

F. W. J. SCHELLING: PRESENTATION OF MY SYSTEM OF PHILOSOPHY (1801)

TRANSLATED BY MICHAEL G. VATER

Schelling founded the Journal for Speculative Physics in January 1800, and he used that platform to launch the Presentation of My System in May 1801.¹ He addresses this self-consciously epoch-making work to a public aware of his long collaboration with Fichte in transcendental idealism and of his recent independent studies in natural philosophy. Schelling claims in the Preface that he has and always had only one philosophy, and he defines the new “System of Identity” against the foil of its precursors: K. L. Reinhold’s Elementary Philosophy and J. G. Fichte’s Theory of Science. The Preface has a double, if not contradictory, burden: to convince the reader that Identity Philosophy is not new, i.e., that it is a maturation of positions long held, and that it is new, i.e., an advance beyond both Reinhold’s system of universal principles secured by fact and argumentative consensus, and an advance on Fichte’s merely regional, idealistic metaphysics of consciousness.

Schelling’s tone is assertive, for a young man. His title immodestly joins the possessive pronoun “my” to the impersonal “system of philosophy,” and many of his remarks continue the unpleasantly personal tone. By early 1802, Schelling will argue that there can be but one philosophy and one truth, not idiosyncratic philosophers each with their “private label” versions of truth. But here he grandly suggests he is the sole individual who can bring forth the whole truth—although he presents but a fragment of that whole. Schelling does acknowledge his debts in this Preface, but does so only dialectically. The attentive reader will see that when he emphasizes the novelty of his views, Schelling is most conscious of their similarity to those of Reinhold and Fichte. Schelling’s first readers

¹Horst Fuhrmans, “Schellings Trennung von Fichte,” in F. W. J. Schelling, *Briefe und Dokumente*, vol. 1, ed. H. Fuhrmans (Bonn: Bouvier, 1962), 236.

understood that all three were all at work at the same task: making a philosophy out of Kant's incomplete and preparatory critical writings. Although Reinhold is little studied for his own philosophy today, scholars have noted how reactions to his idea of universal principles in philosophy and to his recurring lapses into "realism" shaped both Fichte's and Schelling's early philosophies.²

Schelling admits his new system is incomplete. "My System" is a bare statement of the logic of identity, and although it provides some application of that logic to the philosophy of nature, it postpones crucial discussion of methodology and gives few hints, other than reaffirming the validity of the 1800 System of Transcendental Idealism, of what the system's treatment of individual and social consciousness would be. This translation presents only its first fifty-four theorems, up to the Kantian rudiments of nature—matter, attractive and repulsive force, and gravity. When Schelling himself breaks off the work at the threshold between organic nature and intelligence, he claims a fragment may give a fair sense of the whole—a conviction he shares with the early romantic poets and critics, Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel.

Schelling claims the "present situation of science" forces him prematurely to divulge his private views. One can identify four events in that situation, which, though they pull him in different directions, are all intertwined. (1) In 1799 Kant publicly denied that Fichte's philosophy was the successor system to his Criticism. This set transcendental idealism adrift, and clearly challenged it to transform itself into systematic philosophy, not historical commentary. (2) Reinhold, who had recanted his own Elementary Philosophy and converted to Fichtean idealism in 1794, went over to a realistic dualism when he reviewed J. G. Bardili's Foundations of First Logic in 1799. His criticism there of the views of Fichte and Schelling elicited responses from both of them and eventually from Hegel; Reinhold's "new" dualism is the final object of attention in Hegel's Difference. (3) Fichte and Schelling had long talked of founding an Institute for Critical Philosophy and publishing a journal to solidify their views. They wanted their version of transcendental idealism, which included Kant's syntheses of consciousness but excluded his thing-in-itself, to be perceived as true Kantian philosophy. Each went his own way, discussing the venture under a different name with a different publisher—Fichte negotiating for a "Critical Institute" with Ungar, but Schelling actually signing with Cotta for "The Annals of Contemporary Science."³ Such "cooperation" produced friction between them. (4) Sharply differing views on the place of nature in a comprehensive system of

²See Hartmut Kuhlman, *Schellings Früher Idealismus: Ein kritischer Versuch* (Stuttgart and Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 1993), 31–104.

³See *Fichte-Schelling Briefwechsel*, ed. Walter Schulz (Frankfurt a.M.: 1968), 78–90.

philosophy moved the two authors toward plainly different positions: Schelling toward a field-metaphysics, where one identical reality finds expression under different forms in the ordered phenomena of nature and of consciousness, Fichte toward a pluralistic metaphysics of interacting individual wills. In the two years of correspondence prior to this publication, the two philosophers talked past each other, Schelling eager to explore the absolute identity glimpsed in the concluding sections of *System of Transcendental Idealism*, Fichte directing his energies toward thinking through a “spiritual world,” where God somehow individuates consciousnesses into an interdependent network of individual wills. Schelling’s assertive challenge to his erstwhile mentor, that he was developing an “objective idealism” to counter the defects of Fichte’s merely ‘subjective’ theory, met with no direct reply.⁴ So it is that “*My System*” becomes the platform for testing out this new position, with its somewhat indelicate, “hypothetical” characterization of the philosophers’ differences and its deferred hope for ultimate agreement.

Schelling’s fragmentary system is important in another respect. Published just when Hegel was about to join him in Jena to work on the *Critical Journal of Philosophy*, “*My System*” was the first statement of a common position held by both philosophers of identity, and it was followed six months later by Hegel’s *Difference* between the Fichtean and Schellingean Systems of Philosophy. When Hegel talks, as he repeatedly does, of the promise and the pitfalls of the “first dawning” of objective idealism, it is “*My System*” that he has in mind. When Hegel criticizes Schelling—as he continues to do throughout his life—for having introduced inappropriate quantitative techniques into the heart of philosophy, he has in mind Schelling’s sole tool for relating the dual phenomenal worlds to the unbroken identity of the absolute: the substitution of quantitative difference—predominance of subjectivity over objectivity, or the reverse—among phenomena for the qualitative indifference of the absolute.⁵ Real logic is qualitative negation, insists Hegel; the insipid finite negativity of quantification is not the “existing absolute.”⁶

⁴The English-language reader can follow the gist of the discussion in “Selections from the Fichte–Schelling Correspondence,” in *Theory as Practice: A Critical Anthology of Early German Romantic Writings*, ed. Jochen Schulte-Sasse et al. (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 73–90.

⁵See §§ 27–31 and related corollaries and explanations below.

⁶See Hegel’s treatment of Schelling’s key function, indifference, in the *Science of Logic*, where it nests on the cusp between ‘being’ and ‘essence’, or, in Schelling’s terms, between the finite and the infinite. *Hegel’s Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities, 1968), 375–85. Though Schelling is not mentioned there by name, Hegel performs a dialectical critique of the thin conceptual apparatus of identity philosophy: the transformation of self-repelling opposite qualities into quantities lying alongside one another. The attempt to apply such an analysis to bodies moving in a gravitational system results in inverse quantitative ratios that, like Spinoza’s all-engulfing substance, externalize difference rather than explain its dynamic. Quantified being finally turns into self-sublating substrate, or essence, where quality, negation, and movement emerge as the real features of thinking.

Neither Schelling nor his son, who edited it, provided a synopsis of this work. The following summary, offered to help orient the reader, is no substitute for a careful tracking of Schelling's proofs.

§§ 1–3 introduce the perspective of intellectual intuition, or of speculative reason freed of all particularity, hence kindred to and coincident with everything that is. §§ 4–9 introduce the abstract law of identity ($A = A$) as the rule of reason. These moves are similar to Fichte's starting points in *Theory of Science*, the first corresponding to the *nova methodo* approach of the 1797 Introductions, the second to that of the 1794 Foundations of the Entire Theory of Science.

§§ 10–14 argue that from the perspective of reason, nothing finite or temporal is real. In Spinoza's terms, modal being cannot be explained from the perspective of infinite being. There is no adequate explanation of finitude.

§§ 15–18 demonstrate that the one reality intuited in reason, the absolute, subsists only under $A = A$. The formal structure of this identity is indifference; materially it is an identity of being and knowing.

§§ 19–22 make all finite entities or episodes of subject-objectivity (which is what a being is, transcendently considered) aspects of the absolute's form or self-cognition. The essence or substance of absoluteness is sheer identity. Its form—cognate terms are expression, image, development, or instantiation—is endless self-positing as determinate cases of subject-objectivity. The last term simply indicates episodes of consciousness associated with objective being, or of being associated with consciousness.

§§ 23–31 redefine absoluteness relative to finite being as the quantitative indifference of subjectivity and objectivity in contrast to their finite or quantitative difference. All the difficulties of understanding the "Presentation" are compressed in the mantra-like formula: *Quantitative indifference [obtains] in the whole, quantitative difference in the parts* (§ 30, note 10).

§§ 32–39 argue that the absolute is the universe itself, not its cause. The universe is not an aggregate of self-subsisting individuals; an individual is only a determinate form of the existence of the absolute.

§§ 40–45 account for the potencies, or hierarchy of relative totalities or universes, all of which together make up the absolute's form.

§§ 46–54 consider the first relative totality, matter or nature as such, and its component forces or tendencies. At this point Schelling crosses from identity theory or metaphysics over to philosophy of nature.

This translation is based on the edition published by Schelling's son, Karl Schelling, in fourteen volumes: F. W. J. Schelling, Sämtliche Werke (Stuttgart and Augsburg, 1856—). It is reprinted in Manfred Schröter's reordering of the texts: Schelling Werke, ed. M. Schröter (Munich: Beck, 1968), vol. 4. Pagination of that edition is given in braces.

