

RH: What is Wrong with Blind Necessity?

BIO: Franz Knappik is Associate Professor at the University of Bergen.

What is Wrong with Blind Necessity? Schelling's Critique of Spinoza's Necessitarianism in the *Freedom Essay*

Franz Knappik

Abstract: Spinoza's necessitarianism—the doctrine that everything that is actual is necessary—is an important matter of debate in German Idealism. I examine Schelling's discussion of Spinoza's necessitarianism in his 1809 *Freedom Essay* and focus in particular on an objection that Schelling raises against this view, namely, that it has “blind necessity” govern the world. While Schelling draws on Leibniz's critique of Spinoza's necessitarianism in this context, he rejects the assumption of divine choice that stands behind Leibniz's version of the charge of blind necessity. I develop an interpretation that shows both how Schelling consistently avoids necessitarianism despite denying divine choice, and how his own version of the charge of blind necessity offers objections against Spinoza's necessitarianism that focus on the issues of divine personhood and love.

Keywords: Schelling, Spinoza, Leibniz, necessitarianism, personhood, divine love

There can be little doubt that in its influence on the development of post-Kantian German Idealism, Spinoza's philosophy is second only to Kant's. Important strands of philosophical debate within the idealist movement go back to the famous dispute on Spinozism that is triggered by Jacobi's *On the Doctrine of Spinoza*. Idealists like Maimon, Schelling, and Hegel thoroughly engaged with Spinoza's writings, and Schelling himself even adopts a version of Spinozism at some stages of his career. Yet, while a substantive amount of scholarship has been devoted to Spinoza's influence on the idealist movement,¹ there is

surprisingly little discussion in the literature about the idealists' views on one of the most crucial elements of Spinoza's philosophy: his modal metaphysics.²

At the core of Spinoza's modal metaphysics is a position that is known as 'necessitarianism,' the view that everything that is actual is necessary, or that there is no contingency. For the case of God as substance and the attributes that constitute his essence,³ this necessity follows from the fact that God's essence includes existence.⁴ For God's modes, necessity follows from the fact that these modes are necessary consequences from His nature: "all things have been determined from the necessity of the divine nature to exist and produce an effect in a certain way" (*E* IP29).⁵ Therefore, Spinoza holds, "In nature there is nothing contingent" (*E* IP29) and, "Things could have been produced by God in no other way, and in no other order than they have been produced" (*E* IP33).⁶

Necessitarianism is a radical view. In particular, it is much stronger than determinism. Roughly speaking, determinism holds that given the causal past plus the laws of nature, only one course of events is possible. But normally, determinists allow that the causal past and/or the laws of nature could themselves have been different, and that, had they been different, another course of events would have taken place. As traditional compatibilists about freedom and determinism have argued, determinism leaves room for alternative possibilities. By contrast, necessitarians deny that there is such a thing as an unactualized possibility. For them, there is absolutely only one way things could have possibly been: the way they actually are. Hence, necessitarianism excludes not only libertarian accounts of freedom, but also traditional forms of compatibilism à la Hume, Locke, and Leibniz.⁷

For an idealist like Schelling, it is an urgent theoretical task to clarify his stance towards necessitarianism. For, on the one hand, he emphatically wants to develop a "system of freedom" that grants freedom a central theoretical role, rather than denying its existence. On the other hand, he aims to explain finite reality as following necessarily from a basic principle (an Absolute, God), which itself exists necessarily. Hence, Schelling's explanatory project tends towards necessitarian implications that would leave space for freedom only in an extremely reduced sense. Schelling is not always entirely clear about what stance he wishes to take regarding this issue. But there are two texts in which Schelling does address

necessitarianism and, more specifically, Spinoza's version of it in considerable detail: *Philosophical Investigations into the Nature of Human Freedom*—the so-called *Freedom Essay*—of 1809, and the Spinoza section of the 1833/34 lectures *On the History of Modern Philosophy*.⁸ Not only do these discussions shed important light on Schelling's own metaphysical positions, they also develop original criticisms of Spinoza's necessitarianism that are of philosophical interest in their own right. Nevertheless, scholarship so far has largely failed to analyze this strand in Schelling's reception of Spinoza.

It is my aim in this article to close this gap for the case of Schelling's discussion of Spinoza's necessitarianism in the *Freedom Essay*.⁹ Schelling's discussion of Spinoza's necessitarianism in the *Freedom Essay* centers on the charge that Spinoza sees reality as governed by "blind necessity," and that such a view is deeply unsatisfactory. Schelling is not the only author to have criticized Spinoza's necessitarianism in terms of blind necessity, and some versions of this critique are relatively trivial.¹⁰ But as I hope to show in the following, Schelling develops a nuanced and philosophically interesting understanding of the notion of blind necessity, which can be spelled out in the form of original objections against Spinoza's necessitarianism.

I proceed as follows. In section 1, I will contextualize Schelling's discussion of Spinoza in the *Freedom Essay* both with regard to his own earlier writings and Leibniz's discussion of Spinoza's blind necessity in the *Theodicy*, which he explicitly draws on. As I hope to show, Schelling rejects the Leibnizian alternative to Spinoza's necessitarianism because he denies that God has any alternative to creating the actual world. Section 2 addresses the question of whether Schelling's denial of divine choice commits him to necessitarianism and develops a reading that avoids this implication. In sections 3 to 5, I turn to the question how we should understand Schelling's charge of blind necessity if not in Leibnizian terms. In section 3, I explore some of the necessary background in Schelling's theory of personhood, while in sections 4 and 5, I develop two interpretations of his own version of the charge of blind necessity that center on the notions of divine personhood and love. Section 6 concludes by asking how Schelling's metaphysics, in the *Freedom Essay*, relates to traditional views on divine perfection.

1. The Context of Schelling's Discussion

The *Freedom Essay* of 1809 marks an important stage in the development both of Schelling's philosophy in general, and of his attitude towards Spinozism in particular. Schelling engages with Spinoza since his days in the *Tübinger Stift*, and grants references to and discussions of Spinoza an important place in his early writings.¹¹ However, Spinoza's necessitarianism is not an issue in these texts. Rather, Spinozism mainly figures there (a) as the most consequent version of dogmatism,¹² (b) as a precursor of Schelling's own ideal-realism¹³ or his philosophy of nature,¹⁴ and (c) as inspiration for an account of the Absolute as pure activity that is free in the sense that it only follows its own nature.¹⁵ Importantly, this latter account of the Absolute has no necessitarian implications for the early Schelling (nor does he discuss its relation to necessitarianism). In that period, Schelling instead assumes indeterminism at the level of finite subjects, allowing for a libertarian "transcendental . . . freedom," which he interprets as the "empirical" counterpart (SW I 1:237/"Of the I," 123), or as the "appearance" (SW I 1:435/"Treatise," 126), of Spinoza's freedom of the Absolute.¹⁶

Things change when Schelling develops his Philosophy of Identity in the early 1800s. In his texts from this period, Schelling imitates Spinoza's metaphysics in many respects, and even partially adopts Spinoza's *mos geometricus*.¹⁷ In the culminating text of the Philosophy of Identity, the so-called *Würzburg System* ("System of Philosophy in General and of the Philosophy of Nature in Particular") of 1804, Schelling goes as far as to explicitly subscribe to necessitarianism.¹⁸ As a consequence, Schelling explains away all free choice as a mere illusion,¹⁹ just like Spinoza.²⁰ Given this adherence to necessitarianism in 1804, it is not surprising that when Schelling revises his position again in his next major work, the *Freedom Essay*, he motivates this through an extensive discussion of Spinoza's modal metaphysics.²¹

The "highest question" of the *Freedom Essay*, Schelling tells us at an important juncture of the text, is the question of theodicy: the question of how God "as moral being" relates to the moral evil that we find in the world He has created (SW I 7:394/*FS* 58). As

Schelling claims, this question can be properly addressed only after a “preliminary question” has been decided, namely, “Is revelation an action that ensues with blind and unconscious necessity or is it a free and conscious action?” (SW I 7:394/*FS* 58)—where by ‘revelation,’ Schelling refers to God’s production of the finite world. While Schelling does opt for the second option and sees “revelation” as “free and conscious action,” it soon becomes clear that the first option—“revelation” as something that “ensues with blind and unconscious necessity”—primarily stands for Spinoza’s necessitarianism. It is therefore an important task for Schelling to refute this necessitarianism, and thus to clear the ground for his assessment of the problem of theodicy.

What exactly does it mean for Schelling that Spinozism makes divine revelation (or creation) subject to a “blind and unconscious necessity,” rather than a “free and conscious action”? And what reasons does Schelling have to reject the view he ascribes to Spinoza? As a first step toward answering these questions, we need to examine Leibniz’s critique of Spinoza’s necessitarianism as presented in the *Theodicy* and to which Schelling explicitly refers in the context of his discussion of Spinoza.”²²

In §§168–74 of the *Theodicy*,²³ Leibniz discusses metaphysical positions that contradict his mature²⁴ solution to the problems of free will and theodicy—the solution according to which human actions are hypothetically necessary (i.e. they necessarily follow from God’s decision to create the best of all possible worlds), but not absolutely, that is, unconditionally necessary.²⁵ Among these incompatible views are necessitarian views, on which “there is nothing possible except that which actually happens” (*T* §168/*Theodicy*, 228), that is, views on which everything is absolutely necessary.²⁶ Leibniz examines several versions of necessitarianism, but the one that there is “most reason for opposing” (*T* §168/*Theodicy*, 229) is Spinozism. Leibniz tells us that Spinoza

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appears to have explicitly taught a blind necessity, having denied to the Author of Things understanding and will. . . . [He] teaches that all things exist through the necessity of the divine nature, without any act of choice by God. (*T* §173/*Theodicy*, 234)

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Leibniz formulates several objections to Spinozism. Thus, he argues that Spinoza cannot allow for realistic fictions that describe possible but non-actual scenarios.²⁷ And at a later point of the *Theodicy*, he objects to Spinozism on the basis of the special laws of nature;²⁸ according to Leibniz, these laws are contingent (as they cannot be analytically demonstrated), and the fact that these rather than other, less simple laws govern our world shows that this world is grounded in the purposeful choice of “an intelligent and free being” (*T* §345/*Theodicy*, 332). But Leibniz’s most fundamental worry about Spinozism is not that it cannot deal with such objections, but that the very notion of a “blind necessity” that governs everything is deeply mistaken: he claims that it makes Spinoza’s version of necessitarianism “so bad, and indeed so inexplicable” a view that it is not even necessary to refute it (*T* §173/*Theodicy*, 234).

