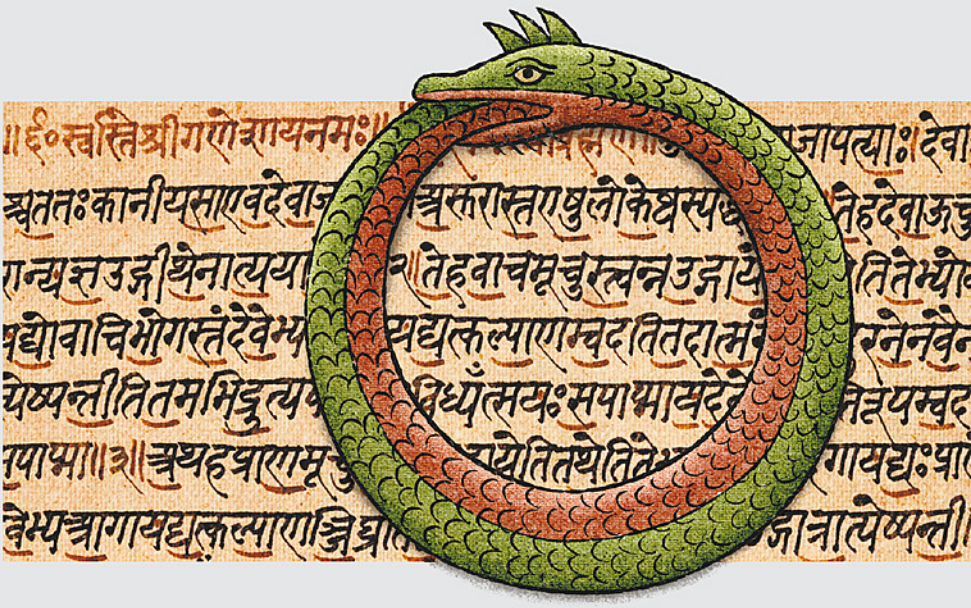
Mythical Totalities

Edited by
Gregory S. Moss



Reality and Hermeneutics 8

Mohr Siebeck

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Bonn Studies in the New Humanities

8

Mythical Totalities

Studies in the Philosophy of Mythology

Edited by

Gregory S. Moss

Mohr Siebeck

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Gregory S. Moss

Foreword

Jason M. Wirth

Discourses about myth (mythology) tend to reflect the low philosophical esteem accorded to myths. At best, myths are denigrated as mere stories. Perhaps they reflect the philosophically underwhelming convictions of those given to magical thought. In these kinds of approaches, mythology assumes for itself a position of superiority over what it analyzes. Logos has triumphed over mythic thinking, and it looks condescendingly at its gullible and pre-critical past.

At worse, myths can be images and stories consciously deployed to erect dubious and often violent political structures. Myths in this context are the stories that are politically promulgated to lend credence to otherwise unjustified and unjustifiable power. Walter Benjamin's famous essay, "Critique of Violence," for example, analyzes the founding violence of myth as power structures retroactively constitute their legitimacy in a myth that disguises their original violence.

Ernst Cassirer, one of the twentieth century's most provocative defenders of mythic thinking as a form of consciousness, had a similar concern. After a defense of mythic thinking in the second volume of his *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, he came to worry in the *Myth of the State* about the contemporary practice of constructing and deploying nationalistic myths as a support for totalitarian forms of imperialism. Their totalitarian character was all-encompassing as state-sponsored myths sought to ritualistically incorporate every aspect of human life. Such a strategy, some have argued, was inspired by the Romantic call for a "new mythology" that would mark a radical and comprehensive shift in our appreciation of the ontological constitution of the world. Cassirer countered that this is based on a misappropriation of the German Romantics who, for all their political flaws, were chiefly interested in the aesthetic dimension of being. "They never meant to politicize but to 'poeticize' the world."[1]

The new national imperial myths, however, marked a pernicious perversion of myth, reducing it to the production of propaganda that serves to mystify the state's violent origins. Myths were not originally self-conscious stories designed to achieve a political purpose:

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[1] Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State*, 184.

> Myth has always been described as the result of an unconscious activity and as a free product of imagination. But here we find myth made according to plan. The new political myths do not grow up freely; they are not wild fruits of an exuberant imagination. They are artificial things fabricated by very skillful and cunning artisans. It has been reserved for the twentieth century, our own great technical age, to develop a new technique of myth. Henceforth myths can be manufactured in the same sense and according to the same methods as any other modern weapon – as machine guns or airplanes.[2]

Before the weaponization of myth, the Enlightenment had already downgraded it to a primitive form of thinking. Responding by calling for a re-evaluation of mythic thought, German Romantics were struggling to restore balance to the monopoly on thinking that scientific rationality commanded. Unfortunately, by the time that Schelling unveiled his remarkable lectures on the Philosophy of Mythology in his late Berlin period, the battle had already been lost. As Walter Otto remarked, "μῦθος remained in an age in which poesy was lost."[3] Myths were regarded as earlier, failed forms of thinking, relics of our intellectual infancy. Perhaps they could be understood as superstitious flights of fancy and irrationality, or, to the extent to which that were not fantastical, they could be seen as halting and generally unsuccessful attempts to be rational or proto-scientific, albeit in rudimentary ways.

In all the accounts above, mythology explains myths by understanding them to be something besides themselves (ideology, emotion, runaway imagination, infantile forms of science or metaphysics, etc.). Such practices accentuate the brilliance and daring of Schelling's seminal approach. Schelling's Philosophy of Mythology does not explain myths by deciphering them in order to explain them by reference to what they are not. They are not allegories, always meaning something other than themselves. They are tautegorical. The gods came as themselves and their coming does not mean something besides itself. Schelling was clear about this: "Mythology is not *allegorical*; it is *tautegorical*. To mythology the gods are actually existing essences, gods that are not something *else*, do not *mean* something else, but rather *mean* only what they are" (SW, II/1, 195–196). Gods are not explicable through reference to something similar outside of themselves, but rather each God is uniquely itself and explicable solely with reference to itself. Coleridge, a serious admirer of Schelling and among the few contemporary thinkers to embrace Schelling's stunning 1815 address *On the Deities of Samothrace*,[4] coined the term, although he derived the idea itself from his engagement with this address. Schelling in turn happily borrowed the term from Coleridge.

Mythic thought is not aware of itself as mythic. It becomes mythological when one views myths from a critical distance. One can analyze this form of consciousness only when one is no longer in its thrall. The gods must first take

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[2] Ibid., 282.

[3] Walter F. Otto, "Der Durchbruch zum antiken Mythos im XIX. Jahrhundert," 221.

[4] See *On the Deities of Samothrace* (1815), translated, edited, and with supplemental essays, by Alexander Bilda, Jason M. Wirth, and David Farrell Krell (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2024).

flight. It does not follow, however, that the distance that makes mythological thought possible means that the mythic was somehow not real or that it was something besides itself. As Martijn Buijs in his essay in this volume reflects, "If myth has in some sense a revelatory power for us, this revelatory power can only be unfolded and understood in a philosophical elaboration that is not itself mythical even as it is concerned with myth. This is the task of Schelling's philosophy of mythology."