Schelling put some material in footnotes in the original edition. His son and editor, working from a corrected, 1802 copy of the work, inserted some emendations in the text within brackets and others in footnotes. The provenance of notes, whether from author, editor, or translator, is noted in every case. Material in the body of the text found in parentheses or brackets comes from Schelling, either the original version of 1801 or his handwritten emendations of 1802. Words added by the translator to clarify various phrases or sentences are placed within braces.

The translation of a few terms needs to be discussed. Schelling's Indifferenz is borrowed from English; he means "indifference" to be a logical operator, not a psychological descriptor like Gleichgültigkeit. He adopts the habit of talking of the ontological standing of the absolute with the tenseless verb seyn, which is rendered as "to be" or "to subsist," never as "exist." I have been literal about this, as have the translators of the young Hegel, since the odd usage is meant to convey a philosophical point. Heidegger to the contrary, being has no connection to time, while existence and time are virtually synonymous. Erkenntniß is translated as "cognition," Erkennen as the gerund "cognizing." This activity is what one who has "intellectual intuition" does; it is insight, seeing, acquaintance and has little to do with objective or recorded knowledge, Wissen. I have usually translated Einheit as "identity" rather than "unity," because most of the time Schelling is speaking of the coalescence of two things that do not lose their intellectual distinctness, even though they are not actually distinguished or differentiated. Entzweiung is "doubling," a logical predicate, not particularly invested with psychological or sociological implications when Schelling uses it.

"My System" is a difficult work that demands much of its reader. A concentrated meditation on its opening moves and definitions, and on the interlinked terminology Schelling uses there of reason, cognition, identity, indifference, and difference may be found in Christoph Asmuth's "Anfang und Form der Philosophie."⁷ I hope the translation is intelligible; I am of course solely responsible for its flaws.

Presentation of My System of Philosophy (1801)

*Preface.*⁸

{4:107} For many years I sought to present the one philosophy that I know to be true from two wholly different sides—{both} as philosophy of nature and as

⁷Found in *Schelling: Zwischen Fichte und Hegel*, ed. Christoph Asmuth, Alfred Denker, and Michael Vater (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: Grüner, 2000), 408–10.

⁸This *Presentation of My System of Philosophy* was published in the *Journal for Speculative Physics*, Vol. 2, no. 2 (1801).

transcendental philosophy. Now I find myself driven by the present situation of science to publicly bring forward, sooner than I wish, the system that for me was the foundation of these different presentations, and to make everyone interested in this matter acquainted with views which until now were merely my own concern, or perhaps shared with a few others. One who understands this system as I now present it, who subsequently has the desire and the means to compare it with those early presentations, who further perceives how many preliminaries were necessary to prepare for the complete and certain exposition that I believe I can now provide, will find it natural rather than blameworthy that I first produced those preliminary versions. Working from wholly different sides, I sought to prepare for the integral reception of this philosophy—which I have the audacity to regard as the one and only philosophy—before I dared bring it forward in its entirety. Under these circumstances no one should think (as was occasionally imagined when I presented this system {4:108} in lectures the past winter) that I have altered my system of philosophy. 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 the different {earlier} presentations, which I constantly used as my personal guide-star in both transcendental and natural philosophy. I never concealed from myself or from others the fact that I take neither what I term ‘transcendental philosophy’ nor what I term ‘philosophy of nature’, each in isolation, to be the system of philosophy itself. Instead I announced in the clearest terms in the Preface to my *System of {Transcendental} Idealism*, in many places in this journal, etc., that I regard each of them as nothing more than a one-sided presentation of that system. If there were readers and critics who were not aware of this fact, or for whom such announcements gave no clue to my real intention, this is not my fault, but theirs. Nor is it my fault that {my} vocal protest against the way idealism is usually exhibited, which has existed since {I started work on} the philosophy of nature, has to date been noticed only by the sharp-sighted Eschenmayer,⁹ while the idealists themselves did not respond to it. —I have always represented what I called philosophy of nature and transcendental philosophy as the opposite poles of philosophical activity. With the present exposition I situate myself at the indifference-point {between them}; only if one has

⁹Karl Eschenmayer, a follower of Fichte with an interest in philosophy of nature, provided impetus for Schelling’s philosophical development at two points. His *Propositions from the Metaphysics of Nature Applied to Chemical and Medical Topics* (1797) suggested that phenomena can be mapped onto a line defined by opposite qualities and then quantified relative to one another, the model for the potency schema developed in § 46 f. In 1803 Eschenmayer suggested, in *Philosophy in Its Transition to Nonphilosophy*, that Schelling’s philosophical direction was theological, and in 1804 Schelling agreed, using the term ‘God’ instead of ‘the absolute’ in his *Philosophy and Religion*. *Tr.*

previously constructed [philosophy] from completely antithetical directions can one correctly and confidently place oneself there. —For most people faced with the task of assessing a philosophical system, nothing more pleasant can happen than that they are given a single word which they {then} believe has the power to fetter and arbitrarily confine their mind. If I should say, however, that this present system is ‘idealism’, or ‘realism’, or even some third combination of them, in each case I might say nothing false, for this system could be any of these, depending on how it is viewed ({though} what it might be in itself, abstracted from any particular ‘view’, would remain undecided). {4:109} But by doing so I would bring no one to a real understanding of this system, for what idealism or realism might be, or some possible third position compounded from the two, is by no means clear or obvious, but something still to be decided. Different minds attach quite different ideas to these expressions. I do not wish to anticipate {here} the point in the following presentation where this matter will of itself come up for discussion, but only to make some preliminary remarks. It is self-evident, e.g., that I take as the actually elaborated system of idealism only what I have expounded under that name, for if I took idealism to be anything else, I would have expounded this alternative. Accordingly, I give ‘idealism’ no other meaning than what which I have given it in that presentation.¹⁰ Now it may be the case, e.g., that the idealism which Fichte first advanced and still maintains had a meaning completely different than this. Fichte, e.g., might have conceived idealism in a completely subjective sense while I, on the other hand, conceived it in an objective one. Fichte might have held an idealism relative to the standpoint of reflection, whereas I situated myself and the principle of idealism at the standpoint of production. To put this contrast in the most intelligible terms, if idealism in the subjective sense said that the I is everything, idealism in the objective sense would be forced to say the reverse: everything is = I. There is no doubt these views are different, although no one will deny that both are idealistic. —I do not say that this is really how things stand; I merely pose the possibility. But supposing this is the case, the reader will learn from the word ‘idealism’ simply nothing about the genuine content of a system expounded under this name. Rather, to the extent one is interested in the matter one must resolve to study it and only then examine what is understood or properly asserted by ‘idealism’. The situation may be no different for what used to be called ‘realism’ {4:110} than it is for idealism. It seems to me, as I hope the following presentation proves, that until now realism in its most sublime and perfect form (in Spinozism, I mean) has been thoroughly misconstrued and misunderstood, {at

¹⁰*The System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800). Tr.

least} in all the slanted opinions of it that have become public knowledge. I say all this only to this end, first, that the reader who wishes to become informed about my philosophy resolve at the start to read the following presentation with quiet consideration, not as the recital of something already known (in which case only the form of exposition might be of interest), but as something still entirely unfamiliar. Everyone is at liberty afterwards to assure himself that he has long thought the same things. I particularly request that one criticize as philosophy of nature only what I designate ‘philosophy of nature’, as the system of idealism only what I call the *System of Transcendental Idealism*, but that one decide to learn my ‘system of philosophy’ solely from what follows. My second request is that one form an opinion of my presentations of natural philosophy and of idealism, but especially of the following presentation of my system of philosophy, solely from those texts themselves, not from other expositions; that one ask not whether this presentation agrees with that exposition, but whether it agrees with itself and whether it has warrant or not, considered in itself and entirely abstracted from everything that exists outside it. I especially hope that the reader will resolve provisionally to consider Fichte’s system and my presentation independently, since only through a further development can it appear whether and to what degree the two are, and have been, in agreement all along. I say *provisionally*, since I think it is impossible that we not eventually come to agreement, even if now, at least in my opinion, this point has not been reached. —But then would any educated person believe that a system of this sort develops instantaneously, as it were, or that it has already attained its complete development? Have people given Fichte the time to come to the point where he must decide that his system is not just idealism in general {4:111} (since in my view, all true speculative philosophy is this) but precisely this idealism {which I present}? —I think Fichte has until now achieved only the most general results. Some people may be pleased and others irritated that I consider what has been done up to this point as only the beginning of what will be done, and that the whole matter is therefore far from its ‘end’. How could this development of which I speak be more effectively delayed than by the eagerness of idle people who, by nature quite remote from the faintest idea of speculation, nonetheless voice their opinion on these matters with the blindest possible self-confidence and who voice either their agreement or disagreement before they have even grasped what the discussion is about? Where must it end when, e.g., Reinhold declares with most naive candor that he “has never understood, either in the beginning or in the middle, not even shortly before the end (he says end) what was the real issue in the latest philosophical revolution”? Where must it end when such a person—who in the beginning of this “Revolution” was a blind follower of Kant, then in a theory of his own making proclaimed infallible, catholic philosophy, and toward the end gave himself over to the bosom of the Theory of Science (with an

equally strenuous protestation of his deepest conviction)—when such a person, after all these proofs of philosophical imbecility, does not lack the courage to again (and as he himself surmises, for the last time) prophesy the “present” end of the philosophical revolution?¹¹ — We avert our gaze from these sights and {4:112} for the present recall only this: all further clarifications of the relation of our system to any other, especially to Spinozism and to idealism, are to be sought in the following presentation itself. I hope this presentation will also put an end to all misunderstandings {of my work}; the philosophy of nature was especially plagued by them. {4:113} As I remarked in an essay in the previous

