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Schelling, Jung and the *Imaginatio Vera*

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While Jung hardly mentions Schelling in his writings, Schelling's philosophy anticipates many elements of his psychology. In Schelling's *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom* philosophy reaches a crisis point, which prepares the way for Schelling's positive philosophy as well as existentialism and the later ascendancy of depth psychology as Jung conceived it. A closer examination of the nature of this crisis as it finds expression in Schelling's *Investigations,* which takes clues from Berdyaev's and Kierkegaard's existential philosophy, provides a revealing perspective on the present post-modern condition of our culture. This essay is an attempt to examine Schelling's text with regard to the role the imagination plays in it in order to gain deeper insight into the cultural relevance of Jung's psychology.

Keywords: C.G. Jung; G.W.F. Schelling; imagination; good and evil; personality; myth

Introduction

> Every truly creative individual has to create his own mythology.
> F.W.J. Schelling[1]

Is there still a place for myth in our present world or is it not rather naïve and even positively dangerous to glorify the mythic imagination? One certainly has good reasons to be suspicious of such attempts if one thinks back to the events of the first half of the twentieth century, not to mention the current revival of fundamentalisms. With such legitimate concerns in mind, one would be most inclined to interpret C.G. Jung's psychology as primarily pursuing a project of 'demythologization' that aims at increasing consciousness through the withdrawing of projections.[2]

But even if one favors such a modern reading of Jung's psychology, it certainly cannot be denied that this psychology demands of us a certain humility that recognizes the inevitable and continuous presence of a mythic-symbolic dimension in our lives. Myths can be considered as 'involuntary statements about unconscious psychic happenings' (Jung, 1949/50, para. 261). 'The primitive mentality', according to Jung, 'does not *invent* myths, it *experiences* them' (ibid.) and what is true for the 'primitive' still remains so for us moderns. Whether we like it or not, the 'most we can do is *to dream the myth onwards* and give it a modern dress' (ibid., para. 271).

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Much of Jungian theorizing therefore is concerned with the way in which mythological motifs shape our experience through projection of archetypal contents.

James Hillman's archetypal psychology, on the other hand, validates this ineradicable inferiority by offering an explicitly romantic reading of Jung that seeks to develop 'a psychology of soul that is based in a psychology of image . . . a poetic basis of mind' (Hillman, 1975, p. xvii). He places Jung in a long line of ancestors 'that stretches back through Freud, Dilthey, Coleridge, Schelling, Vico, Ficino, Plotinus and Plato to Heraclitus – and with even more branches which have yet to be traced' (ibid.). In defense of such an approach one could argue that, if soul is image, then any psychology that does not seek such a basis will leave the soul in exile and treat mythological motifs in a too narrowly subjectivist fashion. Furthermore, the whole thrust of both romantic thought and earlier Platonic thought was not that of a regressive return to unconsciousness, but that of a symbolic thought predicated on an intensification of consciousness. For Friedrich Schelling, mythology is 'true Symbolism' (1990a, p. 52). It is in this sense that Samuel Coleridge,[3] for example, proposed his famous distinction of imagination and fancy, imagination being for him the mediator to a higher, universal and ontological kind of reason. The alchemists used the term *imaginatio vera* already in a similar sense. The alchemical concept of *imaginatio* is in Jung's view 'perhaps the most important key to the understanding of the *opus*' (1944, para. 396), which for the alchemists always had both an inner world and an outer world dimension inseparably belonging together. *Imaginatio vera* is precisely that which binds these two dimensions, the subjective and the objective, together.

If one were to take such a possibility seriously, one could see another potential trajectory in Jung's late thought, which complements his theory of projection. One could then wonder whether by introducing the 'missing fourth' of synchronicity into the objective ternary of space, time and causality Jung perhaps also sought to re-introduce by implication *imaginatio vera* into modern consciousness. Jung's late writings on the alchemical and Gnostic amplifications of Christian symbols present us, one could say, with his way of dreaming the Christian myth onwards and giving it a modern psychological dress. In this myth the *imaginatio vera* would play a key role in the alchemical/psychological opus of individuation At the later stages of this opus, imagination would have less and less to do with simple projection. Rather, the awakening to the *unus mundus*[4] would imply the gradual unfolding of a capacity to see the essence of the real by means of a symbolic vision. 'Hermetic science strove for a qualitative, unifying exaltation of the relation of the knower to the known in the symbol *through the act of knowing*' (Bamford, 2003, p. 47).

In this article, I want to explore such a 'romantic' reading of Jung's psychology, which gives the benefit of the doubt to the metaphysics attached to the romantic understanding of the imagination, by looking at the role that the imagination plays in one specific text of this tradition, namely, Schelling's *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom* (Schelling, 2006 [1809]). This text, published in 1809, is, according to Martin Heidegger, of pivotal importance within the philosophical discourse of German Idealism. Both German Idealism and the whole project of modernity as it became formulated in this period reach here a crisis point, which sets the scene for the later developments of Søren Kierkegaard's existentialism and, via Eduard von Hartmann and Carl Gustav Carus, of depth psychology.[5]

Schelling wrote his work in the aftermath of the French Revolution. The Goddess of Reason had been enthroned, freedom proclaimed. Philosophers had set

themselves, following Immanuel Kant, the task of writing the new Gospel of freedom and autonomy. One can read his *Investigations* as a reaction to the terror that accompanied the revolution[6]. G.W.F. Hegel, in his *Phenomenology of the Spirit* (in a chapter entitled 'Absolute Freedom and Terror'), expresses the view that the terror of the Revolution was not the result of barbarism, but rather had as its root subjective freedom itself in its absolute realization. This analysis points beyond a rationalistically sanitized conception of freedom as autonomy towards the existential, historical reality of freedom as it marks the historical course of modernity, which has unleashed ever increasing potentials of destructiveness.