The reflective negative capability (to use Keats's lovely term) that enables the purview of a philosophy of mythology does not falsify or denigrate mythic consciousness in order to view myth from a perspective outside myth. At issue is the event of mythic consciousness as such. As the editor of this volume, Gregory S. Moss, articulates this still radical insight: "The tautegorical approach does not measure myth by an external standard of meaning, but reads it autonomously, i.e., on its own terms." Or: "the surprising significance of Schelling's manifesto for mythology lay in its declaration of autonomy. Myth must be understood as myth, not as history or metaphor or any other substitute."

This volume gathers some wonderful exercises in mythological thought in its tautegorical dimension, that is, in the dimension that respects mythic thinking as a transformative and pre-reflective event of human consciousness. This perspective remains one of the unjustly under-appreciated accomplishments of Schelling's late positive philosophy. A long overdue accounting of the importance of this aspect of Schelling's thinking motivates the analyses in this volume's first six contributions.

That being said, the tautegorical force of mythic consciousness was not lost on everyone. Perhaps the most prominent beneficiary of this tradition in the Twentieth Century was Ernst Cassirer, and two essays are dedicated to assessing his reception and retooling of Schelling's project.

The *Wirkungsgeschichte* of the philosophy of mythology also indirectly influenced thinkers who had little appreciation for Schelling overall. Nietzsche, the most prominent among these, claimed in *Ecce Homo* that Schelling, like all the other German stealth theologians, was just another Schleiermacher, a fabricator of veils.[5] However, although Nietzsche would be unimaginable without the figure of Dionysus, many readers are likely surprised by its importance for Schelling. In the *Urfassung* of the *Philosophy of Revelation*, for example, Schelling characterized artistic creation in a manner that strikingly anticipated the Dionysus/Apollo trope in Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*: "The mystery of true art is to be *simultaneously* mad and levelheaded [wahnsinnig und besonnen], not in distinctive moments, but *rather uno eodemque actu* [altogether in a single act]. This is what distinguishes the Apollonian inspiration from the Dionysian."[6] Regardless of his lack of respect for Schelling, Nietzsche's articulation of the Dionysian mode of consciousness is at least performatively a kind of Philosophy of Mythology in the tautegorical mode. Kwok-kui Wong's essay revisits this issue.

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[5] Nietzsche, *Kritische Studienausgabe*, 6:361.
[6] Schelling, *Urfassung Philosophie der Offenbarung*, 422.

Other essays detect the Philosophy of Mythology in a wide array of thinkers, including the anthropologist Lévi-Strauss, Blumenberg, Derrida, Ricoeur, and Levinas. And in a valuable gesture toward a more inclusive global philosophical palette, the final two essays turn to one of Schelling's unexpected admirers, the Kyoto School luminary Tanabe Hajime, whose metanoetics, rooted in both Saint Paul and Shinran, remain one of the philosophical highlights of the last century. This volume takes a significant step toward the restoration of the full dignity of the history of the human mind, demonstrating the powers of mythic consciousness and the dangers of its political distortion. In so doing, thinking discovers new insights about its past and future.

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Introduction: The Tautegorical Turn in the Philosophy of Mythology

Gregory S. Moss

1. Philosophy and Mythology as Forms of Absolute Knowing

In his *Inquiry into the Essence of Human Freedom*, Schelling exclaims that "it is not the time to raise old oppositions once again, but rather, to seek that which lies outside of, and beyond all oppositions."[1] Exactly because the Absolute is that in which "all oppositions disappear"[2] philosophy aims at absolute knowledge. Given that the absolute excludes nothing, it is *relative* to nothing else. If philosophy is called to absolute knowledge, the philosophy of mythology ought to be intimately tied up with absolute thinking.

'Mythology' is said in many ways. Myth is a form of logos that narrates a story. From a historical and anthropological view, we know that mythical stories are not limited to relative beings. Rather, myths tell us stories of the world and the role of human life in that world. Mythical logos narrates the story of the absolute. Although both philosophy and myth present the world, philosophy thinks about the world by means of concepts, while myth narrates a story of the world by means of the imagination. Mythical images are not universals, but particulars represented by the imaginative faculty. By depending on the power of the imagination, myths tell us stories of the world. These stories are not just told and retold – they are told within a larger cultural context in which they can be ritually enacted and regularly imbued with magical power that have an effect upon and orient the world of the people who believe them.[3] Mythology is said in many ways: in one sense it can signify a story, but in another sense, it can signify a form of culture.

Since philosophy aims to achieve absolute knowledge, and myth presents a story of the absolute, philosophy and myth are both concerned with the absolute. If philosophy aims to discover the truth about the absolute, philosophy ought to inquire into whether there is any truth to the mythical presentation of the absolute. As a form of absolute knowledge, philosophy ought to concern

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[1] Schelling, *Freedom Essay*, 77.
[2] Ibid., 71.
[3] See Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 118.

itself not only with the form of mythical knowing, but its content too. Philosophy can equally inquire into whether there is any truth in the form of myth, or whether there is any truth to the content of particular myths. In one sense, 'mythology' signifies the story of the absolute and the cultures that are informed and oriented by those stories. But in another sense, 'mythology' also means the study of myth. Since philosophy of mythology is a form of the study of myth, philosophy too can be described as a form of mythology.

Unlike mythology qua pictorial narrative of the absolute, the philosophical study of myth does not primarily operate by means of images. Philosophy pursues knowledge of absolute being by means of concepts. Accordingly, the logos about myth that philosophy seeks is a conceptual logos. Philosophy qua mythology is a conceptual study of mythology.

If the absolute had a merely trans-conceptual character, then no concept would match the absolute. In this case, the philosopher could never have a true thought about the absolute. Hence, philosophical truth requires that the absolute must have conceptual form. The absolute must already be constituted by a unity of the concept of being with being itself. In other words, philosophy can only possess the truth on the condition that truth already be present within the absolute itself. By matching one's concept with the being, the philosopher matches their concept with the concept present in the thing itself. As Fichte reminds us, philosophy ought to seek out the oneness of being and thought, not just being or thought alone.[4]

This defense of the philosophy of mythology presupposes that philosophy is normatively oriented towards absolute knowledge. But one might challenge this argument by sincerely calling into question Schelling's claim that philosophy should concern itself with absolute thinking. Indeed, the philosopher might well proclaim absolute thinking to be impossible. Nevertheless, such knowledge would invoke an absolute concept, for every object would be relative to another. If philosophy knows that every being is relative to another, then there is at least one concept that would be universal and all-encompassing. Since nothing would exceed the concept of relative being, the knowledge of the relativity of all things itself would constitute absolute knowledge. No matter what relative object I think, what I think must be, and nothing can exceed being – not even nothingness itself.

Perhaps the absolute can be thought, but it might be a merely contingent object of philosophical speculation. Ironically, absolute knowledge would be necessary for such self-knowledge. For such a claim would divide all of the objects of philosophical knowing into those contingently related to philosophical speculation, and those that are endemic to it. In short, one cannot deny Schelling his injunction that philosophy ought to seek absolute knowledge without thereby realizing Schelling's vision of absolute thinking.

