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FRIEDRICH WILHELM JOSEF VON SCHELLING Translated by Andrew A. Davis and Alexi I. Kukuljevic

TRANSLATORS' PREFACE: F.W.J.Schelling's "On Construction in Philosophy" appeared in 1803 in the short-lived Kristisches Journal der Philosophie, which he co-founded with Hegel in 1801. Schelling's essay is a review of a text with the rather cumbersome title, Treatise on Philosophical Construction as an Introduction to Lectures on Philosophy, by the now forgotten Swedish philosopher Benjamin Karl Henrik Höyer (Höijer). The fact that Schelling's text appears to be chiefly a commentary on a wholly unknown philosopher more than accounts for why the text has largely been overlooked. Yet, such a judgment can only be formed from a cursory reflection, for the work, like most of Schelling's purported commentaries, makes use of the source material as a productive constraint. Höyer's text thus functions as a speculative springboard that catapults the reader into the heart of Schelling's system itself.

In an effort to keep these introductory remarks brief we limit ourselves to two general points that we hope will serve to situate the historical and contemporary import of this relatively short review. The first concerns the place of this text within the development of Schelling's thought, which as every reader of Schelling knows, proceeds spasmodically, constantly rearticulating itself around new crises that spur on its development. The second situates the concerns of the text within the contemporary philosophical conjuncture.

1. Published in 1803, "On Construction" helps to mark the transition intimated by System of Transcendental Idealism in 1800 and introduced in 1801 with Schelling's "Presentation of My System of Philosophy." In the latter text, the parallelism that Schelling defended in the former book between the philosophy of nature and transcendental idealism gives way to the Identitätsphilosophie in which the identity of the real and ideal, spirit and nature is postulated as the generative beginning of all philosophizing. The turn to Identitätsphilosophie seeks to overcome the opposition between freedom and necessity, idea and nature, thought and matter, that plagues the Kantian starting point. The rehabilitation of construction becomes decisive in Schelling's turn towards a conception of ideas that are immanent to nature itself, ideas that are nature's expressive medium and not its external regulative constraint.

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The site of this contestation for Schelling is Kant's account of construction in "The Discipline of Pure Reason in its Dogmatic Employment," a subsection of "The Transcendental Doctrine of Method." The first half of Schelling's "On Construction" is an involved *Auseinandersetzung* with Kant's attempt to limit construction to the domain of mathematics and thus separate philosophy absolutely from the illicit adoption of the *more geometrico*. Dogmatic metaphysics, according to Kant, consistently confuses the legislative and constructive employment of reason and the chief aim of the *Critique* of *Pure Reason* is to vanquish it by means of a critical discipline that exhaustively determines the principles upon which the synthetic use of reason is legitimate.

Only this move, granting philosophy the constructive power of mathematics, which definitively breaks with the Fichtean starting point that haunted Schelling's early work, enables philosophy to become genetic. Yet, it is made clear in "On Construction" that to break with Fichte requires a more concerted demolition of the Kantian *doxa* which obscured the great contributions of pre-critical thought. In this text, Schelling makes it clear that Plato and Spinoza are his true masters and that the dismissal of Spinozism as the 'true conclusion to dogmatism' or unrestrained *Schwärmerei* must be contested. Schelling provocatively claims that Spinoza' system is "at the antipodes of dogmatism."

"On Construction" serves to foreground the provocative thesis that *Naturphilosophie* is not so much an extension of the Kantian project inaugurated by Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, but its radical challenge. Construction is the methodological means that enables philosophy to think from the perspective according to which, to quote Ian Hamilton Grant, "conceptual genesis and natural genesis become one and the same."¹ Only a sustained encounter with Schellingian constructivism will enable us to understand Schelling's radical claim that to "philosophize about Nature means to create Nature."² Or in the words of "On Construction," [philosophy] is nature brought to the highest consciousness, nature in its clarity and exemplarity." In our view the careful study of the concept of construction will certainly augment the philosophical effort to grasp Schelling's post-critical metaphysics.

2. The renewed interest in Schelling's feverish output, made manifest in the recent surge of translations of his work, points to the pressing need to radically reevaluate the veritable hegemony of Kantian critique.

Kant's critical project, for all its subtlety, has primarily served to buttress the progress of modern science as a mathematization of nature. As we continue to grapple with the historical foundations of the contemporary dominance of scientific thought and philosophy's distinctive provenance vis-à-vis the sciences of nature, there are few more significant conflicts to examine than that between Kant and Schelling over the nature of nature and the possibility of metaphysics or what Schelling would perhaps prefer to call speculative physics. Hegel is often remembered for the speculative, dynamic position that opposes the mechanistic nature of Kantian critique, but it was certainly Schelling that first and most consistently articulated a dynamic understanding of nature against the Kantian view. Schelling shifts the problem of philosophy away from the epistemological problem of *knowing* nature *a priori* to the ontological affirmation that "Nature IS *a priori*."³ In "On Construction" the reader will find an impassioned argument for the priority of construction (philosophy must begin by constructing construction) as the unique means of articulating a philosophy that is not situated from the outset outside nature, but is its immanent and highest expression.

"On Construction" confirms the judgment that Schelling is indeed a contemporary philosopher. It is our hope that this essay will become a site in which the battleground between critical and pre-and/or-post-critical philosophy can be situated, in which Schelling's contentious relationship to Kant and Fichte and his creative appropriation of Spinoza and Plato can be further articulated and his contemporary importance can be sighted.