¹¹For anyone with a sense of science what we said in the text will be adequate to justify our opinion of Herr Reinhold; we are bold to express it because privately we never had the least respect for him as a philosophical mind—he never was one and he has, indirectly at least, given up all claim to the title. He condemns himself to always be the schoolboy and plays the disciple to the point of absurdity; on this score he has really made the grade. He never had anything more than a historical mind for philosophy: he advanced his theory of the faculty of presentation on the basis of Kantian philosophy {4:112n} (which it notoriously assumes to be true). Since from its viewpoint presentation is just a fact, naturally nothing more than a factual deduction of it is possible. Since this first and singular expression of his own philosophical activity, Reinhold has had nothing more important to do than, with the appearance of every new philosophy, conduct yet another review of all previous philosophers: spiritualists, materialists, theists, and whatever else they may be called, and happily always pinpoint their failings, but never recognize his own or see how useless his attempt to thresh the noble ancient grain along with his straw was—a delusion surpassed only by his belief that he has solved the major problems of philosophy with the principles of matter and form, or of the presenting and the presented {elements of consciousness}. Since he has continued to live in profound ignorance of the authentic core of all speculation, naturally nothing seems too grand for his power of judgment. But if this feeble mind takes on Spinoza or Plato or criticizes other worthy figures of philosophy, it is surprising that he seems to omit Fichte from this critical survey, and that he does so just as easily as he recently seemed to have understood Fichte and have become deeply convinced of the truth of his philosophy. —Honesty will not permit me to intentionally distort isolated philosophical assertions that are as candid as the confession {of ignorance} cited above; otherwise I might take the mutilations that some of my assertions have suffered in a certain review of my *System of Transcendental Idealism* seriously. I shall certainly not waste my time on the matter, but instead formally invite Herr Reinhold to say whatever he thinks appropriate of me in reviews, journals, etc., moreover, to help himself to my ideas and to my method as a ‘heuristic’ principle (which ought to be of good use), even to idealism, if he feels it necessary for the honor of truth and “the end” of the philosophical revolution to refute ideas (even ones derived from him), once they have been made suitably absurd. —But what will people say when this Reinholdism spreads all the way to explicit denunciations or to attacks from moral and religious quarters, as happened in the latest issue of *The German Mercury*? Surely one will see here again only the temperament described above and see fit to apply the golden word of {Schiller’s and Goethe’s} *Xenien*:

I never quarrel with sensitive people:
Bad company comes of it, at the first opportunity.

Author’s note.

issue, since it should have been self-evident that a “*First Sketch*” could contain no finished system,¹² I have for many years thought it better to remedy these misunderstandings by completing the system than by a preliminary general discussion. Accordingly, I shall no longer pay the least attention to any critical judgment that does not engage me over first principles, here expressed for the first time, and that fails either to attack these or to deny what necessarily follows from particular statements derived from them. —The method that I have employed in the construction of this system will permit more detailed discussion at the end of the whole presentation than at the beginning. Concerning the manner of exposition, I have taken Spinoza as a model here, since I thought there was good reason to choose as a paradigm the philosopher whom I believed came nearest my system in terms of content or material and in form.¹³ I also adopted this model because this form of exposition allowed {both} the greatest brevity of presentation and the most accurate assessment of the certainty of demonstrations. —I have made quite frequent use besides of a general symbolic notation that was previously employed by Herr Eschenmayer in his essays on natural philosophy and the article “Deduction of the Living Organism” (in *Röschlaub’s Magazine &c.*). I wish all my readers would read these essays, partly for their own intrinsic interest, partly because it would put them in a more secure position to compare my system of nature-philosophy and the sort of natural philosophy produced by an idealism which, though produced quite necessarily, merely occupies the standpoint of reflection.¹⁴ For to grasp in its core the System of Identity which I advance here, {and} which is wholly removed from the standpoint of reflection, it is extremely useful to become closely acquainted with the system of reflection that is its antithesis, since reflection works only from oppositions and rests on oppositions. {4:114} Generally speaking, with this system I take a

¹² *Erster Entwurf einer Systems der Naturphilosophie* (1799). *Tr.*

¹³ Schelling was not the only one to speculate about a transcendental interpretation of Spinoza. Late in life, Kant sees Spinoza as doing something similar to transcendental philosophy in that in his “seeing all things in God,” he adumbrates a universal system of all possible objects under one principle [Kant’s *Opus postumum, Erste Hälfte*, trans. Artur Buchenau (Berlin u. Leipzig: de Gruyter, 1936), 12.5–9, 20–23]. At one point, Kant calls Spinoza, Schelling, and Lichtenberg [a Fichtean philosopher of nature] the past, present, and future of transcendental philosophy (*ibid.*, 1.87.20–33). *Tr.*

¹⁴ *Reflection* is the subject-centered cognition that is the antithesis of the identity philosopher’s speculative knowing. That cognition is ‘reflected’ suggests it is secondhand, diminished, passive. In the body of *My System* Schelling contrasts reflection to *reason* and associates it with the temporal and dynamic perspective of mechanism (4:115). It is synonymous with appearance (4:117) or with the individual’s self-separation from totality that defines it finitude (4:126). In *Further Presentations*, where its use might resonate with Hegel’s *Difference*, it designates cognition tied to a finite existence or associated with sensation (4:362–63); it is also used synonymously with *understanding* to designate the standpoint where being and cognition confront one another as opposites (4:366–67). *Tr.*

double stance, {first} toward the philosophers of previous and contemporary times and {secondly,} toward empirical physicists. As for the philosophers, I have partially explained this point in this preface; a comprehensive explanation will occur in the presentation itself. It is superfluous to remark besides that by 'philosophers' I understand only those who possess principles and method, who do not merely repeat the thoughts of others or cook up a strange stew from different scraps and tidbits. As for the physicists, one can predict their reaction to the philosophy of nature beforehand. By far the greater number of them will continue to fight the inevitable; they talk, therefore, of gradually accepting the constructions of philosophy of nature as probable explanations or confirming them by experiments, or even of finally immortalizing the whole of dynamic physics in their textbooks as a pretty good hypothesis.

This may suffice for an author's statement. From this point on, the subject-matter alone speaks.

§ 1. *Definition.* I call *reason* absolute reason, or reason insofar as it is conceived as the total indifference of the subjective and objective.

It is not the place here to justify this turn of speech, since its only function is to generally awaken the idea that I shall connect with this word. —Just a brief indication must be given, then, of how one comes to understand reason this way. One gets there by reflecting on what presents itself in philosophy {as occupying a position} between the subjective and the objective, which evidently must be an item standing indifferently over against both extremes. Reason's thought is foreign to everyone; to conceive it as absolute, and thus to come to the standpoint I require, one must abstract from what does the thinking. For the one who performs this abstraction {4:115} reason immediately ceases to be something subjective, as most people imagine it. It can of course no longer be conceived as something objective either, since an objective something or a thought item becomes possible only in contrast to a thinking something, from which there is complete abstraction here. Reason, therefore, becomes the true *in-itself* through this abstraction, which is located precisely in the indifference-point of the subjective and the objective.

The standpoint of philosophy is the standpoint of reason; its kind of knowing is a knowing of things as they are in themselves, i.e., as they are in reason. It is the nature of philosophy to completely suspend all succession and externality, all difference of time and everything which mere imagination¹⁵ mingles with thought, in a word, to see in things only that aspect by which they express absolute reason. Philosophy, however, does not view them insofar as they are objects

¹⁵For imagination refers to reason, as phantasy does to the understanding. The former is productive, the latter reproductive. (What follows from this point are additions from one of the author's copies. *Ed.*)

of reflection, which is subject to the laws of mechanism and has duration in time.

§ 2. *Outside reason is nothing, and in it is everything.* If reason is conceived as we have asked in § 1, one immediately becomes aware that nothing could be outside it. For if one supposes there *is* something outside it, then either it *is* for-itself outside of reason and is then the subjective, which is contrary to the assumption, or it *is* not for-itself outside reason and so stands to this something-outside-it as objective item to objective item, and is therefore objective. But this again is contrary to the assumption (§ 1).

Therefore nothing is outside reason, and everything is in it.

Remark. There is no philosophy except from the standpoint of the absolute. Throughout this presentation, no hesitation on this matter will be entertained: reason is the absolute to the extent that it is thought, just as we defined it (§ 1); the present proposition, accordingly, is valid only under this assumption.

Explanation. Any objection to this view might refer just {4:116} to this: that one is accustomed to viewing things not as they are in reason, but only as they appear. Consequently, we do not tarry with the refutation of objections, since in what follows we must prove that everything that *is* is in essence equal to reason and is one with it. The proposition as formulated would need of no proof or even explanation but would instead rank as an axiom, if so many people were not entirely unaware that there could be nothing at all outside reason unless reason posited it outside itself. Reason never does this, however, only a false employment of reason that is accompanied by the inability to make the abstraction we required above and to forget the subjective [isolating, individual] element in oneself.

§ 3. *Reason is simply one and simply self-identical.* Were this not so, the being of reason would require some additional ground other than reason itself, since reason itself contains only the ground that it *is*, not that some other reason would *be*; reason would not be absolute, which is contrary to the assumption. *Reason is hence one in an absolute sense.* If one supposes the reverse of the second clause, namely that reason is not self-identical, then that in virtue of which it is different from itself must still be posited in it, and, since *outside* it (*praeter ipsam*) there is nothing (§ 2), this other factor must therefore express the essence of reason. Since, moreover, everything is in-itself only in virtue of its capacity to express the essence of reason (§ 1), this other factor too, considered in itself or in reference to reason, would again be equal to reason, one with it. *Reason is therefore one* (not only *ad extra*, but also *ad intra*, or) in itself, i.e., it is simply self-identical.

§ 4. *The ultimate law for the being of reason, and, since there is nothing outside reason (§ 2), for all being* (because it is comprehended within reason) *is the law of identity*, which with respect to all being is expressed by $A = A$.

The proof follows immediately from § 3 and the propositions that precede it. {4:117}

Corollary 1. By all other laws, accordingly, if there are such, nothing is determined as it is in reason or in itself, but only as it is for reflection or in appearance.