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[4] Fichte, *The Science of Knowing. J.G. Fichte's 1804 Lectures on the Wissenschaftslehre*, Lecture 1, 25.

If philosophy failed to know itself, then philosophical knowing would not be all-encompassing. As a result, philosophy would not possess absolute knowledge, and could only lay claim to a relative object. All knowing would be relative to a form of thinking that would escape it. Thus, in order to achieve absolute knowledge, philosophy ought to know itself. Self-knowledge is a demand of absolute thinking. In order to think the absolute, we are called to think about the thinking of the absolute.

Since philosophy is historical, and it must know itself, the inquiry into the history of philosophy is essential to philosophy itself. Indeed, philosophy is not just absolute thinking, but the thinking of the history of absolute thinking. By treating absolute thinking as a totally ahistorical phenomenon, one relativizes it, and thereby fails to think absolutely.

Since philosophy has the obligation to know its own history, in order to know itself, it is called to re-think the history of the philosophy of mythology. Because we aim to re-think the history of the philosophy of mythology without thereby bracketing the systematic ambitions of philosophy, this text does not give centre stage to the study of myth in psychology or sociology – such as those important and classical treatments in Freud, Jung, or Durkheim. However, because of the wide scope of philosophy, these approaches may be considered insofar as they touch upon the concerns of the philosophers considered.

2. The History of the Philosophy of Myth: From Schelling to Tanabe

Our book does not give equal treatment to all the philosophers who have seriously studied myth and its various forms. In this respect, our book does not mean to be a comprehensive survey of the history of the philosophy of myth. Instead, the book largely (though not exclusively) focuses on the work of F.W.J. Schelling. Schelling sets the tone for the book, for it is the great Schelling who first recognizes the deep and intimate bond between philosophy, myth, and the absolute that we have systematically elucidated here. Schelling recognizes that myth is the most primordial cultural practice whereby the human being posits the absolute as divine. Because human beings are those who posit absolute existence as divine, the late Schelling argues that the human being is the God-positing consciousness. In addition to recognizing the intimate relation between myth and the absolute, Schelling is also careful to link the practice of philosophy to myth. For Schelling, both revealed religion (which he distinguishes from myth), and philosophy are also concerned with the absolute. In his positive philosophy, Schelling argues that the task of positive philosophy consists in grasping absolute existence as divine – as God.[5] Indeed, myth, religion and philosophy are all bound together as ways that the absolute is revealed as divine.

[5] See Schelling, *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy*: *The Berlin Lectures*, 179 [128].

Because the mythical worldview is the most fundamental form of human consciousness, Schelling reasons that it cannot itself be produced by a more primordial form of consciousness. Thus, myth can only be the product of an unconscious power of the human being, the God-positing consciousness.[6] Since Schelling's philosophy of nature renders consciousness itself a product of nature, the unconscious power that gives rise to consciousness must be a natural power.[7] This brief synopsis of Schelling's philosophy of myth evokes a question: what is the relation between nature and myth? This is one of the many queries of relevance to our inquiry.

Nature is not just a set of objects, natura naturata, but an activity. Nature is spirit in potential, it is at work, natura naturans, in the creation of mythical forms. Because mythical forms are produced by an unconscious natural power, mythical consciousness believes the mythical forms to be the product of foreign powers beyond themselves. While mythical consciousness is unconscious of the fact that it is the God-positing consciousness, in philosophy this unconscious, natural, and spiritual drive that generates the mythical world is revealed through the disclosing power of philosophy – a discipline charged with reconstructing the various stages of the revelation of the absolute. In a word, Schelling's philosophy not only aims at absolute knowledge, but further recognizes what this demands: a philosophical interrogation into the being and truth of myth.

Naturally, our inquiry does not stop with Schelling. Ernst Cassirer is another important thinker whose work on myth has been unduly overshadowed by his work on the philosophy of science. In the second volume of his *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms: Mythical Thinking*, Ernst Cassirer transforms Schelling's approach to mythology as a philosophy of the absolute into a transcendental philosophy. As Heidegger points out in his review of the volume, "Cassirer explicitly takes over the view of Schelling."[8] Cassirer asks:

> Or is there perhaps a means and possibility to retain as such the question put forward by Schelling's Philosophy of Mythology but, at the same time, to transplant it from the ground [*Boden*] of a philosophy of the Absolute to that of a critical philosophy?[9]

Although the form of myth is of immense importance to the evaluation of its truth, many questions in this book also concern the content of myth, for this is of equal relevance to the question of the truth of myth. For example, traditionally, myth has been associated with *polytheism*. Should myth be identified with polytheism? While Schelling identifies myth with polytheism, Cassirer challenges any easy identification of the two. If a society can be constituted by

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[6] Schelling, *Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*, 123–138.

[7] Schelling's unconscious should not be identified with Freud's *Id* or the Freudian unconscious later endorsed by the Surrealists of the early 20th century. By no means is it an irrational power of desire, a destructive eros that must be ameliorated by the super-ego. Rather, it is *an impulse towards divinity* that lies within nature itself.

[8] Heidegger, *The Piety of Thinking*, 32. One time student of George Dumezil, Jaan Puhvel also recognizes the importance of Schelling for Cassirer: "Ernst Cassirer's work is a "redevelopment and reassessment of Schelling's approach." Puhvel, *Comparative Mythology*, 12.

[9] Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, Vol 2: Mythical Thinking*, 12.

a totemistic structure of ritual and belief without a pantheon of gods, then polytheism is not a necessary feature of the mythical worldview.[10] The question of polytheism raises other questions concerning the relation of myth to religion. Should myth be identified with religion as such? Or is there a significant difference between these cultural forms that is of relevance to philosophical thought?

Because the philosophical inquiry into the history of mythology is not of merely historical interest, we should further consider why Schelling's approach to the philosophy of myth, and the transcendental shadow it has cast in the work of Ernst Cassirer, should stand at the centre of our systematic interests.

Time and again, throughout the history of the Western tradition, the allegorical interpretation of myth dominated the way intellectuals read myth.[11] From the Greek Sophists to the Neo-Platonists and the Stoics[12], myth never means what it says. Rather, when a myth speaks of a God or a divine event – it means something else: a natural occurrence, a social-historical happening, a moral, etc. This disposition to uncover a hidden meaning in myth – to *decode* its true message by looking through the cloak of mythical imagery, continued well into the twentieth century, the most prominent example of which is the famous anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss.[13]

The relevance of Schelling's philosophy for the study of myth can be gleaned from the work of comparative folklorist and mythologist, Jaan Puhvel. For Puhvel, the surprising significance of Schelling lies in his contribution to the autonomy of myth:

> But the surprising significance of Schelling's manifesto for mythology lay in its declaration of autonomy. Myth must be understood as myth, not as history or metaphor or any other substitute.[14]

Puhvel is on point that the profundity of Schelling's reading consists in the fact that he challenges any reading of myth that subordinates mythical meaning to some other form of meaning. When the myth speaks of the history and life of the gods, these are not metaphors or allegories that substitute or stand for some other meaning. Rather, the myth means what it says: 'Zeus' means Zeus, 'Athena' signifies Athena. Schelling's approach is tautegorical, for it does not look to another strata of meaning by which to interpret the mythical signs. The tautegorical approach does not measure myth by an external standard of meaning, but reads it autonomously, i.e. on its own terms. Following Schelling, Cassirer would ad-

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[10] While Cassirer sees totemism as an expression of the mythical worldview, he does not follow Durkheim, who posits totemism as the "most primitive cult." See Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 77. Already by the time of Mirceade, totemism was no longer recognized as the earliest form of myth. See Mirceade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 231.