As the passage from §173 of *Theodicy* that I have quoted above suggests, Spinoza’s necessity is ‘blind,’ for Leibniz, because Spinoza rejects a common view of creation, which is shared by Leibniz. On this view, creation is an intelligent action of a personal, rational agent. It results from a free choice that God makes in virtue of His will; this choice, in its turn, is based on a perfect understanding of the chosen object (and, for Leibniz, of all alternatives to it), which God possesses in virtue of His intellect.²⁹ By contrast, Spinoza denies that God’s creation is anything like the outcome of an informed choice or an action out of reasons;³⁰ as Leibniz claims in the above passage, he both denies that God has any choice between different possibilities,³¹ and he rejects the assumptions that the traditional view makes about God’s mind. It bears emphasis that Leibniz is inaccurate when he writes that Spinoza’s God has no intellect and will at all, for Spinoza explicitly ascribes to God an intellect³² and will.³³ Nevertheless, divine intellect and will are not something that *guides* God’s action on Spinoza’s understanding of these terms; rather, they are part of *natura naturata*, or of what God *brings about*.³⁴ So even though he does not deny a divine intellect and will, the necessity that governs everything for Spinoza is indeed *blind* insofar as it does not proceed from insight

into reasons, or, as Leibniz puts it elsewhere, is not guided by intelligence³⁵ or wisdom³⁶; it is not “full of counsel” (*Specimen demonstrationum catholicarum* [A VI 4:2323]).

In the *Theodicy*, Leibniz does not explain why he finds Spinoza’s resulting view so “bad” and “inexplicable” that it is patently wrong, but it seems clear that one important motivation for his dismissal of Spinoza’s position is the following. The traditional view of creation has the consequence that both the act of creation and the created world as its outcome are open to explanations in terms of purposes or final causes, and as is well known, Leibniz grants such explanations a central place in his metaphysics. By contrast, Spinoza denies both final causes in nature and purposeful divine action (*E* IApp [G II.80/C I.442–43]). So, for Leibniz, Spinoza’s assumption that reality is governed by a blind, non-intelligent necessity makes reality ultimately unintelligible.³⁷ Of course, Spinoza subscribes, like Leibniz, to the Principle of Sufficient Reason, and therefore holds that there is an explanation for everything.³⁸ Still, Spinoza leaves no room outside of the sphere of human agency for the teleological form of understanding that, on Leibniz’s view, we need to apply to reality as a whole in order to (among other things) appreciate its perfect rational order and goodness,³⁹ make sense of the existence of evil, and guide scientific research.

So much for Leibniz’s stance towards Spinoza’s necessitarianism, as it is expressed in the sections of the *Theodicy* that Schelling draws on. What is Schelling’s own view on this matter? Initially, it is tempting to think that Schelling closely follows Leibniz in the way he understands this notion and in his motivation for rejecting such blind necessity. Schelling himself not only talks about Spinoza’s “blind necessity” in the same context in which he engages with Leibniz’s discussion of Spinoza, he also directly adopts Leibniz’s objections from fiction⁴⁰ and from special laws of nature.⁴¹ Furthermore, Schelling at one place equates Spinoza’s blind necessity with an “inanimate and impersonal [*unlebendig und unpersönlich*]” necessity (SW I 7:397/*FS* 61, translation modified), whereas the action-guiding intellect and will that the common view of creation ascribes to God were traditionally seen as defining features of a *personal* God. And finally, Schelling characterizes Spinoza’s necessity as “blind” and “without understanding [*verstandlos*]” (SW I 7:397/*FS* 61, translation modified).

Hence, like Leibniz, he relates the notion of blind necessity to Spinoza's denial of traditional accounts of God's mind.

Nevertheless, such a Leibnizian reading of Schelling's charge of blind necessity cannot be correct. For in the same context in which he engages with Leibniz's discussion of Spinoza, Schelling explicitly rejects crucial parts both of the traditional and of Leibniz's alternative to Spinoza when he writes that "the notion of God's deliberating with himself or of a choice among various possible worlds remains a notion that is groundless and untenable" (SW I 7:397/FS 60–61, translation modified). We can distinguish two important aspects in the critique that Schelling formulates here. First, Schelling denies that creation results from deliberation; similarly, in the "Stuttgart Seminars," he rejects a view of God as acting "ex ratione boni" (SW I 7: 429/"Stuttgart Seminars," 204),⁴² and, in the *Freedom Essay*, he claims that, in the nature that God creates, "there is not simply pure reason but personhood and spirit (as we likely distinguish the rational author from one possessing wit)" (SW I 7:395/FS 59). All this suggests that, for Schelling, Leibniz's idea of God as ideal rational agent who brings about a purposeful world overrationalizes God.

Second, Schelling rejects the view that creation involves a choice between different possibilities. He goes on to argue that this would lead to the absurd consequence that God was able to create a world that was not the best possible one.⁴³ The reason why this consequence is absurd for Schelling is that it contradicts God's essential goodness and perfection: "God according to his perfection can only will one thing," namely, "the only possible world according to God's essence" (SW I/7:398/FS 62).

As these latter formulations show, Schelling's rejection of divine choice is based on an objection against Leibniz that was already raised by Leibniz's contemporaries:⁴⁴ God's essential goodness seems to imply that God really has no choice but to create the best possible world, and hence the actual world. Put in modal terms, God's essential goodness makes Leibniz's crucial distinction between a "hypothetical" or "moral" necessity, on the one hand, and an "unconditional" or "metaphysical" necessity, on the other hand, collapse, so that God's act of creating the actual world becomes unconditionally necessary. As Schelling

points out, “if God is essentially love and goodness, then what is morally necessary in him also follows with a truly metaphysical necessity” (SW I 7:397/FS 61).⁴⁵

Leibniz himself was clearly aware of the problem that Schelling points to and developed various ways of dealing with it.⁴⁶ But as our focus is with Schelling’s position, we will not examine these solutions here. Rather, what matters for our present discussion is that Schelling himself subscribes to a view on which God’s creation of the actual world is, pace Leibniz, unconditionally necessary and devoid of alternative possibilities. We can call this view “One World”:

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(One World) With metaphysical necessity: [God creates the actual world],

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where the square brackets are meant to create a tense-free context.

So, it turns out that Schelling cannot understand the charge of “blind necessity” in the same way as Leibniz—viz. as lack of intelligent divine agency—given that Schelling thinks that God is not aptly characterized as an intelligent agent who acts out of insight into reasons and as result of a free choice. But this leads not only to the question of how else Schelling understands the notion of blind necessity, but should also make us wonder how his position differs from Spinoza’s at all. For as we have now seen, Schelling agrees with Spinoza that God has no choice between different possibilities; rather, He can create only *one* world.⁴⁷ So, is Schelling not himself committed to a form of necessitarianism? I address this question in the next section, before coming back to the question of how Schelling understands the charge of blind necessity in subsequent sections.

2. Does Schelling Endorse Necessitarianism in the *Freedom Essay*?

In addressing the question whether Schelling's "One World" claim in the *Freedom Essay* commits him to necessitarianism (despite his critique of Spinoza), we should begin by noting that the overall argument in that text is clearly incompatible with any form of necessitarianism. For it is one crucial aim of this argument to establish that the existence of moral evil is caused by our free choice and therefore due to our responsibility, not God's: "evil remains always man's own choice; . . . every creature falls due to its own guilt" (SW I 7:382/*FS* 48, translation modified). Schelling is explicit that he relies here on a libertarian notion of an unconditioned free choice: "Man is placed on that summit where he has in himself the source of self-movement toward good or evil in equal portions . . . ; whatever he chooses, it will be his act" (SW I 7:374/*FS* 41).⁴⁸ So Schelling's argument presupposes the truth of indeterminism,⁴⁹ and is therefore incompatible with necessitarianism.

But how can Schelling assume that there is only *one* world, namely, the actual world, that God can possibly create, and at the same time subscribe to indeterminism? Does the claim that God necessarily creates the actual world not entail that things could not have been any other way, and hence, necessitarianism?

It is true that such an entailment would have held for Leibniz. But although Schelling strongly draws on Leibniz and adopts some of his terminology in this context, we should be aware of the possibility that he may give his own interpretations to Leibnizian language. In particular, formulations like that of "the only possible world according to God's essence," and his assertion that "God according to his perfection can only will one thing" (SW I 7:398/*FS* 62), imply necessitarianism only if a particular view of divine will and creation is presupposed: a view—like Leibniz's—on which the divine will has as its object a fully specified world, and divine creation correspondingly settles each and every detail about the created world.⁵⁰ But this Leibnizian view is not without alternatives. For theistic thinkers who subscribe to libertarianism about human freedom, it is natural to assume that God's agency (in creation, but also in subsequent interventions if there are any) only settles a limited range of features of the world, while leaving open how human beings decide to act.⁵¹ For someone who holds such a view, that God can create only one world, or that He "can only will one thing" (SW I 7:398/*FS* 62), can simply mean that God's essence leaves room for only one

such limited set of features as being brought about by God, while this set of features does not fully specify the created world, and in particular does not specify how human beings act.⁵²

This provides an interpretation of Schelling's "One World" thesis and his related formulations that is, unlike the Leibnizian interpretation, compatible with his commitment to indeterminism. Not only is this reading therefore more charitable than the Leibnizian one, it also gains support from a part of Schelling's discussion in which he further explains his views on human freedom and responsibility. As Schelling points out, indeterminist free choice is not located at the level of individual human actions. Rather, such actions are free to the extent to which they express the agent's nature or moral character (his "intelligible being," as Schelling calls it [SW I 7:384/*FS* 49]).⁵³ But following Kant's notorious doctrine of the "intelligible deed" in which we adopt an intelligible character (*Religion*, 6:31), Schelling holds that this character itself is imputable to the agent because it is adopted in an unconditioned act of choice. Like Kant, Schelling ascribes this act to the "intelligible being" of the individual man "outside all causal connectedness as it is outside or above all time" (SW I 7:383/*FS* 49)—that is, to man as thing in itself, as opposed to man as appearance.