Corollary 2. The proposition $A = A$ is the sole truth posited *in itself*, without any reference to time. I designate such a truth an eternal truth, not in an empirical but in an absolute sense.

§ 5. *Definition.* I call the A of the first position the subject, to differentiate it from that of the second, the predicate.

§ 6. The proposition $A = A$, conceived universally, says neither that A on its own *is*, nor that it is as subject or predicate. Instead, *the unique being posited through this proposition is that of identity itself, which accordingly is posited in complete independence from A as subject and from A as predicate. The proof of the first assertion is furnished in the *Theory of Science § 1*; the second part of the proposition follows of itself from the first and is contained within it. Since abstraction is made from the being of A in its own right, and also from its status as subject and predicate, the sole thing remaining from which abstraction cannot be made, which is therefore really posited in this proposition, is absolute identity itself.¹⁶*

§ 7. *The unique unconditioned cognition is that of absolute identity.* Since it alone expresses the essence of reason (§ 3), the proposition $A = A$ is also the unique unconditionally certain proposition (§ 4, Corollary 2). But absolute identity is also posited through this proposition (§ 6). Therefore [its cognition] is etc.

Comment. The preceding series of statements was advanced merely to show the unconditioned character of this cognition. {4:118}. For this cognition is not itself really proven, precisely because it is unconditioned.

§ 8. *Absolute identity simply is and is as certain as the proposition $A = A$ is.* For it is immediately posited along with this proposition (§ 6).

Corollary 1. Absolute identity cannot be thought except through the proposition $A = A$, yet it is posited through this proposition as *standing in being*. Therefore it *is* by virtue of being thought, and *it belongs to the essence of absolute identity to be*.

¹⁶The principle $A = A$ requires no demonstration. It is the ground of all demonstration. What is posited by it is only unconditioned being-positing. But where this unconditioned being-positing manifests itself is completely a matter of indifference for the principle. This A in the subject position and the other in the predicate position is not what is really posited; what is posited is only the identity between the two. *Editor's addition.*

Corollary 2. The being of absolute identity is an eternal truth, since the truth of its being is equivalent to the truth of the proposition $A = A$. But {the proposition $A = A$ } is {the sole truth that is in itself} (§ 4, Corollary 2) etc.

§ 9. *Reason is identical with absolute identity.* The proposition $A = A$ is reason's law of being (§ 4). Now by means of this proposition absolute identity is also immediately posited as standing in being (§ 6), and since the being of absolute identity is identical with its essence (§ 8, Corollary 1), reason is also (§ 1) identical with absolute identity itself, not only in being but in essence.

*Corollary. Therefore the being of reason (in the sense defined in § 1) is just as unconditioned as that of absolute identity, or: **Being** belongs equally to the essence of reason and to that of absolute identity.* The proof follows immediately from the preceding.

§ 10. *Absolute identity is simply infinite.* —For if it were finite, then the ground of its finitude would lie either in itself or not in itself, outside it. In the first case, it would be the cause of some determination in itself, hence something simultaneously causing and caused, and therefore not absolute identity. In the second case, the ground of its finitude would be outside it. But there is nothing outside it. For if there were something outside it by which it might be limited, it would have to be related to this outside something as objective item to objective item. But this is absurd (§ 1). Therefore just as surely as it is, is it infinite, i.e., it is simply infinite. {4:119}

§ 11. *Absolute identity can never be abolished as identity.* For it belongs to its essence to be, yet it is only because it is absolute identity (§§ 6, 8, Corollary 1). Therefore it can never be abolished as such, for otherwise being would necessarily cease to belong to its essence, i.e., something contradictory would be posited. Therefore, etc.

§ 12. *Everything that is, is absolute identity itself.* Since identity is infinite and can never be abolished as absolute identity (§§ 10, 11), everything that *is* must be absolute identity itself.

Corollary 1. Everything that is, is in itself identical. This proposition is merely the converse of the preceding one, and so follows immediately from it.

Corollary 2. Absolute identity is the unique thing that absolutely *is* or is *in itself*; so everything is in itself only to the extent it is absolute identity itself, and to the extent that it is not absolute identity itself, it is simply not *in itself*.

§ 13. *With respect to being in itself, nothing has come into being.* For everything that *is* in itself is absolute identity itself (§ 12). This, however, has not entered into being, but simply is; therefore it is posited without any connection to time and outside all time, for its being is an eternal truth (§ 8, Corollary 2). Consequently, everything viewed as being in itself is absolutely eternal.

§ 14. *Nothing considered in itself is finite.* The proof is drawn from § 10 in the same way as that of the preceding proposition.

Corollary. It follows that from the standpoint of reason (§ 1) there is no finitude, and that considering things as finite is precisely the same as not considering them as they are in themselves. —To the same extent, to consider things as differentiated or multiple means not to consider them *in themselves* or from the standpoint of reason.

Explanation. The most basic mistake of all philosophy is to {4:120} assume that absolute identity has actually stepped beyond itself and to attempt to make intelligible how this emergence occurs. Absolute identity has surely never ceased being identity, and everything that *is* is considered in itself—not just the appearance of absolute identity, but {—} *identity itself*. Further, since it is the nature of philosophy to consider things as they are in themselves (§ 1), i.e., insofar as they are infinite and are absolute identity itself (§§ 14, 12), true philosophy consists in the demonstration that absolute identity (the infinite) has not stepped beyond itself and that everything that is, insofar as it is, is infinity itself—a proposition that Spinoza alone of all previous philosophers acknowledged, even if he did not fully carry out its demonstration, nor express it clearly enough to avoid being misunderstood ever after.

§ 15. *Absolute identity is only under the form of the proposition $A = A$, or this form is immediately posited through its being.* Because it *is* in a simply unconditioned way and cannot *be* in a conditioned way, unconditioned being can be posited only under the form of this proposition (§ 8). Therefore this form is immediately posited along with the being of absolute identity, and there is here no transition, no before and after, but absolute simultaneity of being and of form itself.

Corollary 1. Whatever is posited along with the form of the proposition $A = A$ is also immediately posited with the being of absolute identity itself,¹⁷ though it belongs not to its essence but only to the form or mode of its being. The proof for the first part of the proposition follows directly from the preceding one. The second part of the proposition is proved as follows: the form of the proposition $A = A$ is determined by the character of A as subject and A as object. But absolute identity is posited in this very proposition independently of A as subject and A as predicate (§ 6). So too, whatever is posited along with the form of this {4:121} proposition belongs not to absolute identity itself, but merely to the mode or form of its being.

Corollary 2. Whatever belongs merely to the form of being of absolute identity, but not to identity itself, is not posited in itself. This is because only absolute identity itself is in its essence posited in itself. Therefore etc.

¹⁷What is derived from this same form is therefore equally eternal with absolute identity. *Editor's addition.*

§ 16. *Between the A that is posited as subject in $A = A$ and the A posited as predicate (§ 5), no intrinsic opposition is possible.* For as far as both subject and predicate are, they belong not to the essence but only to the being of absolute identity, but as far as they belong to the essence of absolute identity [or are absolute identity itself], they cannot be conceived as different. There is therefore no *intrinsic* opposition between the two.

Corollary 1. There is posited in the position of the subject and that of the predicate the same entire A.

Corollary 2. *Absolute identity is only under the form of an identity of identity.* This is so because absolute *is* only under the form of the proposition $A = A$ (§ 15), and this form is posited along with its being. In the proposition $A = A$, however, the same thing is equated with itself, i.e., an identity of identity is posited. So absolute identity *is* only as the identity of an identity, and this is the form of its being, inseparable from its being itself.

§ 17. *There is an original cognition of absolute identity, and this is posited immediately with the proposition $A = A$.* This is so because there is a cognition of identity as such (§ 7). Now if there is nothing outside absolute identity, this cognition is within absolute identity itself. But this cognition does not immediately follow from its essence, for from its essence it follows only that identity *is*. It must immediately follow from its being, therefore, and so belong to its form of being (§ 15, Corollary 1). But the form of its being is as original as this being itself, and just as original is everything posited along with this form (*ibid.*). Hence there is {4:122} an original cognition of absolute identity, and since this belongs to its form of being, it is directly and immediately posited with the proposition $A = A$ [i.e., this cognition is an attribute of absolute identity itself].

§ 18. *Each thing that is, considered absolutely and in itself, is in essence absolute identity, but in its form of being, it is a cognizing of absolute identity.* The first part of this proposition follows from § 12, the second from § 17. For if cognition of absolute identity belongs directly to the form of its being, and this form is inseparable from its *being*, then everything that *is*, is with respect to its form of *being* a cognition of absolute identity.

Corollary 1. The original cognition of absolute identity is therefore also its *being* according to form,¹⁸ and, conversely, every being is in its formal aspect a cognizing (—not a being-cognized—) of absolute identity.

Corollary 2. There is no primitive item cognized [apart from the one doing the cognizing]. Instead, cognizing is original *being* itself, considered in its form.

¹⁸Only infinite *in its very self*, hence not to be distinguished from being. *Editor's addition.*

§ 19. *Absolute identity is only under the form of cognizing its identity with itself.* This is because its cognizing is as original as its form of being (§ 18), indeed it is its very form of being (ibid., Corollary 1). This form, however, is that of an identity of identity (§ 16, Corollary 2). Now if there is no identity outside it, then its cognizing is strictly a cognizing of its self-identity, and since it *is* only under the form of cognizing, so it *is* only under the form of cognizing its self-identity.

Corollary. The entirety of what *is* is in itself, or considered in its essence, absolute identity; considered in its form of being, the whole is the self-cognizing of absolute identity in its identity. —This follows immediately {from the above}.

§ 20. *The self-cognizing of absolute identity in its identity is infinite.*

For self-cognizing is the form of its being [of the being of absolute {4:123} identity]. But its being is infinite (§ 10). Thus this cognizing is an infinite one as well [therefore indivisible].