Notes

1. Ian Hamilton Grant, *Philosophies of Nature After Schelling* (New York: Continuum, 2006), 19.

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2. F.W.J. Schelling, First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature, trans. Keith R. Peterson (Albany: SUNY Press, 2004), 14.

3. Ibid., 198.

On Construction in Philosophy

Treatise on Philosophical Construction as an Introduction to Lectures on Philosophy, by Benj Karl H. Höyer. Translated from the Swedish. Stockholm by Steverstolpen. In commission from Fr. Berthes in Hamburg. 1801.

Since philosophy can neither surpass the narrow limits of Kantian criticism, nor advance upon the path inaugurated by Fichte to a positive and apodictic philosophy without rigorously introducing the method of construction, the following text sketches and presents with the greatest clarity that central point upon which the scientific fulfillment of philosophy depends.

In the future, the doctrine of philosophical construction will constitute one of the most important aspects of scientific philosophy: it is undeniable that due to the lack of a concept of construction many [philosophers'] participation in the advances of scientific philosophy are hindered. The drive [*Dringen*] to a rigorous construction, developed from first principles, is the most powerful means against a certain false liberality that suffices for the 'great minds' [*Geistreichen*] of philosophy, who in the guise of philosophizing pander to mere reasoning. Construction is a powerful means against the muddle of all perspectives which confuses the true and false and makes them indistinguishable.

Some philosophical efforts, since they do not embark on this path and revolt against the attempt at a scientific construction, keep themselves in a certain superficial blindness to the relation [of matter and form]. Thus, especially in philosophy, matter and form must be indivisible to the extent that a system that neglects the side of form must neglect content to the same degree. Philosophy is not at all concerned with what is known, but rather the grounds [Gründen] on which it is known. Until one has pushed through to the absolute itself [schlechthin Absoluten], the slogan of the skeptics, that every reason [Grund] can be set over against another reason [Grund], will certainly and necessarily have its place. One cannot deny that isolated true philosophical propositions result even from systems that are disordered and contradictory with respect to form; in such systems the propositions are without any scientific worth, having neither sense nor content. The feeling of truth in the singular accompanied by the total confusion of the whole produces the most narrow self-righteousness and obstinate resistance to learning. There is no other means than form to convince these people of the total nullity of their philosophy and help them break through [to the absolute], if this is even possible.

Form, then, which on the one hand protects philosophers from errors and deviations, is, on the other hand, a very important weapon, even the only weapon, against half-philosophy and non-philosophy, both of which make no claim to form without thereby exposing their complete lack of it.

Furthermore, no philosophy can be counted as true and absolute without proving that it has acquired absolute form. Since no such philosophy may yet exist, no philosophical orientation or striving can be taken as the true one, if it has not had insight into the *indivisibility of essence and form* and made this into its lodestar and principle.

The great example that Spinoza bequeathed philosophy, through his usage of the geometrical method, instead of spurring on the perfection of that method, actually had the opposite effect. The world, which did not understand this great mind, searched for the source of its errors in the form [of geometrical method], ascribing to it a certain affinity with fatalism and atheism.

If Spinoza erred, it is because he did not go far enough back in his construction,¹ and if he did not neglect the form, he certainly neglected the pure ideal side of philosophy. The same is true of both dogmatism and the geometrical method: there is an external and internal, a formal and essential dogmatism. Essential dogmatism has only one distinguishing feature; it is the use of the form of reflection of the absolute [*der Gebrauch der Reflexionsformen vom Absoluten*]. This essential dogmatism conflicts with the inner spirit of Spinozism, which is a system at the antipodes of dogmatism. This can be shown even without taking into account the proofs that one could extract from his texts. Spinoza could not avoid formal dogmatism; his philosophy lacks the necessary element of skepti-

cism: since philosophy is completely in the region of the infinite such that it does not have a point above itself, as does mathematics, from which it can reflect, but rather unifies all points of reflection in itself, its own essence must always accompany it. Philosophy is not only a knowing, but always and necessarily at the same time a knowing of this knowing, not in endless procession, but an always present infinity.²

We will not speak of the *Wolffian* philosophy which is in every respect dogmatic, or of its soulless and spiritless application of an external form of the geometrical method from which no idea of construction can be awakened.

We turn to *Kant*, who grasps the demonstrative method in philosophy only in the spirit of dogmatism and as logical analysis. He dedicated only a portion of his doctrine of method to the critique of the use of demonstrative method in philosophy.

Kant is perhaps the first to grasp the universal concept of construction deeply and truly philosophically. He consistently describes construction as the identification [*Gleichsetzung*] of *concept* and *intuition* and thereby lays claim to a non-empirical intuition that must express itself, on the one hand, as an intuition that is singular and concrete and, on the other hand, as a construction of a concept that is universally valid for all possible intuitions belonging under the same concept. Regardless of whether the object that corresponds to the universal concept 'triangle' is projected in pure or empirical intuition, its ability to express its concept without compromising its universality remains the same because the empirical intuition itself will only be seen in and for itself through the activity of the construction of the concept.

To this extent, Kant has completely expressed the idea of construction and the ground for all evidence. If he thereafter denies the concept of construction in philosophy, since philosophy only has to do with pure concepts which have nothing to do with intuition, and nevertheless attributes the non-empirical intuitions of mathematics to construction, it becomes clear that Kant has only actually evaluated the *empirical* side [of construction], the relation to the sensible, which others had missed. For if philosophy is limited to pure concepts without intuition, it would then follow, if it could be proven, that there can be no non-empirical intuitions that fit philosophy's concepts. Kant denies non-empirical intuitions to philosophy, because they would have to be intellectual intuitions, and according to his opinion all intuition is necessarily sensible. However, it is clear that in mathematical intuition the absolutely *universal* [schlechthin Allgemeine], the pure unity of the universal and the particular, is not sensible, but rather purely intellectual. He thus places the singularity of mathematical intuition completely in the relation to the sensible. Or since mathematics involves sensibly reflected intellectual intuitions, a non-empirical, i.e., intellectual intuition must be added

to the particularity of sensible intuition *as such*, in order to advance a mathematical construction.