To this Kantian account, Schelling adds a further point that is important regarding the issue of his "One World" claim:

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Man is in the initial creation . . . an undecided being . . .—only man himself can decide. But this decision cannot occur within time; it occurs outside of all time and, hence, together with the first creation (though as a deed distinct from creation). (SW I 385–86/*FS* 51)

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Here, Schelling explicitly claims that there is a sphere of unconditioned human choice that is not affected by divine agency: God's creation leaves men "undecided," that is, without a determinate moral character; through their own choice of such a character, human beings "determine" how they will act at the level of individual actions in time. It is therefore fair to conclude the following: while there is for Schelling only *one* course of divine action that is

compatible with God's essence, this does not settle how human beings decide and act. Rather, in addition to what is settled by divine action, there are the unconditioned atemporal acts in which human beings choose their moral character, and it is these free human decisions that fix how human beings behave at the level of individual actions in time.

One important question that the resulting picture raises is why Schelling (unlike either Spinoza or Leibniz) assumes such an asymmetry between, on the one hand, God as acting out of necessity, and, on the other hand, man as capable of indeterminist choice. We will come back to this question in the next section.

3. Schelling on Personhood

We have seen so far that, in the *Freedom Essay*, Schelling (a) joins Leibniz in opposing Spinoza's blind necessity, (b) denies Leibniz's view that God has a choice between different possibilities, and yet (c) also rejects necessitarianism by ascribing to human beings an indeterminist free choice of moral character. This finally enables us to address, in this and the next section, the question of how precisely Schelling understands the charge of blind necessity he levels against Spinoza, if not along the lines of Leibniz's version of that critique.

We saw earlier that Leibniz characterizes Spinoza's "blind" necessity also as "inanimate and impersonal" necessity, and as "necessity devoid of understanding" (SW I 7:397/FS 61). Since it has turned out that Schelling cannot mean these descriptions in the sense in which Leibniz uses similar characterizations of Spinoza's necessity, we need to ask how else he may understand them. So, we must clarify what accounts of personhood, life, and understanding Schelling relies on in his critique of Spinoza; and, as he elsewhere in the *Freedom Essay* treats both 'life' and 'understanding' as aspects of 'personhood,'⁵⁴ the primary task at this point is to understand what Schelling means by 'personhood.'

Schelling's account of 'personhood' in the *Freedom Essay* raises many questions in its own right,⁵⁵ especially since it depends on his crucial but difficult distinction between two ontological aspects of entities in general: "the entity [*Wesen*] in so far as it exists [*existiert*]

and the entity [*Wesen*] in so far as it is merely the ground of existence [*Grund von Existenz*]” (SW I 7:357/*FS* 27, translation modified). For present purposes, I must restrict myself to sketching what I take to be the most promising interpretation of this distinction, and of the account of personhood that Schelling bases on it.

While Schelling does very little in this text to elucidate the distinction between the ground of existence and the entity insofar as it exists, he gets more explicit about it in several texts written soon after the publication of the *Freedom Essay*. Three points are particularly important. First, in his open letter about the *Freedom Essay* to Carl August von Eschenmayer (April, 1812), Schelling indicates that by ‘existence,’ he means in this context the “revelation” of a “subject that is merely in itself,” or “externally efficacious existence” (SW I 8:173).⁵⁶ In other words, ‘existence’ here stands for the interaction of an entity with other entities. Second, in a letter to his friend Eberhard Friedrich Georgii of July 18, 1810, Schelling points out that by the “ground” of existence, he does not refer to a *cause*, but to a “foundation,” “basis,” “means of realization,” or “*conditio sine qua non*” (*Aus Schellings Leben*, 2:221).⁵⁷ So contrary to what the term ‘ground’ may initially suggest, the “ground of existence” provides merely a necessary, not a sufficient condition for “existence,” that is, efficacy or interaction.

Third, in the “Stuttgart Seminars” of 1810, Schelling describes the ground of existence in the case of God as “that whereby he exists as a particular, unique, and individual being” (SW I 7:438/“Stuttgart Seminars,” 210, translation modified). By contrast, God as existing is described here in terms of a “universal” principle that is “infinitely communicative” (SW I 7:438–39/“Stuttgart Seminars,” 210). The relation between both principles in God is characterized as follows: the “universal entity [*allgemeine Wesen*] does not float in the air but rather is grounded in, as it were supported by, God as *individual* entity [*individuelles Wesen*]—*the individual in God thus is the basis or foundation of the universal*” (SW I 7:438/“Stuttgart Seminars,” 210, translation modified). Assuming that these characterizations apply to finite entities, too, the latter passages add an important further detail regarding the “ground of existence”: this ground is necessary for interaction (or “universal,” “communicative” existence) because it is a principle of individuation—it is

responsible for the numerical distinctness of the entity, and without such individuation, there would be no entity that could interact with others.⁵⁸

It bears emphasis, however, that Schelling can only have in mind here a very narrow notion of individuation, which establishes merely numerical distinctness. Thus, consider the case of human beings: that they are individuals in the richer sense of concrete persons with determinate features—a determinate moral character, and even a determinate body⁵⁹—is, for Schelling, a consequence of their free atemporal choice; and, as we shall presently see, this choice essentially goes beyond the mere dimension of the ground in man, as it constitutes a taking-stance precisely towards the relation between both principles.

Related to its role as principle of individuation in this qualified sense is a further aspect that Schelling connotes with the dimension of the ground—that of being something hidden, inscrutable and irrational: the ground is that which “with the greatest exertion cannot be resolved in understanding” (SW I 7:360/*FS* 29). This point mirrors traditional theories of individuation, as prominent candidates for a principle of individuation in medieval metaphysics such as matter (Avicenna and Aquinas) and individual forms (Duns Scotus) are similarly inscrutable.⁶⁰ By contrast, Schelling often uses the metaphor of “light” to characterize the dimension of the existing entity,⁶¹ suggesting that this side of entities is open to rational understanding.

Hence, we can understand Schelling’s distinction between the “ground of existence” and the “existing entity” as referring to two fundamental dimensions of everything that exists: a dimension of “closure” in virtue of which an entity is an individual, and hence, separate from other entities and hidden from rational scrutiny; and an opposite dimension of “openness” in virtue of which the entity interacts with other entities, and can be rationally understood.

We now can see how Schelling develops an account of personhood for the case of human beings by applying his general model of ground of existence vs. existing entity to the case of human beings. As he points out, the two principles correspond to two different dimensions of the human will: the ground of existence corresponds to a “self-will [*Eigenwille*]” that is initially “pure craving or desire,” while the existing entity corresponds to

a “universal will [*Universalwille*]” that Schelling also identifies with “understanding [*Verstand*]” (SW I 7:363/*FS* 32). Unfortunately, Schelling does not further explain the terms ‘self-will’ and ‘universal will’. On the most natural reading, ‘self-will’ stands for brute and given (and hence, rationally inscrutable) drives, desires etc. that do not take into account the interests of other human beings and therefore correspond to the metaphysical dimension of “closure.” By contrast, ‘universal will’ stands, on this reading, for more or less reflected and transparent attitudes in which the individual human being opens itself to the interests of other human beings (corresponding to the metaphysical dimension of “openness”).⁶²

Given this duality of principles in human beings generally, the life of an individual human being will consist in a process that is driven by the tension and interaction between both sides. In this process, we examine and clarify—and thus raise to consciousness—both the demands of our self-will and of our universal will, and try to integrate them with each other.⁶³ However, this need for integration confronts us with the question of how to prioritize the self-will and the universal will: we can either “transfigure” the self-will so that it harmonizes or is “one” with the universal will (SW I 7:363/*FS* 32), and use the motivational force of the self-will as “instrument” (SW I 7:389/*FS* 54) that enacts the (morally good) demands of the universal will. Or we can turn things upside down, subordinating the universal will to the self-will.⁶⁴ Which way we go is up to us, and decided by us in our free, atemporal choice of moral character.

Hence, the dimension of the ground and that of the existing entity interact in man in such a way that human freedom, or the “capacity for good and evil” (SW I 7:352/*FS* 23), arises. It is therefore not the dimension of the existing entity, of “light” or of rationality as such that allows us to overcome the dimension of the ground, but our freedom, which emerges in the dynamic interplay of those two principles. Human freedom, thus understood, is the core of human personhood:

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The principle raised up from the ground of nature whereby man is separated from God [i.e. the principle of the ground of existence] is the selfhood in him which, however, through its

unity with the ideal principle [i.e. the principle of the existing entity], becomes *spirit*. Selfhood *as* such is spirit; or man is spirit as a particular being, endowed with a self [*selbstisch*] (separated from God)—precisely this connection constitutes personality. Since selfhood is spirit, however, it is at the same time raised from the creaturely into what is above the creaturely; it is will that beholds itself in complete freedom. (SW I 7:364/FS 33, translation modified)⁶⁵

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As a result, Schelling understands personhood as interaction between a self-will and a universal will that gives rise to freedom. Schelling thinks that he can straightforwardly apply this account to God as well.⁶⁶ God, too, displays the two sides of a ground of existence and of an existing entity; and in His case, too, these two sides correspond to distinct “wills.” To the dimension of God as existing entity corresponds an “ideal” side in Him—a “will of love” or “will to revelation” (SW I 7:375/FS 42) that strives towards revelation, creation and communication. Distinct from this will of love is the “will of the ground.” This will ultimately aims at divine self-revelation, too, but since such revelation presupposes “something resistant in which it can realize itself,” the will of the ground brings about “particularity and opposition,” factors that oppose divine revelation (SW I 7:375–76/FS 42). The will of the ground therefore amounts to a “tendency in God working against the will to revelation” (SW I 7:397/FS 60). As a consequence, God’s existence essentially consists in a dynamic interaction between the two principles, a process in which a “living unity of forces” (SW I 7:394/FS 59) is developed and maintained. The process in which these opposed forces interact gives rise to divine self-revelation and, as in the case of human beings, to a transparent consciousness of the opposed principles and to freedom.⁶⁷ This is the sense in which God, too, is personal and spiritual.