In order to do justice to this existential or psychological reality of freedom, which would later engage Jung so deeply in his psychological reflections on the problem of evil, Schelling defines positive freedom in the *Investigations* as the freedom to good *and* evil. The 'and' in this formula links good and evil inseparably together as a dialectical pair. As Heidegger formulates it, this is: 'Because freedom as a real capacity (*Vermoegen*), i.e. decisive preference (*Moegen*), of the good is at the same time the positing of evil' (1971, p. 188). Schelling wants to square the circle by showing that systematic philosophical thought can nevertheless contain this explosive reality as its very principle, that a *system* of freedom is possible. To make his argument, Schelling has recourse to symbolic expressions borrowed from Jacob Boehme's theosophy in order to create a philosophical myth, which is meant to account for the origin of evil in the inner nature of the Godhead itself without thereby attributing evil to God.

The philosophical struggle for the system represented the quest for a new holistic ordering principle of culture after the collapse of the medieval cosmos, which was irreversibly sealed by the event of the French Revolution.[7] The failure of Schelling's attempts to reach the desired *system* of freedom that can contain the actual existential realities and tensions of the new emerging modern world signals the need for a new ordering principle. Jung's psychological notion of the Self could be seen to respond to precisely such a need.

Because the existential reality of freedom is inaccessible to rational analysis, Schelling uses in his text the method of a transcendental hermeneutics,[8] which seeks to offer an account of the human experience of freedom through symbolic imagination. If an extension and reworking of the Kantian transcendental logic, as in the Idealist systems, really fails to offer a theoretical basis to understand the existential reality of freedom, maybe the key lies in the imagination as a capacity to understand the pre-predicative dimension of our experience. For this dimension to become accessible to our understanding it first of all needs to be translated into symbolic images, which cohere in a 'world-image' (*Weltbild*) that provides the initial background and context before which any subsequent discursive understanding can unfold. It is the process of forming such an image as a way of understanding to which the term transcendental hermeneutics refers here. The symbolic image anticipates that which cannot yet be grasped by the discursive understanding but which is nevertheless in principle graspable by intuitive reason. It unfolds an initial understanding of the intuition.

The existential philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev[9] will take this approach of Schelling further and depart from systematic philosophy altogether in order to employ an aphoristic style of philosophizing. Philosophy in his view is meant to become a direct expression of life itself through which it creatively transforms itself. According to Berdyaev: 'existential philosophy marks a transition from the

interpretation of knowledge as objectification, to understanding it as *participation*, union with the subject matter and entering into cooperation with it' (1976, p. 61).

When Jung states that the primitive mentality does not invent but experiences myths, this implies that it experiences the world itself as unproblematically meaningful, it *lives* the myth. We may call this a consciousness of 'original participation'. As opposed to this original participation of mythical consciousness, the consciousness that Berdyaev talks about may be called, with Owen Barfield, final participation.[10] It would lead, we could say, to a creative retrieval of meaning after its loss, a retrieval that is more than an invention, by individual effort, in the sense in which Jung talked about his personal myth.[11] Such a myth is also lived and also has a world dimension but in Berdyaev's understanding it ultimately springs from spiritual depths of the *individual* that nevertheless *transcend* the subject–object division through the creative act. Philosophy understood in this way takes the form of a symbolism of spiritual experience, a knowledge that is 'attained by means of images to a greater extent than . . . through concepts' (Berdyaev, 1976, p. 39).

What Berdyaev has in mind is therefore not psychological introspection but a participatory knowledge of reality, which at the same time creatively transforms it. If participation is founded on the premise that inner and outer worlds form at a deep level a unity, it also implies as a consequence that the qualitative transformation of knowledge really does lead to a qualitative transformation of the world in some infinitesimal manner. It was perhaps on some similar basis that the alchemists assumed a direct connection between inner psychological change and outer transmutation of material substances. Following this line of thought, in Jung's psychology it would be the transcendent function,[12] which eventually leads us outside the closed circle of psychologism. Through the gradual unfolding of the living experience of the Self in the process of individuation we would open ourselves more and more to the depth dimension of the world and would increasingly gain the capacity creatively to re-imagine it. Jung's notion of synchronicity would signal such a potential.

Clearly, this is a romantic-idealistic line of thought that makes no sense within the modern, essentially still Cartesian paradigm.[13] It may even appear to promote the sort of regression to earlier forms of mythical consciousness whose danger we signalled at the beginning of this article. Does it not take the attempt to offer a 'romantic' reading of Jung more than one step too far? A more promising way to move beyond modern disenchantment would seem to be offered by a post-modern reading of Jung.

Imagination and the post-modern condition

Post-modern philosophical discourse has opened a way out of what is increasingly experienced by many as an impoverishment through modern disenchantment. A new 'post-colonial' openness for other cultures has replaced the modern myth of progress and the superiority of western scientific-technological civilization. We also witness a new openness to the spiritual amongst philosophers in the 'religious turn' in post-modern thinking.