Since Kant grants a non-empirical intuition to geometry, he cannot then establish an absolute difference between mathematics and philosophy through this non-empirical intuition. Such a difference requires a non-empirical intuition that cannot be given. The difference between the two lies much more in the fact that the mathematician makes use of intellectual intuitions reflected in sensibility and the philosopher makes use of intellectual intuitions reflected purely and in themselves. Kant's grounding of geometry in space and arithmetic in time expresses the totality of intellectual intuition, for geometry in the finite and for arithmetic in the infinite. The reasons internal to Kant's whole philosophy that make intellectual intuition absolutely and intrinsically [*schlechthin und an sich*] inaccessible to him, are in part well enough known and in part will be clarified in what follows.

Let us not speak of the contradictions Kant finds himself in through the rejection of construction and pure intellectual intuition. His *transcendental imagination*, his *pure synthesis of apperception*, requires the reality of such an [intellectual] intuition. Kant often remarks in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that concepts are only mediated representations of objects, and without unity with these objects are totally empty, and yet philosophy itself is limited to discursive concepts. In order to avoid these contradictions, we must ask what advantages mathematics has over philosophy that make it capable of an expression of intellectual intuition in sensibility. Clearly nothing remains but the possibility that [the mathematician] can place appearances into a construction without the aid of intellectual consciousness, thus requiring the accidental [and] external support of sensible intuitions. But then, the true philosopher would not envy the advantages of the mathematician and Plato would certainly not have said: it is necessary for the philosopher to know geometry *in order to see the essential and to lift himself out of the changing flux.*

The geometer has the advantage that, besides the image that commands his attention, there is at the same time a sign that fixes his otherwise flowing activity [fließende Handlung] and by which he can uncover the errors of his conclusions. This advantage is noticeably diminished in the other branch of mathematics, in which there is no image of the object, but only a sign and relationships of quantity. In algebra only relations of relations are observed. On the other hand, it may be expected that a universal symbolic or characteristic is to be invented even outside the special symbolic and characteristic presentation of mathematics. And so the idea that Leibniz had already advanced is realized. That certain steps have already been taken, which prove the possibility of such an invention, can be easily shown.

The primary reasons, expressed even by Kant, why dominant public opinion opposes construction *in philosophy* and thereby opposes philosophy itself as a science, are as follows.

The first reason is the absolute opposition of the universal and the particular, which, as Kant recognizes, is suspended [aufgehoben] for mathematics but still holds for philosophy. Kant writes, "Mathematical knowledge observes the universal in the particular while philosophy observes the particular only in the universal" (CPR A714/B742). There are several observations to be made here. First, since every true identity of the universal and the particular is in itself intuition, there is no reason to negate intuition because in one case the particular is presented in the universal and, in the other case, the universal is presented in the particular. Rather, what follows is that there are two different kinds of intuition. If one understands by universal the pure understanding's [universality] or the discursive universal, it is easy to show that even these two kinds of intuition are given in both branches of mathematics. Arithmetic expresses the particular (the relation of singular quantities) in the universal, geometry expresses the universal (the concept of figure) in the particular. Thus it is evident that all oppositions made possible through the antithesis of the universal and the particular fall under mathematics itself and that philosophy is not in opposition to mathematics. Construction can be divided into philosophical and mathematical sides and in philosophy it achieves a point of absolute indifference. More specifically, when each side must be either a presentation of the universal in the particular or the particular in the universal, then philosophy is neither of these, but rather the presentation of their unity in absolute indifference, while these sides appear divided in mathematics.

There is another idea of the universal, which Kant did not know or explicitly accept, but which he nevertheless takes up unwittingly from the tradition as an explanation of philosophy. Namely, that philosophy can be seen as a *presentation* of the particular in the universal.

In this case, the universal is the essential and absolutely universal, not the concept, but the idea, if we think of the universal and particular as reflective oppositions [*Reflexionsgegensätze*] in the Kantian sense. For its part, this shows how the particular, in the sense that it is presented in geometry, besides grasping the particular as a formal factor, also grasps the universal in itself. In this sense, the universal as the unity of the universal and particular in itself is already an object of intuition, which, understood intellectually, is the idea. But Kant does not take it in this sense, so he cannot explain philosophy as the presentation of the particular in the universal.

Even the distinctions made above between geometry and arithmetic, namely that one presents the universal in the particular and the other the particular in the universal, occur, to speak more specifically, not in the view of construction itself as such, but in other relationships, for construction as such is in mathematics and philosophy always the absolute and *real* equalization [*Gleichsetzung*] of universal and particular.³ The particular in geometry is not the empirical triangle sketched upon a piece of paper, but, according to Kant himself, *the triangle of pure intuition*. Construction has only this triangle of pure intuition in view; the empirical is related accidentally, as an *accidens*, upon which construction does not reflect. *This* particular is however already the particular *presented in the universal* and insofar as it is an idea, or the real universal itself, it has an *essential* unity and not merely a formal unity.⁴

It is certainly odd that Kant shows philosophers a geometrical concept in order to enter into competition with the geometer over its construction. "Suppose a philosopher be given the concept of a triangle and he be left to find out, in his own way, what relation the sum of its angles bears to a right angle. He has nothing but the concept of a figure enclosed by three straight lines, and possessing three angles. However long he meditates on this concept, he will never produce anything new. He can analyse and clarify the concept of a straight line or of an angle or of the number three, but he can never arrive at any properties not already contained in these concepts. The geometer alone can take up these questions" (A716/B744).⁵ This is every bit as clever as when on the contrary he demands that the geometer construct an idea, e.g., Beauty, Right, Equality, or Space. The geometer would doubtless meet with no more success as the philosopher did in his construction of the triangle. It is as if one gave paints and paint brushes to the musician to develop music, or musical notes and instruments to the sculptor in order to sculpt and out of the resulting impossibility, prove the non-existence of their art.