Still, there is a crucial difference between divine and human personhood: unlike in man, the self-will in God remains always subordinate to the universal will.⁶⁸ So not only does divine personhood not require the possibility of choice, it even precludes it. Yet, this does not make God *less* personal or free than human beings are; rather, it is the reason why He is the

“*highest* personality” (SW I 7:395/*FS* 59, emphasis added) and possesses “True freedom,” a freedom which is “in harmony with a holy necessity” (SW I 7:391/*FS* 56).

This reading of Schelling’s account of personhood adds an important further piece to our interpretation of his modal metaphysics. That there are these two forms of freedom—God’s freedom that excludes indeterminist choice, and human freedom that essentially involves it—is not a brute fact for Schelling. Rather, human freedom is itself a *necessary* part of the one world that God cannot but create. For, precisely because the subordination of the self-will to the universal will can be reversed in human freedom, this form of freedom provides the heterogeneous, relatively independent medium that God needs for His self-revelation:

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Were now the identity of both principles in the spirit of man exactly as indissoluble as in God, then there would be no distinction, that is, God as spirit would not be revealed. The same unity that is inseparable in God must therefore be severable in man—and this is the possibility of good and evil. (SW I 7:375/*FS* 32–33)

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Since it is absolute necessary that God reveal Himself, it is also absolutely necessary—in virtue of God’s loving essence—that there be human beings with indeterminist free will. So, while Spinoza holds that everything is necessary because it follows necessarily from God’s essence, Schelling counters that on an adequate understanding of God’s essence, it necessarily follows from this very essence that *not* everything is necessary. This view anticipates the doctrine of the “necessity of contingency” that is often ascribed to Hegel (in his writings from 1812 onwards).⁶⁹ It can itself be seen as an elaboration of Fichte’s ideas in writings like the 1794 *Foundations of the Doctrine of Science* and the 1798 *System of Ethics*, where he treats an indeterminist form of freedom of the will as a necessary part of the realization of the absolute I.⁷⁰ Indeed, we will see in the next section that Schelling himself

presents his counter-proposal to Spinoza's necessitarianism in the *Freedom Essay* as being indebted to Fichte's idealism.

4. Blind Necessity as Lack of Personhood

Given what we said in the last section about Schelling's account of human and divine personhood, we must now ask what exact consequences this account has for the issue of blind necessity. I will proceed in two steps. I first develop an interpretation that sees the deficit of blind necessity in a lack of personal structure in God and the world. While this interpretation has good textual support, I argue that the dimension of Schelling's critique that it points to is not compelling, as it rests on an uncharitable reading of Spinoza. I therefore go on to develop in section 5 an interpretation that identifies a related but distinct problem with Spinoza's necessity, namely, the impossibility of a personal, action-guiding relation of *love* between God and human beings in the framework of Spinoza's necessitarianism. That Spinozism leaves no space for divine personhood and a personal relation with God are not new worries, of course. But as we saw in the previous section, Schelling develops a highly unusual account of personhood. In this section, we will see that he proposes equally original versions of the above-mentioned worries about Spinozism on this basis.

The first option for understanding Schelling's notion of blind necessity—viz. in the sense of a lack of personal structure as such—follows quite straightforwardly from the views on personhood that we have summarized in the previous section. From Schelling's perspective, Spinoza's God is impersonal, not because He is not a rational agent who deliberates and chooses, but rather because He is not constituted by a dynamic interaction between the two contrasting principles of self-will and universal will. The same holds for the individuals that make up the finite world. It seems to be this worry that Schelling expresses when he states, "The error of his [Spinoza's] system lies by no means in his placing things *in God* but in the fact that they are *things*—in the abstract concept of beings in the world, indeed of infinite substance itself, which for him is exactly also a thing" (SW I 7:349/FS 20).

So, on this reading, the “blindness” that Schelling ascribes to Spinoza’s necessity is a metaphor for the lack of personhood, life, and consciousness that Schelling locates in Spinoza’s substance: these features all would require for Schelling the personhood-constituting interaction of opposed principles, which he finds lacking in Spinoza’s system. But why is such blindness so problematic for Schelling? One reason is, of course, that if Schelling is right, Spinoza is unable to do justice to a decisive dimension of our and of God’s nature. But there is a further important point here that makes Schelling’s critique analogous in a way to Leibniz’s (for whom Spinoza’s necessity was problematic because it excludes a form of intelligibility from God and nature, namely, that of teleology): Schelling uses the dynamic interaction of self-will and universal will as a form of explanation that he tries to extend to everything real. For Schelling, there is a sense in which personhood is everywhere,⁷¹ and makes things intelligible for us. We have seen that, for Schelling, both God and human beings are personal in his sense. Since, in addition, Schelling thinks that human beings and all other finite entities inhere in God,⁷² and participate in the very process that constitutes God’s personhood, he can use the two opposite dimensions in God and their interaction as principles of a genetic explanation for different levels of nature.⁷³ Finally, we have seen that Schelling’s account of personhood rests on a general distinction between ground and existing entity that seems to apply to *every* individual. Since, for Schelling, the existence of non-human finite individuals, too, basically consists in an interaction between these two aspects of the individual, there is an analogous sense of personhood that applies even to merely natural beings.

It seems to be this latter point that Schelling has in mind when he suggests “that everything real (nature, the world of things) has activity, life and freedom as its ground or, in Fichte’s expression, that not only is I-hood all, but also the reverse, that all is I-hood” (SW I 7:351/*FS* 22). The reference to Fichte at this point is important, as it allows us to see how Schelling’s critique of Spinozism is connected to one of his most basic philosophical commitments—a commitment that he shares (at this level of abstraction) with Hegel, and that is inspired by Fichte’s idealism. For, as becomes clear now, Schelling not only adapts the basic structure of his modal metaphysics from Fichte (indeterminist freedom as being itself

absolutely necessary), he also draws on Fichte with regard to the form of *intelligibility* that should be attributed to reality, including non-human nature. As Schelling points out in this context, he has turned Fichte's "thought of making freedom the one and all of philosophy" into the guiding principle of his own "higher realism": like Fichte's idealism, this realism is motivated by the "longing to make everything analogous to [freedom], to spread it throughout the whole universe" (SW I 7:351/FS 22). Schelling thus presents his position in the *Freedom Essay* as implementing a program that Schelling (like Hegel) was deeply attracted to since his days in the *Stift*, and that Fichte was the first to explicitly formulate and pursue: the program of making freedom the cornerstone of a philosophical system.⁷⁴ Now, the way Schelling fleshes out this program in the *Freedom Essay* is precisely by using the personhood- and freedom-constituting dynamic described in the last section as universal explanatory principle, and by explaining reality as a whole in terms of the very same structures that we are familiar with from our own lives and their psychological and ethical conflicts.⁷⁵ By contrast, Spinoza's blind necessity, with its alleged lack of personhood and life, leaves no room for the form of understanding that Schelling is after, and hence is not compatible with the idea of a "system of freedom" that guides Schelling's philosophical endeavors both in and beyond the *Freedom Essay*.

I think that this reading fits well with the passages in which Schelling talks about blind necessity and identifies an original strand in his critique of Spinoza's necessitarianism. However, the resulting critique falls short of being fully satisfactory, as it is possible to argue that Spinoza has the resources for accommodating many of the points that Schelling makes in this connection. First, Spinoza defends a parallelism for the attributes of thought and extension⁷⁶ that has the consequence that every finite individual consists not only of a body, but also of an idea that represents this body; and many interpreters of Spinoza have argued that it follows from this that all finite individuals have a mind (in some way or other).⁷⁷ From the viewpoint of such an interpretation, it would be mistaken to criticize Spinoza as treating everything as devoid of life and mind.

Second, Spinoza also ascribes, as we saw earlier, an intellect and will, and hence, a mind to God—viz. an infinite mode of thought of which all finite modes of thought, and

hence all mental states of individual minds, are parts. Moreover, Spinoza holds that God has an idea of his essence and of everything that necessarily follows from it.⁷⁸ It follows that for every idea in God's mind, there is a further idea that represents it; and since Spinoza seems to think that such an "idea of an idea" is sufficient for consciousness,⁷⁹ it is at least a genuine possibility that God's mind is conscious for Spinoza, and that this conscious mind represents both God himself and the entire *natura naturata*.

Third, it is not even correct that Spinoza leaves no room for the dynamic form of intelligibility that Schelling links to his account of personhood. For in his doctrine of the *conatus*, Spinoza uses precisely a dynamic explanatory principle that applies to everything finite. *Conatus* is defined as the striving of each thing to persist in its existence.⁸⁰ The notion of the *conatus* is central to Spinoza's explanations for the behavior of finite modes;⁸¹ and while his notion of the *conatus* is clearly modeled on biological and/or psychological phenomena, he extends it throughout finite reality. Whereas each individual has by definition exactly one *conatus*, such that there cannot be a proper conflict or interaction of different *conatus* within one individual, the *conatus* of different things can conflict with each other, as the manifestation of one thing's striving to persist in existence may consist in a causal activity that leads to a decrease in causal power, or even to the destruction, of another thing.⁸²

Thus, Schelling's charge of blind necessity against Spinoza, if it is understood in the sense of a lack of personhood, turns out to presuppose an unfair reading of Spinoza. I therefore turn in the next section to another dimension of Schelling's critique of Spinoza's necessitarianism, which rests on a more adequate reading of Spinoza.