There are also efforts to attempt a serious reassessment of the *philosophia perennis* as we see it, for example, in books like that of the German philosopher Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann[14]. Biggemann's approach has a certain post-modern flavour to it. It seeks to loosen up rationalistic and scientistic rigidities. As a way into

a contemporary understanding of the spiritual literature of the past, he suggests a reassessment of the role of the imagination or fantasy, in his terminology. Spiritual worlds, Schmidt-Biggemann suggests, have a peculiar psychological status, which 'lies between pure imagination and flat factual reality . . . The world of spiritual literature has to be accepted by means of fantasy as a real world' (Schmidt-Biggemann, 1998, p. 16; present author's translation). One has to take this peculiar existence that is neither purely fictional nor purely objective seriously. Spiritual worlds form a 'counter-world' to the 'real' world. They give vital depth, colour, meaning and existential substance to our life.

The symbolic and imaginal, approached in this way, open a free space for the creative play of the imagination through which we may be able to give shape to a 'subtler language', in Charles Taylor's words,[15] a language that remains open for multiple meanings and significations and that can not only give depth and meaning to our lives but is ultimately vital for transforming them. Such a position would be compatible with Jung's psychological perspective, which distances itself intentionally from any explicit metaphysical claims.

The problematic side of post-modernism is that it tends towards a progressive relativization of all meanings. The post-modern self has been termed a 'multiple self'[16] or 'protean self'.[17] Its imaginative soul life is one of disintegration and virtualization. We are continuously flooded with images and increasingly immersed in virtual realities. This emergence of hyper-reality, as Baudrillard called it,[18] increasingly paralyses the capacity for the kind of imagination that Schmidt-Biggemann has in mind by eroding the capacity for depth and interiority: 'The typically postmodern image', R. Kearney writes, 'is one which displays its own artificiality, its own pseudo-status, its own representational depthlessness' (1988, p. 3). The pseudo-status, depthlessness and artificiality of the flood of images in which we are immersed display the extent of the loss of the symbolic. Faced with a world that dissolves more and more into unreality we are forced, as Baudrillard's writings demonstrate, into the position of the ironic observer.

The religious turn

Post-modernism provides us with no resources to move beyond this state of affairs. Where there is no longer a coherent self to act, nor a meaning and set of values to motivate action, all that is left is to be the ironic observer. In its struggle to overcome its fatalism in the face of increasing fragmentation post-modernism, at least in some of its variants, therefore looks once more towards Christianity because of Christianity's capacity to go through successive 'Dionysian' transformations of the God-image to disclose new meaning beneath this trajectory of virtualisation of reality. It looks for the 'God who may be,'[19] the God beyond metaphysics[20] and its associated power-regimes.

According to Gianni Vattimo, the exodus into secularization, which culminates in post-modernity, was in fact initiated by Christianity itself. 'Heidegger's depiction of the history of Being as the weakening of strong structures is "nothing but the transcription of the Christian doctrine of the incarnation of the Son of God"' (Depoortere, 2008, p. 11). The divine kenosis of Christ, his self-abasement to the level of humanity, lies at the root of Western civilization as 'an exodus from the sacred into the secular, an exodus initiated by the incarnation. Consequently, according to Vattimo, secularization is not a break with Christianity. On the contrary, it is an

"application, enrichment and specification" of the Christian origins of our western civilization' (Depoortere, 2008, p. 13).

Vattimo's provocative hermeneutics of Christianity confronts us with a paradox at the heart of occidental Christianity. The modern notion of autonomy relies on an increasingly strong emphasis on the personality that concentrates within itself the forces to cut the umbilical cord with the medieval cosmos in which it took shape. Christianity could be seen to lie at the root of this specifically modern experience of personhood. The incarnation of Christ, God becoming flesh, means the birth of the human person, which is more than 'persona' (in the sense of 'mask') or, in Jung's language, the gradual assimilation and interiorization of the Self, which was initially projected onto the Christ-figure.[21] But personality in this deeper sense cannot flourish without image, myth and soul. It is the strange fate of personality in the Western Christian world that it progressively undermines those conditions of its own existence in its drive for individuation and selfhood. Personality is liberated and at the same time deprived of the conditions of its own existence in the trajectory of the development of Western Christian civilization towards secularization. Since the Cartesian split happened, personality came both into sharper and sharper focus and was yet progressively deprived of soul until today we witness the 'death of man' (Foucault). The retrieval of the imagination that can counterbalance the virtualization of the world and the dissolution of identity appears in this perspective linked to a re-imagination of the Christian myth itself, the myth that forms the archetypal matrix of the personality.

Schelling's project

Schelling, in his *Philosophie der Kunst* (1802–1803), had already formulated such a programme.[22] In the 'pagan' world, nature was full of gods and the individual was embedded in a world of immediacy in which the visible *was* the presence of the divine, while the spiritual dimension oriented towards a monotheistic transcendent God was only taught in the mysteries. In the Christian world, on the other hand, the polytheistic presence of divinities in nature and with it the imaginal have come to be culturally repressed. A re-imagination of the Christian revelation therefore needs to retrieve the lost dimension of nature. The new poetry will have the *Naturphilosophie* as its basis, a philosophy or 'science' that is itself in continuity with the hermetic, alchemical tradition, which kept the 'dangerous' pagan, dimensions alive.[23] Here we find the parallelization of Christ with the *lapis*, the *salvator macrocosmi*. This re-imagination of Christianity is, according to one possible reading of Schelling offered by Jean François Marquet,[24] his project from the beginning. But it is only in the *Investigations* that Schelling realizes that such a re-imagination needs to do full justice to the element of personality as it emerges in the Christian world instead of dissolving it in the *hen kai pan* ('one and all') of the system of Identity.