[11] Although here I read 'allegorical' to simply signify what is implied by the Greek etymology, i.e. "speech about something else," we could further divide these forms of other-signification into other various other kinds, such as the *sensus anagogicus [anagogical sense], etc. See* Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, Vol 2: Mythical Thinking, 46 [48].*

[12] See Brisson, *How the Philosophers Saved Myth*, 1–3.

[13] See Lévi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth," 206–232.

[14] See Puhvel, *Comparative Mythology*, 12.

amantly affirm that myth should be read autonomously, for myth should "not be measured by the external criteria of value and reality."[15] As Schelling writes, the tautegorical approach can explain "[…] how was it possible that the peoples of antiquity were not only able to bestow faith in those religious ideas […] but were able to bring them to the most serious, in part, painful sacrifices."[16]

For Schelling, it is implausible to believe that people conducting such sacrifices would look upon their gods as mere allegories, for no one sacrifices to an allegory or symbolic representation of something else.[17] Just as people do not worship allegories, they do not worship inventions. Schelling and Cassirer both argue that myth cannot be reduced to a conscious invention that is constructed according to a plan.

These questions become especially urgent in the context of our global, technological, and natural-scientific culture which seem to have effaced much of the influence of myth. If Cassirer is right that the natural scientific culture has replaced the mythical perspective as our guiding worldview, what role and place can myth and the mythical worldview have in such a global and technological culture? Cassirer writes:

> The world views of myth and of theoretical knowledge cannot co-exist in the same area of thought. […] Once the day has dawned, once the theoretical consciousness and theoretical perception are born, no return seems possible to the world of mythical shadows.[18]

If myth has been cancelled, in what has it been (or can it be) preserved in different forms of culture, such as in the various arts, whether it be the novel, film, or music? If it is (or can be preserved), does this imply a transformation of its very character? While Cassirer acknowledges the return of myth in the political sphere, such as in the myths of Nazi Germany, this return of myth is accompanied by a radical transformation of its original character. Unlike the mythology that constitutes the primordial form of world-consciousness from which all other forms of culture arises, Cassirer will later acknowledge in *Myth of the State* that the return of myth in the political domain are consciously invented myths constructed 'according to plan,' for the sake of political control and manipulation. However, these myths certainly do not exhaust all forms of mythical consciousness, and they are late developments in the history of human culture that must originally presuppose a form of myth that is fundamentally different in form.[19] Is myth a conscious invention constructed according to a plan, or does

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[15] Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, Vol 2: Mythical Thinking*, 4 [4–5].

[16] Schelling, *Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*, 136.

[17] While Schelling's argument certainly problematizes an allegorizing of all forms of myth, in which people consciously view their own myths in an allegorical manner, the evidence presented here is not intended to be accompanied by apodeictic certainty. Rather, on the evidence provided, it remains possible to conceive of mythical signs as signifying some form of *unconscious* meaning, such as one might find in Jung's theory of myth. In *Mythical Thinking*, Cassirer will eliminate even this possibility, for such an interpretation could not in principle account for the possibility of magical practice.

[18] Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, Vol. 3: The Phenomenology of Knowledge*, 28.

[19] See Cassirer, *Myth of the State*, 278–282.

it originate in an unconscious activity of the human being? Or if both exist, how do these various forms of myth relate to each other? Such questions are of central importance to the philosophy of mythology. Above all, before we begin to evaluate the potential benefits or dangers of myth in our contemporary world, we must first understand what it is.

Schelling's philosophy of myth inaugurates a new possibility of reading myth that has been sorely overlooked and underestimated. Rather than attempt to straight away decode the true and hidden meaning of myth, Schelling's tautegorical turn critiques the presupposition of that very practice. If myth means what it says, then myth has nothing to hide – it's meaning is transparent – open and available for those with hears to hear and eyes to see. Although the content of myth does not hide its meaning, both Schelling and Cassirer will insist that, because the origin and ultimate significance of myth remains hidden to mythical consciousness, philosophy is burdened with the task of laying bare that origin and ultimate significance.[20]

Instead of dogmatically searching for the 'true' meaning of a myth in the question 'what does this myth really mean?' the tautegorical approach calls us to ask the question 'how does myth signify?' With the tautegorical turn in the history of the philosophy of mythology in hand, we have struck upon one of the main tasks of this volume: to re-think how myth signifies. We aim to inquire into the form of mythical signification, and to do this in dialogue with Schelling's tautegorical critique of the history of the philosophy of myth. However, in order to avoid the risk of dogmatically endorsing any one approach to this question, we also investigate other major approaches to myth in the 19th and 20th centuries, some of which return to the allegorical form of signification, such as Nietzsche and Strauss. With these contrasting approaches side by side, we hope to bring the various approaches into relief, and to further sharpen and clarify the form of the question. Without adjudicating this question concerning the form of myth, we cannot make good headway on the question of the truth of myth.

In our everyday being-in-the-world, 'myth' is used synonymously with 'lie' or 'deception.' Treated as a mere deception, myth is emptied of all truth. Since all deceptions are false, and myths are deceptions, myths too must be false. As inherently false representations, myths are inherently failures – representations that fail to be true. Here the idea reigns that myth is measured by a principle of truth that lives outside of myth.

Fascinatingly, this everyday prejudice is also reflected in the history of mythology. As Cassirer notes, the classical philologist and mythologist Max Müller

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[20] Unlike Schelling, Cassirer does not locate the origin of mythical consciousness in the unconscious power of nature, but in the symbolic function of the human being from which all forms of culture originate. Like Schelling, however, he argues that myth does not know that its forms are products of a human activity – it is an unconscious form of human production. Oddly, Cassirer himself does not emphasize or even acknowledge the role of the unconscious in Schelling's account of myth. For more on Schelling's influence on Cassirer, as well as Cassirer's own reading of Schelling, see Moss, Gregory S. "Autonomizing Culture: The Schellingian Heritage of Cassirer's Philosophy of Mythology."

argued that myth was simply a "disease" of language.[21] Such an attitude is also reflected in the Enlightenment approach to mythology, which looks upon myth as mere "superstition." In each case, myth is measured by an external cultural form, such as language or science, to which it fails to correspond.