§ 21. *Absolute identity cannot cognize itself infinitely without infinitely positing itself as subject and object.* This proposition is self-evident.

§ 22. *It is the same identical absolute identity that, with respect to its form of being, if not with respect to its essence, is posited as subject and object.* This is so because absolute identity's form of being is the same as the form of the proposition $A = A$. In this proposition, however, the same entire A is posited in the position of the subject and that of the predicate (§ 16, Corollary 1). There is, therefore, one and the same identity which according to its form of being is posited as subject and object. Further, since it is only with respect to the form of its being that it is posited as subject and object [in a divisible way], it is not so posited *in itself*, i.e., with respect to its essence.¹⁹

Corollary. *In itself* [relative to absolute identity] *no opposition occurs between subject and predicate.*

§ 23. *None other than quantitative difference is [at all] possible between subject and predicate.*²⁰ For 1): any qualitative difference between the two is unthinkable. —*Proof.* Absolute identity *is*, independent of A as subject and object (§ 6), and it *is* equally unconditioned in both. Now since it is the same equal absolute identity that is posited as subject and object, there is no qualitative difference. Consequently, there remains 2): since there is no possible difference between the two in terms of being itself (because they are equally unconditioned as subject and object, thus the same in essence), there remains only a quantitative difference, i.e., one that obtains with respect to the *amount* of being, such that the same identity is posited [as subject and object], but with a predominance of subjectivity [of cognizing] or objectivity [being]. {4:124}

¹⁹ Were this form not a cognizing, it would generally not be divisible *qua* form. *Editor's addition.*

²⁰ Whether this difference is actual is wholly undecided here. *Editor's addition.*

Explanation. We ask the reader to follow us in this proof with at least the provisional trust that it will become perfectly intelligible after one simply forgets previously obtained ideas, especially those of the customary concepts *subjective* and *objective*, and thinks in each proposition exactly and only what we wish thought. We offer this suggestion here, once and for all. This much at least is clear at the start: we admit no opposition between subject and object (since what is posited in the one position and in the other is the very same identity; subject and object are thus in essence one), but perchance just some sort of difference between subjectivity and objectivity. These distinctions belong to the form of every being, since they pertain to the form of being of absolute identity. Though perhaps they do not subsist in an identical way, they *are* together in such fashion that they can be alternately posited as predominant {in one instance and in another}. We do not yet assert all this here, but only advance it as a possible conception. For the sake of greater clarity, we add the following remark: since the same A is posited in the predicate and in the subject position in the proposition $A = A$, without doubt there is posited between the two utterly no difference at all, but an indifference. In this situation, difference (consequently, the discriminability of two) would become possible only if either predominant subjectivity or predominant objectivity were posited, in which case $A = A$ would have changed into to $A = B$. (B is assumed as a designation for objectivity). Now either this factor or its opposite might be the predominant one, but in either case, difference sets in.²¹ If we express this predominance of subjectivity or objectivity by the exponent of the subjective factor, it follows that if $A = B$ is posited, there is also conceived a positive or negative power of A, so that $A^0 = B$ must be the case just as much as $A = A [= 1]$ itself, i.e., it must be the expression of absolute indifference. Difference is simply not to be understood in any other way than this.

§ 24. *The form of subjectivity-objectivity is not {4:125} actual unless a quantitative difference of the two is posited.*

Proof. This is so because it is not actualized {*actu*} if subjectivity and objectivity as such are not posited. But since the two cannot be posited as such, they might still be posited with quantitative difference (§ 23) [since only in this way are they discernible]. Thus the form of subjectivity-objectivity is not actualized {*actu*} or really posited unless quantitative difference is posited between the two.

§ 25. *With respect to absolute identity no quantitative difference is conceivable.*

Since this identity is identical (§ 9) to the absolute indifference of the subjective and the objective (§ 1), neither the one nor the other can be discriminated within it.

²¹ With quantitative difference, quality too commences. *Editor's addition.*

Corollary. Quantitative difference is possible only *outside* absolute identity.

This proposition is just the inversion of the preceding one; it is certain, even if there is nothing except absolute identity.

§ 26. *Absolute identity is absolute totality.* —Because it is itself everything that is, or it cannot be conceived as separated from everything that is (§ 12). It *is*, therefore, only as everything, i.e., it is absolute totality.

Definition. I designate absolute totality the universe.

Corollary. Quantitative difference is possible only outside absolute totality. This proposition follows directly from §§ 26 and 25, Corollary 1.

§ 27. *Definition.* What exists outside totality I designate in this context an **individual being or thing**.

§ 28. *There is no individual being or individual thing in itself.* For the sole *in-itself* is absolute identity (§ 8). But this is only as totality (§ 26) [therefore only totality is the *in-itself*].

Remark. There is also nothing in itself outside totality, {4:126} and if something is viewed outside the totality, this happens only by an arbitrary separation of the individual from the whole effected by reflection. But in itself this separation simply does not happen, since everything that *is* is one (§ 12), and within the totality is absolute identity itself (§ 26).

§ 29. *Quantitative difference between subjectivity and objectivity is conceivable only relative to individual being, but not in itself, or in light of the absolute totality.* —The first part of the proposition follows directly from §§ 27 and 26, Corollary, the second part from 25 and 26.

§ 30. *If quantitative difference in fact occurs in the perspective of the individual thing, then, to the extent that it is, absolute identity is to be understood as the quantitative indifference of subjectivity and objectivity.* The proof follows immediately from the proposition that absolute identity is absolute totality (§ 26).²² {4:127}

²²I wish to pursue in greater detail the deduction that absolute identity is necessarily totality. It is based on the following propositions:

1) The proposition $A = A$ expresses a being, that of absolute identity; this being, however, is inseparable from its form. So there is here a unity of being and form, and this unity is the supreme existence.

2) The being that immediately follows from the essence of absolute identity can only *be* under the form $A = A$ or the form of subject-objectivity. This form, however, *is* not unless subjectivity and objectivity are posited together with {their} quantitative difference. For if both are posited as equally infinite they are utterly indiscernible, since there is no *qualitative* opposition either. Form is destroyed *qua* form; what is both the one *and* the other {of two opposites} with equal infinitude coincides with what is neither one nor the other.

3) The same also holds for the higher form of existence that is based on the absolute indifference of cognition and being. Only under this form can the absolute be posited as existing. But if this form is in fact indifference, there is no ability to discriminate {between cognizing and being} and this form is not posited as such.

Explanation. Expressed in the clearest way possible, our assertion is this: if we could view everything that *is* in the totality, we would perceive in the whole a perfect quantitative balance of subjectivity and objectivity [of the real and the ideal], hence nothing else than a pure identity in which nothing is distinguishable, however much in the perspective of the individual a preponderance might occur on one side or the other. We would therefore perceive that even this quantitative difference is in no way posited *in itself*, but only in appearance. For since absolute identity—that which simply *is* and is in all{—}is not in any way affected by the opposition of subjectivity and objectivity (§ 6), the quantitative difference of these two cannot occur with respect to absolute identity or in itself, and the things or appearances that appear to us as different are not truly different, but are identical *realiter* {in reality}. The result is that all things together, though none for itself, {4:128} display clear unclouded identity itself inside the totality in which primitively opposed potencies cancel each other out. This identity, however, is not produced, but original identity, and it is only produced {in the totality} because it *is*. Therefore it already is in everything that *is*. The power that bursts forth in the stuff of nature is the same in essence as that which displays itself in the world of mind, except that it has to contend there with a surplus of the real, here with one of the ideal. Yet even this opposition, which is not an opposition in essence, but in mere potency, appears as opposition only to one who finds himself outside indifference, who fails to view absolute identity itself

4) Hence the absolute does not exist in actuality unless, in addition to the difference between subjectivity and objectivity, there is also posited a difference with respect to that higher form—a difference between the ideal and the real.

5) Yet this latter difference cannot be posited with respect to the *absolute itself*, {4:127n} since the absolute is inalterably determined as the total indifference of knowing and being, and of subjectivity and objectivity as well. Therefore difference can be posited only in the context of what is sundered from the absolute, and only to the degree that it is sundered. This is the individual. But immediately with the individual, the whole is posited as well. Hence the absolute is posited as absolute by means of being posited with quantitative difference in individuals, but with indifference in the whole. Therefore the absolute *is* only under the form of totality, and this phrase: “quantitative difference in individuals and indifference in the whole” {says} precisely the same thing that “identity of the finite and the infinite” does.

Definition of quantitative difference.—It is a difference that is not posited with respect to essence (on the whole we do not concede there is such a thing), a difference, therefore, based merely on the diversity of {factors within} *form*, and which for this reason one can also designate a ‘formal difference’. *Example:* the pure idea of a triangle. In it is neither an equiangular shape nor of one of unequal angles, neither of an equilateral shape nor of one of unequal sides; an idea of this sort is a quantitative differentiation of the idea of the triangle. But further, the very idea of the triangle can exist only in the totality of these forms, so that it is indeed always posited in individuals with difference, but with indifference in the whole.—To speak generally, quantitative difference is posited only in the context of separation and through the *act of separation*. *Editor’s addition.*

as primary and original.²³ It appears a produced identity only to the one who has separated himself from the whole, and to the extent he isolates himself. To the one who has not withdrawn from the absolute center of gravity, it is *the first being*, the being that never was produced but *is* if anything at all is; it *is* to such a degree that the individual being too is possible only inside it, while outside it, apart from things separated in mere thought, there is truly nothing. But how is it possible for anything to separate itself from this absolute totality or be separated from it in thought? This is a question that cannot yet be answered here, since in its place we prove that such a separation is intrinsically impossible, that it is false from the standpoint of reason, the source of all errors (as can readily be seen).

§ 31. *Absolute identity is only under the form of quantitative indifference of the subjective and the objective* [and so too, that of cognition and being].