From pantheism to pan-personalism

In view of the decisive importance of the notion of the Cartesian disengaged punctual subject for the formation of the modern understanding of personality, it is not surprising that Schelling's philosophy with its holistic orientation initially started out as resolutely anti-personalistic. Schelling's initial decisive insight is that the Cartesian self-consciousness and subsequently Kant's transcendental subject remain

inexplicable unless reflexive self-consciousness (I think *therefore* I am) is founded in an immediate intellectual intuition of the pre-reflexive I am. The relation of I as subject and I as object in reflexive self-consciousness has to be founded in a non-reflexive immediate awareness, which is therefore pre- or super-conscious.[25] But while Fichte limits this same insight to the I, Schelling's philosophical path leads him to think of this unconditional, absolute basis of reflexive self-consciousness as that which underlies the dynamic genesis of both human self-consciousness and nature.[26] Nature for Schelling becomes unconscious spirit, just as human self-consciousness becomes conscious nature. It is easy to see how this Schellingian notion of nature could be fruitfully compared to Jung's conception of the collective unconscious.

The Cartesian dualism is resolved by a Spinozism in reverse. Just as Spinoza declared the absolute substance as the unitive ground that underlies *res cogitans* and *res extensa* as its attributes, so for Schelling it is now the absolute 'I am' that unfolds itself in its depotentialized[27] form through the dynamic process of nature to come to itself in human self-consciousness, which, in its own dynamic-historical process, seeks to move from abstract ideality to concrete realization through cognitive and practical activity. The final philosophical realization of the oneness of man and nature, the subjective and the objective, in a unitive ground is anticipated by art. Art realizes a perfect equilibrium of conscious and unconscious activity. In this whole development the imagination mediating the subjective and objective, conscious and unconscious, forms the golden thread.[28]

Jung maintains that every neurosis is a division within oneself, between the conscious and the unconscious. To heal this division in a way that does justice to the innate teleology of the psyche, he developed the process of active imagination that is based on the transcendent function. In Schelling's *System of Transcendental Idealism* we find a strikingly similar conception.[29] Art, Schelling claims there, is the highest function of the human spirit apart from philosophy (whose *Organon* it is) through its capacity to unite the conscious and the unconscious where they are at their highest point of tension in the creative act. In this way, the artistic imagination anticipates the successful philosophical construction of the true shape of reality within the medium of intellectual intuition of the unconditional absolute. The true artist and the true philosopher, we may say, therefore fulfil on the cultural level an analogous task to that of the transcendent function in the individual. They seek to heal the cultural neurosis, the split of objectification.

Continuing this insight Schelling develops in his philosophy of Art a conception of the symbolic imagination. He distinguishes three types of imagination (*Einbildungskraft*): schematic; allegorical; symbolic. The schematic views the particular through the general, the allegorical the general through the particular and the symbolic is the synthesis of both, 'where neither the general means the particular, nor the particular the general, but both are absolutely one . . .' (Schelling, 1990a, p. 51; present author's translation). In other words, the symbolic here is the best possible representation of the Absolute as the indifference of the general and the particular in the form of a particular work of art. We only need to replace Jung's term of the Self for 'the Absolute' to see the close connection to Jung's psychological view.

But Schelling's creative resolutions of the divisions of his age up to this point remain, as we said, anti-personalistic. We are still in the domain of idealistic speculation. His system of identity is a system of all-unity, which, inasmuch as it is constructed *more geometrico*, remains lifeless. The seed of life is nevertheless already contained in his introduction of the imagination as a central thread through his

system culminating in a close affiliation of philosophical and artistic creativity. The actualization of the identity of the finite and the infinite, the objective and the subjective, nature and spirit requires imagination, in German *Ein-bildung*, which may be translated as 'imaging, forming into one'. In the sphere of art, as we have seen, this formative activity creatively anticipates new meanings. The self is 'that which always becomes and never is' (Schelling, 1856–1861, III 16) and this becoming happens by reconciling successive dualistic divisions through the imagination. The Imagination is the 'monas' linked to the 'dyas', from which it draws its life.[30] The self is always a becoming, an anticipation of a transrational unitive meaning.

For all of idealistic thought the true unity is the unity of identity and opposition. But this purely logical structure of absolute identity still remains sterile until the opposition contained in it becomes, so to speak, volatile and real. Reality is characterized by a positivity or alterity, which resists any reduction to a purely logical status. In the sphere of human freedom it is the reality of evil, which remains in this sense resistant to any rationalization. Thinking human freedom as the freedom of good *and* evil transforms the logical dialectics into what Berdyaev later called an existential dialectics of freedom. This integration of radical alterity into the unity of the self is what Schelling now designates with the terms life and personality: 'All personality rests on a dark ground, which therefore also needs to be the ground of knowledge' (Schelling, 1856–1861, VII 414).

Schelling's *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*

It is in the *Investigations* that Schelling therefore introduces alterity into his system through the imagination as a means for a hermeneutics of human freedom. Only now, after the philosophical demonstration of the unity of nature and spirit (i.e. freedom), does the true opposition, that between freedom and necessity, become apparent. It is here that 'the innermost centerpoint of philosophy first comes into consideration' (Schelling, 1856–1861, VII 333). The system of identity, while overcoming the Cartesian split by reconciling freedom and nature, does not offer a basis for a hermeneutics of the existential reality of human freedom. In it freedom is subjected to the necessity of the logical-speculative structure of the Absolute pantheistically encompassing all of reality. Thus, freedom collides here with necessity in the sharpest way imaginable and it is precisely this collision, this aporia, where philosophy is closest to a breakthrough to the real, because philosophy for Schelling deepens into the real by way of a successive overcoming oppositions.