The Schellingian and Cassirerian approaches to myth challenge such common prejudices that we have inherited in both our everyday and intellectual life. According to Cassirer, to read myth 'autonomously' also means to measure it by "its own inherent, structural lawfulness."[22] When we read myth as a "disease" of language, or failed science, we treat myth in a heteronomous way. Rather than measure it by appealing to cultural function that is external to it, Cassirer calls upon us to investigate whether myth does not have its own internal function which it can successfully realize. The 'autonomy thesis' evokes an important question, so often hidden by the march of demythologization: does myth have its own function – its own purpose – in cultural life that is irreducible to other forms of culture? Many answer in the negative. But even amongst those who answer in the affirmative, the answers vary: for Schelling myth is a unique way that existence is posited as divine; for Cassirer myth is characterized by an independent symbolic modality which transforms sensory impressions into objective representations; for Blumenberg, myth functions as an autonomous way human beings attempt to overcome the absolutism of reality. Whether we answer in the negative or the affirmative, we cannot ignore the question and the challenge posed by the autonomy thesis.

Schelling's influence was large – it extended far beyond Europe to Japan and, in particular, to Kyoto. The Kyoto School philosophers voraciously read Schelling and the German Idealists. Nishitani, Keiji, student of Nishida Kitarō, translated Schelling's *Freiheitsschrift* into Japanese. Tanabe Hajime – co-founder of the Kyoto School – was also deeply influenced by many philosophers in the West – including Heidegger and Schelling. Indeed, Tanabe's *Philosophy as Metanoetics* is littered with praise for Schelling. Tanabe found Schelling "preferable to Hegel,"[23] and praised Schelling's *Investigations* as a "major philosophical achievement."[24] Tanabe presents his seminal *Philosophy as Metanoetics* as a "further refinement of Schelling's standpoint"[25] and an effort to "bring to fulfilment the dialectical mediation that constitutes the general essence of his theory."[26]

Although Tanabe does not appear to endorse the tautegorical approach to myth, his work is of special importance to our inquiry. First, following Nishida and Schelling, Tanabe considers philosophy to be directed towards the absolute. Second, like Schelling before him, Tanabe's philosophy of mythology cannot be divorced from his reflections on the absolute. However, unlike his Western counterparts, Tanabe re-thinks the absolute as absolute nothingness,

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[21] Cassirer, *Myth of the State*, 18.
[22] Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, Vol 2: Mythical Thinking*, 4–5.
[23] Tanabe, *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 242.
[24] Ibid., 256.
[25] Ibid., 248.
[26] Ibid., 256.

a concept endorsed (albeit in different ways) by the key figures of the Kyoto School: Nishida, Tanabe, Nishitani, and Ueda Shizuteru. Although Tanabe is not the only Kyoto School philosopher to develop a philosophy of mythology[27], Tanabe's proximity to Schelling and his integration of a philosophy of mythology into the philosophy of absolute nothingness makes his work especially relevant for our inquiry. With our reflections on Tanabe, we hope to put Tanabe's work into comparative perspective with other 20th century phenomenological existentialists (such as Levinas), and to show the way that absolute philosophizing already has a home in Kyoto. Indeed, by recovering key insights from the Kyoto School, we have an opportunity to discover possibilities for absolute thinking that de-centers the European continent by preserving, but also fundamentally transcending, many of its central insights.

In the 20th century, the phenomenological method, first discovered by Husserl, opened up a new philosophical framework for the philosophy of mythology. Discontent with a transcendental approach to myth, or its metaphysical equivalent in Schelling, Heidegger called for a re-thinking of the philosophy of myth that employed the descriptive tools of phenomenology. As is well known, in his review of the second volume of Cassirer's *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, Heidegger levied extensive critiques of the framework of Cassirer's philosophy of myth. Yet, Heidegger offered more than mere critique. In fact, Heidegger called for a phenomenology of mythology situated withing the transcendental ontology of *Being and Time*. In his second volume, Cassirer argues that mana is one *expression* of the sacred, that domain that is set apart by the experience of wonder – θαύμαζειν.[28] In his review, Heidegger argued that this mythical concept of mana can already be disclosed in the Geworfenheit of Dasein: "In thrownness, accordingly, all disclosed beings have the ontological feature of overwhelmingness (mana)."[29]

Following Heidegger's Leitfaden for a future phenomenology of myth, we consider the potential for a phenomenology of mythology by uncovering the mythical potential of the lifeworld, and engage the concept of significance in Blumenberg's *Work on Myth*. Of course, the critique of the classical approaches to myth does not end with Heidegger. By following the spirit of criticism into Postmodern philosophy and Hermeneutics, we further consider critiques of classical approaches to myth in Derrida, and re-think the debate between Derrida and Ricœur on the problems of eurocentrism, logo-centrism, and other questions that arise within that discourse.

Because philosophy has historically grappled with mythology, and philosophical thinking of the absolute demands an inquiry into the history of philosophical thinking, philosophy cannot complete its own systematic ambitions to think the absolute without a serious inquiry into the history of the philosophy of mythology. The book before you, dear reader, is just this: a set of inquiries

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[27] For example, consider Kiyoshi Miki's "Myth."
[28] See Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, Vol 2: Mythical Thinking*. 98.
[29] Heidegger, *The Piety of Thinking: Essays by Martin Heidegger*, 43.

into the history of the philosophy of mythology. Through these inquiries, we hope you will join us in the *practice* of philosophical self-knowing.

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I. F.W. J. Schelling and the Tautegorical Structure of Myth

Mythos as Self-Contained Intermediary: Nature, Reality, and Mythology in the Context of Schelling's System of Knowledge (1800)

Jesper Lundsfryd Rasmussen

Abstract: The article aims at establishing a better understanding of Schelling's scarce remarks from the final words of *System des transscendentalen Idealismus* (*STI*) on a new mythology as an intermediary (Mittelglied) to completing his system of knowledge. To this end, it suggests taking a closer look at Schelling's work that precedes the Jena period. First, mythology is briefly elaborated within the systematic program of the system of knowledge, which Schelling introduces in *STI* and the philosophy of nature (1799), as well as the challenges that such a complex pose for a completion of his system. Secondly, Rasmussen develops Schelling's early philosophy of mythology as Philosopheme in two stages, drawing 1) on his early studies of the ancient myths in Tübingen, his discussions of contemporary conceptions of mythology, such as Karl Philipp Moritz's, and 2) the passages on mythology from *Allgemeine Uebersicht der neuesten philosophischen Literatur* (1798). From these two steps, the article unfolds a notion of myth as history-like presentation (geschichtsähnliche Darstellung) and integrates it into the system of knowledge. Specifically, history-like presentation is methodologically placed between philosophical construction (necessity) and history (freedom) and presents the content of the two main branches of philosophy in a vivid and real whole. This notion of a new philosophical myth, the article argues, enables Schelling to combine his philosophy of nature and transcendental philosophy in a tautegorical medium, thus preparing the completion of the system in the work of art.