5. Blind Necessity as Lack of Love

As we saw in section 3, Schelling calls the dimension of the "existing entity" as applied to God the "will of love." God's will of love is a principle within God that aims at divine self-revelation, and ultimately at the establishment of an all-embracing unity between the dual

principles in their fully developed, conscious forms⁸³—a unity that Schelling identifies with the fullest form of divine love.⁸⁴

Now, at one point in his discussion of the character of divine creation as an action that is free and conscious (rather than being an instance of blind necessity), Schelling writes, “A plainly free or conscious will is, however, the will of love, *precisely because it is this* [i.e. will of love]: the revelation that results from it is action and deed” (SW I 7:395/*FS* 59, translation modified and emphasis added). We can understand Schelling here as follows: what sets apart his metaphysics from Spinoza’s with regard to blind necessity is the will of love that Schelling ascribes to God—more precisely, the will of love “because it is this,” because it is the will of *love*, not the will of the ground. This suggests that what is decisive for Schelling’s opposition to Spinoza is not so much the personal character of God in general, but the role love plays for divine personhood. This idea gains further support from Schelling’s claim that

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since this system [i.e. Spinozism] grasps altogether only one side of the Absolute—namely the real one or the extent to which God functions only in the ground—these propositions [i.e. about a necessity in God] indeed lead to a blind necessity without understanding. (SW I 7:397/*FS* 61, translation modified)

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As the dimension of God that is opposed to that of the ground is the will of love, this is, again, tantamount to saying that what is responsible for the blindness of Spinoza’s necessity is Spinoza’s failure to account for the will of love.

In which way could the role that divine love plays for the structure of God’s personhood add to our understanding of Schelling’s views on blind necessity? First, we need to clarify how precisely Schelling understands love in this context. Quoting his own earlier account of love in *Aphorisms as an Introduction to the Philosophy of Nature* of 1805, Schelling declares that “this is the secret of love, that it conjoins such beings of which each

could exist for itself, yet does not and cannot exist without the other” (SW I 7:408/*FS* 70, translation modified). Hence, love in Schelling’s sense is a symmetrical and non-reflexive relation (symmetrical because Schelling’s formulation implies that love is always reciprocal, and non-reflexive because the formulation implies that love obtains between interdependent but distinct relata). This relation obtains between individuals who renounce the independent existence of which they would be capable, preferring to share their existence with the beloved.⁸⁵

How does love, thus understood, affect God’s agency? Schelling points out that God’s creation of the world is “induced by the love that it [i.e. the divine spirit] itself is” (SW I 7:361/*FS* 30, translation modified). In other words, God creates the world out of love. Since love, in Schelling’s sense, is a relation between distinct relata, this raises the question: out of love towards *whom* does God create the world? Given Schelling’s definition of love, the target of God’s action out of love can only be the relatively independent, personal entities with whom He decides to share His existence by creating them; that is, us, the finite persons within the world. Divine creation, understood in this sense, is quite an unusual form of an action out of love: it is undertaken for a loved one who only comes into being through this very action.

There is a further important aspect to the agency that God undertakes out of love towards human beings. As we saw earlier, Schelling holds that God’s creation leaves the moral character of human beings “undecided” (SW I 7:385/*FS* 51). It was possible for human beings to choose a good character, and presumably, had they done so, the world would have directly reached the state of all-embracing love that is the ultimate goal of the will of love. But since human beings have chosen evil moral characters—and therefore decided to step out of their relation of love with God—further divine action is needed to re-establish that love, namely, a redemptory action that includes the incarnation of Christ, and that Schelling calls a “second creation” (SW I 7:380/*FS* 46):

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in order to counter personal and spiritual evil, the light of the spirit in fact appears likewise in the shape of a human person [i.e. of Christ] and as a mediator in order to *reestablish the rapport between God and creation* at the highest level. For only what is personal can heal what is personal, and God must become man so that man may return to God. (SW I 7:380/FS 46, emphasis added)

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Since Schelling rejects the idea that God chooses between different possibilities, we should assume that God's agency in the history of salvation is just as necessary as His initial creation, and that it is made thus necessary by God's essential goodness and love.⁸⁶ So like the initial creation, God's redemptory action is a result of His love—and more precisely, as we have seen, of His love towards human beings.

So, for Schelling, God's agency, both in His initial creation and in His redemptory action, is undertaken out of love towards us. At the same time, we saw that it is the relation of those actions to God's will of love that sets them apart from blind necessity and makes them expressions of a "free or conscious will" (SW I 7:395/FS 59). We can understand the connection between these points as follows.

First, God's will of love is manifested in actions out of love, that is, in actions that are motivated by His love towards human beings. But it seems essential to an action out of love that it be oriented towards the loved one, that the loved one figures (in some positive way) in a description of the reason for the action. So, although Schelling rejects Leibniz's account of God as ideal rational agent, it seems that when he himself describes God as acting out of love, he must ascribe at least *some* purposive structure to that agency, and assume that His will of love *guides* His action. It is natural to describe actions that are thus orientated towards another person as actions that the agent undertakes *with a regard* or *with a view* to the loved one, or that in thus acting, he has the beloved *in view*. These metaphors allow us to see how a divine action that is oriented towards the human beings whom God loves can be contrasted with a *blind* action, which lacks such an orientation. On the resulting reading, Schelling describes the action of Spinoza's God as blind because it cannot be an action that is

undertaken out of love and oriented towards the beloved one. This follows from Spinoza's denial that the divine will could guide His action, and from his rejection of the view that God acts for purposes (see sect. 1).

One could object to this proposal that Schelling does not explicitly use metaphors like that of God having human beings "in view" when he describes divine action in the *Freedom Essay*. Yet to this, one can reply that related metaphors do form an important part of the background of Schelling's discussion. For the notion of a divine action out of love towards human beings is directly related to the traditional concept of divine providence, and the very term 'providence' is derived from the visual sphere: it describes a form of (divine) agency that displays "foresight," but also "looks after" those whom God loves.⁸⁷ While Schelling does not employ the concept of providence in the *Freedom Essay* itself, he does use it in earlier texts that are relevant to his engagement with Spinoza—in particular in the *System of Transcendental Idealism* of 1800, where he opposes an understanding of history as guided by "providence" (SW I 3:604/*System of Transcendental Idealism*, 212) to fatalist views, for which everything is governed by the "wholly blind force" of a fate that acts "coldly and unwittingly" (SW I 3:603/*System of Transcendental Idealism*, 211). (Spinoza, by contrast, does not reject the notion of divine providence, but he gives deflationary accounts of it: in the *Short Treatise*, he identifies divine providence with the *conatus* of finite things [G I.40/KV 84], while in the *Theological-Political Treatise*, he identifies it with the order of nature [G III.82/TTP 153], pointing out that "God takes account, not of the human race only, but of the whole of nature" [G III.88/TTP 160]. The providence of Schelling's God who acts specifically with a concern for human beings is clearly ruled out by such accounts.)

Second, there is a further important aspect to the idea of God as acting with human beings "in view." The optical metaphor may be read as conveying not only the purposiveness of the action, but also the agent's ability to take in information about the properties and needs of the one who is meant to profit from the action, and to adapt the action accordingly. This is exactly the case with God's redemptory action, as Schelling understands it. This action presupposes a genuine *openness* of God to the decisions that human beings make in their choice of moral character: as we saw, God *reacts*, if necessary, with His redemptory action in

the “second creation” to human choice. This second aspect of Schelling’s alternative to “blind” divine agency stands even in stronger opposition to Spinoza’s position than the first aspect: it requires not only a divine “will of love” that guides God’s action, it also requires (a) indeterminism (because of the unconditioned freedom of human choice of character), and (b) a passive element in God (as He reacts to our choices). While indeterminism is ruled out, of course, by Spinoza’s necessitarianism, Spinoza explicitly holds that every form of passivity constitutes a lack of perfection,⁸⁸ which entails that God must be entirely free from passivity.⁸⁹

So, on the resulting reading of this dimension in Schelling’s understanding of blind necessity, what Schelling finds so deeply unsatisfactory about Spinoza’s necessitarianism turns out to be its failure to admit of the form of action-guiding divine love towards human beings that Schelling describes in the *Freedom Essay*.

To this critique, one might object that the topic of love between God and man is not something that Spinoza ignores. He not only sees an “intellectual love” of man towards God as constituting the highest form of contentment and pleasure,⁹⁰ he also holds that there is a sense in which God intellectually loves man.⁹¹ So, does Schelling’s critique not again rest on an incomplete or uncharitable understanding of Spinoza?

I think that this worry can be assuaged if it is realized how much God’s intellectual love, as Spinoza understands it, differs from the love that Schelling ascribes to God.⁹² For Spinoza, God’s intellectual love towards man is a special case of an infinite love that God feels towards Himself—a joy that He has in being aware of His perfection (through the idea that He has of Himself⁹³), and that is accompanied by the idea of Himself as cause of this joy.⁹⁴ One “part” of this love is a love of God towards Himself insofar as he contains the essence of human mind,⁹⁵ and this part of God’s self-love can also be described as intellectual love of God towards men.⁹⁶

This account of divine love has three important consequences. First, God’s intellectual love towards man cannot motivate any divine actions. Since God is both absolutely perfect and immutable, and His necessary action of immanent causation exhausts the sphere of possibility, He cannot through his awareness of Himself detect any need or

occasion for a further action that is not already necessitated by His nature. So, Spinoza's God cannot do anything *out of* His love towards men.

Second, just as God's infinite self-love includes as a part an intellectual love of God towards men, it also includes intellectual love towards all other modes.⁹⁷ By contrast, the divine love that Schelling describes and that motivates God's creation and redemption is a love specifically towards men (as creatures who, in virtue of their free will, can exist in relative independence from God). This amounts to an anthropocentrism that Spinoza firmly rejects.⁹⁸

Third, God's love towards men, as Spinoza understands it, is an aspect of His *self*-love. What matters for God in this loving relation is not the individual human being considered in itself, but only man insofar as he is a mode of God. By contrast, Schelling understands divine love as a relation to something distinct from God: the target of God's love is man insofar as he is distinct and relatively independent from God, not insofar as he is a part of God.⁹⁹

So, it turns out that Spinoza and Schelling have two very different accounts of divine love, and Schelling is right when he implies that Spinoza leaves no room for the form of divine love that he himself wants to defend.