Paradoxically, the pantheism of the system of identity finds no place for the lived personal human reality of freedom it initially set out to safeguard against the divisions of the age provoked by the rise of the Cartesian paradigm. For this reason, Schelling now wants to present a revised form of pantheism in which such freedom becomes conceivable. What Schelling offers us in the *Investigations* could be termed pan-*personalism*, a formula that integrates the opposites of personalism and pantheism.[31] Instead of talking of 'absolute identity', Schelling now talks of an anthropomorphically conceived God who interacts with the human person. But at the same time, this anthropomorphic God is still the All-unity. The system of identity becomes transformed into a philosophical narrative that uses symbolic expressions such as a sea of longing in God, the symbolism of centre and circumference, of heaven, light, dark ground. The imaginal expressions and the narrative style of exposition make possible a new hermeneutic of the pre-discursive understanding of the actual

reality of the depth-dimension of the existential experience of freedom. In this way he wants to construct a philosophy of the spirit on the foundation of his *Naturphilosophie.*

For this purpose he takes recourse to the theosophical symbolism of Boehme, Friedrich Christoph Oetinger and Franz von Baader, which is characterized by an anthropocentrism that was up until then foreign to Schelling. The philosopher 'grasps the god outside through the god in himself' (Schelling, 1856–1861, VII 337). In human freedom the dark side of God becomes manifest. God becomes intricately involved, even identified with the becoming of the world. The 'becoming God' makes space for man to the extent of surrendering his becoming into the hands of man. He is the quintessentially kenotic God of both the Lurianic *Tsimtsum*[32] and the kenosis of Christ unto the death on the cross. The new specifically modern experience of freedom demands a re-imagination of the God-image, which already anticipates Jung's alchemical/psychological amplifications of the Christian myth.

In place of static necessity *more geometrico* we now have life, driven by contradictions, breaking forth from dynamic opposition. In the Stuttgart lectures, which were held soon after the Investigations, Schelling talks of the fundamental law of opposition:

> Without opposition, no life. This is so within man and within every existence. In us as well there is something rational and something irrational. Everything, in order to manifest itself is in need of something which is not itself in the strict sense. (Schelling, 1856–1861, VII 435)

Every existent presupposes a ground of its existence. This ground can be understood as the principle of existence, the principle of individuation, and the principle of 'incognition',[33] that which cannot be dissolved into rational concepts even with the most intense effort.

The human person presupposes an irrational bodily and psychic ground in order to manifest its personal existence. This structure applies even to God. God is an actually existent *personal* being only by having something in himself that is not himself: *nature* in God, 'the unconscious part of God' (Schelling, 1856–1861, VII 435).

Because with God the totality of being comes into view, the ground in God has to be understood as the ground of the world. Nevertheless, the latter has to be differentiated from the ground inasmuch as it is the ground of God himself in him.[34] On the one hand, Schelling writes in his response to Jacobi, 1813:

> God *is* ground of himself as a moral being (*ein sittliches Wesen*) . . . But God also *makes* himself ground by making that part of his being with which he was active before, passive . . . How else can God humble himself (*sich herablassen*) than by . . . [m]aking a part of himself into the ground, so that creatures may be possible and that we may have life in him? (Schelling, 1856–1861, VIII 71)

We see here the motif of divine kenosis to which we have already alluded. God is a moral, personal being that gives existence to creatures though a sacrificial act.

Freedom as the capacity for evil and the reversed God

Schelling tries to explain by this sacrificial motif how freedom as the 'capacity for good and evil' can be thought as possible. If there is no life in general without opposition, freedom, as the highest intensity of life, will demand the most fierce opposition,

namely, that of good and evil. Paradoxically, by extending freedom over the whole of reality in his philosophy of identity, which sought to turn Spinoza's system on its head, freedom in this real, existential sense, so Schelling now acknowledges, got lost. Identity, like an omnipotent sponge mops up neatly all difference, but 'if freedom is a capacity for evil, it has to have a root independent of God' (Schelling, 1856–1861, VII 354). Schelling's solution now is to understand this independent root as *nature* in God, which is really nothing else but the voluntaristically transformed Spinozist God which, instead of being a stale absolute substance turns out to be an infinite sea of longing and desire, a chaotic basis of all existence which resists all order and final rationalization. Desire is at the basis of everything, not only the human psyche but nature as a whole, even God. Nature cannot be understood as an all-encompassing system of causality anymore. While everything appears to follow natural laws:

> Anarchy still lies in the ground, as if it could break through once again, and nowhere does it appear as if order and form were what is original but rather as if initial anarchy has been brought to order. This is the incomprehensible base of reality in things, the indivisible remainder, that which with the greatest exertion cannot be resolved in understanding but rather remains eternally in the ground. (Schelling, 1856–1861, VII, 360)

It is this indivisible remainder that breathes soul, life, dynamism and personality into what would otherwise remain a system of lifeless abstractions. Within God himself, who is initially the *Ungrund,* the dark sea of longing gives birth to the light, the creative *Logos.*[35] The creative Logos redeems the life hidden in the unconscious ground out of non-being, elevates it from potency to act. This happens through the divine imagination, 'through genuine impression [*Ein-Bildung*], since that which arises in nature is impressed [*hineingebildet*] into her' (Schelling, 1856–1861, VII 362). The divine imagination separates successively the latent darkness and light in order to raise up the hidden unity or idea, which lies as a potency hidden in the dark ground of nature.