Keywords: The Boundary of Reason, System of Knowledge, Philosophy of Nature, Transcendental Idealism, New Mythology, Philosophical Construction, Philosophies of Mythology

In the ninth lecture of the so-called historical critical introduction to the philosophy of mythology, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling reflectively turns his attention towards the conditions of a philosophy of mythology. Comparing the new developments of his thinking to his earlier systematic appropriations of myth, he subsequently emphasizes the connection between philosophy and mythology, designating his own work, *System des transcendental Idealismus* (1800), as a precursor to the philosophy of mythology.[1] Immediately following this preliminary characterization, Schelling complements his hitherto

[1] Henceforth, *STI*.

developed doctrine of myth, i.e., mythology, with a concept explicitly borrowed from Coleridge: tautegory.[2] In the same breath, he highlights a striking kinship between two normally distinct realms. Like nature, Schelling argues, myth is characterized in virtue of its completeness and independence. Contrary to earlier and contemporary attempts to reinterpret myths in light of something alien, they are rather self-contained and explicable without recourse to external fields. Accordingly, they must be understood in their own right and on their own terms. Consequently, we should refrain from re-interpreting myths as immature science, Christendom *in spe*, or otherwise understand them as something other than they are in and of themselves.

Despite the suggested independence of myth, Schelling thus maintains a relative identity between myth and nature in virtue of their content. What distinguishes myth from nature, and consequently the philosophy of nature from the philosophy of mythology, is the form, that is, the means (Mittel) through which the content is known to us. Whereas the content of the philosophy of nature can be constructed before our eyes in intellectual intuition, and thus rationally be known in its genesis, the content of myths is simply given to us in an immediate narrative, immune to any attempt to rationally reconstruct it. The human being is, according to Schelling, simply not in possession of the means to create new myths consciously, i.e. intentionally, whether they are based on nature, reason, moral grounds, or otherwise.

It has rightly been argued that this tautegorical conception of myth marks a turning point in Schelling's thought and receives its most systematic treatment in the lectures on the philosophy of mythology.[3] Nonetheless, Schelling was deeply occupied with mythology his entire life, a fact that Schelling himself acknowledged. As has just been mentioned, he explicitly traces the main gesture of the philosophy of mythology back to Coleridge's notion of ταυτηγορικον (tautegorikon) and *STI*. To capture the true meaning of the ancient myths, Coleridge anglicized and applied this term based on his reading of Schelling's *Ueber die Gottheiten von Samothrake* (1815) in "On the Prometheus of Aeschylus" (1825).[4] Although Schelling does not shy away from critically commenting on Coleridge's clarification of the tautegorical myths as philosopheme, i.e., propositions containing theoretical truths (a notion Schelling himself applied positively to describe the ancient myths in his Tübinger studies on mythology), he not only accepts Coleridge's concept as well as its philosophical connotations, but

[2] Where the text is available, I quote Schelling from the historical critical edition: Schelling, *Historisch-kritische Ausgabe*. Henceforth, I will refer to this edition with '*AA*' followed by series (*Reihe*), volume (*Band*), and, if relevant, section (Abteilung). Otherwise, I quote the edition published by K.F.A. Schelling: Schelling, *Werke*. Henceforth, I will refer to this edition with 'Schelling, *Werke*' followed by volume (1–14). Here, Schelling, *Werke*, 11:196n; cf. Schelling, *Werke*, 13:223 and 364. Henceforth, I differentiate between, on the one hand, myth as the actual myth, e.g., the Greek myths, and, on the other hand, mythology as the doctrine of myth, e.g., Christian Gottlob Heyne's model of the ancient myths as an expression of a childish, and thus not fully developed rationality.

[3] See for example Gabriel, *Der Mensch im Mythos*, § 11.

[4] See Bilda, Wirth, and Krell, "General Introduction."

utilizes it approvingly in the subsequent lectures. The concept itself stems from Coleridge's *The Statesman's Manual* (1816), which he published one year before *Biographia Literaria* (1817).[5] The latter was highly influenced by the early work of Schelling and even contained unmarked translations of excerpts taken directly from the 1800 system. Thus, Schelling's new endeavor explicitly and implicitly invites its readers to embed the philosophy of mythology into the horizon of his earlier philosophy.

This contribution intends to accommodate Schelling's invitation to contribute to our knowledge of the developmental origins of the tautegorical notion of myth by addressing the question of mythology in the early period of Schelling's work in the 1790s. Specifically, the article focuses on *STI* and attempts to interpret its concluding words on mythology in light of Schelling's earlier ambitions to gain a proper understanding of myths and their systematic and philosophical functions. In the programmatic last words of *STI*, Schelling infamously proclaims the completion of his system of knowledge (System des Wissens) in the work of art and with the return of science (Wissenschaft) to the ocean of poetry.

As such however, *STI* ends with Schelling's proclamation that the completion of his system of knowledge in the artwork needs to take place against the backdrop of a mythology to come, a new mythology:

> Welches aber das Mittelglied der Rückkehr der Wissenschaft zur Poesie seyn werde, ist im Allgemeinen nicht schwer zu sagen, da ein solches Mittelglied in der Mythologie existirt hat, ehe diese, wie es jetzt scheint, unauflösliche Trennung geschehen ist. Wie aber eine neue Mythologie, welche nicht Erfindung des einzelnen Dichters, sondern eines neuen nur Einen Dichter gleichsam vorstellenden Geschlechts seyn kann, selbst entstehen könne, dieß ist ein Problem, dessen Auflösung allein von den künftigen Schicksalen der Welt, und dem weiteren Verlauf der Geschichte zu erwarten ist.[6]

These enigmatic final words on mythology have been the object of great interest from many Schelling scholars, not the least because Schelling added a footnote to this passage, claiming that the proclaimed new myth is based on a "schon vor mehreren Jahren ausgearbeitete Abhandlung *über Mythologie*, welche nun binnen kurzem erscheinen soll."[7] Due to the scanty details, which Schelling offers his readers on mythology in *STI*, scholars have often resorted to his later work on mythology as a remedy to unravel these lines. With few exceptions, the mythology has been interpreted retrospectively from the viewpoint of the identity philosophy, such as the philosophy of art, the Würzburg system, or the *Weltalter*-project.[8] Supplementing this view with a recourse to the so-called oldest systematic program of German idealism, others have argued for a democratic

[5] Coleridge, *Stateman's Manual*, 36f. See Halmi, "Coleridge on Allegory and Symbol."

[6] Schelling, *AA*, 1,9.1:329.

[7] Ibid., I,9.1:329n. The literature on this passage is *legio*. See for example Hühn, "Idee einer Neuen Mythologie"; and Otabe, "Begriff der Mitte." For this thematic in general, see Freier, *Rückkehr der Götter*.

