work of truth and Beyng. Perhaps we may begin to understand it as an effort to bring mindfulness to reason much the same as Euripedes’ poems brought unexpected and uncalculated resolve to the Greeks. Caught in the rather unwelcome ‘between’ of Sicilian oppression, Athenian settlers were (literally) put in mind of their poet’s sayings: “it is told that a ship of Caunus fleeing into one of their harbors for protection, pursued by pirates, was not received, but forced back till one asked if they knew any of Euripedes’ verses, and on their saying they did, they were admitted and their ship brought into harbor.” If thinking can be led back to the concealed saying of truth, and language back beneath the nihilistic fate of sensible/intelligible opposition, then a dwelling might arise from the seaward between.

But what, precisely, is to be brought-forth in this work of thinking and language? How does it attempt (versuchen) a ‘leap’ (der Sprung) from a historical time of need to a being-historical moment, from an obdurate poetizing presentedness to a constructive projecting-open of the truth of Beyng? In the portion of the text which sounds forth the grounding of the truth of Beyng, Heidegger comes to two direct points. First: “Da-sein means appropriation in the event—in the event as the essence of Beyng. Only on the ground of Da-sein, however, does Beyng enter into its truth” (CP 293/§168). The statement breaks with all notions of Being as grounded on a being, for the operative necessity concerns Beyng’s relationship to appropriation – the verbal sense of aneignin pertaining to eignen as the root of Ereignis. Second, and with a view toward thought’s questioning: “In view of the

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24 Hellmers believes the conception of history proper to inceptual thinking is anchored in a Wesen/Wesung reducible to freedom (see Hellmers, 148-49). I agree the Beitrag’s point of departure is ‘practical’ in a certain sense and that the poetic imagination enjoys that freedom made possible in a distinct relationship to truth’s ‘work,’ but if one wants to adopt ‘freedom’ (accentuating praxis historically) as a general heuristic Heidegger’s clear misgivings about ontological and subjectivist willfulness must be accounted for.

ever greater desolation and disfigurement of philosophy, something lastingly essential would already be won if the posing of the question of truth were achieved out of the necessity of the question and in the right way” (352/§227). Truth’s grounding necessity, that is, is intrinsic to philosophy’s very possibility; question-seeking must undergo the formation brought by the character of what is to be thought. In desolation, however, this necessity is forgotten. Can it be restored to ‘asking’? In simple terms, Heidegger intends a repositioning of questioning. To ‘pose’ the question of truth from out of ‘necessity’ implies that necessity is a site of ‘working out’, of rebuilding, which vies with the default position of philosophical design and construction. Heidegger elsewhere says of his epoch:

Now for the first time there exists such a thing as the position of the human. Humans make it depend on themselves how they are to stand toward beings as what is objective. This initiates that mode of being human that occupies the realm of human capacity as the domain of measuring and accomplishing the mastery of beings as a whole. (AWP 219-20/91-92, my emphases)

Repositioning thus means bracketing the position of objective standing and resuming the position of necessity. The work of the text, in this regard, is to accomplish something like a land survey of the region otherwise concealed by human artifice and architecture, a survey whose measuring capacity must somehow come from the ‘playing field’ (der Spielraum) itself.26 Such is the basic sense of ‘leap’ – not a leap forward as though thought were on the brink of great progress, but a leap back to that position wherein “the way of creative thinking of Beyng” rooted in questioning’s necessity recovers a “land [das Land]” of appropriation (CP 80/§42). Considered as a work ‘of thinking,’ however, this leap of questioning’s position entails a more specific and difficult motion. Heidegger describes the leap as “the leaping into a preparedness for the appurtenance to the event,” an event that is an “intrusion” in the work-site and “cannot be compelled by thinking” (235/§120). This is the sense in which Ereignis is the “rubric” (1) of the work. The play of the playing field shudders and

26 The elemental significance of der Spielraum shall remain an important theme for Heidegger. In his 1944-45 lecture course, for example, he observes: “Even the most important questions are only real, i.e., questions that emerged according to their measure, if they are asked in the single free-space [Spielraum] of the single question, which is: What now is?” (TP 58/155).
shakes, as though to render any traces of measurable ‘Being’ off kilter and yet to summons questioning onward into the measuring work of thought. Heidegger explains:

The most genuine and broadest leap is the one of thinking—not as though the essence of Beyng could be determined on the basis of thinking (assertion), but because here, in knowledge of the event, the cleft [die Zerklüftung] of Being is penetrated the furthest and the possibilities of sheltering the truth in beings can be gauged most extensively. (CP 235-36/§120)

But if thinking is itself caught up in the flux of repositioning and the unsteady sojourn through the cleft of Being, how can it perform a work of measurement or gauging at all? Kant too, we recall, privileged a playing field of sorts in the realm of transcendental determination—the free play of imagination and understanding distinguishing the judgment of taste on the basis of a feeling of pleasure. But here, with Heidegger, the questioning-thinking belongs to the play, in a position that is as far removed from subjective determination as it is before any stable mode of measuring. The “manifold” (448/§262, or ‘frequent’) leap of thinking is ‘broadest’ because it allows itself to be thrown beyond the footing of judgment and into a rift that is strange, immeasurable, yet brimming with measureable possibilities. If there is a ‘feeling’ attached to this playing-field position it is not pleasure but, as we shall learn, distress/plight. But in view of this positional breadth of thinking’s leap, and while anticipating the coming epoch of “the working out of the essential form of beings from out of the truth of Beyng” (3/§1), the decisive task for Heidegger is to recalibrate the ‘gauge’ of essential measure-taking.

Insofar as the repositioning and recalibration concerns the territory of thinking, Heidegger must specify further how the text’s work of thinking works on thought’s primary traction: questioning—namely, on that path of questioning which has long ‘worked upon’ the truth of beings and Being, often by rendering the imagination all too instrumental. This line of consideration recalls the manner in which the work-being of an artistic work exercised the viewer’s relationship to the actuality of the work, as a work of truth. It is also reminiscent of the sense in which Schelling’s ‘essential’ inquiries (art and human freedom) sought to allow the matters themselves to work upon
the otherwise determinative imagination. But the *Beiträge* treats the situation of questioning with a broader and more penetrating view toward the historical and dispositional tendencies brought to bear on the question of philosophy – the question of Being. This does not mean Heidegger is engaging in something like a ‘higher order’ of speculation. A time of need, a time in the aftermath of systems, places questioning in question. The task is to see the moment through and test whether a ‘great hour’ is still to be won. The precise *experience* this work upon questioning means to reveal for the inceptual leap is described in §55, a passage that shall remain a touchstone for our remarks in this section and the next:

Out of the plight [*die Not*] of the forgottenness of Being [*die Seinsvergesseneheit*]: the resonating of the truth of Beyng and of the very holding sway [*die Wesung*] of Beyng. The inception of this plight from its depth as lack of plight. The forgottenness of Being does not know anything of itself; it supposes itself to be in touch with ‘beings,’ with the ‘actual,’ to be close to ‘life’ and to be certain of ‘lived experience.’ For, the forgottenness of Being knows only beings. Yet in this way, in such presencing of beings, they are abandoned by Being. The *abandonment by Being* [*die Seinsverlassenheit*] is the ground of the forgottenness of being. The abandonment of beings by Being [*die Seinsverlassenheit des Seienden*] gives them the appearance that they themselves, without needing anything else, are now there to be grasped and used. But the abandonment by Beyng excludes and precludes the event. The resonating must sound out of this abandonment and must start with the unfolding of the forgottenness of Beyng, in which the other beginning resounds and so does Beyng. (*CP* 114/§55)

The passage is framed between a situation of plight (or distress) and a moment of resonance (or echo), and lists two constitutive conditions: forgottenness and abandonment. In the midst of these elements there is a verbal comparison between ‘supposing’ (*sie vermeint beim*) and ‘sounding’ (*der Anklang klingen*). Nothing is said directly of ‘questioning’ in this experience, and yet everything depends on it. In anticipation of this experience Heidegger positions a distinction that remains decisive throughout the text: the tension between the *guiding* question and the *basic* (or grounding) question. He explains: “The question of Being is the question of the truth of Beyng. When grasped and worked out historically, it becomes the basic question, versus the previous question of philosophy, the (guiding) question of beings” (4/§2). The two questions are not simple rivals, but cross and double one another along a course of necessity analogous to the promise and peril we noted
in Kant’s creative character of reason. The guiding question asks ‘about’ Being, it wants to know what Being ‘is’ as the categorical presence by which standing beings are representable. The basic question concerns beings, but pledges itself to Beyng – it is ‘of’ the truth of Beyng. Understood thus, basic questioning inflects the guiding question through the recovered life of identity and ground in, for example, Schelling’s copula. To say that the question of Being ‘is’ the question of the truth of Beyng is to announce that the guiding question already and necessarily asks the basic question, if unawares. What we have noted of reason’s representational production is a fitting parallel – is a drive which already and necessarily assumes a basis of poetic projection in language, even if the former’s will to constancy retreats from the latter’s aletheiac resoluteness. The basic question arises in the strife of truth, and the guiding question persists in the strain toward manifest security and calculation. These distinctions do not mean that what is ‘guiding’ is false, just as what is ‘equipmental’ in a work of art or ‘expressive’ in a work of poetry is not per se ‘wrong,’ or that an ‘impasse’ utterly belies one’s stewardship of the ‘impulse.’ Rather, it is an issue of how the questioning belongs to its subject matter, how thought – in response to its question – stands and speaks, and whether it is mindful of its basis for measuring beings. Alert to this criterion, Heidegger presses the two modes of questioning, and their affiliated domains of response, into sharper genealogical contrast. But the reason is not just diagnostic; it is to allow their tipping point to emerge as precisely a matter of measure on which the difference between ‘supposing’ and ‘sounding’ shall pivot.

Returning to our focal passage, the work upon questioning allows the plight of forgottenness to stand out in the present time of need against a background of historical depth.27 The tension

27 Heidegger sustains this focal point of departure when treating the relationship between thinking and poetizing in “Introduction to Philosophy: Thinking and Poetizing.” Here he speaks of “thoughtlessness. . . which continually has its root in a loss of reflection [Besinnunglosigkeit]” (TP 2/91), a thinking which purports to “think that which is, although usually ineptly and imprecisely and slightly forgetfully” (11/101). Continuing, he specifies this state of affairs in terms similar to the ‘plight’ we are now considering: “All of Western thinking currently stands in this obscurity of the difference between beings and being. It stands in this obscurity so firmly and decisively that the thinking of thinkers has not even once become attentive to this difference itself, and specifically to its question worthiness. Does the ground for this still barely experienced distress [Nat] of thinking lie solely in the inability of thinkers, or does the ground lie in the being of beings itself? If it were so, then being itself would have up till now
between the guiding and basic domains of questioning is, as it were, the birthright of an originary plight. As Heidegger explains in his 1937-38 course, *Basic Questions of Philosophy*, in the inception of Greek thought beings come to stand out as “unthought” and thus “worthy of questioning [fragwürdigste]” (BQP 147/GA 45: 170). Philosophical thinking requires a time-space site for questioning. Here there is a marked distress of “not knowing the way out or the way in” to this ungrounded, through essential, space where being and non-being await determination (132-33/153).

Curiously, though man himself first arises out of this distress, it is markedly a distress of Being (as Seyn) – a distress pertaining “to the truth of Being itself” and not to man, properly speaking (133/153) (we will return to this issue). Man is transported into a “basic relation to beings as such” and is, under the auspices of wonder [das Erstaunen], displaced into a specific perception of beings rendered determinable in their beingness” (134/155). Man’s need to think the question of the Being of beings (already an “essentially misleading” question (OET 151/94)) is, as we know, here bound up in a commensurate transformation of the essence (Wesen) of truth. Wonder does not satisfy the instigating distress. There is no “way out or way in,” but rather a movement of man “before and into the unusualness of everything in its usualness.” The result is an experience Heidegger describes as refused its entrance into the brightness of this difference. Presumably this is the case” (39/129, my emphasis). Though the problematization of forgottenness is, in this regard, very specific, it is worth noting that the theme emerges in Heidegger as a mark of plight and possibility as early as his 1920-21 lectures on *The Phenomenology of the Religious Life*. Here he focuses on the aporia “regarding oblivio” in Augustine’s *Confessions*, Book X, where the concerned passage reads: “Et tamen . . . ipsam oblivionem meminisse me certus sum, qua id quod meminerimus obritur” “[And yet . . . I am certain that I remember forgetfulness itself (the having-forgotten [das Vergessenhaben]), by which what we remember (what we want to represent to ourselves) is concealed]” (at PRL 139/GA 60: 189).

To avoid confusion, we must keep in mind that Heidegger does not use ‘Seyn’ in the lecture course with the same frequency he does in the Beiträge. The title of BQP §1 is indicative of a shared sensibility with the Beiträge: “Futural philosophy; restraint as the basic disposition [Grundstimmung] of the relation to Being [Seyn]” (BQP 3/1), but Rojcewicz and Schuwer are right to maintain the course’s basic level of clarity in the use of ‘Being.’ When referring to the course I have not altered the original term, but context should indicate where we are to hear ‘Beyng’ in the position of ‘Being.’ In the lecture course, Heidegger tends to draw forth the problematic under the heading, Sein, and in the Beiträge he allows himself to treat the same problematic by writing Seyn as the turn of the term proper to what the path of retrieving distress and thinking abandonment in full ought to convey.