It is within man that the deepest hidden unity is raised into being by the divine imagination:

> In man there is the whole power of the dark principle and at the same time the whole strength of the light. In him there is the deepest abyss and the loftiest sky or both *centra*. The human will is the seed – hidden in eternal yearning – of the God who is present still in the ground only; it is the divine panorama of life [*goettliche Lebensblick*], locked up within the depths, which God beheld as he fashioned the will to nature. (Schelling, 1856–1861, VII 363)

We are presented here with the image of two eyes meeting, the vision of divine imagination and the 'gaze of life' of the deepest, hidden self of man. The human self is spirit precisely by being raised out of its independent root of self-will in the dark ground and transmuted into the light of universal will by the divine imagination. The human self as free spirit concentrates the whole force of darkness and light within itself, in a way that makes it another *god*, God's *other*. This idea of the god that emerges from the dark unconscious ground reminds us of Jung's phenomenology of the Self. In Schelling's vision the human spirit is the highest expression of a process in which nature unfolds by way of successive polarities until it comes to self-consciousness in man. Man as his *other* is what God beheld and longed for as he fashioned the will to nature. In human freedom the polarity of darkness and light gains the highest intensity as the opposition of good and evil.

Man is free because he unites within himself a self-will (which gives him independence from God) with a universal will. While this unity of ground and existent is *inseparable* in God so that in him darkness is eternally transmuted into light, in man it is *separable*. All personality, says Schelling, 'rests on a dark ground' (Schelling, 1856–1861, VII, 413), a source of selfhood, which becomes the basis for the manifestation of the good if it is brought back from actuality into potentiality. The full unfolding of personality is thus intricately linked to the human capacity for evil originating in the deepest ground of human existence. Yet 'evil is only evil to the extent that it exceeds potentiality, but, reduced to non-Being or to the state of potency it is what it always should be, basis, subordinate' (Schelling, 1856–1861, VII 405). The creation of man is a continuous process, which is for Schelling an integral part of the self-manifestation of God as personality and in this sense he can even say that 'in order that there should be no evil, there would have to be no God himself' (Schelling, 1856–1861, VII 403), namely God *as personality* who seeks in man his other would have to cease to exist. God is a living God and as such has freely subjected himself to the process of becoming:

> all life has a destiny . . . and is subject to becoming and suffering . . . .
> Without the concept of a humanly suffering God, one which is common to all mysteries and spiritual religions of earliest time, all of history would be incomprehensible. (Schelling, 1856–1861, VII 403)

God is at the mercy of human freedom, which is defined by the separability of that which is inseparable within God: self-will and universal will, ground and existent. Therein lies the independence and at the same time the chronic fragility of human identity. It is, in Kierkegaard's words, a 'relation that relates itself to itself' (1980, p. 13).[36] But it can bring this conjunction of self-will and universal will into equilibrium only through its free relation to the divine ground of Being, which posits this relation. Love is what constitutes this free relation.

The human self, however, is driven by the *anxiety* of life into negating this love and craves to subject the light principle to the dark force of self-will within itself. The dark ground in itself is evil neither in God nor in man, but the reversal and disunity of these principles to which man is driven by existential anxiety leads to the manifestation of evil. Anxiety later on, in Kierkegaard and Heidegger, becomes a key term evoking the fundamental ontological mood of human existence. In the flight from dying to self, the open void of true apophaticism at the core of existence turns into self-referential literalistic nihilism. Referring back to the different kinds of imagination, we could say that the symbolic imagination is replaced on a transcendental, pre-conscious level by the allegoric/literal and the schematic/abstract one. In this way, Schelling claims:

> another spirit usurps the place where God should be, namely the reversed god, the being aroused into actuality by God's revelation, that can never wrest actuality from potency, that, though it never is, yet always wants to be and, hence, like the matter of the ancients, cannot be grasped actually . . . by the complete understanding but only through the false imagination. (Schelling, 1856–1861, VII, 390)

Already in 1804 Schelling has interpreted the Fichtean I, which posits itself and is the source of the universe of a subjective idealism which views all reality as the productions of its own consciousness, as the principle of the fall.[37] In Schelling's text the fall happens outside the temporal order on a transcendental level. But the

reference to Johann Gottlieb Fichte makes the historical connotation unmistakeable. Fichte's philosophy formulates the self-origination of the modern, autonomous subject. Later Kierkegaard, inspired by Schelling's *Investigations*, will equate the positing of the authentic self with sin: 'If therefore one wants to explain sin through selfishness one ends up in unclarities, as it is rather in sin and through sin that selfhood comes about' (Kierkegaard, cited in Huehn, 2004, p. 154). What we see here is the inversion of the traditional hamartiology (theology of sin) within the context of a theory of freedom. In its theological sense, sin constitutes a privative act while the inversion takes hold of 'the whole of this relational structure [of the dark and the light principle] from its centre and reverses it' (Huehn, 2004, p. 157). The point of this inversion is, according to Lore Huehn:

> that this reading links the concept of sin so closely to that of freedom, that sin itself suddenly turns out to be a positive process of freedom (*Freiheitsgeschehen*) – a process which can be neither avoided nor simply overcome, precisely because it admits of no alternatives in its origins. (Huehn, 2004, p.158)

The Fichtean autonomous self is a two-edged sword. Inasmuch as it is originating in 'sin', it is at the root of a progressive process of objectification and loss of the symbolic imagination, which comes to a culmination in our present post-modern era. These are the existential dialectics of freedom. And yet it is this same self which can also come to know within its innermost depths 'the whole strength of the light . . . the loftiest sky' (Schelling, 1856–1861, VII 363), once it ceases to want to usurp the 'place where God should be' (Schelling, 1856–1861, VII 390).