Remark. What was assumed in a merely conditional way in the preceding proposition is here asserted absolutely.

Proof. This is so because absolute identity *is* only under the form of subject-objectivity (§ 22). This form is not actualized {*actu*} unless quantitative difference is posited outside totality (§ 24), though inside {4:129} totality, therefore within absolute identity (§ 26), quantitative indifference is posited (§ 25). Consequently, absolute identity *is* only under the form of the quantitative indifference of the subjective and the objective.

§ 32. *Absolute identity is not cause of the universe, but the universe itself.* For everything that *is*, is absolute identity itself (§ 12). But the universe is everything that *is*, etc.²⁴

Remark. The long and profound ignorance about this principle will perhaps excuse our dwelling a while longer on this proof that absolute identity is the universe itself and that it cannot *be* under any other form than that of the universe. This may be especially necessary for those who stand so firm and hardened, as it were, in common sense beliefs that they cannot be torn away from them by philosophical argument (the taste for which they lack). I am nonetheless convinced that everyone will be persuaded of this proposition when he reads over the following propositions attentively and sees that they have been irrefutably proved, to wit: 1) that absolute identity is only under the form of the proposition $A = A$, and that, since it *is*, so too *is* this form; 2) that this form is *original*, therefore linked with the absolute identity of subject and object [being and cognizing]; 3) that identity cannot be *actual* (*actu*) under this form—it is assumed it is, since absolute identity is actualized { *actu* } because it merely is

²³This opposition appears as an opposition only when I separate myself off. *Editor's addition.*

²⁴The universe does not = the material. —Identity is to all eternity just identity, but *universe* means something entirely different. *Editor's addition.*

potential {*potentia*}—unless the indifference expressed in the proposition $A = A$ is quantitative [not qualitative]; 4) that this quantitative indifference can *be* only under the form of absolute totality, thus, of the universe, {and} that accordingly absolute identity, insofar as it *is* (exists) must be the universe itself.

§ 33. *The universe is equally eternal with absolute {4:130} identity itself.* For it is only as universe (§ 32). Identity is eternal, so the universe is equally eternal with it.

Remark. We may with full justification say: Absolute identity is itself the universe; the converse: the universe is absolute identity, is to be said only under a restriction: it is absolute identity considered in its essence *and* in its form of being.

§ 34. *Absolute identity is in essence the same in every part of the universe; for in essence, it is completely independent of A as subject and as object (§ 6), consequently also independent of all quantitative difference (§ 24), and so the same in every part of the universe.*

Corollary 1. The essence of absolute identity is indivisible. —For the same reason. —So too, whatever else may be divided into parts, absolute identity is never partitioned.²⁵

Corollary 2. Nothing that *is* can be negated in its being. For it cannot be negated without absolute identity ceasing to *be*. Since of course identity *simply* is without any reference to quantity, it would simply cease to be if it could be abolished even in some part of the whole. Since it would be just as improper (if we can use the expression) to negate it in the part as to do so in the whole, in the negation of the part it would be abolished as such. Accordingly, it is impossible that anything that *is* be negated in its being.

§ 35. *Nothing individual has the ground of its existence in itself.* —For otherwise its being would necessarily follow from its essence. But everything is identical in essence (§ 12, Corollary 1). Therefore the essence of an individual thing cannot contain the ground that it *is* as this individual. It is therefore not through itself that it *is* as this thing.

§ 36. *Each individual being is determined through another individual being.*²⁶ For as an individual being it is neither {4:131} determined through itself, since it does not subsist in itself and does not contain the ground of its being (§ 35), nor through absolute identity, since this contains only the ground of totality and of being, to the extent it is comprehended in totality. The individual can therefore be determined only through another individual being, which again is determined through another, and so on without end.

²⁵ Divisibility = quantity: Absolute identity is independent of all quantity. *Editor's addition.*

²⁶ The primitive basis of the principle of causality. *Editor's addition.*

Corollary. So too there is no individual being which is not as such a determined entity, consequently a limited one.

§ 37. *Quantitative difference of the subjective and the objective is the ground of all finitude, and, conversely, the quantitative indifference of the two is infinitude.*

As for the first part, quantitative difference is the ground of all individual being (§ 29), consequently of all finitude as well (§ 36). The second part follows of itself from the first.

Explanation. The general expression for the ground of all finitude is $A = B$ (according to § 23, Explanation).

§ 38. *Each individual being is as such a determined form of the being of absolute identity, but not its very being, which is only in totality.*

This is because every individual and finite being is posited through a quantitative difference of subjectivity and objectivity (§ 37), which again is determined through another individual being, i.e., through another determinate quantitative difference of subjectivity and objectivity. —Now since subjectivity—and—objectivity is as such absolute identity's form of being (§ 22), the determinate quantitative difference of the two is a determinate form of the being of absolute identity. But for that very reason it is not identity's being *itself*, which *is* only in quantitative indifference of subjectivity and objectivity, i.e., in totality.

Corollary. Proposition § 36 can therefore also be expressed this way: each individual being is determined through absolute identity, not insofar as it simply is, but only insofar as it is under the form of a determinate quantitative difference between A and B, which {4:132} difference is again determined in the same way, and so on without end. [One difference presupposes the other.]

Remark 1. It might be asked why this precise relation proceeds endlessly or into the infinite. We would reply: the relationship obtains between all subsequent {finite entities} for the same reason it obtains between the first and second. Since of course a first point can never be specified where absolute identity has passed over into an individual thing, if the series {of determinations} did not reach back without end, the individual thing would not be incorporated into totality, but would have to *be* for-itself as an individual thing, which is absurd.

Remark 2. From this it also follows that the law of this relation is not applicable to the absolute totality itself, that it therefore falls outside the principle $A = A$. But nothing is determined as it is *in itself* or in reason by all the laws of modality (§ 4, Corollary 1); and so the same holds too for this {causal} relationship, and vice versa.

§ 39. *Absolute identity is in the individual under the same form under which it is in the whole; conversely, it is in the whole under no other form than the one under which it is in the individual.*

Proof. Absolute identity *is* even in the individual, since every individual is but a determinate form of its being, and it is *entirely* in every individual, since identity is

simply indivisible (§ 34, Corollary) and can never be suspended as absolute identity (§ 11). Since in general it *is* only under some form, it therefore *is* in the individual under the same form under which it *is* in the whole. So too it subsists in the whole under no form other than that under which it subsists in the individual.

Proof for the proposition can also be derived from § 19 ff. Since identity in its form of being is an infinite self-knowing, it is also subject and object unto infinity, in quantitative difference and indifference. {4:133}

§ 40. *Each individual is certainly not absolute, but it is infinite in its kind* [and to the extent it is infinite, it is not subject to the law stated in § 36]. It is not absolutely infinite, since there is something outside it (§ 1), and it is determined in its being by something external (§ 36). It is infinite in its kind, however, or, since mode of being is determined by the quantitative difference of subjectivity and objectivity (§ 29), and since this difference is expressed in the potency of one or the other (§ 23, Explanation), it is infinite within its *potency*, for it expresses absolute identity for its potency²⁷ under the same form as the infinite [e.g., infinite divisibility or rather indivisibility]. Therefore the individual is itself infinite within the scope of its potency, even if not absolutely infinite.

§ 41. *Each individual in relation to itself is a totality.* This proposition is a necessary and immediate consequence of the preceding one.

Remark. It might still be asked here what this individual is in relation to absolute totality. *In this relation, however, it simply does not subsist as individual*, since viewed from the standpoint of absolute totality only totality itself *is* and outside it is *nothing*. —Thus every individual is only an individual as far as it is conceived under the relationship determined by the law stated in § 36, but not as far as it is viewed *in itself* or considered in terms of what it has in common with the infinite.

Corollary. The above proposition can also be expressed this way: Each $A = B$ considered in itself or as referred to itself is an $A = A$, therefore something absolutely self-identical. —Were this not true, there would be nothing real, since everything that *is*, subsists only to the extent it expresses absolute identity under some determinate form of being (§ 38).

§ 42. *Definition.* I shall designate a totality a relative one insofar as it displays the individual in relation to itself. I do so not because the totality could anything but absolute in comparison to the individual, but because it is merely relative compared to absolute totality. {4:134}

Definition 2. Each determinate potency signifies a determinate quantitative difference of subjectivity and objectivity that occurs with respect to the whole or

²⁷ Correction: in its kind. *Editor's addition.*

to absolute totality but which does not occur with respect to this power. Thus, e.g., a negative exponent of A signifies a predominance of objectivity relative to the whole (hence with respect to A and also to B). But for that very reason, since this predominance is common to both A and B, relative to the potency itself in which the predominance occurs a perfect balance of the two elements is possible, and therefore an $A = B$ is an $A = A$.²⁸ {4:135}

Remark. We ask the reader to pay close attention to this definition, since through it alone will he be put in position to appreciate the full interconnection of what follows.

§ 43. *Absolute identity is only under the form of all the potencies.*

This proposition follows directly from Definition 2, § 42, taken together with the proposition that absolute identity is only as the quantitative indifference of subjectivity and objectivity (§ 31).