Wonder, that is, displaces man into “the realm where the most usual, yet still as such unthought (beings), are established in their most proper unusualness, namely the one of their Being, and where beings as such then become the most worthy of questioning” (BQP 147/170).
“essentially suffering [Leiden]” (BQP 151/175).\(^{30}\) Man finds himself before beings as beings, and must there “hold fast [festzuhalten]” to this transformation according to an “acknowledgment [Anerkenntnis]” that is itself sustained within the limit of “questioning what beings as such are” (150/174). Unable to face the “unconcealedness of beings” (153/178), questioning endeavors to grasp (fassen, begreifen) entities in terms of their purported beingness (Seiendheit). Over time, what should have been revelatory in suffering is ignored. What should have been endured as the originary distress of the truth of Being is reckoned a situational symptom which questioning can allay. Forgottenness insinuates itself in the very moment unconcealedness is too much to bear and the guiding question appears to present the path of necessity. “The grasping becomes a sort of know-how [Sichauskennen] with regard to the ideas, and that requires a constant assimilation to them” (156/181).\(^{31}\) Beings are hemmed in by the constancy of a referring look or idea.\(^{32}\) The original and motivating necessity is lost, just as the original essence of aletheia is lost – “Beings become. . . objects of representations conforming to them” (156/181).\(^{33}\) Beings, in effect, can no longer point to Being (as, ultimately, Seyn).\(^{34}\) Together, these results of forgottenness spell a departure from the “primordial need [anfänglichen Not]” (155/180) exhibited in the depth of distress. Heidegger explains:

\(^{30}\) Such as in the case of Hölderlin’s later poetry. See BQP 151-52/175. Heidegger revisits this theme of suffering in his discussion of Nietzsche in GA 50 (TP). He refers to Nietzsche’s comment in Thus Spoke Zarathustra (1882-1885): “The suffering of the higher human is not its low point; rather, there is still something higher as its height” (at TP 32/124).

\(^{31}\) In the Beiträge Heidegger specifies the problem of this predominance of ideas in relation to ἀλήθεια: “[Ιδέα] is that interpretation of ἀλήθεια which prepares the later determination of beingness as objectivity and necessarily forecloses to the entire history of Western philosophy the question of ἀλήθεια as such” (CP 206/§109).

\(^{32}\) See also OET 152/95, 149/90-91. In the Beiträge Heidegger sounds the same concern: “Truth as correctness is unable to recognize (i.e., to ground) its own playing field [Spielraum] as such. It helps itself by raising itself up to the unconditioned and bringing everything under itself, so as to become (it seems) free from the need for a ground” (CP 200/§102). Constant presence belies a problem of ground and concealment which anticipates the ground for unconcealment Da-sein (as there) will afford. Heidegger states in the Leap: “In the other beginning, beings (those in a determinate domain and region, or beings as such) can no longer be normative for Beyng. Here thought reaches so far ahead toward—or, better into—the ‘there’ that the truth of Beyng is lit up in an originary way” (248/§130).

\(^{33}\) As questioning runs on the track of techne, so to speak, aletheia lapses into “the correctness of representations and procedures” (BQP 156/181). And, as he notes in GA 50 (TP), “Rationality that merely calculates value and profit is the rationality of mediocrity” (TP 29/120).

\(^{34}\) This point is sharpened and protested in the Beiträge: “We can never grasp beings by explaining, and deriving, them on the basis of other beings. They can be known only out of their grounding in the truth of Beyng” (CP 231/§118).
In the *first beginning*, truth (as unconcealment) is a character of beings as such, and, according to the transformation of truth into the correctness of assertion, ‘truth’ comes to determine beings as transformed into objects. (Truth as correctness of judgment, ‘objectivity,’ ‘actuality,’—the ‘Being’ of beings.) (*CP* 184-85/§91)

The transformation attending the course of the guiding question does not, however, remove entirely the basic disposition of inceptual questioning—the questioning that adheres to the unusualness of beings and thereby belongs to the unconcealing emergence of beings. “To sustain the basic disposition,” Heidegger explains, “means to *carry out* [vollziehen] the necessity of such questioning, toward which the not knowing the way out or the way in compels us” (*BQP* 151/174). To ascertain how, exactly, such ‘carrying out’ comes to the fore in a positive sense we must first remain on the side of the critical view and ask: how does the forgottenness abiding in the domain of the guiding question structure a position of self-supposition in thought?

What we have thus far noted concerning the work of thinking underway as a questioning of questioning may be summarized as follows: Though necessary on the basis of the itinerary coursing from man’s wonder amid the unusual relation to beings, his steadying reliance on the perception of beingness, the truth of objectness, and the eidetic gathering of representational conformity, the odyssey of the *guiding* question is a triumph of metaphysical acumen that nevertheless *forgets* to inquire into “the *truth* of the interpretation of ‘Being’” (*CP* 187/§94). ‘Systems,’ says Heidegger, “are only possible, and toward the end necessary, in the realm of the history of the answer to the guiding question” (75/§39). And where even the most mindful of systems faces an impasse, the odyssey spells a journey homeward to the scene and site of forgetfulness. If thinking wants to know where and how its questioning went awry, the answer is that it was right to guide itself by productive *differentiation* [*Unterscheidung*], but wrong in the basic gauge of differentiation. Gathering this predicament into the tense of thought’s present position, Heidegger observes, “what is precisely

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35 Heidegger evokes the same sense of plight’s necessity when, in GA 50, he speaks of “a dire need that is barely felt,” a “dire need that we first reflect on the lack of reflection [*Besinnungslose*] in this dealing” (*TP* 41/136, 46/141).
characteristic of metaphysics is that it takes this \textit{differentiation} as an immediate one. Being is understood as the generalization of beings, just as graspable in representation as are beings, only more ‘abstractly’” (473/§268). The work of thinking, broadly put, is to elucidate the consequences of such differentiation, its a priori bases, and, so doing, measure the breadth of thought’s leap. The rarefication of Being as what is “in some way... ‘general’” (87/§44) on the basis of beingness, and thus as a condition for “the representing of something as the \textit{koinóv} and \textit{kathólov}” (473-74/§268), effectively degrades Beyng “to the level of the truth of beings, the correctness of representation” (87/§44). Thus obscured under the responses to the guiding question, abstraction forgets that Beyng “is never an object, something we set over against ourselves, something representable” (251/§134).

The position of aesthetics, as we have seen, manifests this predicament. Heidegger here equates “the task of overcoming aesthetics” with that of “overcoming a particular conception of beings as objects of representation” (498/§277)). But how is it that the impetus toward ‘overcoming’ is also an impulse of retrieval, a return to the first beginning? The decisive clue resides in Heidegger’s second example of artistic work in \textit{OWA}, where the leap from object-being to the inner essence of work-being obtained in the experience of standing before the Greek temple. The \textit{Beiträge} enacts the very same movement for thinking, positioning a leap from the guiding question into the basic question by standing thought before the experience of the Greek beginning. In both experiences there is a remainder of ‘createdness’ which directs us toward a ‘work’ of truth beyond the terrain of our productive or interrogative drives. Our standing before the temple and our leap back through the Greek beginning alike reveal that “beings (those in a determinate domain and region, or beings as such) can no longer be normative for Beyng” (248/§130). The turn toward the basic question thus resembles what I have called the turn toward the preserving imagination. The ‘createdness’ of a work of art summoned us, ultimately, to preserving the primordial poiesis of truth and the strange relation amid beings in the work’s open region; the ‘forgottenness’ of the basic question summons our thinking, ultimately, to a leap “so far ahead toward—or, better, into—the ‘there’ [\textit{Da}] that the truth
of Beyng is lit up in an originary way” and Beyng “becomes that which is alienating” and strange (248/§130).

Leaping into the first beginning (“without wanting to reinstate that beginning,” 498/§277) thus arises as a way of standing astride the differentiation of being and Being which grasps Beyng as beingness, and the differentiation afoot within the strange fugal sway of Beyng. What is hitherto concealed by the productive responses to the guiding question is to be drawn back to the incipient distress of the first beginning – the need for a site of relations as a field of questioning. To recover the basic question is to return toward the forgotten field of essential relations. But intrinsic to these topographical and interrogative elements of thought’s working leap is, as noted, an abiding and decisive leap of language itself. The mark of thought’s apprenticeship to the truth of Beyng lies primarily in the measures taken through the copula. Responses to the guiding question shatter under this basic point: “Beyng uniquely is and therefore ‘is’ never a being and certainly not the being that most eminently is” (469/§267). Heidegger is not toying with words, but exacting from them a sheltering possibility. “The saying, ‘Beyng is,’ possesses a very different character as something said,” he continues. “[T]he saying does not express about Beyng something that supervenes to it in general, something present at hand it in; on the contrary, it says Beyng itself out of itself. It says that Beyng alone is master of its essence, and, precisely for that reason, the ‘is’ can never become something entirely supervenient to it” (469-70/§267). These words comprise an example of the “thoughtful speaking” to be attempted upon the return to the first beginning, a speaking not “over and against what is to be said but is this latter itself as the holding sway of Beyng” (2/§1). The leap of language consists in a saying that will ‘belong to’ Beyng’s word (1).

But to pass from ‘supposing’ to ‘sounding’ and saying in position, questioning, and language we must appreciate how Heidegger transposes a situation of forgottenness to an event of abandonment which, like the depth of original plight, is not reducible per se to an effect of man’s causal interrogative decisions. As our focal passage indicates, abandonment and forgottenness are
two threads in the same knot of “presencing.” At first glance they appear synonymous. What was wondrous for the Greeks, the Being of beings, has become all too obvious and common in the “contrivances” of “lived experiences.” Being is abandoned on the level of inquiry into beings. And yet, right away it must be noted that this predicament might also be recast historically as an abandonment enacted by Being (as Seyn) itself. Heidegger states: “The forgottenness of Being dominates, i.e., it determines our relation to beings, so that even beings, that they are and what they are, remain a matter of indifference. It is almost as if beings have been abandoned by Being, and we are heedless of it” (BQP 159/185). Considered henceforth as a predicament for the truth of Being itself (that is, Seyn), this abandonment appears more determinate. “Beings are,” says Heidegger, “but the Being of beings and the truth of Being and consequently the Being of truth are denied to beings. . . they remain abandoned by Being and left to themselves” (159/185). Heidegger suggests this be thought as an internal division: beings are abandoned “by the Beyng which belongs to them and to them alone” (CP 115/§55). The activity which leads to forgottenness and abandonment will, as we will see, correspond to a possibility on the side of Beyng: “The fact that Beyng is forgettable thereby becomes an axiom, and the forgottenness of Being [Seinsvergessenheit], which sets in at the beginning, expands and overlays all human comportment” (335/§212). For the moment it is enough to note that, insofar as the original distress was the need for a time-space site of questioning being, and yet indifference has come to overrun this point of departure, Being (as Beyng) must withdraw from the scene. As a predicament stemming from the transformation of truth, then, there is on the side of the epochal situation of forgottenness the event of abandonment. More mysteriously still,  

36 This abandonment, to be sure, not only emerges according to man’s thinking and questioning, but happens to man as the singular being standing in the space of knowing. Says Heidegger, “The abandonment by Beyng happens to beings and indeed to beings as a whole and thereby also to that being which as man, stands in the midst of beings and, in so doing, forgets their Beyng” (CP 115-16/§55).  
37 Here, and in the quotes that follow, terminological confusion is hard to avoid. When Heidegger speaks of essential movements on the side of ‘Being’ we do well to hear ‘Beyng’, but he is also allowing the experience of fogottenness to unfold under the framework of questioning’s own reference to Sein as what is forgotten and what ‘withdraws’ so as to leave space for Seyn to reconfigure the shape of the framework.
Beyng appears to conceal its truth from questioning in an essential way. Mediating these two movements is the relationship between the mode of questioning and the essence of \( \text{aletheia} \). Just as the distress which gave rise to philosophy (“of not knowing the way out or the way in” \( BQP \) 132/152) belonged simultaneously to Being and to thinking, the distress resounding in the event of abandonment itself has “no time-space at all” \( CP \) 124/§60. The concealment obtaining in forgottenness “deprives \( \text{άλήθεια} \) of disclosure” \( OET \) 148/89.

Having thus come to this multi-faceted event where the necessity of distress will take on a more robust and productive shape, the peculiar feature of Heidegger’s own style of ‘unconcealing’ discourse becomes all the more apparent. His inquiry does not take the movement of primordial questioning or the transformations in the essence of truth to be a linear, cause/effect passage. Rather, his rigorous thinking toward unconcealments in this history of Beyng opens his thought to possibilities of a renewed grounding even in a situation as apparently stark as the abandonment of beings. So doing, he discloses the primary sense of \( \text{Kehre} \): there is a thrust and a counter-thrust \( BQP \) 159/184), turning and counter turning \[ \text{Widerkehre} \] \( CP \) 400/§255). The very superlative nature of this abandonment may in fact indicate that in it there lies concealed an “event,” a “most hidden and most proper ground” for a necessity through which Being and its truth may, ultimately, stand ready should a “leap into another knowledge” \( BQP \) 161-62/189) be enacted. This is why the abandonment by Being “has to be experienced as the basic occurrence of our history and brought into the knowledge which configures and leads the way” \( CP \) 112/§52). It is the event that commences the \textit{resonance}. How, then, is this event experienced and configured? How does plight, rightly experienced, bring forth a ‘reflection’ on that is alert to the projective ‘grounding and opening up’ of the \textit{Spielraum} to which the \textit{Da} of Da-sein belongs?
III. Creative Measures: Capacitating Projection and the Event of Imagination

Emblematic of the work upon thinking underway, the leading necessity of our focal passage from §55 is that *a resonance sounds forth from the depth of plight.*\(^\text{38}\) The preparation for, and leap to, the other beginning is thus construed on the basis of an event that, like the poetizing projection of Hölderlin’s testimonial verse, is historical, spatial, and audible. To reposition ourselves and our questions on the verge of the playing-field of Beyng is to recover a basic disposition for a basic occurrence, and to do so by way of returning through the first beginning to the strange experience of a *Wesung* (as opposed to *Wesen*) underway. Specifying this sense of resonance, philosophy, says Heidegger, “is now in the first place preparation for philosophy by way of the construction of the most proximate foyers in whose spatial structure the words of Hölderlin can be heard, be answered by Da-*sein*, and in this answer be grounded for the language of future man” (*CP* 422/§258). It is in the context of this necessity that we now want to explore the pro-ductive, attestative character of the plight belonging to the truth of Beyng, and prepare the way for understanding the meaning of *imagination* as a name for the “occurrence of the *clearing* itself” (312/§192). If in prior chapters we established a relationship between the status of the imagination and the problem of poetizing (its concealing and poietic possibilities), in this section we shall discover that plight, more essentially regarded, mirrors the nature of poetizing and thus also unfolds along a course of deepening relationship to imagination. To begin, we must first secure an understanding of the principal matter through which the meaning of resonance, like the words of Hölderlin, will be drawn.