It follows from this position that the philosopher after Kant could only approach his work analytically, given the concepts to which he is constrained. Is this truly Kant's opinion, or has this later chapter forgotten the previous chapters?

However, more in line with the spirit of Kant's own system are other statements that these are nothing but repetitions of the same old opposition of discursive concepts to intuition, unity to multiplicity.

All *a priori* multiplicity is already given to mathematics, but for philosophy there remains nothing but *pure understanding* on the one hand and *empirical multiplicity*, on the other hand, which as empirical, however, is excluded from it [philosophy]. Philosophy proceeds with completely empty hands, that is, with an empty understanding. With an undetermined multiplicity as its material, philosophy would construct *without an object*. That is, philosophy does not construct at all.

Put in another way: philosophy has *no other a priori* concepts than those [obtained from] the synthesis of possible intuition (which is merely a *possibility* of intuition) with which one can make synthetic *a priori* judgments but cannot construct. It is true that nothing can be constructed *with* these concepts, but one

can construct the concepts themselves, though not insofar as they are *synthetic* and therefore discursive concepts which oppose the actuality of the intuition. These concepts will not be constructed in any other way than as ideas, the concept of cause and effect, e.g., in the idea of the absolute unity of possibility and actuality, which has possibility and actuality itself in the idea of the absolute unity of subjective and objective, etc.⁶

All of these statements are necessary for the view that nothing exists in human minds but empty concepts, empirical intuitions and between them an absolute hiatus. Kant cannot justify his own procedure in this part of the Doctrine of Method, namely how he himself arrived at these synthetic concepts. It is true that Kant did not construct these synthetic concepts, but grasped them analogically from experience. It is unthinkable that Kant could have consciously made this presupposition: there is no higher source of the cognition of concepts, from which the concepts could be grasped a priori, necessarily and truly. The retrogression of construction—or because this is not granted—of thinking as such cannot stop until it reaches the point at which constructing and constructed, thinking and thought come together as one. Only this point can be called the principle of construction. This is not the case with every concept. Without doubt, philosophical reflection thinks something else in these concepts than whatever thinks from them; what for the Kantian analytic is actually the constructed. These concepts may be principles for the latter, but not the former. Everything that cannot be circumscribed by the aforementioned conjunction [of constructing and constructed] falls outside the jurisdiction of construction, or philosophy as such.

Thus concepts, which are themselves the constructed, or at least do not have the character of a principle of construction or a *means* of construction, prove that one cannot advance from the merely reflected and deduced and even if the reflection and deduction is completely true, one cannot construct *with* these concepts. Not even the geometer constructs *with* the concept of the triangle, the square, etc., for then there would be as many and as various evidences as constructions. These are all themselves the constructed from the *perspective* [*im An-Sich*] of the geometer's presentation. Should the geometer construct *with* these concepts, he would fare no differently than in the aforementioned outline of the philosopher.

There is only one principle of construction, *one* [principle] *with which* we construct in both mathematics and philosophy. For all the geometer's constructions, this principle is the homogenous, absolute unity of space and for the philosopher it is the absolute unity of the absolute. As has been said, only one thing is constructed, namely *ideas*, and everything that is deduced is not constructed as deduced but rather in its idea.

Perhaps this is expressed nowhere more immediately and judiciously than in Kant's reasoning about philosophical construction. His *Critique of Pure Reason* only deals with the *understanding* and after that, when he pressed on to the true objects of philosophy, the realm of ideas, he had only the highly confused reports of others. Even in Höyer's concepts we can see a certain dependency on Kantian limitations and the orientation of his philosophy toward the finitude of the understanding, when he says on page 47, "*Even* those concepts that he (Kant) calls ideas, arise through construction. An idea is actually a concept that in itself has no reality and thus no concept at all. It is not constructed and cannot be constructed. In a wider sense it is also a concept, but a concept that *now* has no reality. An actual idea would be nothing, or nothing thinkable, but insofar as it is, in another respect, a concept, so it is my present concern to construct it." The author knows well, as we've seen, the elements of all construction that remain completely unknown to Kant: the absolute, that is in itself unlimited and completely one, and the particular which is limited and not one, but many. This is a struggle that can only be solved through *the construction* of the Idea and through the productive imagination.

The reasons against construction in philosophy, previously discussed, already grasp that only *possible* objects are given through construction. The author [Höyer] emphasizes, perhaps more than behooves philosophy, the external necessity that he differentiates from ideal or inner [necessity] and that, according to him, made the creation of metaphysics possible. It is necessary that Kant, who only gave his pure concepts of the understanding possibility, look for an actuality outside of the concepts. For in construction, the idea that the author makes valid, there is given not merely a relative or purely ideal possibility but an absolute possibility. With the idea of construction, the author commits himself to absolute idealism. If the question concerns absolute reality, then it is given immediately with absolute ideality. If the discussion concerns, as it seems, external necessity as a condition of empirical actuality, then this can never be demonstrated as such in the idea, for it becomes *empirical actuality* by removing itself from the idea. Even the general laws, according to which this empirical actuality changes by so removing itself to this and no other determination, can only be constructed in the idea.