Conclusion: changing paradigms of identity and the cultural role of Jung's psychology

In the background of the thoughts I have presented here lies a perhaps somewhat simplistic heuristic hypothesis about a succession of what we may call paradigms of identity with their correlative God images. The pre-modern identity was defined by piety, a reverence for a transcendent order expressing the ideas in the mind of the creator-God in which it saw itself located and which defined its sense of identity. Its cosmos was full of symbolic meanings that the creator had engraved into the book of nature. The modern identity is initially defined in idealistic thought by the paradigm of autonomy and its rationally constructed Absolute. In the idealist constructions theism turns into pantheism. Psychic energy gets re-invested from the 'beyond' into the human being and the visible world. This is Schelling's starting point. What we see happening in his *Investigations* is the onset of a new paradigm, that of authenticity, which, I would suggest, is the one defining our present time, in particular since what Taylor called the authenticity revolution in the twentieth century.[38] This paradigm had been prepared in Romantic thought and, most potently perhaps, in Nietzsche's thought. It is a profoundly ambiguous paradigm that releases the potentials for both good and evil in a psychological analogy to the splitting of the atom on the physical level. The unconscious, dark side of God erupts in and through human freedom. The paradigm of authenticity forces upon us a powerful confrontation with the ambiguous nature of the Self. This is a theme that defines Jung's psychology. *Vocatus atque non vocatus deus aderit*.

According to Huehn, Schelling's notion of the reversed god is unfolded through a 'dialectic of the return of the repressed' (2004, p, 155). The reversed god, i.e. the

authentic self, the Nietzschean *Uebermensch*, if you will, which wants to take the place of god:

> dictates the dialectic of a process, in which God is not truly and in reality disqualified, but only disqualified in such a way that he from now on remains present in the modality of repression – more precisely in the modality of simple reversal. This discreditation therefore itself generates precisely the reversed relation to God, which rebounds on man in the form of a universal self-alienation which it set out to eliminate. (Huehn, 2004, p. 157)

What is it, then, we can now ask, that this dialectic is unconsciously driving towards? Jung has given a profound answer to this question in his psychology of individuation. The process of individuation could be seen as a process that transforms the paradigm of authenticity into a different one, which I would want to term that of integrality. Without the loss of any of the gains of autonomy, freedom and authenticity, this paradigm would lead to a new form of wholeness through integrating with these a new form of 'piety', of careful attention to the numinous. Integrality would represent a form of authenticity that, through the self-overcoming of nihilism and the corresponding healing of the imagination, would give a place once more to God(s) without relapsing into a pre-modern mentality. In the perspective of the thought of the philosophers of the Kyoto School the contemporary Western form of nihilism has not yet accomplished its true self-overcoming,[39] which would lead to such a new opening towards a dimension of meaning via the experience of the true Nothing, the *Ungrund*. Schelling's philosophical myth, as Boehme's theosophical myth before it, originates in such an experience.[40]

It is possible to understand Jung's conception of the unconscious in a similar way. The integration of unknowing combined with the cultivation of psychological consciousness can lead to a healing of the extroverted one-sidedness of our culture, which suffers from a loss of soul, of true imagination. Imagination and the *docta ignorantia* of the experience of the *Ungrund* belong here together. What is utterly beyond conceptual grasp can only be expressed symbolically. In this sense, Jung's psychology can be seen as catalysing a move from the false imagination to the *imaginatio vera*, which anchors rationality in the trans-rational. But this process can only happen in the inner forum of the individual; it is the process of creating one's personal myth, as Jung did. Also, it would have to be linked not with a relapse into irrationalism but with the shaping of a new kind of rationality.

Such a new rationality, which does not nihilistically deny the sacred but honours it and with it the 'garden of symbols' in which its presence can be experienced, could be called 'transversal reason', a term coined by the philosopher Wolfgang Welsch,[41] or 'transdisciplinarity', a term coined by Basarab Nicolescu. It would be a fluid, open form of rationality that can move with ease between different worlds and structures of consciousness. This fluidity would ultimately be held in the open space of an imaginal realization of the synchronistic dimension of subject–object identity, the dimension of the self-manifestation of the sacred. Nicolescu claims that the sacred is in fact 'the essential element in the structure of consciousness and not simply a stage in the history of consciousness' (Nicolescu, 2002, p. 126). Awareness of the sacred leads to the opposite of closure, it leads to an 'open unity of questioning in the multiplicity of answers because the sacred is the question' (ibid., 128).

Have we finally found a new place for mythopoeic creativity in our time? Jung's Bollingen tower was a place of myth and symbol. But at home he had a statue of Voltaire. Jung the psychologist was not a romantic after all. He wisely gave his own myth the modern dress of a science. He knew that we live in an era that can no longer simply endorse metaphysical speculations like those of Schelling. The whole deduction we have made, it has to be frankly admitted, rests from a strictly rational point of view on a *petitio principii*. It appeals to an intuition, an experience (of the primitive in us?) that precedes the discursive argument built on it. It assumes something from the start – an idealistic metaphysics that makes *imaginatio vera* thinkable – to then derive from it an analysis of our post-modern condition that seems to 'prove' the initial assumption. But have we not considered Schelling's text itself as one of the stepping-stones that led us to where we are today by stating that it was symptomatic of the changes during the French Revolution? We cannot extricate it from these historical dynamics of which it is an expression. Is it not due to the subsequent industrialization, urbanization, the growth of information technology and other historical factors that we are in this post-modern era where hyper-reality and virtualization threaten to obscure more and more a deeper sense of soul? Surely we have to add these factors into the equation and cannot simply brush them aside through a philosophical myth based on idealistic metaphysics. On the other hand, perhaps we nevertheless need such myths, even if they are inevitably personal myths. We need such counter-worlds as ways of stepping outside what to the ego is the only reality, even if they are only failing attempts to respond to the question that does not cease to address us, perhaps more persistently even when we try to eliminate it.