*Projection and the Abyss of Representation*

If there is a singular note Heidegger returns to time and again in his excavation of “the blocks quarried from the bedrock” (*CP* 421/§257) it is, as we have begun to indicate, the note of ‘projection’

\(^{38}\) The audible emphasis in ‘resonance’ obviously has a precedent in Heidegger’s long-running language of ‘attunement.’ But it is worth nothing that the notion of hearing attached to basic questioning (like ‘forgottenness’) is already operative in Heidegger as early as his 1920-21 course on The Phenomenology of the Religious Life. Speaking from the horizon of Augustine’s *Confessions*, Book X, he remarks: “Thus everything depends upon the authentic hearing, upon the *How* [*Wie*] of the questioning posture, of the wanting-to-hear [des Hörenwollens]” (*PRL* 150/GA 60: 203).
(Entwurf), projecting-open, more specifically (advancing the dichtender Entwurf we have noted). To hear this note is to enter into Heidegger’s discourse attuned to the resonance which sounds the motion of the leap, and thereby enter the Kehre, not as a typological device, but as a transformation in which we are caught up, a rebuilding of the acoustic field in which Beyng’s word – Ereignis – is to sound. Specifically, it is to undergo the relationship between a projecting resonance and a saying of Beyng in the between. So doing, basic measures must become creative measures. Nowhere is this necessity more concrete than in the transposition of projection from the Kantian domain of representation to Da-sein in the domain of the abyssal (der Abgrund, das Ab-gründige). In §262 Heidegger explains:

It is immediately customary for us to think of these projections as forms of representation which make possible an encounter with objects: the transcendental condition of Kant. And we do well to practice thinking of beings as such with regard to this interpretation of beingness as objectivity. Nevertheless, this Kantian interpretation stands on the ‘ground’ of the subiectum and resides in the sphere of representation. The ‘projection’ becomes characterized as, in the best sense, ‘subjective,’ i.e., not ‘egoistic’ or ‘subjectivistic’ in the epistemological sense, but, instead, ‘subjective’ in the metaphysical sense of subiectum, that which lies at the ground and so is unquestioned and unworthy of question. The interpretation of Kant’s thought can here gain essential clarity and can then lead us to see that, even with this position of the subject, philosophical thinking does not make it past (schematism and transcendental imagination) the abysses. Yet we would already need to have become questioners with respect to other domains, so as not to mis-characterize this conception of Kant as an exaggerated peculiarity but, instead, so as to take seriously this reference to the abyssal [das Abgründige]. That will not occur at all, unless our reading of Kant has shifted its basis—from the ‘subject’ to Da-sein. (CP 445-46/§262: 448)

When Heidegger alludes to the ‘customary’ he has in mind the settled responses to the guiding question, particularly the standardization of beingness whereby the grasping mode of techne strips physis and aletheia of the openness through which Beyng was to be manifest in beings.

Specified in the modern epoch of machination (Machenschaft), the customary idea-based apprehension of beings in terms of ‘constant presence’ hides itself under the populist impulse toward “lived experience” and there maintains its “distorted essence [das Unwesen] of the beingness of beings” (CP 127/§61); ‘distortion’ is, of course, the term which names the effect of poetizing reason. With respect to the above passage, the concealing work of the customary inclines philosophy to
reduce the projective to the representative and subjective. Projections are thus ‘grounded’ in a
*subjectum* which forgets to question its transcendental rubric (*das Unwesen* entails *der Ungrund*).
The passage thus displays how the being of projection (crucial to the event of resonance) alerts
thought to a tension between the domain of representation and the more basic domains which stand
thought in the between position of Da-sein. Heidegger believes that a continued reading of Kant will
disclose the abyssal ground of the sphere of representation, though this is something different than a
mark of failure; the abyssal becomes a point of retreat from all subject-object dichotomies, but also a
point of reference for standing Da-sein in “the strangeness and *uniqueness* (incomparability) of a
relation with Beyng (251/§134). Elsewhere Heidegger explains that *Being and Time* sought to grasp
the relation between Da-sein and Beyng by way of the “understanding of Being,” itself a thrown
(*werfen*) projection “pertaining to an ap-propriation by Beyng itself” (251/§134). The *Kantbuch*, as
well, attempted to turn the sphere of representation back toward a more “basic position” in which the
relation between Da-sein and Beyng (and thus the being of projection) could be understood
(252/§134). That is not to say these prior texts treated the abyssal in full. *Being and Time* sought “to
expose ‘time’ as the domain of projection for Beyng,” though this alone (had it succeeded in full)
would not have developed the question of Being “as a *question* and thus as a creative thinking of
what is most question-worthy” (448/§262); and the *Kantbuch* sought “a more original version of
precisely the transcendental project in its unity, through an *exposition* of the transcendental
imagination.” Neither project succeeded in allowing the being of projection to surmount the sphere of
representation in full but they did establish “a historical directive toward something wholly other”
(252/§134) than customary thinking, and prepared for the way for venturing “a manifold leap into the
essence of Beyng” (448/§262).

But how is the abyssal, as it pertains to the projective, intrinsic to this leap? The simple
answer is that it dislodges the customary and subjective from its make-shift (in the sense of *Machen*)
measures and sets Da-sein in a relation of appropriation. What is projected is not ‘transcendent’ per
se, but is beyond man, and of that “which holds sway as nothing other than event” (23/§7). To take the abyssal ‘seriously’ is to reckon with the between as a site of “foreboding [das Er-ahnen]” (18/§6: 20) in which Da-sein is bereft of representational measures yet stationed in a “creative withstanding [schaffende Aushalten]” (33/§13) and on the brink of a profound decision for the “constancy of Beyng itself” and “its own measure” (10/§5). Der ab-grund is not der Ungrund, but a ‘straightening’ measure for the essence of projection just as Hölderlin’s essential pro-duction signaled a projective straightening of poetizing production. The problem of projection, here understood, thus leads to the very question: “who is able to be Da-sein, and when and how?” (351/§226). The question is not a humanistic or existential cry for meaning in the terrain of ‘lived experience,’ but is, properly speaking, a distressing question – a question posed from a domain of plight in which thought somehow already belongs in relationship to Beyng.

**Plight’s Pro-ductive Work**

This question from the realm of plight returns us to Heidegger’s insistence on the place of abandonment for inceptual knowledge. We now return to this matter in order to ascertain (1) how precisely we ‘become questioners with respect to other domains’ (see above), and (2) how the experience of the abyssal is productive in a way befitting the projective course resonating will take. The predicament of representation noted above (reducible, notably, to schematism and transcendental imagination), together with the larger problem of the guiding question and its poetizing domain of

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39 Even so, what distinguishes schaffende Aushalten from the legacy of Sehnsucht in Schelling’s account of man’s representational (and ultimately poetizing) drive? This, in many respects, is the question at the very center of Heidegger’s thought between HEP and the Beiträge. We have already elucidated the transposition of Sehnsucht and Streben to the disposition of philosophical questioning for Heidegger; the language of ‘endurance’ and ‘preservation’ maintains the schaffende constitution of Schelling’s sense of man’s rational vocation, but removes the ‘creative’ and ‘withstanding’ from the domain of the ‘proclaiming’ and ‘unifying.’ In this regard, what is ‘schaffende’ applies to the realm of the between as opposed to the summit. Accordingly, Heidegger continues to absorb Schelling’s apparatus of yearning and striving into the instantiating event of Da-sein and away from the reign of will. A simple statement in his later Schelling courses evidences this trajectory, though leaves open the fate of the Hervorbringen at work: “In striving for . . . a certain sensibility of self is contained, finding oneself in something; striving to become oneself, to produce oneself. Longing” [“Im Streben nach: ein gewisses Sichempfinden, sich in etwas midfinden; selbst zu werden, sich selbst hervorzubringen; Sehnsucht”] (GA 49: 87). The task of the Beiträge and of “Poetically Man Dwells” is, in part, to afford this productive sensibility its proper measure and this self its proper dwelling.
answers, would appear to have long since consigned any appeals to imaginative measure-taking to the debris of the departed shore. And yet, adhering to the projective impulse is a continued resolve to apprentice thought to Hölderlin, and to stand Da-sein in a creative work. In the immediacy of the leap, moreover, like the event of Kant’s schematism, “everything is transformed at once” (CP 11-12/§5), and even if we wonder “if a measure is still needed at all” (10/§5) the experience of the between must somehow be configured, drawn forth, enabled. The work of thinking must, following Schelling, be capacitated anew, in this case not by a productive determination of unity or Wesen, but by a productive hearing which yields a speaking from “out of the question-worthiness of Beyng” (422/§258). That is not to say that Heidegger models the work of projection or the basic experience of abandonment on the productive imagination and it’s a priori milieu. It is, rather, to introduce the possibility that the enactment of the basic disposition (die Grundstimmung) and the reckoning with the abyssal require a work of poietic production distilled in terms proper to (though by no means beholden to) the imagination. In a moment we will meet with a strange return of Einbildung to Heidegger’s discourse. We will be pressed to allow an unlikely term to do a constitutive work. Understanding the work of distress will prepare us for this meeting.

I have in mind three elements of the plight we have noted. First, Heidegger has characterized plight historically as the age of “the total questionlessness [Fragwurdiglosigkeit] of Being” and the “epoch of the highest abandonment of beings by Being” (BQP 160/185). Ours is an “epoch” in which “‘technology’ (the priority of what is machinational, of regulations and procedures over that which is affected by these and taken up into them) necessarily assumes mastery” (CP 335/§212). Whether it be manifested in “the gigantic,” “institutions,” or Christianity (113-14/§54), machination admits no

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40 Desmond’s reflection on this matter is clarifying: Science, technology, the will to univocity, be it human reason’s will to itself alone, or human will willing itself, all contribute to the metaphysical amnesia of what is there. One might say we are successful and powerful only because we are profoundly superficial. The poet is the one who finds a different profundity in and through the surfaces of the between” (Desmond, Art, Origins, Otherness, 232).
limit.\footnote{41} Plight is here doubled as a ‘lack’ of distress, and this is greatest “where self-certainty has become unsurpassable, where everything is held to be calculable” (124/§60). Thus thought as machination (\emph{die Machenschaft}), the abandonment of Being is not only an effect of setting beings back against the standard of beingness, but is \emph{willful}. What is ownmost to truth is ‘long-hidden’; man’s making, rather than questioning, obfuscates the possibilities for openness. The willfulness of \emph{machination} is, one could say, the concretized scale of the transcendental and systemic willfulness by which \emph{poetizing reason} (in service to the guiding question) manipulated beings as objects of representation.\footnote{42} The situation is not, initially, promising: “How can this plight be made effective \textit{as} a plight? Must one not allow the truth of Beyng to shine forth—but to what end? Who of those needless ones is able to see? Is there ever a way out of such a plight which constantly denies itself as a plight?” (118-19/§56).\footnote{43} There is a sense in which the first order of distress – the concealment of truth’s essence – must be \textit{brought forth} from within a space of denial.

Second, to turn this corner of possibility, Heidegger speaks of a corresponding willful withdrawal (\emph{Entzug}) on the side of Beyng, a withdrawal which shelters in concealment an abiding unconcealment. Machination’s withdrawal from Beyng is in fact grounded in Beyng’s own

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\item[41] He states: “Within machination there is nothing question-worthy, nothing that could be deemed worthy through questioning as such, alone deemed worthy and thereby illuminated and raised into truth” (\textit{CP} 109/§51).
\item[42] The case of Nietzsche presents an example of this connection between willfulness in an age of machination and willfulness in the exercise of poetizing reason. We first raised the matter of poetizing by turning to Heidegger’s Nietzsche Lectures for support in his understanding of Schelling’s impasse. What distinguishes Nietzsche’s thought is that his diagnosis of nihilism implicates the reign of rationality (\emph{Verständigkeit}) in what Heidegger calls machination, but his metaphysics sounds the highest pitch of a “poetizing thinking” (\textit{TP} 58/154) that figures (in Zarathustra) “the essence of absolute subjectivity” as “the will willing itself” (34/126). Nietzsche is acutely alert to the force of creativity in human essence and history, but his conception of willfulness begs the question of thought’s poetizing course. Heidegger observes: “For Nietzsche, not only are the gods and God human ‘products,’ but everything that is” (19/109). “By setting its essence upon itself,” he continues, “the human rises into the willing of its own self. With this up-rising [\emph{Aufstand}] of the human into the will as the willing of itself, all things simultaneously become an object [\emph{Gegenstand}] for the first time. The human in this up-rising and the world as object belong together. Within the world as object, the human stands in the up-rising. The up-rising human only admits the world as object. Reification [\emph{Vergegenständlichung}] is now the fundamental comportment toward the world. The innermost and today still concealed essence of the reification, not its consequence or even just its mode of expression, is technology” (20/111).
\item[43] Nietzsche, for all of his distress, does not satisfy this need. “Even where Nietzsche, as a thinker who ‘goes over,’ ultimately does twist free from Platonism and from its inversion, he still does not achieve an originary and overcoming interrogation of the truth of Beyng and of the essence of truth” (\textit{CP} 217/§110).
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withdrawal; the difference is that the latter carries possibilities the former can no longer see. When Heidegger supposes in *Basic Questions*: “What if the need arising from the lack of need and, on account of its hidden domination, the age of complete questionlessness, had its ground in the abandonment of beings by Being?” (*BQP* 160/185), he is already turning the problem of machinational concealment back upon a possibility in Beyng. What machination hides Beyng shelters as a held-back concealment. This is precisely the moment where distress becomes imperative, where it must sound a possibility that cannot be heard. Distress must be ‘effected’ for the unconcealment to occur, for something of Beyng’s truth to resonate in the epoch of abandonment.