Kant yanks up the last anchor of the fantastical hope that science can ground itself in the intellectual world when he shows that none of the three parts that ground mathematics, namely definitions, axioms and demonstrations, can be accomplished or imitated by philosophy. It would be a noteworthy undertaking to investigate the extent to which axioms and definitions ground mathematics. The skeptics directed their strongest doubts against these grounds of mathematics. When one can define a straight line and a circle, but cannot account for their genesis, how does that amount to a proof of the grounds [of mathematics]? How do I even arrive at two or more things, in order to create the axiom that establishes that two things, which are similar to a third, are similar to each other or concerning the concepts of the whole and the part, that the whole is larger than the part? As one can see, these questions lead to an infinite regress, this possibility proves

that axioms and definitions are not, as Kant imagined, true *principles*, but that they are *limit points* of principles and of science. They are limit points of a return to an absolute origin. Each subordinate science, e.g., physics, requires these limit points, through them a science isolates itself and develops itself for itself. How could that which makes up the mere limitation of a science become the measure of the thoroughness of a science, and, moreover, be the science of all sciences? Precisely because philosophy is completely *in* [the domain of] *absolute knowing*, it is not bound by these limitations. It must construct construction itself, as well. as define definition.

But even in the case that this particular form of science has universal validity, then the grounds from which Kant proves the impossibility of true definitions and axioms in philosophy would hold no more then those grounds out of which he demonstrates the impossibility of construction in philosophy. He also grasps in these definitions that the task of the philosopher is merely analytic; and he takes all of his grounds from these presuppositions. The author [Höyer] notices correctly that as soon as one loses sight of the activity of construction or the attention proper to it, and tries to direct the definitions back to conventional rules of logic by giving a line of descent through which the concept becomes a kind, then mathematics will encounter the same difficulties and errors that Kant finds in philosophy. No such analysis in mathematics, much less in philosophy, could produce conviction in its correctness and completeness (S. 60).

Kant himself notices that the only concepts that can be used for definitions are those that contain an arbitrary synthesis and can be constructed *a priori*. And even such simultaneously free and necessary syntheses are all constructions of philosophy, and thus of ideas. If philosophy has no definitions, in the sense that mathematics has them, it is because philosophy's activity of construction is not limited. The definitions of mathematics are also constructions, but they are immediate only for mathematics.

When Kant describes the axioms as *immediately certain a priori synthetic propositions*, we are forced to a higher investigation concerning the correctness of Kant's general claim about the synthetic character of the principles and theorems of mathematics. This is not the place to prove that evidence generally, and mathematical evidence specifically, is not based on a merely synthetic relation. It will become clear that from what we demonstrate next that all demonstration is nothing if it does not bring about the point where the identical and the synthetic are one, or where synthesis is led back to the pure identity of thinking itself (see *System of Transcendental Idealism* S. 40). If this is the case, then axioms, as synthetic and immediately certain propositions, differ from theorems formally and not essentially. They represent only incomplete demonstrations, which when pursued through the particular domains of mathematics lead to the universal, e.g., the mathematical axiom that when two things are equal to a third thing,

they are equal to each other. In philosophy this is constructed from the nature of the syllogism.

Moreover if Kant holds axioms as such to be something peculiar [*Eigentümlich*] to mathematics, he appears to have overlooked the fact that even in this science there are analytical minds that believe these axioms, e.g., the one mentioned above, can be proven and even attempt to prove them. If this situation holds true for Kant's definitions of mathematics, then there could be no cases such as Euclid's well-known definition of parallel lines, which the greater part of contemporary geometers admit as a theorem even though no one has advanced a proof that has general acceptance.

Finally, the *demonstration* accomplishes the complete identification of the universal and the particular. In this we can differentiate two moments, only one of which is essential, while the other belongs to the particulars of mathematics.

The first is the absolute equation of universal unity and particular unity. To stay with the example of geometry, one and the same unity of ideal and real, pure space as absolute form, grounds geometry in all of its constructions. In the construction itself, however, a particular unity, e.g., the square or the parallelogram, is posited. The identification arises through the fact that any absolute unity is expressed in each singular construction as the universal, *whole* and undivided in the particular. All of construction is based upon this conflict between the absolutely universal, insofar as it contains nothing particular, and the particular, insofar as it is not adequate to the universal. In order to show the characteristics of the given figures, the geometer needs nothing more than the universal and absolute form of pure space as such. The geometer *does not depart from his absolutes* in order to reach the particular. The evidence rests on nothing other than the fact that he requires nothing but the absolute for the demonstration of particular unity.

The other moment, which is observable in mathematics, is that in the particularities of its construction universal and particular are seen as absolutely equal. In the single triangle, for example, the infinity of all triangles is grasped and any triangle, even the empirical, can serve the geometer as well as any other. The reasons for this lie uniquely in the fact that intellectual intuition is the form of geometry and sensible [intuition] is the material of geometry.

Kant did not prove that the first and essential moment of the demonstration of philosophy is missing. It remains to be proven that the presentation of the particular in the universal (as Kant describes philosophy) is just as unthinkable as the reverse (namely, if one describes philosophy as the deduction of the particular from the universal, the manifold from unity) unless the particular grasps the undivided unity of the universal in an intellectual intuition as a construction or idea.