§ 44. *All potencies are absolutely contemporary.* For absolute identity is only under the form of all the potencies (§ 43). It is eternal, however, and without any reference to time (§ 8, Corollary 2). Therefore the potencies too are without any reference to time, simply eternal, therefore contemporary among themselves.²⁹

²⁸The concept of *power* or *potency* can most accurately understood in the following way: *what is in existence* is always and only indifference, and nothing truly exists *outside it*. But it exists in an infinite way too, and it never exists otherwise than under the form $A = A$, i.e., as cognition and being. We can consider it either in the individual or in the whole. It exists in the individual under the same form as in the whole. Within the whole, the opposition under whose form it exists is that of infinite being and infinite cognition; what falls in this indifference-point—the absolute one—between these two can for that very reason be neither one nor the other, neither infinite cognizing nor infinite being. And only to the extent that it is *neither* as the one *nor* as the other it is the *in-itself*. Further, being is just as infinite as cognition, and *both*: infinite being and infinite cognizing, are expressed by the proposition $A = A$. Since the proposition expresses both, the infinite thus stands under the form of the proposition $A = A$ with respect to cognition and to being. The indifference of cognition and being is therefore not a *simple* identity of A as subject and A as object (Spinoza), but the indifference of $A = A$ as the expression of being and $A = A$ as the expression of cognition. *Qualitative* indifference would be posited if A as subject and A as object were to be posited over against one another. But this is not the case, except in regard to the finite. In the scope of the infinite, there is not A as subject and A as object, but $A = A$ and $A = A$, i.e., one identity posited over against another. Each is equally infinite, hence indivisible, but precisely because they are equally infinite, they are bound together not through some *synthesis*, i.e., not through something *subordinate* to them, but through what is *superior*, through the absolutely *in-itself*. Now since infinite being, like cognizing, {exists} under the form of the proposition $A = A$, that which compared to absolute indifference is a mere *being* is again posited under this form of indifference, i.e., it is *in reference to itself once more the indifference of cognizing and being*. What constitutes a power or potency is just this: that relative to the absolute {something exists} merely under the attribute of cognition or that of being, that it belongs under $A = A$ either as the expression of being or as that of cognizing. *Editor's addition.*

²⁹All causal derivation is thereby precluded, that of thought from being as well as that of being from thought. The failing of idealism is to make *one power* the first. *Editor's addition.*

Remark. Since all the potencies are contemporary, and there is no reason to begin with one or the other of them, there is no alternative but to make the general expression of potency as such—which is $A = B$ (cf. § 23, Explanation)—the object of investigation. —We take the liberty at this point of inserting several propositions that, for the sake of brevity, we leave without explicit proof. Their proof has been advanced elsewhere, partly in the *System of Transcendental Idealism*, partly in essays published in this journal. Therefore we refer everyone to these sources who is not yet acquainted with the proof and who wishes to further follow our demonstrations.

I) If it is granted that $A = B$ stands for a potency (quantitative difference relative to the whole), then in $A = B$, B is posited as that which originally is (hence as the real principle), A on the other hand as that which is not in the same sense as B, but which cognizes B, hence as ideal principle. For a closer discussion of this statement, {4:136} see my *System of {Transcendental} Idealism*, page 74 and especially 84.³⁰ —Yet this opposition has utterly no standing in itself or from the viewpoint of speculation. For *in itself* A has being just as much as B, because A, like B, is the whole of absolute identity (§ 22), which *exists* only under both forms, but under both equally. Since A is the cognizing principle, while B, as we shall discover, is what is intrinsically unlimited or infinite extension, we have here quite precisely both the Spinozistic attributes of absolute substance, thought and extension. We do not merely think these attributes are identical ideally {*idealiter*}, as people commonly understand Spinoza, we think them completely identical in reality {*realiter*} Accordingly, nothing can be posited under the form A that is not as such and *eo ipso* also posited under the form B, and nothing can be posited under B that would not immediately also be posited under A. Thought and extension are thus never separated in anything, not even in thought and in extension, but are without exception {everywhere} together and identical.

II) If $A = B$ is generally the expression of finitude, then A is to be conceived as its *principle*.

III) B, which originally *is*, is the simply limitable, in itself unlimited {factor in $A = B$ }, while A is the limiting one. Since each is *in itself* infinite, the former is to be conceived as the positive infinite, the latter as the negative, therefore opposite in direction.

§ 45. *Neither A nor B can be posited in itself, but only the same {identity} with predominant subjectivity, alongside {predominant} objectivity and the quantitative indifference of the two.*³¹

³⁰ See F. W. J. Schelling, *Sämtliche Werke*, 3: 385, 390. *Ed.*

³¹ Put in other terms, the proposition would read: Neither A as subject nor A as object can be posited *in itself*, but only one and the same $A = A$ with predominant ideality (as the expression of knowing) and reality (as the expression of being) and the quantitative indifference of the two. *Editor's addition.*

Proof. There is nothing in itself outside absolute identity (§ 8), but the latter is posited endlessly infinity under the form of subjectivity {4:137} and objectivity [A as subjectivity or A as objectivity] (§§ 21 ff.). If this is so, then unto infinity (e.g., in some one part) neither subjectivity nor objectivity can be posited for itself. So when quantitative difference ($A = B$) is posited it is only under the form of the predominance of one factor over the other, and this occurs equally in the whole and in the part (§ 39). But there is no reason that one should be posited as predominant over the other. Therefore both must be posited as predominant simultaneously, and this again is inconceivable without the two reducing their opposition to quantitative indifference. Therefore neither A nor B can be posited in itself, but only the identical with predominant subjectivity, alongside both {predominant} objectivity and the quantitative indifference of the two.

§ 46. *Subjectivity and objectivity can be posited as predominant only in opposite tendencies or directions.* It follows immediately from § 44, III.³²

Corollary. Absolute identity's form of being can thus be universally conceived through the image of a *line*

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 + & & + \\
 A = B & & A = B \\
 \hline
 & & A = A
 \end{array}$$

where the very same identity is posited in each direction, with predominant A or B in the opposite directions, while $A = A$ itself falls at the point of equilibrium. (We signify the predominance of one factor over the other with the + sign).

Explanation. For further consideration we attach some general reflections about this line.

A) The same identity is posited throughout the line, and even at $A = B$ is posited not B *in itself*, but only {B as} predominant. Exactly same holds for A at $A = B$. {4:138}

B) What holds for the line as a whole, holds too for each individual section of it unto infinity. —*Proof.* This is because absolute identity is posited endlessly, and is posited endlessly under the same form (§ 39). Therefore what holds of the whole line, holds too for each part of it unto infinity.

C) Accordingly, the constructed line is divisible unto infinity, and its construction is the ground of infinite divisibility.

³²Thus we never leave the form of subjectivity-objectivity, we never emerge from $A = A$. All differentiation consists just in this: $A = A$ is posited in one direction or tendency as infinite knowing, in the other as infinite being. *Editor's addition.*

Remark. From this it is also clear why absolute identity is never divided (§ 34, Corollary). That is, in every section {of the line divided} there are still three points, i.e., the entire absolute identity which *is* only under this form.—But just this fact: that absolute identity is never divided, makes possible the infinite divisibility of that which is not absolute identity, which is therefore (§ 27) an individual thing [which is to be conceived through the concept of quantity].

D) I designate $\overset{+}{A} = B$ and $A = \overset{+}{B}$ the poles {of the constructed line}, but $A = A$ the indifference-point. So each point of the line, depending on how it is viewed, is the indifference-point and pole or its opposite {one of the end-poles}. —For since the line is infinitely divisible (C), and division is unconstrained in every direction, since the same {identity} *is* in every direction (A), then every point can also serve as indifference-point relative to some other, or become now one, now the other of the two opposed end-poles, depending on how I divide {the line}.

Corollary. From this it is clear: a) how the line, abstracted from the fact that I divide it ideally {idealiter}, is, when viewed in reality {realiter} or in itself, absolute identity in which there is simply nothing to divide. b) how with this line, since it is the fundamental form of [the construction] of our entire system,³³ we never abstractly {in abstracto} step outside the indifference-point.

E) The two poles may be considered as infinitely close to one another or as infinitely remote from each other. —{This} follows directly from the preceding propositions. {4:139}

F) An infinite lengthening of this line could never produce more than these three points. —The proposition is the mere converse of one section of the above.

§ 47. *The constructed line* (§ 46, Corollary) *is the form of being*³⁴ *of absolute identity in the part as in the whole.* The proof includes the above from § 45 on. —This line accordingly satisfies the requirement of § 39.

§ 48. *The constructed line is the form of being of absolute identity only insofar as A and B are posited as being* [as equally real] *in all potencies.*³⁵ —This is so because absolute identity is only under the form of A and B. That is, if A and B themselves *are*, then surely absolute identity *is*. And since identity *is* only under the form of all the potencies (§ 45), A and B are therefore posited as subsisting in all potencies.

³³The same thing for the philosopher that the line is for the geometer. *Editor's addition.*

³⁴Correction: of existence. *Editor's addition.*

³⁵With complete indifference whether identity be conceived under the attribute of one or that of the other. *Editor's addition.*

Corollary. The *degree* of subjectivity with which A subsists (§ 45), must therefore be entirely independent from this being [this real-being] it has in all potencies, since the difference of potencies depends precisely on this difference of degree (§ 23, Explanation).

§ 49. *The constructed line, considered in itself, can contain the ground of no individual potency.* —Since it *is* in the whole as it is in the part (§ 47), it expresses all potencies just as it expresses a particular one.

Corollary. The same holds true for the formula $A = B$, since it is the symbol for a potency as such (§ 23, Explanation).

§ 50. *The formula $A = B$ can signify a being only to the extent that A and B are both posited in it as subsisting* [as equally real].

Proof. This is so because every $A = B$, because it designates a being, is an $A = A$ relative to itself (§ 41, Corollary), i.e., a relative totality. Now a relative totality is only what absolute identity {4:140} expresses for its potency under the same form, the infinite for instance (§ 42). But absolute identity *is* in {a potency like} the infinite only because A and B are posited as subsisting under all potencies (§ 50). So too $A = B$ signifies a **being** only to the extent that A and B are both posited as *being*.

Corollary. The degree of subjectivity or objectivity with which A and B subsist is entirely independent of this being of A and B. (§ 48, Corollary).