6. Restrictions on God's Agency and the Openness of Schelling's Theism

By way of conclusion, I wish to address a more general worry that one may have regarding Schelling's position in the *Freedom Essay*, as I have interpreted it. In the preceding discussion, it turned out to be a crucial aspect of Schelling's metaphysics, in that text, that he restricts, compared to both Spinoza and Leibniz, the extent of divine agency. Does this restriction not undermine the very notion of God as perfect and omnipotent being, thus leading to an utterly unstable position?

To address this question, it will be useful to distinguish three aspects in which Schelling may be said to limit God's agency. (1) Divine agency does not involve free choice,

on his view, but is bound by necessity (cf. Schelling's "One World" thesis). (2) God's agency does not settle all truths about the world He creates; partly, it is up to the free choice of human beings to decide about these truths. (3) God is not entirely active in His self-revelation. Rather, once He has created the finite world, He partly reacts to human choice (since it depends on this choice whether the finite world directly takes an ideal form, or whether instead divine redemption is needed for this).

Of these points, (2) is shared by many theistic thinkers. The assumption of libertarian human freedom is widespread in theistic traditions, and this assumption cannot be maintained without restricting God's agency in the sense of (2).¹⁰⁰ However, this restriction need not be understood as being in conflict with God's omnipotence and perfection. On traditional accounts, as on Schelling's, it is not because of a weakness or imperfection that God does not fully settle each detail of the world in creation; rather, this is a necessary consequence of the perfection that consists in God's ability to produce creatures endowed with free will.

(1), by contrast, is in conflict with many traditional theistic accounts of God's agency. Yet again, it is not clear that this point contradicts God's perfection and omnipotence. Both Spinoza and some scholastic authors like Anselm¹⁰¹ and Abelard¹⁰² hold that (1) follows from an adequate understanding of divine perfection because such perfection requires that God acts only out of the necessity of His own nature (on Spinoza's view), or because it rules out that God could create any but the best possible world (on Anselm's and Abelard's view).

Finally, Schelling's adoption of point (3) in the *Freedom Essay* is a move through which he approaches Christian orthodoxy with its idea of divine redemption (whereas in earlier writings, he had followed Spinoza in ascribing to God or the Absolute a pure activity or "absolute causality" [SW I 1:316/"Philosophical Letters," 178] that is devoid of any receptive dimension). However, despite its central role in biblical texts and Christian theology, the idea of a history of salvation as personal interaction between God and man does not fit easily with dominant views of God's perfection (at least if it is combined with the assumption of libertarian human freedom). For divine perfection is traditionally seen as requiring immutability, and this stands in tension with the idea of a genuine divine openness towards the outcome of human decisions.

How problematic this tension really is depends to a large extent on what view of divine foreknowledge is adopted. If God has (as on many traditional accounts) full foreknowledge of human choices even though we make them with libertarian freedom, it may be possible that He forms in one and the same act both His intention to create this world, and His intention to redeem the world in a determinate way.

Schelling addresses divine foreknowledge when he writes that

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the question still remains whether the act of self-revelation was free in the sense that all consequences of it were foreseen in God? But this too is necessarily to be affirmed; for the will to revelation would not itself be living if no other will turning back into the inner realm of being did not oppose it: but in this holding-in-itself emerges a reflexive picture of all that is implicitly contained in the essence in which God ideally realizes himself or, what is the same thing, recognizes himself beforehand in his becoming real. (SW I 7:397/FS 60)

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I read Schelling here as restricting God's foreknowledge to those features of the created world that God settles in His initial creation. For Schelling here explains this foreknowledge as knowledge that God has of His own essence. It therefore does not seem to include knowledge about the free human decisions, which, as we have seen, go beyond that which follows necessarily from God's essence. Consequently, divine foreknowledge cannot include proper knowledge about God's own redemptory action either (although it may include conditional knowledge about what God will do *if* humans decide in a particular way).

So instead of using divine foreknowledge to reduce the tensions between the idea of a history of salvation and traditional views of divine perfection, Schelling restricts foreknowledge, and emphasizes instead the character of the history of salvation as personal interaction between God and man: from the viewpoint of God in the initial creation, it is an open question what moral character men will adopt, and hence whether there will be a need for a redemptory action or not.¹⁰³ In the *Freedom Essay*, Schelling is ambivalent about how

exactly this openness relates to the issue of divine immutability. His account of the choice of character as atemporal and eternal deed (see sect. 2) suggests that some atemporal sequential ordering relation obtains between the first creation, man's choice of character, and God's redemptory action (whatever the nature of such a relation may be). In other passages, Schelling bites the bullet and accepts that there is a sense in which God is subject to change: "God is a life, not merely a Being. All life has a destiny, however, and is subject to suffering and becoming" (SW I 7:404/FS 66). This is a radical move, of course, but for Schelling it is, once more, a consequence of God's perfection, rather than a limit upon it: Schelling does not locate divine perfection anymore in absolute activity in the *Freedom Essay*—as he did, under the spell of Spinoza, in his earlier writings—but rather in the living, personal, and loving nature of God.¹⁰⁴

So in order to make his views about point (3) consistent with the idea that God is perfect, Schelling tentatively sketches a *revised view of divine perfection*.¹⁰⁵ That Schelling is exploring here a genuine and innovative theoretical option is suggested by the fact that the resulting position anticipates "open" or "relational" versions of theism in contemporary theology and philosophy of religion; views that, like Schelling's, restrict divine foreknowledge, revise traditional views of divine perfection, and emphasize the idea of a history of salvation as a common personal history between God and man, in which God is open vis-à-vis human decisions.¹⁰⁶

Conclusion

In his discussion of Spinoza's necessitarianism in the *Freedom Essay*, Schelling does not offer what Hegel would call an 'immanent' critique of Spinoza. Schelling does not identify inconsistencies in Spinoza's view, or gaps in his arguments. His objections to Spinoza's necessitarianism are based on premises or theoretical desiderata that Spinoza need not accept. Nevertheless, Schelling does succeed in providing an original perspective on Spinozism by disentangling the issues of divine choice, divine personhood, and necessitarianism, and by

developing an original counter-proposal to blind necessity: a robust and innovative account of divine personhood, love, and perfection that is still compatible with the view that there is only one way in which God can act, and which can thereby avoid the problems that confront Leibniz's theory (or, for that matter, any other theory that assumes divine choice and treats God as an ideal rational agent). Schelling's discussion of Spinoza in the *Freedom Essay* thus certainly adds a distinctive and nuanced page to the reception of Spinoza in German Idealism.¹⁰⁷

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Theological-Political Treatise. In Spinoza, C II.65–356. [TTP]

In citing from the *Ethics*, I use the following abbreviations:

App Appendix

C Corollary

D Definition

Dem Demonstration

P Proposition

S Scholium

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¹ E.g. Manfred Walther, ed. *Spinoza und der deutsche Idealismus*; Jean-Marie Vaysse, *Totalité et subjectivité*; Eckart Förster, *Die 25 Jahre der Philosophie*; Eckart Förster and Yitzhak Melamed, eds., *Spinoza and German Idealism*; Violetta Waibel, ed. *Affektenlehre*; and Brady Bowman, *Hegel and the Metaphysics of Absolute Negativity*.

² For a discussion of Hegel’s critique of Spinoza’s modal metaphysics, see Franz Knappik, “Hegel’s Modal Argument.”

³ *E* ID4.

⁴ *E* IP7; cf. *E* IP11.

⁵ Cf. *E* IP16. In *E* IP33S1, Spinoza distinguishes necessity of a thing “by reason of its essence” from necessity “by reason of its cause.” Taken by themselves, the modes are necessary only by reason of their cause; but since their ultimate cause, God, is necessary by reason of His essence, the modes could not possibly be any other way.

⁶ For an influential account of Spinoza’s necessitarianism, see Don Garrett, “Spinoza’s Necessitarianism.” Garrett’s reading, and necessitarian readings of Spinoza more generally, has been challenged by some commentators, most notably Curley (e.g. Edwin Curley and Gregory Walski, “Spinoza’s Necessitarianism Reconsidered”). For an overview of the debate,

see Samuel Newlands, “Spinoza’s Modal Metaphysics.” As far as I can tell, nothing in what Schelling writes on Spinoza suggests that he might consider a non-necessitarian reading.

Leibniz, too, clearly ascribes necessitarianism to Spinoza. Therefore, I will simply assume for the present purposes that such a reading is correct.

⁷ With the exception of Hobbes, who holds both necessitarianism (e.g. Hobbes and Bramhall, *On Liberty and Necessity*, 40, 87) and a “conditional analysis” of freedom (e.g. *On Liberty and Necessity*, 16).

⁸ SW I 10:33–48/*On the History*, 64–75. Schelling’s works are cited by series, volume, and page numbers from SW, followed by abbreviated title and page number of the English translation (where available). (Karl Friedrich August Schelling’s edition of his father’s works consists of two series. Series I includes published and unpublished texts until 1850, series II unpublished material by Schelling on his last philosophical system from between 1856 and 1858.)

⁹ Schelling’s later treatment of Spinoza in *On the History of Modern Philosophy* strongly depends on the complex modal metaphysics of Schelling’s late philosophy and therefore requires a discussion in its own right, which I postpone to another occasion.

¹⁰ In particular, there is a sense of ‘blind necessity’ in which the term stands for the necessity of a fate that precludes freedom, such that the charge of blind necessity becomes equivalent to the charge of a denial of freedom. Such an understanding of blind necessity can be found in Christian Wolff’s school. Wolff, *Theologia naturalis*, 2:509–10 (§528), mentions the denial of a free human soul as one of two tenets that define the view of “universal fatalism” (the other being the assumption of universal unconditional necessity with regard to material things), and equates universal fatalism with the assumption of a universal “*necessitas fatalis*.” One author who links Wolff’s discussion to the notion of “blind” necessity is the Wolffian theologian Johann Lorenz Schmidt, who renders *necessitas fatalis* as “blinde Nothwendigkeit” when translating into German parts of Wolff, *Theologia naturalis* together with Spinoza’s *Ethics* ([Christian Wolff and] Baruch de Spinoza, *Sittenlehre*).