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It is clear, then, that there is another moment, i.e., the relation of mathematics to the sensible, which Kant claims philosophy lacks. For this reason, he denies philosophy the possibility of demonstration.

Moreover, one might remark that the same opposition, which, in the demonstration, lies between the universal intuition of the triangle and the empirical or pictorial triangle, also takes place in philosophy, only interior to the subject. The constructed is thus only an intuition of an individual and as such is determined by empirical conditions. Reason, however, sees in the empirical correlate [*Gegenbild*] only the idea or the pure synthesis of the universal and particular itself; where this is not the case, philosophy is not dealing with reason but with the individual.

Let us now turn to Höyer's text.

He claims: *Kant* constructs, albeit without knowing it (one could say more precisely that Kant must construct if he were only completely conscious of his philosophy and capable of reflecting on it); *Fichte* constructs, though he does so without rules. One might say that Fichte turns the Socratic method of pedagogy into an objective method of science. In the first case [Kant] the intention can be thoroughly recognized but in the second [Fichte] everything hangs together much more subjectively and haphazardly.

It is peculiar how the author, who takes his orientation from Fichte, is led by the philosophical demands of form, spirit and subject matter over and above Fichtean idealism. He legitimates himself by the way in which he explains this fact, and, in so doing, Höyer proves himself a true expert of philosophy and an author who has earned a place among the true thinkers. "A science," he says on page 79, "is nothing other than a construction that follows a rule and thus differentiates itself from everything empirical and from the conclusions and procedures of common sense. Philosophy has yet to have taken this step. It is unavoidable that the more idealism is worked out and approaches the growing difficulties of completion, the more it approaches a construction according to rule, which it will ultimately achieve." When one considers that these statements from the preface were originally published three years ago, then the author's insight is even more astonishing. Further, he comments that idealism presses on by its own power to the method he outlines, and until it is in possession of a secure science of the method itself, it will not obtain the certainty of mathematics. Of all the sciences, philosophy possesses the most freedom and thus it is as much art as science.

Höyer takes the central turning point between himself and Fichte to be the following: in the most important junctures of the *Wissenschaftslehre* the pure I is exchanged for a pure, totally original activity, stripped of all modifications. As a result, Fichte maintains two pure egos and at the same time maintains the not-I.

Here, the central point is often lost and it is necessary for Fichte to ensure that his philosophy is totally idealistic. The original activity and the pure I do not differ in their form, as a closer description of this original activity will make clear, since Fichte ascribes to both of them a purely centrifugal and centripetal tendency. Both are an incomplete expression of the subject-object which is intuited in-itself and freed from any relation to empirical consciousness.

We must now become better acquainted with the characteristics of Höyer's own idea of philosophy. We will skip his introduction, because for our purposes we can approach the text more scientifically: he attaches the idea of philosophy to the opposition between freedom and necessity (p. 92).

He seeks to show that *pure activity* is the principle of philosophical construction in the following manner: the rigorous and authentic concept of construction involves a *restriction of the homogeneous*. A homogeneous or pure matter [Stoff] for construction does not exist outside of pure intuition, whether it be intellectual or sensible (p. 51). Neither the object in the shape of the pure thing or the subject in the shape of the mere representation are sufficient for a solution to the main task of philosophy. Thus all substance is excluded [from consideration], both as object and as subject, as accident, as a state and as a determined, real activity. Nothing remains in *pure activity* in itself, independent of all modifications, but that from which all philosophy and construction are derived.

It appears to be a formal injustice that the author characterizes and then constructs the original activity as only an activity, as a postulate. The geometer's line is a postulate because and insofar as he does not construct it. To postulate is to relinquish construction. This relation that he offers as a principle has even more significance for the contents of his philosophy. Outside of the subjective dependence that he retains, the original activity as mere postulate cannot be grasped as the true and only in-itself, the absolute itself. As a result, Höyer finds himself in the same circumstances as Fichte, for the I is a principle but not simultaneously the only absolute, and he is afflicted by that which lies outside himself. The absolute can only appear to him as an absolute thing. This is revealed by his objections to dogmatism (p. 103), whereby he also grasps realism as he presents it in Spinoza. In order to provide a proof, he poses a question to realism: "What is a reality that is not for an intelligence, for me or some other 'I'?" This is sufficient to demonstrate that he is forced to claim an in-itself and absolute-being as something outside of the "I," for only if that which is outside the "I" is necessarily and only for the "I," insofar as the in-itself is grasped in the first sense, would his question have any grounds.

This is already enough to prove that Höyer's construction has not yet reached the point of the absolute encounter [*Zusammentreffens*] of knowledge [*Erkenntnis*] and the absolute—the only way in which knowledge is fulfilled, though it must be said that no one has come closer to this point than Höyer. Just as with Kant

and Fichte, who, according to Höyer, return us to realism and an absolute not-I respectively, Höyer himself falls unavoidably time and time again into the relative duality of the "I" and the thing. Yet both sides of the duality persist only insofar as each has reality in relation to the other. For the author, as with Fichte, freedom retains a certain priority, even if it requires its antithesis with necessity. Freedom should retain priority and where possible, not merely for appearance, like the thing, but in a more exemplary sense. The particular [spezielle] reality of things, namely that they have these specific qualities and no others, is of great interest to Höyer. This particular reality of things appears to him in a more speculative sense than it does to Fichte (who was certainly the first to have raised and answered) this question) because he identifies it with the emergence of evil in the world. If we can find anything to criticize in the statements of the author it is that he has lagged behind the excellence of his own ideas. The level which his speculations have attained can be measured by the degree to which he has grasped the absolute point of identity in his system. We focus on this absolute point of identity as the most telling aspect of the whole and the sole destination of all true inquiry.