“This extremity of the holding sway of Beyng [*Wesung des Seyns*] requires what is most intrinsic in the plight of the abandonment by Being” (*CP* 400/§255: 408). Specifically, this level of the ‘intrinsic’ is to allow a mindful “preparedness” (185/§91) to be brought forth, a recognition that “genuine selfhood occurs in a grounding beyond oneself, which requires the grounding of a grounding space and of its time” (124/§60). This notion of a preparedness evoked from within the realm of plight parallels the sense of preservation evoked from within the poetizing projections of art and poetry. To take the abyssal fate of Kant’s transcendental ground ‘seriously’ is to yield to this recognition that the Da of selfhood is not subsumed under the will of the subject. So doing, the instigating necessity of ‘not knowing the way out or in’ to the ungrounded ‘between’ space (where being and non-being await determination) would then persist through distress to the thrust into the other beginning. Put differently, if the need for knowing awareness was an instigating necessity in philosophy’s origins, it must also come to light in distress as the renewal of the grounding question.\(^{45}\)

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\(^{44}\) Without an openness for its truth, and without even a site for the distress which might recall Being’s happening in this openness, Being must maintain in un-disclosedness what is proper to the essence of truth (*OET* 148/89).

\(^{45}\) By the same token, just as there was an original ‘displacement’ of man in the first beginning, a subsequent and restorative displacement is envisioned for Da-sein by way of the meditation of distress. As Heidegger states in the *Grounding*: “At most, even this meditation can merely indicate that something necessary is not yet grasped and possessed. This that is necessary, namely, Da-sein, can be attained only through a dislodging [*Verrückung*] of being human as a whole, i.e., through meditation on the plight with regard to Being as such and with regard to its truth” (*CP* 339/§214: 340).
The third elemental attestation of plight concerns pairing the time of the epoch with a deeper moment of Beyng. Though it harbors the concealment of Beyng in its reliance on the happening of beingness, machination nevertheless “provides a first intimation of the truth of Beyng itself,” a hint that we know “little enough of” (CP 126/§61). The condition of possibility for this hint is, according to On the Essence of Truth, already there in concealment conceived as a “fundamental occurrence [Grundgeschehnis]” (OET 149/90). Thus, the concealment machination makes willful, if experienced from a posture of distress, proves to be a Trojan horse of sorts for the truth of Beyng to return to the fore. As Heidegger states, “the concealing of what is concealed belong[s] to the originary essence of truth” (151/93). Being is “in its essence self-concealing” (BQP 163/189). An essential unconcealment must, of course, be approached from the same horizon that evidences its necessity—the ‘questioning’ which characterizes lived-experience. For this hint to turn such truth out of forgottenness into the open of questioning, its mode of manifestation must be something other to the grasping ‘acknowledgment,’ standardization, and correctness of metaphysical truth. Something “extraordinary, unimaginable,” says Heidegger, must “thrust into this plight” (CP 119/§56), something compelling enough to transform the hint of machination into an enactment of the other beginning. 46 This ‘something’ is the echo of the truth of Beyng resounding in distress. 47 When the distress of the abandonment of beings is attuned to (heightened by) the ‘not’ that is Beyng’s self-concealment in aletheia’s openness, it prepares thinking for the transformation from the guiding

46 The unusualness of this ‘hint’ is inspired by the strangeness of its source in Beyng behind the echo. As Heidegger remarks in the Leap: “Beyng becomes that which is alienating and specifically such that the grounding of its truth heightens the strangeness and maintains all beings of this Beyng in the strangeness characteristic of Beyng. Only then is fulfilled the utter uniqueness of the appropriating event and of all the momentariness (which is assigned to this uniqueness) of Da-sein. Only then is the deepest pleasure, out of its ground, set free as the creativity [Schaffende] which, in the most reticent restraint, is preserved [bewahrt] from deteriorating into a sheer, insatiable riot of blind drives [Treiben von blinden Treiben]” (CP 248/§130: 249)

47 In The Last God Heidegger will restate this point, underscoring the contingency of distress in relation to the possibility of something “lastingly essential” (CP 352/§227) with which this paper began. “Whether this call [dieser Zuruf] of the extreme intimation, this most concealed appropriation, still occurs openly, or whether, instead, the plight becomes mute and all reigning is withheld, and whether the call is still taken up, provided it does happen at all, and whether the leap into Da-sein and thus, out of the truth of the latter, the turn still become history—therein is decided the future of man” (CP 400/§255: 409).
question of the first beginning to the grounding question of the other. Distress is as old as Beyng, one
might say, and equally vigilant. It cannot fall deaf to what abandonment hides and Beyng holds back.

Based on these elements, we may understand how a distress of a lack of distress is a site in
which the distress of Beyng and self-concealment of truth may be manifest in a compelling way for
Da-sein. The distress of the ‘between’ of beginnings, (between the guiding and grounding questions),
that is, illuminates the long-hidden distress which calls for knowing awareness, and which must now,
in preparation for the crossing, be reinstated as Da-sein’s ‘mindfulness.’\footnote{The unconcealing work
distress brings forth allows the “path of thinking” to move according to “a transformation of its
relatedness to Being” (\textit{OET} 154/97). Heidegger explains in §91 of the \textit{Passing}:}

\begin{quote}
And this knowledge alone passes on to us the necessity of preparing the other beginning and of
experiencing, in the development of this preparedness, the most proper plight in its full clarity, i.e., the abandonment by Being, which, deeply concealed, is the counterpart to the nonoccurrence of the question of truth and therefore cannot at all be explained on the basis of current or past faults and omissions. If this plight did not have the greatness of origination out of the first beginning, from where would it then take its power of compelling us to prepare for the other beginning? (\textit{CP} 185/§91)
\end{quote}

These comments anticipate the direction Heidegger’s analysis will take as distress attests to
Da-sein’s grounding ‘thrownness,’ ‘decision,’ and the ‘passing’ of the last god.\footnote{Distress, in
sounding its own ‘lack’ in the event of the abandonment of being, has returned to philosophy the
originary resonance of its essential necessity. In view of the subtle yet penetrating nature of these
distinctions for our understanding of projection, resonance, and the question-worthiness of the
imagination, we might here attempt an illustration (albeit imperfect) on the basis of Heidegger’s own
terms. Suppose we stand afoot the terrain of a site of excavation and construction. There is a building
here, but from the outside one can see that beneath the glare cast off by the shimmering walls there
are structural flaws running all the way down to the poorly footed foundation. The building presents...}

\begin{quote}
\footnote{With different ambitions in mind, but with a similar sense of plight and possibility, Kierkegaard remarks: “For in order to be aware of oneself and God \textit{imagination} must enable a man to soar higher than the misty precinct of the probable, it must wrench one out of this and, by making possible that which transcends the \textit{quantum satis} of every experience, it must teach him to hope and fear, or to fear and hope” (\textit{Sickness Unto Death}, 174, my emphasis).}
\end{quote}

\footnote{See for example, \textit{CP} 303-304/§§180-183, and 247-248/§130.}

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a towering spectacle from afar and a commanding view from within, but to the trained eye on the ground it stands on the brink of collapse. Preparations for its replacement are in fact already underway outside, and blocks stand quarried from the ground. We stand upon these blocks at what is to be the foyer of the new structure. It is a sobering position, for we have no blueprints to assure the new construction. We know only that it is to be hewn by hand in a way, like a Greek temple, befitting the original terrain, and that the foyer must lead into an open space crafted to catch and hold a penetrating wave of sound, as though held on a wave of light. Every material decision is also a question asked in the service of this illuminating sound. And so, standing here on the threshold, the work of the hands becomes a work of the ears as we try to arrange the stones by listening in anticipation for the sound they might hold. It is a strange attentiveness to hold in mind, a silent work of trembling hands, and a work that soon holds us encircled by the rising stones. In fact, it becomes apparent that ‘we’ are not yet complete ‘selves,’ but that in the foundational work we are exposed to an authentic position for who and how we are to be.

*The Creative Appropriation*

Plight attests to the appropriation of question-seeking and creative reflection into the grounding necessity of Beyng. Plight’s character resembles the pro-ductive movement of Beyng’s truth in and through the work of art or poetry, the emergence and preservation of what has secured itself in a position of necessary withdrawal from the mastery of poetizing reason. What distinguishes inceptual thinking from conceptual philosophy, says Heidegger, is the historical incorporation of “the concept of philosophy. . . into the plight of the truth of Beyng.” There situated, “the moments of those who ‘create’ [»Schaffenden«] might receive their time” (*CP* 421-22/§258: 422). Our illustration evokes the sense of this relational moment, where “experiencing (thinking creatively) the truth of Beyng” (448/§262) emerges as a manifest task on the open site of an open structure. It is a task without measures present-at-hand, a work measured by the projection to come. It is also rift-bound,
between earth and world, and it is performed in a wager of silence. Silence, the ground of language, is also here the ground of coming resonance. Says Heidegger:

> Silence is the most concealed holding to the measure. It holds to the measure [hält das Maß], in the sense that it first posits measures. And thus language is the positing of measures in that which is most internal and most extensive, the positing of measures as the originating holding sway of what is fitting and of its joining (the event) (CP 504/§281: 510)

Silence awaits the resonance ‘of’ the jointure, but in a measuring and not a passive way. To build by way of listening is to render the abyssal anticipatory, to step toward a time of “the great stillness, the simple nearness of the essence, and the bright remoteness of beings, when words once again are effective” (CP 33/§13). Such a domain is altogether distinct from the transcendental, but it is not amiss to hear in this silent holding something akin to the productive imagination resting ready at the frontiers of intuition in the realm of its native measure, the imagination before the categories bring measures of their own. Of course, here in this long silence at the threshold of the coming foyer and coming resonance, we are not speaking of measures sheltered in the productive depths of intuition, but of a measuring stillness brought forth through distress. Here we find standing the Da-sein that “has overcome all subjectivity” (251/§134), the “creative Da-sein” Heidegger so desired in his 1936 Schelling course, the being for whom “the uniqueness of Hölderlin in the history of Beyng must be established” (422/§258). If creative reason is to be inflected toward a creative listening and, in turn, a speaking in the name of the resonant projection, then it would do well to listen to the measure of the poet’s verse and bestow its distress in his danger. “The historical destiny of philosophy culminates in knowledge of that necessity to create a hearing for [das Gehör zu schaffen] the words of Hölderlin. The ability to hear corresponds to an ability to say which speaks out of the question-worthiness of Beyng” (422/§258). Perhaps we could say that Hölderlin must be for thought what Euripedes was for the Greek settlers and what Musaeus of Attica was for Aeneas in Elysia – a shibboleth of creative endurance and dwelling.
Supposing, then, that the resonance of Beyng’s truth comes to sound and play in the open space, just as the truth of Beyng and of beings is founded and underway in the poet’s naming words – what then for the creative Da-sein who is grounded in this expansive fugal event? Can such a question be asked without recourse to the view of ‘creation’ that habitually pairs production and projection with a mode of machen? To be sure, if the other beginning for thought and the leap into the between is underway, the full breadth of the leap still lies before us. We remain in a moment of mindful preparation, a moment of foreboding (18/§6) and possibility. The pursuit of the question of the truth of Beyng, says Heidegger, is not resolved in a flash of ‘deliverance’ – the separation [χωρισµός] of the between is not settled by “slinging a bridge between Beyng (beingness) and beings, as if they were two present at hand riverbanks,” but rather “by transforming together, into their simultaneity, both Beyng and beings” (12/§5). But having been ‘dislodged’ into the between, and there “stand[ing] in the event” (23/§7), we do have a sense of this transformation, and we do have a creative work before us. I mean ‘creative’ in the sense of schaffen (see, for example, §§193, 258), which must be understood as having a primarily receptive disposition and is not reducible to an instrumental Technik or an accomplishment of Hergestellsein in/as something standing; but I admit that the consideration of what schaffen might mean for ‘us’ in this position does require that we push the limits of what Heidegger has ventured. What we do know is this: the creative work, as we have intimated, is one of withstanding, or steadfastness (from inständig). Da-sein is the “carrying out of the strife” (26/§10) of Beyng’s Wesung. Da-sein is “to be the ‘there,’ the clearing for self-concealment, in the steadfastness of selfhood as grounding the truth in beings” (316/§193). To stand steadfast is to exercise a restraint (351/§226) that allows Beyng to escape the fate of the representable (251/§134) and enables beings to come configured into the open in their relation to Beyng.

50 Heidegger states: “Occurring here is not a deliverance [Er-lösung]—i.e., basically, a suppression—of man but, rather, an establishment [Einsetzung] of the more original essence (the grounding of Da-sein) in Beyng itself: the acknowledgement of the appurtenance [Zugehörigkeit] of man to Beyng through the god and the admission by the god of needing Beyng, whereby the god does not at all renounce himself or his greatness” (CP 405/§256: 413).
Steadfastness is an *a-pseudos* work that reinscribes the terms of identity in the open region. Da-sein bears the strife of the between in one sense, and exercises in another “[t]he sheltering of truth” that “allows what is true to come into the open, and into the distorted [Verstellte], as a being. Only in that way do beings stand in Beyng. Beings are. Beyng holds sway [*Das Seiende ist. Das Seyn west*]” (27/§10).