¹¹ Cf. in particular SW I 1:151–52/“Of the I,” 64, 1:159/69, 1:171/77–78, 1:192–96/92–96; SW I 1:307–26/“Philosophical Letters,” 173–86; SW I 2:35–37/*Ideas*, 27–28, 2:71–72/54–55; and SW I 3:356/*System of Transcendental Idealism*, 17.

¹² E.g. SW I 1:151/“Of the I,” 64, 1:171/77–78.

¹³ SW I 2:71–72/*Ideas*, 53–54.

¹⁴ “Einleitung zu einem Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie” (SW I 3:273; SW I 3:356/*System of Transcendental Idealism*, 17.)

¹⁵ E.g. SW I 1:195–96/“Of the I,” 95–96.

¹⁶ SW I 1:236–37/“Of the I,” 123–4; SW I 1:435–37/“Treatise,” 126–28; and SW I 3:576–79/*System of Transcendental Idealism*, 183–84.

¹⁷ Cf. Xavier Tilliette, *Une philosophie*, 357–80; and Michael Vater, “Schelling’s Philosophy of Identity.”

¹⁸ SW I 6:184–85/“System of Philosophy in General,” 172–73; and SW I 6:372–73.

¹⁹ SW I 6:541–42.

²⁰ *E IIP2S*; and Letter 58, G IV.266/C II.428.

²¹ In addition to the aforementioned 1833/34 lectures *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, some of Schelling’s later writings—including the 1811 draft of the *Ages of the World* (*Weltalter*, 45–46), as well as the late *Darstellung der reinrationalen Philosophie* (SW II 1:275–76), and *Philosophie der Offenbarung (Urfassung*, 143–45)—contain further discussions of Spinoza, but again they do not address the issue of necessitarianism.

²² Despite the substantial amount of secondary literature on the *Freedom Essay*, Schelling’s discussion of Spinoza’s necessitarianism and Leibniz’s critique of it, as far as I can see, has not been analyzed in detail. Schelling’s own modal metaphysics in the *Freedom Essay* has been little explored, too. Thomas Buchheim, “Anmerkungen des Herausgebers” and “Freispruch durch Geschichte,” and Francesco Moiso, “Gott als Person,” are notable exceptions. I discuss their interpretations below. For treatments of other aspects of Schelling’s reception of Spinoza and Leibniz in the *Freedom Essay*, see Jason Wirth, *The*

Conspiracy of Life; Sören Wulf, “Pantheismus und Pantheismuskritik in Schellings *Freiheitsschrift*” (on Spinoza); and Thomas Buchheim, “Freispruch durch Geschichte” (on Leibniz).

²³ Cf. also “Ad Ethicam B. de Sp.,” A VI 4:1765–76, and Leibniz’s annotated copies of Spinoza’s writings, A VI 4:1705–64; since Schelling had no access to this material, I will focus on the *Theodicy* in the following. Cf. also Ludwig Stein, *Leibniz und Spinoza*; Ursula Goldenbaum, “Leibniz’s Fascination with Spinoza”; and Wirth, *The Conspiracy of Life*, 42–43. References to A are by series, volume, and page number. (The Academy edition of Leibniz’s writings is being published in eight series. Series I to III contain Leibniz’s correspondence, series IV to VIII his other writings, ordered according to disciplines.)

²⁴ At some early point of his career, Leibniz himself subscribed to necessitarianism. See Robert Merrihew Adams, *Leibniz*, 10–11; and Stein, *Leibniz und Spinoza*, 94.

²⁵ On the precise sense of Leibniz’s ‘hypothetical necessity,’ see Adams, *Leibniz*, 16–20; cf. also Martin Lin, “Rationalism and Necessitarianism.”

²⁶ The *Theodicy* is cited by ‘T’ and paragraph numbers as in G 6:21–437 (where G is cited by volume and page numbers), followed by page references to Huggard’s English translation. In connection with necessitarianism, Leibniz uses “logical” (T §349/*Theodicy*, 334), “metaphysical” (T §174/*Theodicy*, 236; T §349/*Theodicy*, 334) and “geometrical” (T §347/*Theodicy*, 333) necessity as synonyms for absolute necessity; we will encounter these terms in Schelling, too. In other places, Leibniz adds that, in order to be absolutely necessary, something also needs to be necessary per se, or through its own nature. Cf. Adams, *Leibniz*, 17. Yet his discussion of various forms of necessitarianism does not seem to employ this stronger notion of absolute necessity, since none of the authors Leibniz discusses here holds that everything is necessary through its own nature.

²⁷ T §173/*Theodicy*, 235.

²⁸ T §345–46/*Theodicy*, 332–33.

²⁹ For one influential formulation of this view, cf. Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Ia q14 a5 (on God's intellect), Ia q19 a2, a4 (on God's will and its cooperation with God's intellect in creation), and Ia q19 a10 and Ia q25 a6 (on God's free will, and His ability to create other [and even better] worlds). References to *Summa theologiae* are by part number, quaestio number, and article number.)

³⁰ As opposed to an action for which there is an (explanatory) reason—Spinoza, of course, does not deny the latter.

³¹ *E* IP33S2.

³² E.g. *E* IIP11C.

³³ E.g. G.III 62/*TTP* 62.

³⁴ *E* IP31; cf. *E* IP32C2. More precisely, both the divine intellect and the divine will—which coincide for Spinoza (*E* IIP49C; G III.62/*TTP* 131)—are, on a plausible reading, an infinite mode in the attribute of thought, of which all finite modes of thought are parts (cf. *E* IIP11C; Letter 64, G IV.278/C II.439). Cf. Michael Della Rocca, *Spinoza*, 73–74; and Yitzhak Melamed, *Spinoza's Metaphysics*, 133.

³⁵ *T* Appendix II (“Reflexions sur l’ouvrage que M. Hobbes a publié”); and §3/*Theodicy*, 395.

³⁶ Leibniz and Clarke, *Correspondence*, 16.

³⁷ This point may even be considered a further connotation of the notion of ‘blind necessity.’ In a related context, Kant remarks that the ‘blind’ in ‘blind necessity’ can be read in two ways: “Blind means when one oneself cannot see; but also that through which one cannot see. Blind necessity is thus that by means of which we can see nothing with the understanding” (“*Metaphysik LI*,” 28:199). Cf. Kant’s example of “opaque glass” in “*Metaphysik Mrongovius*,” 29:923. The Latin *caecus* has similar derivative uses: the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, s.v., mentions ‘obscure,’ ‘hidden,’ and ‘unknown’). Kant’s works are cited by volume and page numbers from *Kant's Gesammelte Schriften*.

³⁸ *E* IP11Dem2.

³⁹ Cf. *New Essays on Human Understanding*, A VI 6:73.

⁴⁰ SW I 7:398/*FS* 61.

⁴¹ Quoted at length at SW I 7:396/*FS* 60.

⁴² Translation amended.

⁴³ SW I 7:397/*FS* 61.

⁴⁴ Cf. Adams, *Leibniz*, 16.

⁴⁵ This passage speaks against the reading of Buchheim, “Anmerkungen des Herausgebers,” 156, on which Schelling’s claim that God cannot but create one world relates only to an “ideal” world, namely, the state of perfection that God had originally planned for His creation. Elsewhere, Buchheim argues that God was free *not* to create any finite world for Schelling (cf. also Moiso, “Gott als Person,” 210–11), since His nature of self-diffusing love is already fulfilled by the inner-trinitarian relation between Father and Son (Buchheim, “Freispruch durch Geschichte,” 369–70). But this is contradicted by the conjunction of Schelling’s claims that “God is essentially love and goodness” (SW I 7:397/*FS* 61), and that “the action of revelation in God [i.e. as is clear from the context, the creation of the finite world] is necessary . . . in regard to goodness and love” (SW I 7:397/*FS* 60). It is true, however, that Schelling will come to embrace the view on which God is free to create a world or not in later writings, beginning soon after the *Freedom Essay* in the first draft of the *Ages of the World* (cf. Schelling, *Weltalter*, 98–99).

⁴⁶ Cf. Adams, *Leibniz*, 9–52.

⁴⁷ Schelling does not deny that God is free (remember, he sees revelation as a “free and conscious action”); but he understands this freedom (like Spinoza, e.g. *E ID7*) merely as action out of the necessity of the agent’s own nature (SW I 7:384/*FS* 50; SW I 7:391–92/*FS* 56). When Schelling describes creation as a “decision [*Entscheidung*]” at SW I 7:397/*FS* 60, he probably has in mind an etymological interpretation of the term as *Ent-scheidung*, a negation of separation (cf. Schelling, *Weltalter*, 98 for a similar interpretation of *sich-Entschließen*).

⁴⁸ Cf. also SW I 7:384–85/FS 49–50. Commentators agree (at least implicitly) that Schelling’s view of human freedom in the *Freedom Essay* requires choice or alternative possibilities<Singular/plural disagreement. Suggest ‘requires choice or alternative possibilities’ or ‘a choice between alternative possibilities CR>. See, e.g. Wilhelm Jacobs, “Entscheidung,” 129–30; Friedrich Hermanni, *Die letzte Entlastung*, 127, 146–47; Siegbert Peetz, *Die Freiheit im Wissen*, 196, 215, 217; Michelle Kosch, *Freedom and Reason*, 95–96, “Idealism and Freedom in Schelling’s *Freiheitsschrift*,” 150; and Thomas Buchheim, “Der Begriff,” 210.

⁴⁹ That is, the negation of global determinism. This is compatible with local determinism for some part of reality, such as the *psychological* determinism that Schelling may subscribe to (SW I 7:383/FS 49). Cf. Hermanni, *Die letzte Entlastung*, 144. Moiso, “Gott als Person,” sees Schelling’s denial of divine choice as consequence from a view like a Kant’s, in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (5:401–2), that the modal categories of possibility, actuality and necessity are distinguishable only from the viewpoint of a finite understanding (cf. also Martin Heidegger, *Schelling: Vom Wesen*, 276). But since Schelling, in the *Freedom Essay*, (unlike Kant) sees modal categories as dealing with objective modal properties of things or states of affairs, this reading would entail that necessity, actuality, and possibility are not really distinct, which is tantamount to necessitarianism. (Kant’s *Gesammelte Werke* are cited by volume and page number.)