According to Höyer, the point of union between the real world or nature and an intelligible system of essence and activity—both of which must correspond to one another completely (from the side of the real) without mixing with one another lest the ideal (according to the mode of representation) cease to be differentiated from it—lies in the necessity of a universal system restricted to the originary activity. Without this system the unity and comprehensibility of the point of union would disappear. The beginning of this system in the intelligence, which is the beginning of intelligence itself, should be thought as both free and necessary, that is, from different perspectives. Freedom and necessity are only two different points of view for intelligence, whose point of indifference lies in the originary, unmodified activity. This [activity] is, in itself, neither free nor necessary, but to reflection it is similarly free and necessary. As ground, it is necessary and conditioned, because an unconditioned ground is unconditioning, and, as such, no ground at all, but as absolute ground it is at one and the same time unconditioned and free, since it is not determined by anything higher. The causality of the originary activity is at the same time completely the activity itself; the transition to the determination [Bestimmung] and itself in one. The originary activity, which appears to intelligence as freedom, is thus inconceivable and must be so. The first element in each conditioned chain of concepts or things or events is to be grasped as an act of absolute freedom. All life, all force in nature emerges from this originary activity and its force. If it could stop, all existence would disappear. From the infinity of the originary activity the infinitely conditioned emerges in things. Determination [Bestimmung] in its fullfillment is system, since it is unity in multiplicity.

As a result of the essential unity of the originary activity there is, in the strongest sense, only one system, for a second system would arise through something else, which is impossible. Since this system corresponds to an absolute activity, it returns to itself in itself and fully conditioned through itself. More than one nature is impossible, for nature is the system for a finite observer. Nature is inclusive [Inbegriff] of the conditions for the representation of the infinite in the finite, the absolute in the limited. If nature is seen merely as an object or merely as a representation, i.e., as purely subjective, or even as pure, conditioned activity, i.e., as purely passive, then this only occurs by abstracting nature from some of its own conditions.

Even without considering the originary unity of the system, we feel ourselves to be free in every activity. Thus the ground lies not in the first act, from which reality and nature first emerge, but in a new act of reflection which is opposed to the first activity. Through this act of reflection, a new system emerges, corresponding not to the contents or the new nature in the authentic sense, but merely to a new mode of representation. This system, considered in itself as one and the same as the first system, is the intelligible world that emerges from this mode of representation and is opposed to the first system through freedom. As long as I remain within this intelligible system, I am not free, every activity is conditioned in all its parts, even if, or more, exactly because it is at the same time a system, an organic whole through which freedom is sustained. I am only free in the second reflection which lifts me up above this system-not in respect to the mode of activity but in respect to the advancement of the activity in which I can sink back into nature or not. The activity contains in concreto both possibilities. That which constrains me in the first reflection, the causality of the originary activity itself, does not occur in the second reflection. One can be stopped without destroying the other. This contingency of the second reflection in relation to the first, namely that it changes nothing in the system whether I take up one part of its products in myself or not, is precisely what conditions accountability and freedom as a choice between the opposed elements or arbitrariness.

Over and above the first and second reflection, there is a higher reflection that unifies both of them: *philosophical reflection*. Philosophy also has its system, for truth is One. It is nothing other than the all *encompassing* reflection, a system complete in all respects, or, in other words, nature. It is nature brought to the highest consciousness, nature in its clarity and exemplarity.

This is the scheme of the identity to which Höyer leads philosophy; if not exactly literally, then certainly according to the general sense of the matter. We have already expressed the principles which lead us to the judgment, still in need of certainty, that the author has, in our opinion, strengthened the truly speculative standpoint. In speculation, an original thinking spirit pushes through into the

particular forms, as we see from the examination and judgment of the singular characteristics of Höyer's philosophy.

There is another side, beyond that of content, whose importance this work stresses. The degree to which the author has advanced the idea of the philosophy of *form* is evidenced in his construction of the originary activity, for the whole *scientific form* of philosophy must be conditioned through this activity that has been determined by the author.

He introduces his construction in the following way: pure activity is both originary and absolute. Pure activity is pure intuition. Pure intuition is the only means for constructing through a pure activity. Every construction advances a schema and the original construction advances the most original schema—thus the most universal and highest task: unity with ourselves: the "I" (this last transition is neither the most desirable nor the most rigorous). With the "I" we seek to designate a *pure* "I" or an *intelligence*, not the "I" with actual consciousness or any particular modification, but the mere essence and form of intelligence (the pure subject-object).

The most peculiar point in all philosophy, and thus in construction as well, is the so-called transition from the infinite to the finite, the emergence of limitation in the unlimited itself, the same, the absolute. We cannot say that the author adequately saw the whole scope of this problem, simply by taking the first step toward a construction of a synthesis of limits and the unlimited. "Limitation belongs to the *essence* of an activity *as such*. The necessary limitation does not lie in any meaning *outside it*; the limitation and the activity are both equally absolute."

If these limitations or boundaries were flowing and ceaselessly changing, then they would be without effect and would not delimit; the activity would have no product, since the product must be fixed. Activity must achieve balance with the absolute limitation, a *calm*, and this calm is at once a border and a product—it is not a limitation, for this produces nothing, but an activity synthesized with limitation—thus a product to which the opposed absolutes both contribute.