[8] For the priority of the identity philosophy over *STI* in Schelling's understanding of mythology, see for example especially the preface of Hennigfeld, *Mythos und Poesie*; and Oesterreich, *Philosophie, Mythos und Lebenswelt.* For the philosophy of the Weltalter-project, see for example Höfele, *Wollen und Lassen* and Neumann, *Zeit im Übergang zur Geschichte*.

dimension of the new mythology.[9] Furthermore, the known exceptions from this trend often limit themselves to merely mentioning Schelling's earlier interest in mythology, thereby stressing the substantial difference between the earlier attempts and the one undertaken in 1800 (and onwards).[10] Contrary to these positions, few have emphasized the continuity of Schelling's early philosophy with respect to mythology.[11] Moreover, it is still rather uncommon in the scholarship to explore the role of mythology in the context of Schelling's notion of a system in 1800.[12]

Such retrospective approaches suffer from especially one substantial problem that itself is closely related to the development of Schelling's notion of a system. On the one hand, the programmatic form of the oldest system program seems to offer little more than the programmatic enunciations of the system that they ought to explain. Furthermore, the political implications of the oldest system program seem to collide with Schelling's system-theoretical conception in *STI*. On the other hand, Schelling's rational approach to mythology in the identity philosophy seems to disagree with the ambitions of *STI*. Whereas the development of mythology as the material of art in the identity philosophy might appear to correspond to Schelling's project in *STI*, he explicitly *constructs* mythology in the identity system philosophically. The possibility of a rational construction of myth and its origin is, however, exactly what Schelling denies in *STI*.

While it hardly can be denied that Schelling's utterings about a new mythology in *STI* leave much to be desired, they will nonetheless serve as my point of departure for providing a better understanding of the role of mythology as a self-contained intermediary (Mittelglied) in the system of knowledge. Contrary to the abovementioned studies of Schelling's mythology, my attempt instead pursues the issue from a different perspective, i.e., its prehistory. Drawing on the results from his earlier studies of the philosophical myth as a history-like presentation (geschichtsähnliche Darstellung) situated between nature and the genetic construction (theoretical philosophy) and history (practical philosophy), I argue, Schelling's mythology allows myth to serve as the medium that enables the completion of the system of knowledge; or, more specifically, he traces how the absolute other (obiecere) of the absolute I arrives (hinzukommen) and, subsequently, appears in the I unconsciously without reducing the former to the latter or vice versa, thereby preparing the ground for the completion of the system in the work of art. In a new myth, I argue, the I is confronted with a whole world, of which it is neither the author nor a stranger, but which, subsequently, can be reflected in the work of art in its entirety, thus completing

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[9] Frank, *Der kommende Gott*.

[10] See, for example, Allwohn, *Mythos bei Schelling*.

[11] See, for example, Dietzsch, "Zum Mythos-Problem beim frühen Schelling," 127–130. To the best of my knowledge, the first steps towards situating Schelling's new mythology in his earlier work is Binkelmann, "Idee einer neuen Mythologie." See also my forthcoming *Mythos und Kontruktion.*

[12] See, for example, Korten, "Vom Parallelismus von Natur- und Transzendentalphilosophie."

the system. The entire history of the I – i.e., the content of the philosophy of nature as well as the philosophy of the I – must be present in the new myth, albeit in a new and self-contained form, namely as a myth. Thus, I aim to unfold the reasons why a new myth can function as the stepping-stone to completing the system, and what, more precisely, the philosophical relation between history and myth consists in. On this account, myths cannot be equated with history stricto sensu, but rather, they exhibit the common ground between history and nature.[13] Although Dieter Jähnig also refers to the lectures on philosophy of art and the Würzburg system in order to explain the intermediary function of myth in STI, my considerations in this article follow Jähnig in so far as he also relates myth to history and nature.[14] Ultimately however, Jähnig complies with the tradition of scholarship and interprets Schelling's notion of a new myth according to the mythology from the identity philosophy. Complementing this approach, I aim to exhibit the structural and systematic relation between history, nature, and myth in detail, relying on Schelling's earlier mythology.[15]

First, I briefly place mythology within the systematic program of the system of knowledge, which Schelling introduces in STI and the philosophy of nature (1799), as well as the challenges that such a complex pose for a conception of myth. To gain a better conceptual understanding of Schelling's scarce remarks from STI and the kind of mythology that he could have in mind as an intermediary to complete his system, I suggest taking a closer look at Schelling's work, which precedes the Jena period. Specifically, I will draw on his early studies of the ancient myths in Tübingen, his discussions of contemporary conceptions of mythology, such as Karl Philipp Moritz's, and the passages on mythology from *Allgemeine Uebersicht der neusten philosophischen Literatur* (1798). Instead of looking forward to his identity system and back, we can, I will show, achieve a better understanding of the project of a new myth in *STI* and the functional role of myths in systematic philosophy by taking the prehistory of *STI* into account.

1. The System of Knowledge, or the Insufficiency of (Theoretical and Practical) Reason

To determine the function of the new myth in the completion of the system of knowledge, it is necessary to take a brief look at its structure as a whole. In 1799–1800, Schelling names his position the "system of knowledge" (System des Wissens), with which he does not have one, but two differentiated "sciences" (Wissenschaft) in mind, namely the *philosophy of nature* (*Naturphilosophie*), outlined in *Erster Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie*[16] (1799), and *the*

[13] Cf. Gabriel, *Mensch im Mythos*, 407.
[14] Jähnig, *Schelling*, 239–243.
[15] Jähnig only refers to Schelling's earlier studies in order to display Schelling's familiarity with mythology. See ibid., 248.
[16] Henceforth, *EE*.

transcendental philosophy, outlined in *STI* (1800). Together, Schelling argues, in his introduction to the philosophy of nature as well as in *STI*, that they together form the system of knowledge. While the exact nature of the quite complex relation between these two sciences shall not concern us in detail here, the general determinations of the two sciences, as well as the conditions for a completion of the system, will aid the understanding of the systematic function of mythology.[17] In the introduction, which he published as an independent booklet in the early Summer 1799, Schelling defines the philosophy of nature, transcendental philosophy, and the system of knowledge in the following way:

> Wenn es nun Aufgabe der Transcendentalphilosophie ist, das Reelle dem Ideellen unterzuordnen, so ist es dagegen Aufgabe der Naturphilosophie, das Ideelle aus dem Reellen zu erklären; beyde Wissenschaften sind also Eine, nur durch die entgegengesetzten Richtungen ihrer Aufgaben sich unterscheidende Wissenschaft; da ferner beyde Richtungen nicht nur gleich möglich, sondern gleich nothwendig sind, so kommt auch beyden im System des Wissens gleiche Nothwendigkeit zu.[18]

This is not the first time Schelling mentions a system of knowledge. Unlike earlier comments on it, however, he offers his first definition of such a system in this introduction.[19] At this point, it simultaneously becomes evident for everyone that his system is incompatible with that of Johann Gottlieb Fichte, because the philosophy of nature treats the real or nature as independent (Autarkie der Natur) and autonomous (Autonomie der Natur), i.e., as an absolute.[20]

In the preface to the STI, Schelling specifies the task of transcendental philosophy in such a way that it itself must be extended to include a system of all knowledge. This project is identical to the one that Schelling associates with the extension of the principles of transcendental philosophy to all possible problems relating to knowledge, which results in a sequence of stages or epochs that in this part of the system now consist of the I's attempt to trace its own past and, thus, to uncover the "Parallelismus der Natur mit dem Intelligenten […]."[21] A complete representation (Darstellung) of this so-called parallelism is, Schelling now proclaims, "weder der Transscendental- noch der Naturphilosophie allein, sondern nur beyden Wissenschaften möglich […]."[22] Whereas in the philosophy of nature he defines the task of this science on the basis of its similar structure with the task of transcendental philosophy, he likewise defines the task of transcendental philosophy in terms of its structural similarity with the philosophy of na-

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[17] The literature on this subject is quite vast. See, for example, Hühn, *Fichte und Schelling*; Baumgartner, "Der spekulative Ansatz in Schellings System"; Korten, "Vom Parallelismus der Natur- und Transzendentalphilosophie zur Identitätsphilosophie"; Schwenzfeuer, *Natur und Subjekt*; Schwab, "Fichte Schelling Debate." For my own interpretation, see Rasmussen, "Freedom as Ariadne's Thread"; and *Mythos und Konstruktion*.