Explanation 1. If we signify the two opposed factors of the construction [subjectivity and objectivity] by A and B, then $A = B$ falls neither under A nor B, but in the indifference-point of the two. Now this indifference-point is not the absolute one, for at the latter falls $A = A$ [as the indifference of cognizing and being] or quantitative indifference, but in the present one $A = B$ or quantitative difference [of cognizing and being]. —In $A = B$, A is actual as mere cognizing, B as that which originally *is*, the former thus posited as merely ideal, the latter as real (§ 44, Remark 1). It cannot *be* this way, since A subsists as much as B (*ibid.*) and should be equal to it, i.e., *have being* in common with it, not just ideally {idealiter}, but really {realiter}; only under this condition does B subsist. If both ought to be equally be posited as real, a relative doubling necessarily occurs in the passage from relative identity to relative totality, yet this doubling happens only after the two are equated in reality {realiter}. The following schema will serve to make this clear.

A		B
	1. $A = B$ (relative identity).	
2.A	(relative doubling).	B
		3. $A = B$ (relative totality).

The following remarks may be made about this schema: —The schema distinguishes relative identity from relative totality.³⁶ {4:141} Absolute identity, by contrast, is also absolute totality (§ 26) for in it A and B do not subsist as different and so are not posited as ideal or real. —To the extent $A = B$ is posited as relative identity, there is necessarily also posited a stepping out from identity on A's part, since not only is it posited as subjective but as *having being* (§ 50) or as *real*. The totality of *this schema* is caused, then, by A being posited jointly with B under B [expressed by $A = B$]. This $A = B$, in which A is posited with B as *being*, is, considered in complete isolation or in- and for-itself, really the $A = A$ of this potency; it is $A = B$, i.e., predominant objectivity or subjectivity, only with respect to the whole, not in itself (§ 42, Definition 2). We request {the reader} not to disregard these remarks, for even though they primarily serve to explain our method, they are for that very reason necessary and indispensable for a basic understanding of the construction of this system. —The following will serve to clarify still more the meaning of the schema set out above. In $A = B$ (conceived as relative identity) absolute identity is posited only generally under the form of self-cognizing; from the viewpoint of the originally objective, it is *limited* by the subjective. We designate the tendency or direction in which B (as infinite extension) is limited the *outward* tendency, {and} the one in which alone A can be limited the *inward*. —Now absolute identity is posited as an infinite self-cognizing (§§ 19, 20). Consequently there can be nothing in it (e.g., the condition of being-limited) that would not also be posited under the form of self-cognizing; this situation is necessary and must be carried forward until it is posited under the form of absolute self-cognizing. So with A identity must cognize itself as immediately limited in its subjectivity, with B as limited in its objectivity, and when this limitation is posited as mutual {in $A = B$ } it must recognize itself in the relative totality. So a necessary transition from relative identity to relative totality follows directly from the infinitude of absolute identity's self-cognizing. {4:142}

Explanation 2. Relative totality is the common reality of A and B (1). Outside absolute identity, therefore, there is posited relative to the subjective a pervasive tendency toward being or reality. This tendency cannot subsist anymore within absolute identity itself since there is in it utterly no opposition between the subjective and the objective. In it, ultimate reality and ultimate ideality fall into an indivisible unity. One can say of reality therefore, though not of objectivity, that it is the predominant element in the whole series {of potencies and of individuals within potencies}, since everything, even the subjective, strives toward it.

³⁶ All construction starts from relative identity. Absolute identity is not constructed, but simply is. *Editor's addition.*

—In the highest instance of reality one again finds absolute totality, absolute balance of subjectivity and objectivity.

Explanation 3. Since the schema noted above is derived from the universal concept of potency ($A = B$) it is necessarily the schema of all potencies, and since, further, absolute totality is constructed only through a realization of the subjective in all potencies, just as the relative totality is constructed through a realization {of subjectivity} in the determinate potency, so must the succession of potencies follow according to this schema.

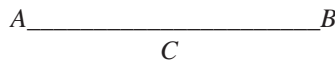
§ 51. *The first relative totality is matter.*

Proof.

a) $A = B$ is not anything real, either as relative identity or as relative doubling. —In the individual as in the whole $A = B$ can be expressed as identity only through the line (§ 46, Corollary). But in this line A is everywhere posited as *having being*. Therefore this line generally presupposes $A = B$ as relative totality (§ 50, Explanation 1); relative totality is therefore the *first thing presupposed*, and if relative identity *is*, it is only through totality.

The same thing holds for relative doubling. For since A and B can never be separated from one another, the only way relative doubling would be possible, would be that the identity of the line

ACB {4:143}



in which A signifies the $A = B$ pole, B the $A = B$ pole, and C the indifference-point be suspended, and



AC and CB be posited as different lines (under the schema of the angle $C \text{-----} B$, hence under form of the *first two* dimensions). But since AC and CB are, each for itself, the whole, relative doubling presupposes relative totality just as relative identity does, and if it *is*, it is only through totality that it can *be*.

b) Though within the relative totality, relative identity and doubling do not actually {*actu*} subsist, they are still potentially {*potentia*} contained. —This is so because the two precede relative totality not actually, but potentially, as is clear from the argument of § 50, Explanation {1}.

c) The same $A = B$ therefore *is* simultaneously under the form of the first dimension (pure length) and the first two dimensions (length and breadth), and it is in fact posited for itself under each form—which is contradictory. The two

opposite dimensions must therefore mutually resolve themselves in a third (which here is revealed to be the condition under which A and B can be posited in relative totality). This third dimension must be of the sort that through it length and breadth are completely suspended, but nonetheless A and B come to relative difference, since otherwise (§ 37) the infinite would be produced (or infinite space, as will be shown in the sequel). So the third dimension must be produced in a way that A and B remain in quantitative difference. But exactly this situation occurs only in matter since it represents the third dimension under the form of individual being. *Therefore matter is relative totality* as such, and since it can be derived immediately from $A = B$ or the general expression of potency, it is the *first* relative totality or that which is posited when potency as such is posited. {4:144}

Corollary. Matter is the 'first existent'. —{This} follows from the proposition just proved.

*General Remark*³⁷

We have intentionally pursued *this* proof of our proposition since it is the shortest. The following additional points are what is of chief importance for this subject: 1) one must be convinced of the primordially of matter, that it is the first item presupposed. If one holds this conviction it becomes quite clear that to the extent that identity *is*, it subsists only as totality and also that originally nothing else *is*. 2) One must distinctly conceive the requirement that A and B are to be originally identified not just ideally *{idealiter}*, but really *{realiter}*, to see that this demand is met only in matter. For it is identical to the requirement that something which intrinsically moves only inward (A) should become real *{objectified}*, that there should then be posited a real return inward, or an 'inner' that is simultaneously an 'outer'—such a thing exists only in what one calls the inner aspect of matter, which is equivalent to the third dimension. 3) One must

³⁷ Only someone who has followed us but lacks true insight into the meaning of our system could interrupt at this point with the question: So is this system realism or idealism? One who has understood us sees that this question makes no sense whatsoever in reference to us. For us of course, there is simply nothing in itself except the absolute indifference 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. *So too matter is, but it is not as matter, but only insofar as it belongs to the being of absolute identity* and expresses absolute identity for its potency. We wish to take this opportunity, which seems most appropriate, to show by the example of matter how Spinoza's three types of cognition can be displayed in system and what meaning they have within it. The lowest stage of knowing is to regard matter as such as the real; to see in matter what it has in common with the infinite (totality, relative to itself), therefore to know it generally as nothing but totality, is the second; finally to know that, considered absolutely, matter is not and that only absolute identity is, is the ultimate level or genuine speculative cognition. *Author's note.*

think the quantitative being-positing of A and B concretely. If one assumes, e.g., {4:145} that A is infinite and that it infinitely returns from B, it would be infinitely forced inward; in that case it would merely be an 'inner', and for that very reason also no 'inner', since this concept has standing only in opposition and opposition occurs only within quantitative difference, but never within indifference. The same thing holds if we infinitely posit B (the factor that moves outward) or, finally, if we infinitely posit both, A as well as B. There *is* an inner *and* an outer only within relative totality. Therefore, because matter as such is posited, it is also posited with the quantitative difference of A and B.

§ 52. *The essence of absolute identity, insofar as it is immediately the ground of reality, is power.*—This follows from the concept of power. For every immanent cause of reality is designated a power. But if absolute identity is the immediate ground of a reality, it is immanent cause as well. This is so because it is really only the immanent cause of a being (§§ 32, 38, Remark 2). Therefore, etc.

§ 53. *Immediately through absolute identity A and B are posited as being or as real.*—The proof includes all previous propositions, since we have derived the fact that the 'first existent' (consequently also A and B) has being directly from absolute identity itself.

Corollary 1. Hence, as the immediate ground of reality of A and B, absolute identity is power or force (§ 52).

Corollary 2. A and B are the immediate ground of the reality of the 'first existent' [of the first quantitative difference], and since both of them are in essence equivalent to absolute identity—since the same absolute identity is in each of them (§ 22)—both of them, A and B, are forces.³⁸

Corollary 3. As immediate ground of the reality of the 'first existent' A is attractive force, B is repulsive force.—The demonstration of this proposition is presupposed. Cf., *System of Transcendental Idealism*, pp. 169 ff. [Cf., 440 ff. of the previous volume]. {4:146}

§ 54. *As the immediate ground of the reality of A and B in the 'first existent,' absolute identity is gravitational force.*

This is so because A and B, as subsisting in the 'first existent' and as the immanent cause of its reality, are the attractive and the repulsive force (§ 53, Corollary 3). But the power by which these two are posited as *being* and as the immanent cause of the reality of the 'first existent' [of the first quantitative difference] is gravitational force³⁹ (for the proof, cf., Vol. 1 of this journal, 2nd fascicle, pp. 19 and 24 ff. [above pp. 34 and 37 ff.]). Therefore, etc. . . .

³⁸ Correction: thus both appear as forces. *Editor's addition.*

³⁹ Quantitative difference aside, it is not gravitational force but absolute indifference. *Editor's addition.*