Notes

1. Schelling, 1990a, p. 90.
2. In this sense Robert Segal, for example, sees Jung doing in his psychological interpretation of myth something not essentially different from Bultmann's demythologization: 'Ironically, Bultmann, despite the misleading term "demythologization", strives to do the same as Jung: Not to eliminate myth from the New Testament but, on the contrary, to reinterpret myth symbolically in order to make it acceptable to moderns' (Segal, 1998, p. 37). What is important of course in this 'symbolic' interpretation is that it is not a symbolism in the traditional, for example Platonic sense, which was true already for many Church fathers, but one that allows for a reading that re-interprets the text with reference to theoretical conceptions acceptable to moderns, i.e. depth-psychology and Heideggerian existentialism.
3. See Barfield, 1971, pp. 69–103.
4. See Jung, 1955–56, paras. 759ff.
5. It goes without saying that Kant and German Idealism represent just one particular way in which modernity has interpreted itself philosophically, but one which is arguably of great significance for Jung's psychology.
6. See Hermanni, 1994, p. 77.
7. See Heidegger, 1971, pp. 27–39.
8. This is the thesis of Temilo van Zantwijk (2000, pp. 47–66).
9. See Nicolaus, 2011. According to Berdyaev's friend Lev Shestov, his whole philosophy is deeply influenced by Schelling's *Investigations*.
10. See Barfield, 1988.
11. See Segal, 1998, pp. 173f.
12. See Jung (1916).
13. There are also other voices today to be heard in the scientific community. The theoretical physicist Basarab Nicolescu, for example, writes: 'The ancients were right: there is indeed an *imaginatio vera*, a foundational, true, creative, visionary imagination. . . . since Reality is

also an open unity the different levels of comprehension are linked to each other within a single, open whole . . . This Whole opens onto the area . . . of the sacred, which is common to the object and the subject' (Nicolescu, 2002, p. 71).
14. Schmidt-Biggemann, 1998.
15. See Taylor, 1992, Part IV.
16. See Turkle, 1996.
17. See Lifton, 1993.
18. See Baudrillard, 1994.
19. See Kearney, 2001.
20. See, for example, Jean-Luc Marion's influential work *God without Being* (1991) or the writings of John Caputo and Jean-Luc Nancy.
21. See Nicolaus, 2011, chapters 4, 6.
22. See Schelling, 1990a, § 42.
23. See Marquet, 1979.
24. See Marquet, 1979.
25. See Frank, 1985.
26. See Schelling, 1990c, § 1.
27. Depotentialization (*Depotenzierung*) is a term which indicates a reduction of potential, the transposition into a lower 'potency' (*Potenz*). The same fundamental structure of transcendental self-consciousness is transposed into an analogous but unconscious, lower potency.
28. See Halbluetzel, 1954.
29. See Schelling, 1990c, pp. 612–629.
30. The subject, which goes through everything and remains in nothing, 'is the innermost, absolute kernel of the ego; as Monas it is not the windowless monad of Leibnitz, but that Monas of the same Leibnitz which is the principle of representation, the original force of representation (*Vorstellungskraft*) itself, or . . . the primal unity of *imagination*. . . . the core of Schelling's metaphysics now becomes apparent as the original synthesis and mutual interdependence of monas and dyas, as the translogical active unity of two principles which in themselves are graspable only in purely logical terms' (Halbluetzel, 1954, p. 70; present author's translation).
31. See van Zantwijk, 2000.
32. See Scholem, 1974, pp. 260–265.
33. See Hermani, 1994, pp. 88–98.
34. There is a significant ambiguity in Schelling's text here which admits both of a strongly pantheistic reading – the becoming God – and of a theistic reading.
35. Schelling is not saying that the dark chaos is the principle of the light even in God: 'God has within himself a ground of his existence, which in this respect [i.e. insofar as God is an existent, that is personal God] precedes him as existent; but at the same time God is also is prior to the ground, inasmuch as the ground as such could not be, if God were not actually existent' (Schelling, 1856–1861, VII 358).
36. See Lore Huehn, '*Selbstentfremdung und Gefaehrdung menschlichen Selbstseins. Zu einer Schluesselfigur bei Schelling und Kierkegaard',* in Buchheim & Hermanni (2004, pp. 151–162). All translations from this article are mine.
37. See Schelling, 1988, *Saemtliche Werke*, VI, 43.
38. See Taylor, 2007, pp. 473–504.
39. See Nishitani, 1990, 1982 on this.
40. See for this Friedrich (2009), R. Ohashi '*Der Ungrund und das System*' pp. 235–252 in Hoeffe & Pieper (1995). *F.W.J. Schelling. Ueber das Wesen der Menschlichen Freiheit.* And *Saemtliche Werke* VII 403–416 in Schelling's text.
41. See Welsch, 1995.

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