According to Höyer, this first product is thus at the same time the primordial material in which the originary activity comes forth in a gradual intensification of all form through constant reflection and reflexive action. Each successive product contains the activity of the previous products such that in each later product there is more activity than in the earlier products. The subjective becomes objective; the activity is turned into the product. There is an object that rests in the first product; in the second product, there is an object that is at the same time an activity (or vice-versa)—the whole representation. In the third product, the object itself becomes a representation—the whole subject. In the next product, the subject, which was a representation of an object, becomes an object—the whole *consciousness* which grasps all the previous products. In the last activity, whose object is consciousness, the activity itself becomes its product, i.e., *the "I."* The

sequence is enclosed on two sides: on the one side, by the first product, which is at the same time the highest object, pure rest; from the other side, it is closed in by the *absolute* subject above which no higher product can be constructed.

Since the "I" is the last product, it follows that each product over and above the "I" must be one of the previous products that emerges in the activities before the emergence of the "I." There are *only three parts* in any possible relation and they correspond to the three products. Any parts beyond these three must already be present in an earlier reflection or a previous relation. In every following relation, or to use our expression, in every following Potency, I am stuck with the subject and achieve nothing but an "I." Just as in a certain limited [thing], the parts of the previous relation, i.e., in the second part, become an object and achieve dignity only in the third part, etc.

We do not mean to claim that this sequence has been worked out by the author with the highest clarity, or in a formal intuition. One wishes that those who grasped this form in the shape that it took in the philosophy of nature and the system of Idealism and saw this as a mere game, which they chalked up to a poorly communicated if capable mind, would have at least seen the inner necessity to these writings, or, in the very least, done justice to the independence from which they arose.

This scientific method is expressed in the clearest and most universal manner in the following passage (p. 156): "Through the mechanism of the understanding, the recent synthesis can continue to a new thesis with its antithesis in activity until the task is resolved in the final synthesis which consists in a unity of intelligence with itself in the representation of nature or in a higher reflection which brings consciousness to this unity. As soon as this is produced—which is not possible or thinkable empirically, since the intelligence cannot overcome its own finitude, this outermost synthesis cannot appear to consciousness as a complete system in its smallest parts—intelligence stops and becomes, once again, the pure activity reduced to nothing; thus the intelligence has nothing more to understand, for everything is one, and without anything to understand it ceases to exist."

The limitations of Fichte's idealism, considered purely theoretically, lie mainly in the fact that the delimiting ground is not found absolutely in the "I" but in something opposed to it; he limits construction, or moreover reflection, to the narrow point of conjunction between the pure and empirical "I" (the subjective subject-object)⁷ and the form of the thesis-antithesis-synthesis is taken purely logically. The "I," which here is a *principle*, is a construct to Höyer, and it is thus truly *transcendental*, since he lays out a sequence of activities which lie beyond the "I." The thesis-antithesis-synthesis repeats itself for him in the singular as well as in the whole and is the example of a real and universal organization.

The objective area and the universal relation that Höyer's idea seems capable of can be judged by the following statements. In the construction of matter [Mate-

rie], given in Kant's metaphysical foundations for natural science, one recognizes his only conscious foray into construction. "What is this original matter that he constructs?" asks Höyer. "Nothing but a modification of that original reality, which expresses the product of the first thinkable activity and is contained therein. This product is also the first object and later on I deduce another object from which it is, more precisely, a limited object in space. As a result, the essence of matter arises in the negative and positive through which it fills space. But that which is true of this matter must be true of all matter, it is just as conditioned and individualized. The conditioned is also a product and has the properties of a product, since nature emerges for me through construction and all construction is production. Since this dualism is found essentially in all construction, it also offers the only satisfactory explanation of all appearance. This principle must grasp something that cannot be explained in atomism, in mechanical chemistry, in material psychology, in hylozoism or in hidden properties. The cohesion as it arises in certain bodies and their properties must be developed through construction and be consistent with it. One has elasticity already in natural science [die Naturlehre] and perhaps this concept is still not applied often enough. At least one has reason to suspect that the polarity which one can find in certain bodies can be deduced from this elasticity or is found in conjunction with it. Both seem to be mere modifications of the universal dualism. Without the philosophy of nature there is no science of nature. The single true purpose of the empirical study of nature can, outside of use, only be this: to bring the special cognition of nature to a necessary and complete conjunction with the metaphysics of nature."

It is a great pleasure, amidst the flood of philosophical books appearing in Germany, most of which offer an unbelievable rawness, a lack of cultivation and even a lack of knowledge in the history of philosophy, to notice in the above cited book such thorough cultivation, such thoughtful, scientifically effective and farreaching knowledge and judgment.

According to the translator's preface, shortly after the publication of this work, Höyer was recommended by general opinion and official judgment to the then unoccupied chair of theoretical philosophy in Upsala."To this he adds the insight, the complete knowledge of his topic, the lively interest for science and its advancement, the gift of clear and concrete lectures, and many more admirable qualities, the expected traits of a true professor. Only a man who knows modesty can earn happiness and with surprise be named a professor of philosophy."

Notes

1. Schelling uses the verb "construiren" here [Translator's note].

2. Cf. Bruno, S. 290 [Editor's note]

3. Compare Methode des akademischen Studiums, S. 97. Cf. also S. 92 [Editor's note].

N. Rendal me al tra

- 4. Compare Neue Zeitschrift für Spekulative Metaphysik, 1Bd. 2. Stück, S. 24 [Editor's note].
- 5. I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Kemp Smith (New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1965), 578–9. Translation altered.

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- 6. Compare Bruno, S. 246, 249 [Editor's note].
- 7. Compare Fichtes und Schellings Briefwechsel, S.59 [Editor's note].