[18] Schelling, *AA*, I, 8:30.

[19] Prior to 1799, Schelling had mentioned a system of knowledge twice: once in *Allgemeine Uebersicht der neusten philosophischen Litteratur* (1797/1798) and once in *Ueber Offenbarung und Volksunterricht* (1798).

[20] Schelling, *AA*, I, 7:81.

[21] Ibid., I, 9:25.

[22] Ibid.

ture in *STI*. The true system is thus constituted by a correspondence between the two sciences: "*Entweder wird das Objektive zum Ersten gemacht, und gefragt: wie ein Subjektives zu ihm hinzukomme, das mit ihm übereinstimmt.*"[23] This approach results in a quasi-history of nature in the EE, culminating in nature's inability to fulfill its task and to represent (darstellen) its own activity (Tätigkeit) as its own construction or product. Instead, this science ends with a turning point (Wendepunkt) between philosophy of nature and transcendental philosophy, where the former sets its own activity not as a real product, but as an ideal act.[24] Transcendental philosophy is, conversely, determined as the opposite of philosophy of nature: "*Oder das Subjektive wird zum Ersten gemacht, und die Aufgabe ist die: wie ein Objektives hinzukomme, das mit ihm übereinstimmt*."[25] The completion of this task not only results in an autonomous reiteration of the entire philosophy of nature (theoretical philosophy) as constructions of self-consciousness trying to reflect itself, but adds to this picture practical philosophy (ethics, politics, history, and religion) and teleology as a "fortgehende Geschichte des Selbstbewußtseyns,"[26] which culminates in the representation of this correspondence (Übereinstimmung) in the work of art. From the outset of transcendental philosophy, the principle of the I has forgotten its genesis, scrutinized in the opposite science: "Das Selbstbewußtseyn ist der lichte Punkt im ganzen System des Wissens, der aber nur vorwärts, nicht rückwärts leuchtet […]."[27] As cited earlier, however, neither theoretical nor practical philosophy is capable of such a representation that can recover this past adequately, because both sciences proceed consciously and thus fail to account for the independence of that which they attempt to construct, i.e., the other (obiecere) of the subject. In every attempt of constructing nature, they bestow upon it the structure of their own principle, self-consciousness, and fail to do justice to the unconsciousness in the product. Hence, they are bound to miss their target of representing the process of the supervention of the other (Hinzukommen), thereby precluding the ultimate task of displaying the correspondence of the I with its other, i.e., transcendental philosophy with the philosophy of nature. By itself, each science is one-sided and incapable of mustering a true system.[28]

The result, what I cannot develop further here, is that neither the philosophy of nature nor transcendental philosophy achieves this by themselves.[29] The main reason for this failure stems from the task itself, which is shared structurally by both sciences. If in philosophy we are bound to construct from an idealistic principle, we are forced to do so on the basis of this very principle out of which something different, something not enclosed in this principle, such as nature,

[23] Ibid., I, 9.1:30.
[24] Ibid., I, 7:271.
[25] Ibid., I, 9.1:31.
[26] Ibid., I, 9.1:24.
[27] Ibid., I, 9.1:47.
[28] In determining truth-apt, synthetic propositions, Kant applied 'hinzukommen' in a similar fashion. See for example Kant, *Schriften*, 38.
[29] I develop these philosophical shortcomings in detail in Rasmussen, *Mythos und Konstruktion.*

can never arise. This forces philosophy to look outside itself in order to fulfill the task of completing the system of knowledge that it has imposed on itself.

In this speculative reinterpretation of the correspondence theory of truth, Schelling thus reaches out for myth as the only medium capable of displaying the supervention in a proper way.[30] This brings us back to the already quoted passage from *STI*:

> Welches aber das Mittelglied der Rückkehr der Wissenschaft zur Poesie seyn werde, ist im Allgemeinen nicht schwer zu sagen, da ein solches Mittelglied in der Mythologie existirt hat, ehe diese, wie es jetzt scheint, unauflösliche Trennung geschehen ist. Wie aber eine neue Mythologie, welche nicht Erfindung des einzelnen Dichters, sondern eines neuen nur Einen Dichters gleichsam vorstellenden Geschlechts seyn kann, selbst entstehen könne, dies ist ein Problem, dessen Auflösung allein von den künftigen Schicksalen der Welt, und dem weiteren Verlauf der Geschichte zu erwarten ist.[31]

How are we, then, to make sense of this new myth, if not by means of reason? The first steps towards answering this question are extractable from the quote itself. It cannot be an invention (Erfindung) of an individual, but of a whole generation (Geschlecht). It cannot amount to mere invention of phantasy. In contrast to the rivaling theory of mythology developed simultaneously by Friedrich Schlegel, it is systematically distinct from philosophy and art. Moreover, it is destined to arise out of history collectively in a not yet determinable age.[32] Accordingly, the myth, which Schelling has in mind, is of an unconscious origin for the individual. Myth cannot, so he hints at in *STI*, be reduced to reason, nor will it occupy the place of reason, but must constitute itself as an intermediary. With this determination of myth, Schelling has thus already laid the foundation for a tautegorical notion of myth, albeit in a rudimentary form that, in contrast to his later philosophy of mythology, does not prescribe any methodology for investigating ancient myths. This is main the reason for my reluctance to use the identity philosophy as the key for interpretating mythology, even though there certainly are similarities in the descriptions and determinations of mythical content.

To see, why this is the case, and to flesh out my alternative approach, we now turn to Schelling's earlier ambition of unfolding a mythology.

2. Mythology as Self-Contained Intermediary

Schelling's occupation with myths in the early period can be broken down in three stages, which correspond to the places where Schelling stayed while developing his early mythology. First, his early Tübinger studies address the

[30] Cf. Thomas Aquinas: *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis. Opera omnia iussu impensaque Leonis XIII P. M. edita. Pars prima Summae theologiae. A quaestione I ad quaestionem XLIX*, I q. 16 arg. 1 co.: "veritas est adaequatio rei et intellectus."

[31] Schelling, *AA*, I, 9.1:329.

[32] See Friedrich Schlegel's mythology in *Charakteristiken und Kritiken*, 311–322. Cf. Kobayashi, "Idee der neuen Mythologie."

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