As such, the steadfastness brought forth by plight implies a point and time of decision, something Heidegger believes Schelling’s positive philosophy to have neglected (see 202/§104). Where in the all-conditioning domain of absolute identity or the “absoluteness of indifference” (198/§102) is there a Da of strife and restraint? Though Heidegger is very close to Schelling’s view of divine self-revelation in saying “Beyng needs man in order to occur in its essence, and man belongs to Beyng so that he might fulfill his ultimate destiny as Da-sein” (250/§133), the ‘need’ does not denote a dependency on which the divine actuality rests, just as the decisiveness of the between is not correlative to the ‘summit’ that is man. The precise difference is, however, not simply one of theology, but rather the manner in which steadfastness holds the full measure of representation in check. We must, says Heidegger, “renounce the habit of thinking that it should be assured that the essence of Beyng should be representable at will for everyone at any time” (251/§133). The statement is not just a critique of the poetizing essence of reason, the domain of responses to the guiding question, or the constitutive disposition for machination, but is a charge against the systematizing impulse specific to German Idealism. Silence, sheltering, and steadfastness are this renunciation. And when Heidegger treats ‘representing’ still more directly he finds in it a directional movement which furnishes a point of comparison with steadfast creating. “The trace of Da-sein is visible in representing,” he explains, but is so in terms of “the transport of Da-sein toward something” (315-16/§193) whereby the basic disposition toward projecting-open is left behind. By contrast, steadfast creating entails a peculiar mix of letting-be and configuring in accordance with the basic question. The ‘creative bestowal’ we witnessed in the essence of art, and the ‘preserving
imagination’ we noted in the experience of art’s truth, are, I believe, here inscribed (with emphasis) in Da-sein’s steadfastness:

*What we, steadfast in Da-sein, ground and create [schaffen] and, in creating, allow to advance toward us in the manner of an assault—only that can be something true and manifest and, consequently, recognized and known. Our knowledge extends only so far as the steadfastness in Da-sein reaches out, and this is the power of sheltering the truth into configured beings.* (CP 314/§193)

To create from the steadfast disposition of restraint (351/§226) is, one could say, to exercise a radical hospitality toward the showing of beings in their relation to Beyng. Creative measures are, like Da-sein itself, grounded in truth’s fugal need for shelter, not in the *ideas* or under the auspices of beingness. Sheltering, in this sense, mirrors the composure fixed and figured in the work of art. Knowing extends itself by welcoming the advance of beings, a forward motion by way of essential confrontation that bears the same sense of violence characteristic of work-being’s strife. As with Schelling’s summit, this space of decision concerns man’s word-bearing capacity, for words are where the constancy of Beyng’s truth is decided and founded in the language of knowing. But Heidegger’s ‘between’ is not ultimately a site of moral consequence, just as the waywardness of the guiding question is not per se reducible to man’s ‘rising up’ against the principle of absolute unity.51 Da-sein, to be sure, is assigned the task of “the sheltering of the truth of the event into the great stillness of Beyng [die große Stille des Seyns],” but the incumbent decision concerns the sway of Beyng in and for the realms of beings (89/§45), not the salvific band of absolute unity. As such, the decision also concerns Da-sein’s own historical standing, a standing in which the abyssal and the resonant encompass the scene, as opposed to man’s internalized principles of darkness and light (ground and existence). Heidegger’s Da-sein is nowhere destined to overcome the place of strife and conflict between Schelling’s ground and existence, but is instead brought back into this place, as the openness of the between, so as to measure forth “the holding sway of the possibility of various

51 Although it is true Heidegger does make use of this conception of ‘uprising,’ thus recalling Schelling’s attention to the matter, at, for example, *TP* 61/158.
shelterings of truth” (89/§45) in a moment in which the advent of God or the flight of the gods is not yet assumed as a mark of full actuality.

But insofar as Da-sein is assigned a creative work in this leap which brings shelter to truth, and whereas Da-sein, like the poet, is to uphold the measures belonging to Beyng in words born of silence, may we not say that the domain of imagination is reinstated here in the Da of Ereignis? Has not distress, rightly experienced, summoned the poetizing imagination back from the frontiers of willfulness into the work of preparation and configuration? Is the reinstatement of bringing-forth, hitherto accomplished in the essential investigations of art and poetry, now set forth in the structural position and steadfast bestowing of a realm of imaginative decision?

The Appropriated Imagination

The above questions are not a contrivance meant to force the scattered remains of a transcendental apparatus on a poetic work of thinking. Rather, they are the very questions Heidegger appears to ask himself in the midst of this work. Having accounted for the full production won through the superlative nature of plight and abandonment, we come now to the perplexing, perhaps out-of-joint, account of a resonant transfiguration and the name that names it. Section 192, entitled Da-sein, reads as follows:

To the usual view directed toward ‘beings,’ Da-sein, as grounding the openness of self-concealing, appears as nonbeing and imagined [eingebildet]. Indeed, Da-sein, as the projecting-thrown grounding, is the highest reality in the domain of imagination [im Bereich der Einbildung], assuming we understand the latter not simply as a faculty of the soul and not simply as something transcendental (cf. Kant book) but, instead, as the event itself, wherein all transfiguration oscillates [worin alle Verklärung schwingt].

‘Imagination’ as an occurrence of the clearing [Lichtung] itself. But ‘imagination,’ imaginatio, is a name that names from the viewpoint of the immediate apprehending of the ὄν [that which is] and of beings. Calculated in those terms, all Beyng and its opening constitute something imagined that is added to what supposedly stands on its own. But everything here should be reversed: what is ‘imagined’ [‘eingebildet’] in the usual sense is always the so-called ‘really’ present at hand, for that is what is brought to an image, i.e., brought into the clearing, into the ‘there,’ so as to appear. (CP 312/§192)

What does this passage say? What work does it do in the quarry of thought? In the preceding section Heidegger calls Da-sein “the pivot in the turning of the event [Wendungspunkt in der Kehre des
Ereignis\(\text{es}\)], the self-opening center of the counterplay between call and appurtenance \([Zu-gehörigen]\), the ‘domain of what is proper’ \([\text{Eigen-tum}, \text{‘property’}]\).” He likens Da-sein to “the ‘domain of a prince’ \([\text{Fürsten-tum}, \text{‘principality’}]\), the sovereign center of the appropriating eventuation as the assignment, of the one who is appurtenant, to the event and at the same time to \textit{himself}: becoming a self” \((311/\S191)\). The translation does an able job of signaling the work of language afoot in this description, but the original terms make this work more explicit as a play of jointure and resonance. As \textit{Wendungspunkt},\(^{52}\) Da-sein is or ought to be a structural pivot-point on which \textit{Ereignis} turns through \textit{Zuruf} (call, directive) to a domain of \textit{hören} (hearing) and \textit{gehörig} (belonging, fitting). As \textit{Fürsten-tum}, Da-sein is itself a privileged yet subordinate domain, something kindred and obedient to its lord. ‘Appurtenance’ rightly amplifies the instrumental sense of Da-sein’s domain, as well as the legal sense of a property, a right of way for the appropriating event \((\text{Ereignung})\). Further, \textit{Zu-gehörigen zum Ereignis} also positions Da-sein’s \textit{Selbstwerdung} as a pivot that is underway – not yet settled – in the \textit{Eigentum} of Beyng. Unless Da-sein attends the call as a way toward a sounding of belonging, then it is not yet itself in the event but an instrument without assignment.

Returning to our passage above, the opening sentence is an admission that the ordinary view – the \textit{view} of the \textit{Leitfrage} and the customary \textit{ear} for representation – will not hear this description of Da-sein as pivot-point, but will instead hasten to view or grasp it as something imagined. The ordinary view wants to see beings, objects, and thus cannot listen for a domain of hearing and belonging. \textit{Eingebildet} is thus a term of failure, of literally missing the ‘point.’ Then, as if surprised by the insinuation of \textit{eingebildet} in his discourse, Heidegger suddenly turns to \textit{Einbildung} in a formal sense and instates it as a domain in which Da-sein’s reality is superlative, much the same as

\(^{52}\) Compare Schelling’s usage of \textit{Gipfel} and \textit{Scheidepunkt} to convey man’s station, and the \textit{Mittelpunkte} from which an inquiry into the \textit{lebindigen Grund} arises \((\text{Freedom} 41/374, 9/336)\). \textit{Wendung}, from verb \textit{wenden}, of course conveys a sense of ‘turning’ which accords with the sense of a \textit{Kehre} within the event of Beyng, and also echoes the necessary turning of need or distress in \textit{notwendig(keit)}. Schelling’s terms reflect the more determinate sense of an accomplishment, a height, and a basis.
abandonment was the superlative experience in the domain of plight. This, and every ensuing statement, presents a play of reinstatement and caution, as though Einbildung is itself so tangled in the knot of what is guiding and what is basic that the matter simply will not yield to a ‘straightened’ disclosure. First, the domain of imagination, Heidegger continues, is not to be confused as a transcendental faculty, but is rather Ereignis understood as the site of transfiguring motion. Schwingt immediately recalls the Kehre des Ereignisses, but also echoes the trembling strife of earth and world in the truth of the temple’s rift. Verklärung overwhelms the mode ‘appearing’ supposed by the guiding question and its poetizing reason. In his notes for a 1941 course on Schelling’s Freedom Essay Heidegger pauses on this term – Verklärung – and emphasizes it as “not dissolution (evaporation), [but] rather the dark as the dark allows itself to appear [erscheinen, shine forth] in the light” (GA 49: 126); this later emphasis accentuates the disclosure of the abyssal in the very Einbildung of Ereignis. The sense of the play is this: if we let-be the imagination as a domain of Da-sein and bestow upon this domain the name of Ereignis, then we allow Einbildungskraft to leap from the field of schematizing cognition into the open of Beyng. Second, placing Einbildung in quotes captures the identity of the matter as being underway, in motion in the text just as the copula “is” is so often found. But here again a caution: imaginatio, though en route to comportment with Beyng’s word, is always already a ‘name’ (i.e., a founding) deployed in the service of the same apprehending command which conflates Beyng with Being as the category of beingness. Lest we allow Da-sein to be stood under the authority of such a name, a ‘reversal’ is required.

Hence, the third and most ambiguous play of reinstatement and caution: the usual sense (of the ‘usual view’) regards its imagined objects as most extant, thereby borrowing its determinative capital from the supposed immediacy between that which appears and that which is. But the very presence necessary to extantness owes its domain to a clearing (Lichtung), and appearing owes its disclosure to a bringing-forth of imagination (hereingebildet). The implication is that imagination names the conditions of possibility for usual viewing and usual naming, but when the standpoint for
these actions tries to subsume ‘imagination’ into its command structure it is already too late to hear the constitutive work of bringing-forth proper to imagination. The section, for all intents and purposes, ends with this point, though it is not a conclusive point. On the surface, these brief remarks have treated imagination so as to disclose the projection of Da-sein into an oscillating event of transfiguration. Da-sein’s positional counterplay is the primary concern, the imagination is a secondary matter arising in the work of this concern. This is a correct, though not complete, reading. More closely regarded, the ‘counterplay between call and appurtenance’ is enacted in the motion of Heidegger’s statements – he brings thought to participate in the oscillation between transfiguration and naming. Imagination ‘is’ the thrust and counter-thrust of thought’s measures in Ereignis. When I say that imagination is reinstated in Heidegger’s discourse on this score, I mean that it is recovered in the labor of language to perform the counterplay that Da-sein ‘is.’ The transfiguration proper to Ereignis ‘oscillates’ in the space between viewing and hearing, naming and bringing, and to stand these modes together in the turning work of the clearing Heidegger allows ‘imagination’ to name itself. Imagination as occurrence, like the distress of a lack of distress, must ‘get out’ (CP 119/§56), translation adapted) from beneath the plight of imaginatio. Indeed, Da-sein as pivot-point is a thrown-grounding for transfiguration because Da-sein is already thrown into the recapacitating measures of distress. Imagination breaks forth from concealment by standing in the shelter of the clearing, even as it brings the matters for transfiguration into the clearing. In On Time and Being Heidegger returns to this same emphasis on the clearing as “the open for everything that is present and absent.” Contrasting the nature of the clearing to the usual privileging of presence, he insists that the opening “is not only free for brightness and darkness, but also for resonance and echo.”

53 Martin Heidegger, “The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking” in On Time and Being, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2002) 65; the only other version of this text appeared in French translation by Jean Beaufret and François Fédier, in Kierkegaard vivant (Living Kierkegaard), Colloque organise par L’Unesco à Paris du 21 au 23 (Paris: Gallimard, 23 avril, 1964) 165ff. Paul Valéry says of poetic creation: “The living pendulum that has swung from sound to sense swings back to its felt point of departure, as though the very sense which is present in your mind can find no other outlet or expression, no other answer, than
conjoin the elements of sight and sound under the free, unconcealing domain of the clearing is to underscore what he has done in the Beiträge concerning how transfiguration is brought into Ereignis as the domain of imagination. Under every guise we have found it, imagination is a work of freedom, and in this case it is the freedom of the clearing at work in the grounding play of the Da.

*Einbildung*, to be sure, is not one of the quarried blocks listed in §257. Still, if the list of blocks is in any way indicative of the progressive design of the jointure’s rebuilding, then the spacing of three successive elements – *Da-sein, Language and saying, ‘Beings’* – expresses a transition in presence or presencing which implicates the imagination, either as an accomplice in the usual ‘view’ of beings or as a name for the bringing-forth of figures and sounds into the *Da* of Da-sein. As question-worthy in this regard, then, the balance of Heidegger’s plays of reinstatment and caution is that we let the imagination be appropriated from a schematizing function into an oscillating transfiguration, a repositioning that would mirror the larger motion from ‘supposing’ to ‘sounding,’ from production to projection. This is the imagination that belongs to the abyssal depth of plight, to the strife of a basic disposition recovered and repositioned to clear the ground for Ereignis to sound forth. The passage, it would seem, is written for those who now know the need of distress and know it as a need of Beyng as well. The passage attempts to give a word to this relationship, a word that is beyond man yet stands man in the creative work of sounding and figuring the projecting-open of the truth of Beyng. If the work of the Beiträge is to apprentice thought to a hearing of Beyng’s word – Ereignis – and to thereby transform thought’s questioning into an inceptual saying of Beyng, then Heidegger’s word of ‘imagination’ marks the first term in the poetics of the crossing. It names both the essential dwelling of Da-sein in the open, and the measuring work of thought in and as this dwelling.

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the very music which gave it birth . . . Between Voice and Thought, between Thought and Voice, between Presence and Absence, oscillates the poetic pendulum” (Valéry, “Poetry and Abstract Thought,” 156-58).
IV. The Dimension For Every Measuring Act

Beiträge §192 is a marker for the continued question-worthiness of imagination as a way of thinking the clearing as a creative expanse of possibility. Da-sein stands within the domain of imagination just as humans, Heidegger elsewhere notes, “always already stand within philosophy because they do so essentially” (TP 1/90). In its standing, Da-sein “is the between: between men (as grounding of history) and the gods (in their history)” (CP 311/§191). What is true of philosophy, we may surmise, is true of imagination – that it is a realm of “sojourn” (TP 2/91). Sojourn (Aufenthalt) implies an abiding decision to name a path of thinking and a site of dwelling. That this sojourn may pass steadfast into a space of resonant transfiguration is by no means guaranteed by bestowing the name Ereignis upon the domain of imagination. The jointure of Beyng promises no apotheosis of Einbildung. It does, however, compose itself by measures that have elided the distinction between the sensible and intelligible, and have exposed the command of poetizing production to the towering space of poietic projection. Indeed, the variations played forth amid die Fuge entrust their sounding to the configurations of creative measure. Ereignis is Beyng’s word, and what Heidegger states in his 1944/45 course, “Thinking and Poetizing,” here applies to Da-sein as the ‘between’ – that “what is peculiar to the thinker and the poet is that they receive their meditation [Sinnen] from the word and shelter it in saying, such that thinkers and poets are the genuine preservers of the word in language” (5/94). Owing to their distinct “awareness” (Besinnung) (5/94) and “thoughtful guarding [andenkende Wahren]” (15/105) of Beyng, thinkers and poets “produce [hervorbringen] us in our essence” (12/102); they bring forth “the highest reality in the domain of imagination” (CP 312/§192) by virtue of being “the ones who reflectively speak and the ones who verbally reflect” (TP 59/156). The genuine preservation of the word and the essential production of Da-sein comprise the guiding and founding measures to be taken in the domain of imagination. This means that the word, as the

54 Capobianco’s observation is apt on this point: “Dasein becomes capable of dwelling only insofar as it is able to step back from the illusion of the mastery of the conscious subject (decentring) and sustain a relation and openness (recentring) to Being as physis as dynamic and powerful emerging-appearing” (Capobianco, 127)
work of imagination and for the sake of man’s sojourn and dwelling, again springs forth as it did in Schelling’s impulse and in Hölderlin’s impetus, only now with a weight of inceptual significance that concentrates the worthiness of the poetic imagination still more decisively (maßgebenden) in the matter of measure and measure-setting (Mas-Gebende).

Accordingly, Heidegger’s “Poetically Man Dwells.” (1951) sustains and sharpens the sense of measure so crucial to the Beiträge’s crossing and, so doing, performs an expansion of the thoughts initiated in §192 of the that text. Heidegger recovers the project initiated in “Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry” by distilling the question of essence into the question of the necessary relationship between poetic measure-taking and human dwelling. As in “The Origin of the Work of Art,” he pairs a diagnosis of the contemporary and customary horizon of poetic reception and standardization with a penetrating entry into the work-character of a specific work. In its language and procedure, PMD repeats the problematization of the ‘usual view’ and ‘customary representational’ course which concerned the grounding position of Da-sein and the understanding of projection noted in §§192 and 262 of the Beiträge. But lest we assume this text to be a brief diagnostic treatise in the ‘philosophy of poetry’ or a mere critique of the plight of dwelling in a time of machination, we must first be very clear about the standpoint from which the thought of the text unfolds. This standpoint is signaled on the opening page, where the text’s title also names its task: to hear the resonance of Hölderlin’s phrase (“poetically, man dwells”) from within the poem’s own fugal work. Our standpoint before the poem, then, mirrors our standing as Da-sein at the threshold of the other beginning – the rebuilding of the space of open projection, the silent steadfast anticipation of the transfiguring sound of Beyng’s word. Hölderlin’s phrase assigns thought the task of gathering itself into the relationship of poetry and dwelling, much the same as Da-sein, as Wendungspunkt, is assigned the task of carrying the Kehre of Ereignis through call, hearing, and belonging (Zuruf, hören, gehörig. Unless we appreciate how Heidegger’s thought issues from within the imaginative
occurrence of the clearing we will fail to grasp the singular scope of measure-taking (Maß-nahmen) he means to retrieve through the poem’s work.

Heidegger’s leading concern is to take the strangeness of Hölderlin’s phrase as an invitation to restore the phrase to the poem, to then hear the phrase in its full standing, and thus discover “dwelling and poetry [das Wohnen, Dichten] in terms of their essential nature [Wesen]” (PMD 212/GA 7: 192). The initial work of restoration vies on one hand with a literary establishment that overly schematizes poetic meaning, and on the other with the common opinion that the poetic imagination practices a dream-like flight from the actual; both obstacles parallel the default postures critiqued in the Origin of the Work of Art. Accordingly, the first mark of removing these scientific and customary concealments is that we listen for the experience of Hölderlin’s own poetic vision. Says Heidegger: “When Hölderlin speaks of dwelling, he has before his eyes the basic character of human existence. He sees the ‘poetic,’ moreover, by way of its relation to this dwelling, thus understood essentially” (213/193). As in the case of our repositioning in the leap and creative work in the site of the open, the relationship of the poetic to dwelling is not reducible to a poiesis understood as mere machen. Dwelling does, however, include building: “Poetry is what really lets us dwell. But through what do we attain to a dwelling place? Through building [das Bauen]. Poetic creation, which lets us dwell, is a kind of building” (213/193). It is important to note that this distinction (and those to come) does not result from an argumentative assertion Heidegger stamps on his theme. Rather, he finds traction for the ‘essential’ question (for our hearing) by drawing distinctions from the passage. In this way he moves to and from Hölderlin’s words, spacing their constitutive elements in the silence of our reflection. If we want to know what horizon Heidegger is reading from and for, the emergence of ‘building’ suggests that he is hearing Hölderlin’s poem from the arising foyer of the blocks quarried for the space of inceptual resonance.

Between our attempt, with Heidegger, to let the fragment ‘be’ in the context of the poem’s jointure, and Hölderlin’s attempt to display the “nature of poetry as a letting-dwell [Wohlenlassen]”
there thus arises this heightened sense of the mutual belonging between building and language. Just as the nature of building must be sheltered from making, Heidegger submits all human speaking to the antecedent appeal of language itself – the “telling of language [Zuspruch der Sprachte]” (213/193). Notably, this step reminds us that though we are speaking here of ‘man’s’ dwelling, we may only do so essentially with an ear toward what is beyond man. “For, strictly, it is language that speaks. Man first speaks when, and only when, he responds to language by listening [hört] to its appeal” (214/194). This responsiveness before a directive bears specifically, as in the Beiträge, on the originary emergence of beings before the occlusions of ‘beingness’ set upon them. Language “beckons us [winkt uns]” (214/194) toward a response which is also an authentic ‘listening’ for a thing’s nature (214/194). Presumably, if we are to build in/as our dwelling, then the materials and laborers must be sheltered in their own essence, not manipulated in the service of design. As meritous, poetic dwelling attunes us to “another way” of building, a building that listens from the earth as a scene of bestowal and exposure (215/195-96). The distorting notion of poetic ‘flight’ stands undone by the discovery that poetry “is what first brings man onto the earth, making him belong to it, and thus brings him into dwelling” (216/197). But what service does this earthly standing render dwelling and its poetic constitution? In The Origin of the Work of Art the emergent


56 Looking forward in Heidegger’s oeuvre, we find a similar turn toward the appeal of language in the context of a specific artistic matter. In “Art and Space” (1969) his focus on the experience and meaning of visual art (bildende Kunst), especially sculpture, consists in allowing the meaning of space to become question worthy. “As long as we do not experience the peculiarity of space,” he explains, “the discourse about artistic space remains obscure as well” (AS 306-07/205-06). Echoing his appeal to Hölderlin’s Notwege (see HEP 118/34), and drawing the discourse of bildende Kunst into the Beiträge’s sense of elemental clearing, he continues: “Yet how can we find what is peculiar to space? There is an emergency bridge, one that is narrow and swaying. We attempt to listen to language. Whereof does it speak, in the word ‘space’ [Raum]? Clearing-away [Räumen] speaks in it. This means: to clear our [roden], to make the wilderness open. Clearing-away brings forth what is free, the open for the humans’ settling and dwelling” (AS 307/206, my emphasis). The ear for language, for clearing, and thus for dwelling indicates that this inquiry into the peculiarity of space (as opposed to the ordinary sense of the spatial) shares the same sensibilities as the question of the dimensional in PMD.
strife between earth and world marked the opening of truth’s clearing and the site in which philosophical questioning took root on a path of strife and composure.

In the present discussion Heidegger opts not to revisit this specific discourse, but hastens through a “parenthetical remark” to bring forth a reflection on identity in this earth-bound position. This reflection has two sides. First, there is a jointure between poetry and thinking provided “they remain distinctly in the distinctness of their nature” (216/197) – their nature, it would seem, when rooted in the earth. He calls this jointure, following the life of Schelling’s copula, “a gathering by way of difference [Versammlung durch den Unterschied]” (216/197) that holds what is distinct in an “original being-at-one” irreducible to “mere uniformity” (217/198). Second, from the position of the poem itself and its’ hearing, this gathering is composed and thus enables us to “come nearer to thinking the same as what the poet composes in his poem” (217/198). What is composed in the earthly standing of the poet (the gathering of poetry and thinking) is thus enacted in the event of the poem. The result is that our hearing becomes all the more alert to the gathering of thought and poetry in words of dwelling said from an earthly position.

Thus far Heidegger has emphasized the acoustic manner of our encounter with Hölderlin’s poem, and has exercised our visual comportment only in the subtle gesture toward the field of the poet’s vision as opposed to the ordinary view of poetry itself. This accords with the preparation for resonance in the Beiträge, itself a counterthrust to the visual course of poetizing representation. Still, if Hölderlin is now our chief ‘necessity’ in this interim time of plight and coming projection, and if (as I have suggested) Heidegger’s thought in this text issues forth from the site of ‘imagination’ as an occurrence of the clearing, then we are justified in expecting from Heidegger (i) a clarifying comment on the status of vision and bringing in poetic dwelling, and (ii) a trace of the constitutive experience of distress so crucial to forming being-historical hearing and saying. Proceeding with the poem, Heidegger satisfies both expectations by stressing the positional dimension of dwelling as a ‘between’ in which ‘measures’ are taken. First, there is a toil (Mühe) before all merit (Verdienst), an
earthly term which concretizes the historical condition of plight. In this toil, moreover, there is a work of vision. Heidegger explains:

    The upward glance [Aufschauen] passes aloft to the sky, and yet it remains below on the earth. The upward glance spans the between of sky and earth. This between is measured out for the dwelling of man. We now call the span thus meted out the dimension [die Dimension].

(PMD 218/198)

The poet, for whom thought and poetry are essentially gathered, looks upward through the space of resonance. Odd as it may seem, in listening to the poem we are to hear the motion of this glance, a further manifestation of the scene’s silence and a passage of the eye, so to speak, through the larger dimension of dwelling. A mere glance intimates the movement of “what is brought to an image” (CP 312) in §192 of the Beiträge. Second, the dimensional field of the glance accentuates the ‘between’ as a living site of measure. To stress the dimensional over the spatial in this regard is to accentuate the poet’s measuring glance as a work of dwelling that is already and immediately a primordial work of grounding, much like the standing of thought before the originary mystery of Plato’s khora.

Measurement, moreover, is not an instrumentalizing practice of man, but ‘is’ man’s essential mode of dwelling: “According to Hölderlin’s words, man spans the dimension by measuring himself against the heavenly. Man does not undertake this spanning just now and then; rather, man is man at all only in such spanning [sondern in solchem Durchmessen]” (PMD 218/199). The verbal sense of ‘spanning’ amplifies the dynamic identity of poetry and thought (noted above) and thus elides the need to name or “disfigure” (218/199) man’s essential condition under a static nominative domain. Spanning, or measure-taking, would appear to mirror the motion of Beyng in Ereignis, as well as the sense of ‘standing’ in a leap.\(^{57}\)

Why focus on the ‘heavenly’ and the “godhead [der Gottheit]” (218/199) in lieu of the Abgrund or Ereignis? In an obvious sense, Heidegger has bound his discussion to Hölderlin’s terms,

\(^{57}\) Paul Valéry’s Socrates, in his dialogue, “Dance and the Soul,” says this of the dancer, Athikte: “I contemplate this woman who is walking and yet gives me the sense of the motionless. It is the equality of measure alone that holds me. . . .” (“Dance and the Soul,” 303). And Athikte remarks at the dialogue’s conclusion: “Refuge, refuge, O my refuge, O Whirlwind! I was in thee, O movement—outside all things. . . .” (326).
and Hölderlin has allowed the heavenly to stand in question. But Heidegger, echoing the later Schelling, has done this as well in the *Beiträge*, and it is evident that what is audible in the poem accords with the predicament of (and possibility for) measure-taking in Heidegger’s own terms. The station of the heavenly as a point of measure amplifies the sense of abandonment and withdrawal ascribed to both Beyng and to the uncertain passing of the gods. “Man, as man,” says Heidegger, “has always measured himself with and against something heavenly” (218/199). The specific, and indeed most important, point in this turn of the discussion is the field of (and necessity for) this measure-taking. To measure ‘with’ and ‘against’ the heavenly is a statement of description, not an allusion to moral standing or a confusion of guiding and basic questions. Man, for whom poetry and thought are gathered in dwelling, is thrown into a measure-taking necessity. In fact, beneath this description lies a distinction between such measuring and the customary measuring of Being and beings in terms of beingness; Hölderlin’s scene of measure already assumes a terrain of belonging on which dwelling depends. Heidegger states:

> The godhead is the ‘measure’ with which man measure’s out his dwelling, his stay on the earth beneath the sky. Only insofar as man takes the measure of his dwelling in this way is he able to be commensurately with his nature. Man’s dwelling depends on an upward-looking measure-taking [aufschauenden Vermessen] of the dimension, in which the sky belongs just as much as the earth. (*PMD* 218-19/199)

But how, exactly, is the godhead the ‘measure,’ and what is the meaning of setting dwelling in a scene of elemental belonging? Even as we allow that Heidegger is ‘saying’ what he ‘hears’ in Hölderlin’s verse, we do well to hear in Heidegger an echo of Schelling’s own fugal word in the Freedom Essay. It is an echo of vital difference. Schelling, we recall, advanced the question of measure in accordance with the need for unity in the ultimate work of ground and existence, and in

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58 God or godhead in this regard is not to be confused as another name for Beyng. As Heidegger notes in the *Beiträge*: “The god is neither a ‘being’ nor a ‘nonbeing’ and is also not to be identified with Beyng. Instead, Beyng holds sway in the manner of time-space as that ‘between’ which can never be grounded in the god, and also not in man (as some present at hand, living thing) but only in Da-sein” (*CP* 262/§143). And earlier: “So remote is the god that we are unable to decide whether he is moving toward or away from us. . . . In the holding sway of the truth of Beyng, in the event and as the event, the last god is hidden” (21/§7). And: “[What is last] is what not only needs the longest ante-cedence but what itself is, not the ceasing, but the most profound beginning, the beginning which, in reaching our the furthest, catches up to itself with the greatest difficulty” (397/§253).
the work of man as the bearer of this measuring word. Heidegger, though inspired by this attention, protested that Schelling failed to sustain the bare necessity of measure, and instead sheltered the fate of measure-taking under the wings of divine personality. This misdirection was indicative of the larger failure to remain in the moment ‘between’ darkness and light, yearning and understanding. Together, these missed opportunities spelled an impasse indicative of the retreat into poetizing willfulness and representation. In Hölderlin, Heidegger finds the asystic, a-pseudos resolve (entertained in the later Schelling, though unnoted in Heidegger’s reading) to stand in the moment of the between wherein man enjoys no assurances of divine actuality but instead faces a heavenly concealment.  

In the present text, Heidegger’s concern is to contrast Hölderlin’s sense of measure to ordinary and scientific measurement (as calculation), though his statements to this effect bear equally on the impulse he hoped Schelling would sustain. Earthbound and upward, measure-taking “gauges [ermäßt] the between, which brings the two, heaven and earth, to one another. This measure-taking has its own metron, and thus its own metric” (219/199). To be sure, such gauging is not on par with man’s immoral self-assertion or yearning’s covetous clinging to the image of divine unity. It is a measure-taking shorn of all directive ideas and archetypes, which nonetheless affords man his “security” and ‘endurance’ (219/199) – terms evoking the constancy of Beyng and the steadfastness of Da-sein. Poetry is this measure-taking, an essential activity resembling creative bestowal in which the measure is taken by way of reception from the dimensions of the between:

In poetry there takes place what all measuring is in the ground of its being. Hence it is necessary to pay heed to the basic act of measuring. That consists in man’s first of all taking the measure which then is applied to every measuring act. In poetry the taking of measure occurs. To write poetry is measure-taking, understood in the strict sense of the word, by which man first receives the measure for the breadth of his being. (PMD 219/199; cf. CP 314/§192)  

59 The sense of spanning and taking measure in a dimensional position is amplified in ‘Art and Space’ by the enabling act of clearing-away (Räumen): “Clearing-away is freeing of the places at which a god appears, the places from which the gods have fled, places at which the appearance of the divine hesitates for a long time” (AS 307/206).  

60 “To speak of a ‘metric’,” Crowell explains, “is not to invoke a standard that may be applied to the way one lives; if poetizing is measuring, measuring cannot be the application of a rule” (Crowell, 272).  

61 Sculpture evokes a similar measuring motion specified in terms of granting a place for the standing of entities: “Sculpture would be the embodiment of places which, opening and preserving a region, hold something free gathered around them, granting a stay to each thing, and a dwelling to humans in the midst of things” (AS 308/207).
Every measuring act. With this statement the Kantian creative character of reason is recalled to its roots. The measure, moreover, is received then applied first and foremost to man’s being, not to beings under the commanding lens of beingness. The birth of all measuring resides in poetic measure-taking. The taking is an event of basic reception, recalling the basic disposition in which a decision is made for the question-worthiness of Beyng. The scene of the decision is mortal not transcendental, and the dimension is between earth and sky not will or indifference (Schelling). The ‘telling’ of language says as much through the responding words of the poet. And if we listen to the glance of these words we hear again the name of the ‘godhead’ as the upward edge of a projective concealment. What resonates in this dimension is not yet the saying of Beyng but the word ‘godhead’ as a name for the withholding that nevertheless apportions man his means of bringing-forth. For Hölderlin, Heidegger explains, “God, as the one who he is, is unknown and it is just as this Unknown One [Unbekannte] that he is the measure [das Maß] for the poet” (PMD 220/201). To take ‘seriously’ the abyssal depth beneath the root of representation (see passage on this in Beiträge – Kant comment) is to rebound to a height in which finding and letting-be the superlative concealment furnishes a point of departure for measure. Heidegger’s elucidation is not a theological pronouncement; Hölderlin’s voice is neither atheistic nor agnostic. Even if we, following the typology of the Kehre, are inclined to gather this event into the mysteries of meditative thought, the very work of thought here remains phenomenological in the strict sense of allowing what is concealed to manifest itself as such. To be sure, there is also no recourse to transcendental constitution of the ego in this concealedness, but instead a letting-be of the godhead against the elemental ‘as’ of the sky. Measuring works according to appearances, to an appearing which, following §192 of the Beiträge, happens by virtue of something brought to image into the clearing. The unknown god is brought to image ‘as’ unknown in the clearing between sky and earth and by the
dimensions of this expanse, and this bringing affords man the measure for every measuring work.\textsuperscript{62}

Heidegger explains:

What is the measure for human measuring? God? No. The sky? No. The manifestness of the sky? No. The measure consists in the way in which the god who remains unknown, is revealed \textit{as} such by the sky. God’s appearance through the sky consists in a disclosing that lets us see what conceals itself, but lets us see it not by seeking to wrest what is concealed out of its concealedness [\textit{Verborgenheit}], but only by guarding [\textit{alleindadurch. . . hütet}] the concealed in its self-concealment. Thus the unknown god appears as the unknown by way of the sky’s manifestness. This appearance is the measure against which man measure’s himself. (\textit{PMD} 220-21/201)

It is with this sense of ‘guarding’ that Heidegger registers a terrific pause in Schelling’s rush to account for the principled basis of man’s capacity for evil. To be sure, a moral drama or not, poetizing reason has shown the forgetful efficacy of the disposition to ‘wrest’ what ‘is’ from out of concealment. But before consigning the yearning of the ground to a covetousness of the image of existence, there is this poetic decision to guard the image of the unknown and to indeed receive this imaging as an impetus for measuring.\textsuperscript{63} As the work of truth in art is to be ‘preserved,’ the measure taken is to be guarded. The appearance of concealment is not a denial on the godhead’s part, but is the manner by which “the unknown imparts itself, in order to remain guarded within it as unknown” (223/204).\textsuperscript{64} The “hands” (221/201) that measure and build, like the words of the poet in pro-ducting and founding, do not belong to \textit{ideas} of presence and do not serve the security of categorical knowing, but are hands extending from the gathering of poetry and thought – hands “guided by gestures befitting the measure here to be taken. . . a gathered taking-in, that remains a listening [\textit{Hören}]” (221/202). The hands of the sculptor, Heidegger later observes, follow these same gestures and manifest this same gathering:

\textsuperscript{62} Sallis explains: “Poeticizing (\textit{Dichten}) is a response to such showing. To poeticize is to take from this showing a measure for human dwelling, to bring forth a measure, originary poesis” (Sallis, \textit{Echoes}, 189).

\textsuperscript{63} Regarding this reception as a meaning-event, Crowell observes that “the ordinary is experienced in terms of the (unknown) measure that makes it what it is—something that is impossible if I do not, at the same time, measure \textit{myself} against the ‘godhead,’ take the measure of myself, as in conscience” (Crowell, 274).

\textsuperscript{64} “The poet calls \textit{ruft}, in the sights of the sky, that which in its very self-disclosure causes the appearance of that which conceals itself, and indeed \textit{as} that which conceals itself. In the familiar appearances, the poet calls the alien as that to which the invisible imparts itself in order to remain what it is—unknown” (\textit{PMD} 223/204).
Gathering plays in a place, in the sense of the freeing sheltering of things in their region [Gegend]. The older form of the word is ‘that-which-regions’ [Gegnet]. It names the free expanse. Through it, the open is urged to let each thing unfold into its resting in itself. But this means at the same time: preserving [Verwahren], the gathering of things in their belonging-together. . . . Sculpture: the embodiment of the truth of Being in its work of instituting places. (AS, 308-09/GA 13: 207-08)

Concealment – resting – is not a challenge to reason’s will, but a summons to gauge “the very nature of man” (PMD 221/201). Poetry stands in the immediacy of this summons, and if thought belongs ‘by way of difference’ with poetry then in every measuring act of thought the gauging of the measure reverberates.\(^6\) In this way our listening to Hölderlin’s words brings us to a decision as to whether we “are really prepared to make our stay in the domain of poetry’s being” (222/203), the domain of the dimensional measured forth as the dwelling of man. This state of affairs is precisely the same as the point of culminating decision in the Beiträge: the resonance we hear through Hölderlin as the call to decision for poetic dwelling is the resonance we hear in the leap as the call to decision for Da-sein to be the ‘there’ of the clearing.

Finally, there is a spirit of submission in this guarding and gauging that reveals the dimensional bearing of Heidegger’s Hölderlin to be the domain of imagination for the Beiträge’s Da-sein. Poetry exemplifies the originary course of making not as a willful manipulation, but as a “saying [of] the sights of heaven in such a way that he submits to its appearances as to the alien element to which the unknown god has ‘yielded’ [schiket]” (223/204). Together, the modes of sighting and saying bring forth an image, in which case something imaged is simply something made seen.\(^6\) The poetic imagination, then, is the domain of measure that projects by way of submission, producing “imaginings [Ein-Bildungen]that are visible inclusions of the alien in the sight of the

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\(^6\) Heidegger observes: “Because man is, in his enduring [aussteht] the dimension, his being must now and again be measured out. That requires a measure which involves at once the whole dimension in one. To discern this measure, to gauge it as the measure, and to accept it as the measure, means for the poet to make poetry. Poetry is this measure-taking—it’s taking, indeed, for the dwelling of man” (PMD 221/221).

\(^6\) The sense of ‘image’ is specified: “Our current name for the sight and appearance of something is ‘image.’ The nature of an image is to let something be seen. . . . The poetic saying of images gathers the brightness and sound of the heavenly appearances into one with the darkness and silence of what is alien. By such sights the god surprises us” (PMD 223-24/205).
familiar” (223-24/205). The imagination is an event for transfiguration because it hosts a “twilight” (224/205) measure, a measuring which allows concealment to traverse the field of figuration. This is something altogether different from a mimetic or inspired imagination, and the product of this measuring is an “admission of dwelling” not a “frantic” calculation” (225-26/206-07). That submission becomes traversal, and sojourn dwelling, is what distinguishes Hölderlin’s imaginative domain for Heidegger in the Beiträge: “Hölderlin is the most futural, because he approaches from the longest distance and in this distance traverses and transforms what is greatest” (CP 396/§252).67 If poetry speaks in images (PMD 223/204) and if we are to “remain heedful of the poetic,” then this means the pivot-point that is Da-sein is the site of sounds transfigured – a domain of composition in which the imagination is ‘appropriated’ (226/207) to its measure.

For Kant and Schelling alike the experience of the beautiful summoned the imagination toward an affective drive – be it pleasure, tranquility, or moral readiness.68 Heidegger concludes his hearing of Hölderlin in like manner by speaking with the poet of “kindness” (from the Greek, charis). It is a strange turn of emphasis to find in Heidegger.69 He does not mean a practical moral duty, but rather kindness as the structure of a call which gathers sound and hearing in a configuring work. Kindness, Sophocles notes, calls forth kindness (226/207). The yielding of the godhead calls forth the ascent and assent of measure-taking – the “appeal of the measure to the heart in such a way that the heart turns to give heed to the measure” (227/208).

67 Compare Heidegger’s interpretation of Nietzsche on the ‘new’ and ‘futural’ in Thinking and Poetizing.
68 A remark by Schiller may help us double back through Hölderlin’s futural bearing to Heidegger’s time of need with this sense of poetic dwelling in hand: “Live with your century; but do not be its creature. Work for your contemporaries; but create what they need, not what they praise. . . . In vain will you assail their precepts, in vain condemn their practice; but on their leisure hours you can try their shaping hand” (Letters, 61).
69 Schelling, as well, alludes to charis in his 1807 address on the Plastic Arts (see PA 342e/410-11). Where Schelling’s reference is qualitative, celebrating the love and goodness manifest in the experience of archetypal beauty, Heidegger’s usage is a more structural analogy to the conversational nature of call/hearing. One could go so far as to associate PMD’s closing allusion to charis with KPM’s closing allusion to philia – where philia denoted the disposition of thinking with respect to the essential depth of Einbildung, charis denotes the disposition of dwelling and measuring in the dimensional realm of the between. Together, the Greek terms name the dispositional depth and height of Heidegger’s thinking on the poetic imagination.
I began this chapter by suggesting that the *Beiträge* be understood as an apprenticeship of thought to the character of poetic work. The ‘heed’ given poetic measure in “Poetically Man Dwells” expresses the continuation of this apprenticeship by drawing the work of thought into the precise dimension of configuration, where the domain of human dwelling is a field of projection and submission, decision and letting-be. Certainly more may be said regarding the thought of the *Beiträge*, Heidegger’s interest in Hölderlin, and the ongoing ascendance of language at the helm of being-historical thinking. But in the *heeding* and *taking* of measure, much like the creative bestowal of Beyng’s truth in the work of art, there is a profound accomplishment of the imagination that enriches our guiding thematic and distills the leading ambitions of Heidegger’s project at this time.

Heidegger’s turn toward inceptual thinking is, we have seen, a turn within the problematic of poetizing. Without recourse to strict procedural operations or forced textual totality, we have tracked the measures of an emergency route underway, a passage through the entanglements of poetizing production to the attunements of poetizing projection as a path of recovering the proper domain of imagination. There is a repositioning of philosophical questioning, a recalibration of the representational gauge, a recapitulation of basic measures in which renewed creative measures for thoughtful construction and figuration may be found. The leap of thinking is broadest because heeding the primordial necessity of Beyng’s fugal sway requires Da-sein to pass from the domain of representation and will into the abyssal experience of distress, then still further into the creative attestations of our appropriation in the pro- ductive movement of Beyng’s truth. The legacy of *Einbildungskraft* is drawn through the crucible of *Ereignis*, and the superlative character of plight and abandonment comes to be reflected in a superlative anticipation of resonant transfiguration. *Einbildung* and *Ereignis* share in common a fidelity to measure. But to dwell in the dimensional life of *Ereignis* is to yield the instrumental and systematizing imagination to a poietic refinement. *Ereignis* appropriates the projective creativity of reason reflected in Kant’s root and Schelling’s ground, but exchanges the commanding assurance of system and assertion for the integrity of the
between – for bringing-forth the figures and images, names and remains, by which humans dwell. All told, this is a long way to go to positioning thought in a crossing which resists the imagination in one guise and reinstates it in another. To be sure, Heidegger did not undertake the discipline of the Beiträge in the name of imagination, but with each advance in his elemental work the character of Ereignis is manifest as a poietic movement whose metric is best named the poetic imagination.
Conclusion

The wine lost, drunken the waves! . . .
I saw leaping in the salt air
Shapes of the utmost profundity. . . .

-Paul Valéry
“The Lost Wine”

It is a precarious thing to conclude a project in which the thinkers examined have taught us to hesitate before presumptions of philosophical conclusiveness. We began this project, after all, by recalling Heidegger’s early observation concerning the ‘fluctuating’ nature of philosophical concepts, and the essential standing we, as humans, always already have in the field of philosophical assumptions and ambitions. And while we have also performed this study under the echo of Schelling’s call to know things “according to their pure necessity,” none of the standpoints visited in this journey have won for us an assured point of view anchored outside the field of rational construction and ecstatic experience; some standpoints – perhaps the best of them – have in fact shown such a point of remove to be provisional at best, illusory at worst.

We have, however, sought the poetic imagination in a variety of discourses and elucidated its catalyzing function without needing to isolate it as a static conceptual entity against which the needs of thought would measure themselves or make their final case. We have sought it at the roots of Kant’s transcendental architecture, at the heights and depths of Schelling’s idealism, and in the critical retrievals and needful attunements of Heidegger’s fundamental orientations. We have found its traces in the grounds for ontological synthesis, the work of intuition, the life of identity, the questions of essence and jointure, the task of measure, and the dimensions of poetic dwelling. We have witnessed the poetic imagination in moments of promise and peril, pseudos and doxa as well as disclosure and decision. And we have tried to honor the adhesive quality of the imagination – the way in which it cannot be subtracted or isolated from the more explicit matters that render it problematic or productive for Schelling and Heidegger’s paths of thinking. Nowhere have we held that the imagination must be understood as a matter under consistent, unflagging progress – as
though it were a secure baton passed from Kant to Schelling to Heidegger. We have, rather, three
different sets of hands and even more manifestations of the matter they grasp. Without forgetting
what Schelling and Heidegger have brought to the meaning of ‘identity’ in any statement purporting
to categorize or define, we may say the poetic imagination names the point at which the creative
basis of thought comports with the creative possibilities of human existence. It is the matter that
stands astride the theoretical and practical domains, the work of reflection and works of art, the strife
of questioning and the mystery of being. It is persistent and explosive, an impulse and impasse, the
elemental compass in one sense and the brink of enthusiasm in another. Plato’s position remains
telling: he knew enough to withhold credence from the poetic arts, but what he knew ‘well’ he knew
on the basis of a poetic imagination.

Still, even at this ‘conclusive’ stage one might wonder whether the imagination is any better
off for having been run through the mill of Schelling and Heidegger’s philosophies. The theme itself
(as Kant discovered) is already unwieldy – why multiply the confusion by rooting it out in two
thinkers proficient in stylistic obscurities? And why chase it down in two texts (the Freiheitschrift,
the Beiträge) stationed at the far outskirts of rational coherence? Does calling the imagination
‘poetic’ clarify the issue or underscore the problem? And why press the matter with Schelling and
Heidegger, when other established earmarks serve them better? Two replies. First, if clarity is the
issue then I must hasten to accept the blame that cannot, properly speaking, be theirs. Philosophy is
difficult, the more so when the matter concerned is born in philosophical self-criticism and harbored
in the strenuous tasks of system completion, metaphysical closure, phenomenological possibility, and
essential retrieval. Second, I do hope to have shown the imagination to be of central importance to
Schelling and Heidegger – neither an afterthought in their itineraries nor, as it were, a candidate for
flights of fancy in our readings of their signature works. Neither the inner dynamics of Schelling’s
idealism nor Heidegger’s ontological questioning can, I believe, be understood properly without
appreciating the formative role of the imagination in their projects and the corresponding creative
transformations of inquiry they bring about in conjunction with this theme. In fact, by way of providing a brief resume of our discussion, I would like to borrow two tropes (that are obviously more than tropes) from these thinkers and apply them to our theme: the poetic imagination, as it appears in the thought of Schelling and Heidegger, has proven to be something of an irreducible remainder, a matter caught up in the play of unconcealment and withdrawal at the limits of metaphysics and in the primordial scene of phenomenological beginnings. Let us revisit the leading insights we have uncovered in order to show how this is the case.

First, in Schelling’s early preoccupation with furnishing an unconditional principle for transcendental knowing and a system of absolute identity wrought on the basis of productive intuition, the power of imagination provided a clue to the activity of spirit in the genesis of consciousness, nature, and history. By modeling intuitive acts on the striving of spirit, and anchoring both in the fundamental movement of will, the mediating and sensuous character of imagination brought the prize of identity within reach of idealism and brought philosophical abstraction through a decidedly aesthetic and poetic turn. In his System (1800) Schelling redoubled his emphasis on the productive imagination by appealing to the creative imagination to characterize the generative mediation of the whole of nature and intelligence, and, more specifically, the function of aesthetic intuition in revealing the harmony between conscious and unconscious forces for the immediacy of reason. His ensuing writings, even while seeking to refine the meaning of absolute identity and the standpoint of absolute reason, deferred to imagination as intuition’s primordial potentiality and accentuated the life of the absolute as a movement of Ineinsbildung throughout the whole and in the vocation of artistic creation. The result was an ontological system of the absolute in which the poetry of thought sought to mirror the imaginative life of the whole.

Second, Schelling’s 1809 Freedom Essay signaled the harrowing problems of creation and ground arising in the aftermath of the identity philosophy, and with them the question of the fate of imagination at a time in which matters of essence exerted remarkable strain upon the ambitions of
system. Here it seemed as if a discourse of origins and becoming, existence and evil, would eclipse the primacy of intuition and the celebrated status of imagination in both the character of the absolute and the quality of systematizing reason. What, if any, place would arise for imagination in the problem of necessity and freedom and the standpoint assumed for articulating its resolution? In the midst of this radical venture, we observed that the increasingly elemental depth of Schelling’s inquiry led to a new concentration on the generative work of the divine (or ‘true’) imagination in the exchange between ground and existence, there manifesting a creative mediation commensurate with a new emphasis on difference in the principle of identity. We also noted an incisive critique of the inquiring imagination, and thus a tension between the creativity that buttresses the bonded unity of the whole and the creative abstractions which handicap reason’s traditional account of this poietic drama. To reason through imagination’s generative ontological function, then, Schelling had to exercise the science of inquiry in a manner appropriate to thought’s inspired, measuring vocation. His account of divine and human becoming, that is, revealed imagination to be engaged in the primordial, capacitating, work of bringing-forth, and his dialogical enactment of a resolute, poetic inquiry illustrated a parallel work of bringing-forth in reason itself. The imagination – intrinsic to divine self-revelation and human reason alike – was firmly placed in service to the word.

If, then, Einbildungskraft was something of a ‘remainder’ to Kant’s critical project, each of the above ventures in Schelling’s thought, in different ways, established the imagination as the very ground of being and becoming such that without it there would be no logos of the whole and no secure footing for the work of understanding. If the idealist system, extended even to the depths of the irrational ground, is to be ‘of” the absolute or God in both senses of the genitive, then the manner in which knowledge is a knowing of the life of the whole and a knowing from the finite standpoint (the ‘summit’) of this whole amounts to a belonging-together constituted by the imagination.

But it is at this apparent highpoint of the imagination – this poeticizing of thought – that our theme fell into a state of withdrawal; or rather, it became manifest as a concealing force. This state of
affairs arose through our third consideration, Heidegger’s 1936 course on the Freedom Essay. Our task would have been easier had Heidegger simply celebrated Schelling’s attention to, and use of, the poetic imagination in the same spirit he magnified its importance in Kant. But this was not the case. Heidegger indeed celebrated a certain ‘impulse’ in Schelling, but also identified a metaphysical ‘impasse’ that implicated the imagination. Following his lectures on Nietzsche from this period, we discovered that Schelling’s impasse was not simply an unwillingness to jettison the cargo of a systematizing, onto-theological agenda, but was, still more specifically, a failure to relinquish the purported command of a poetizing essence (from dichtender) in reason itself. Even if Schelling problematized the habits of the inquiring imagination, Heidegger found that his appeals to representation, will, and the productive work of subjectivist thought persisted to the extent that Schelling could not hear the cautionary tale written in his own accounts of identity and ground. The impasse, then, echoed the failure of Heidegger’s Kant to let imagination upset the reign of pure reason in light of Kant’s own disclosures regarding the fundamental ground of ontological synthesis. That all great thinkers ‘think the same’ was true then in the following way: with Kant and beyond Kant Heidegger insisted the transcendental standpoint be ontological; with Schelling and beyond Schelling Heidegger insisted the essential standpoint be fugal. In each thinker Heidegger found an advocate for thinking the inner and originary by way of questioning and critique, thereby allowing the manifestation of primordial productivity to reorient the very shape of thought. But Kant recoiled at the expense of imagination and Schelling’s work shattered on account of it. The drama of impulse and impasse, applied to our theme, could thus be summarized in this period by saying that, for Heidegger, the imagination that had been so promising becomes blameworthy.

In view of this critical balance we might have been justified in consigning the imagination to the last great strides of the idealist tradition, then presenting Heidegger’s turn to the essence of truth in art and poetry (contemporaneous with his Schelling course) as a deliberate alternative to the creative character of reason envisioned by Kant but ever destined for contamination. We might have
been justified, that is, in announcing for Heidegger that there was an essential work of the imagination glimpsed in one era, but there must now be an essential retrieval of poetry in the next. Such a summation, to be sure, comes close to the state of affairs, but not close enough. And the clarity won by embracing its rigidity would have wrecked the more penetrating insights to be had by working through Heidegger’s exact relation to the poetizing imagination. In the play of impulse and impasse Heidegger allows the imagination to pass into a state of withdrawal. But at the same time it persists as a remainder, undergoing a sustained reorientation in his own essential inquiries into art and poetry – inquiries to a large extent performed in the name of the impulse he found in Schelling.

Our fourth primary consideration, then, was to examine the work of thought underway in Heidegger’s “The Origin of the Work of Art” and “Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry.” With the status of the imagination necessarily in question, we charted the difference between production in the eidetic, mimetic, and representational sense, and projection (Entwurf) in a sense corresponding to the aletheiac essence of truth and the work-being of poetic works. The difference proved vital to the potentialities within poetizing, the status of which had to do precisely with the fate of imagination. Though Heidegger was careful to avoid thematizing the imagination in these texts (for the most part), his conceptions of poetic founding, saying, preservation, and creative bestowal advanced a case for elemental bringing-forth commensurate with the work hitherto ascribed to the primordial productivity of imagination. The difference between production and projection signaled a passage underway from the poetizing imagination to the measuring work of art, from the primacy of will to the openness of Hervorbringen, from Einbildung and its legacy to Ereignis and its poetic figurations. Heidegger conveyed a sense in which the ‘work’ of truth was the work of being in the poetic essence of art. So doing, the touchstones of the Kantian and Schellingian imaginations – activity, motion, production, illumination, and occurrence – came to be reinscribed in the projective quality of a ‘special poetizing.’ Without neglecting the ‘obtrusions’ of production subtracted from these elements or the broader conscription of imagination in the will to system Heidegger assailed, we allowed the
phrase ‘poetic imagination’ to return to the fore. This was not to reduce Heidegger’s insights to a repetition of what came before, but to underscore the reorientation of imagination underway in his work even as the term ‘imagination’ itself could not carry the weight of what was at stake. In these texts, I argued, Heidegger was venturing forth from the site of Schelling’s impasse – allowing the imagination together with the creative character of reason to shatter outward toward projection and the creative work of thought.

Finally, we turned our attention to Heidegger’s Beiträge in order to appreciate it as an effort to apprentice thought itself to the path and place of poetizing projection. In a specific sense the goal was to understand how and why the imagination, listed as questionable in serving the work of projection in “The Origin of the Work of Art,” now returns as the name for the domain of Da-sein’s instantiation and the transfiguration belonging to Ereignis. In a broader sense, this goal turned on elucidating the meaning of measure in the leap to inceptual thinking, and with it the function of need, plight, and the productive work of philosophy’s ‘basic’ disposition in furthering Schelling’s fugal impulse as a task for thought. I argued that the need to distinguish between poetizing production and projection remained decisive for Heidegger in this text, and that its accomplishment rested in the displacement of Dasein from the standpoint of determinations based on beingness to the position of Da-sein in the decisive, constructive, and configuring site of Beyng’s fugal clearing. Corresponding to this repositioning was a recalibration of the representational gauge, confirming my view that the turn of poetizing takes shape as a turn of the measuring imagination. Heidegger’s explicit, though brief, treatment of the imagination marked a moment in which the theme became manifest once again, thus indicating its presence as an abiding remainder in his thought even while bracketed in a position of questionability. Moreover, in view of “Poetically Man Dwells,” we observed how imagination now operated as the mode of measure-taking and letting-be in the impetus and outworking of poetic dwelling. To complete the relationship between the alethicæ essence of truth
and the instantiation of Da-sein in the fugal rift of Beyng, the poetic imagination in its refined state
was summoned to capture the creative possibilities intrinsic to Da-sein and Beyng alike.

Whether or not the poetic imagination affords a useful rubric for the ongoing work of
interpreting Schelling and Heidegger’s broader provocations is a decision their readers must make. I
hope only to have shown that it is by no means incidental, but rather imperative to those more
established reference points to which we turn in understanding them. It is inseparable from
Schelling’s treatments of intuition, identity, ground, and freedom, it names the most specific focal
point of Heidegger’s turn in the 1930s, and it clarifies the impetus drawing both thinkers into a study
of artistic origins and meaning that would reflect upon, retrieve, and transform the creative character
of philosophical reason.
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