⁵⁰ Cf., e.g. *T* §360/*Theodicy*, 341: “God sees all at once the whole sequence of this universe, when he chooses it.”

⁵¹ This is, e.g. Anselm’s view. See Katherin Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom*. Cf. Buchheim, “Freispruch durch Geschichte,” 374–77.

⁵² This may seem to clash with common views about divine perfection. I address this worry in sect. 6, below.

⁵³ Cf. SW I 7:384/FS 50; SW I 7:391–92/FS 56.

⁵⁴ SW I 7:363/FS 32; SW I 7:413/FS 75.

⁵⁵ Cf. in particular the contributions in Thomas Buchheim and Friedrich Hermanni, eds. *Alle Persönlichkeit*.

⁵⁶ This usage of the term is inspired by the literal meaning of the Latin *existere*: to step out, emerge, appear. Cf. Hermanni, *Die letzte Entlastung*, 88.

⁵⁷ Cf. SW I 7:438/“Stuttgart Seminars,” 210.

⁵⁸ Cf. Friedrich Hermanni, *Die letzte Entlastung*, and “Der Grund der Persönlichkeit Gottes.” In one passage from the “Stuttgart Seminars,” Schelling alludes to traditional accounts of individuation when he identifies the ground in God with a “matter” (SW I 7:435/“Stuttgart Seminars,” 208).

⁵⁹ Cf. SW I 7:387/FS 52: “through this act [i.e. the free choice of moral character] even the type and constitution of his [man’s] corporeal formation is determined.”

⁶⁰ Cf. Hermanni, *Die letzte Entlastung*, 91–93.

⁶¹ E.g. SW I 7:361/FS 30.

⁶² Cf. Hermanni, *Die letzte Entlastung*, and “Der Grund der Persönlichkeit Gottes.”

⁶³ SW I 7:362–63/FS 31–32.

⁶⁴ Cf. SW I 7:390/FS 54.

⁶⁵ Taken on its own, this passage could suggest that personhood is distinct from spirit and defined as a connection between spirit and particular being. But Schelling later refers back to this passage by writing that “personality is founded . . . on the connection between a self-determining [*selbständig*] being and a basis independent of him” (SW I 7:394/FS 59), where ‘self-determining being’ refers to the dimension of the existing entity (cf. SW I 7:359/FS 28).

⁶⁶ SW I 7:394/FS 59.

⁶⁷ Cf. SW I 7:405/FS 68, where Schelling identifies “divine consciousness” with divine “spirit.”

⁶⁸ SW I 7:373/FS 41.

⁶⁹ Cf. Dieter Henrich’s seminal article, “Hegels Theorie über den Zufall.”

⁷⁰ Cf., e.g. GA I 2:411/*Foundations*, 246; and GA I 4:50–52/*System of Ethics*, 52–54.

References to GA are by series, volume and page number. (The Academy edition of Fichte’s works is divided into four series: series I contains Fichte’s published works, series II his posthumous writings, series III his correspondence, and series IV transcripts of his lectures.) Thanks to an anonymous referee for suggesting this way of connecting Schelling’s position to Fichte.

⁷¹ Cf. on this point Heidegger, *Schelling: Vom Wesen*, 162, 171.

⁷² Cf. the beginning of passage that I have just quoted: “The error of his [Spinoza’s] system lies by no means in his placing things *in God*” (SW I 7:349/*FS* 20).

⁷³ SW I 7:361/*FS* 30.

⁷⁴ Cf. e.g. Fichte’s famous claim, “My system is the first system of freedom” (draft of a letter to Baggesen, GA III 2:298/“Correspondence,” 385); in the same year (1795), Schelling writes to Hegel that freedom is the “alpha and omega of all philosophy” (Hegel, *Briefe*, 1:22/*Letters*, 32). References to GA are by series, volume, and page number. For the connection between this and the *Freedom Essay*, cf. Peetz, *Die Freiheit im Wissen*. Of course, Schelling also thinks that implementing the idea of a “system of freedom” requires him to go beyond Fichte by assuming a genuine non-subjective, non-mental dimension both in the Absolute and in finite reality; hence, his reference in this context to his own “higher realism,” and to Fichte’s “subjective idealism” as “misunderstanding itself” (SW I 7:351/*FS* 22, translation modified).

⁷⁵ Indeed, this is the form of comprehension that Schelling himself draws on for his metaphysical explanations in writings such as the *Freedom Essay*. Cf. Schelling’s related defense of “anthropomorphism” in his reply to Eschenmayer, SW I 8:167.

⁷⁶ *E* IIP7.

⁷⁷ E.g. Jonathan Bennett, *A Study on Spinoza’s Ethics*, 135–39, Della Rocca, *Spinoza*, 108–11, and Martin Lin, “Spinoza’s Panpsychism,” who all explicitly ascribe panpsychism to Spinoza. Cf. Don Garrett, “Representation and Consciousness,” 6–7, and Steven Nadler, “Spinoza and Consciousness,” 590. Spinoza writes in *E* IIP13S, “whatever we have said of

the idea of the human Body”—hence, also that it constitutes a mind, as he had claimed immediately before (“The object of the idea constituting the human Mind is the Body” [*E* IIP13]) “must also be said of the idea of any thing”; and, “the things we have shown so far are completely general and do not pertain more to man than to other Individuals, all of which, though in different degrees, are nevertheless animate.” But see Harry Austryn Wolfson, *The Philosophy of Spinoza*, 2:58–59 for a non-panpsychist interpretation of Spinoza.

⁷⁸ *E* IIP3.

⁷⁹ *E* IIP9Dem.

⁸⁰ *E* IIP7.

⁸¹ As in his theory of affects, e.g. *E* IIP9S.

⁸² E.g. *E* IIP11; IVP3; IVP5.

⁸³ SW I 7:405–6/*FS* 68.

⁸⁴ SW I 7:406/*FS* 68.

⁸⁵ Cf. also Buchheim, “Freispruch durch Geschichte,” 359–60; and Jürgen Habermas, “Dialektischer Idealismus,” 192–93.

⁸⁶ Strictly speaking, God’s redemptory action is necessary, for Schelling, really only on the condition that we choose evil; so, it is not really true that everything that God does follows from His loving essence with *unconditional* (“absolute”) necessity (SW I 7:397/*FS* 60). (Cf. Jon Marenbon, *Abelard in Four Dimensions*, 48, who points out a parallel problem in Abelard.)

⁸⁷ The Latin *providere* can both mean ‘act with foresight’ and ‘look after, care for’ (Charlton Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, s.v.).

⁸⁸ *E* VP40.

⁸⁹ Schelling is very much aware of this aspect of Spinoza’s position. Cf. SW I 1:195–96/“Of the I,” 95–96.

⁹⁰ *E* VP27.

⁹¹ *E* VP36C.

⁹² An anonymous referee suggests that there is also a significant difference between Spinoza's and Schelling's views on man's love for God, as Spinoza, unlike Schelling, understands this love as a cool, non-affective attitude. But while it is true that Spinoza's *amor intellectualis Dei* is a condition in which we control our passive emotions (*E* VP38), it is, qua form of love, an emotion (cf. *E* VP15Dem), and, more precisely, a self-caused, and therefore "active," emotion (*E* IID3 with *E* VP36Dem). That Spinoza's descriptions of this love as highest pleasure, contentment, and blessedness (*E* VP27; VP36S) are not just empty phrases is suggested by the fact that Spinoza draws here on substantive theories of happiness and love, viz. on the theories of Jewish Platonists like Leo Hebraeus and Aristotelians like Maimonides, which in their turn are rooted in Plato's theory of *eros* in the *Symposium*, and in Aristotle's theory of contemplation in *Nicomachean Ethics*, book 10 (cf. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of Spinoza*, 2:275–83; Han van Ruler, "Amor intellectualis Dei"; and Lee Rice, "Love of God in Spinoza," 104–5nn5–7). Admittedly, Schelling's and Spinoza's views on man's love for God differ in another respect (which was also suggested to me by the referee): man's love for God can lead to actions out of love for Schelling, but not for Spinoza. For Spinoza, man can act out of love towards other human beings, but not out of love towards God (this would require an attempt to increase God's pleasure, but God cannot have pleasure [*E* IIP33D with *E* VP17], and there is in man an adequate and perfect idea of God [*E* IIP46–47, cited in a related context in *E* VP18Dem]). By contrast, Schelling's account clearly leaves open the possibility of action out of love for God; and Schelling explicitly ascribes a motivational role to love in general when he describes it as principle of enthusiasm (*FS* 415), relates this enthusiasm to Plato's "divine madness" (SW I 7:470/"Stuttgart Seminars," 233), and characterizes such madness as the "foundation . . . of efficacy in general" (SW I 7:470/"Stuttgart Seminars," 233).

⁹³ Cf. the reference to *E* IIP3 in the proof for *E* VP35.

⁹⁴ *E* VP35.

⁹⁵ *E* VP36.

⁹⁶ As well as intellectual love of men towards God (*E* VP36C).

⁹⁷ Cf. Yitzhak Melamed, “Spinoza’s Amor Dei Intellectualis.”

⁹⁸ Cf. (specifically about divine love for man) G I.104/KV 142.

⁹⁹ Thanks to an anonymous referee for pressing me on this third point.

¹⁰⁰ Examples of theistic authors who assume libertarian human freedom include the church fathers before Augustine, Anselm, Duns Scotus, Molina, Arminius, Suárez, Bishop Bramhall, Malebranche, Clarke, Reid, and on some readings also Maimonides, Aquinas, Descartes and Kant. In contemporary Christian philosophy, there even tends to be a consensus on libertarianism (cf. Lynne Rudder Baker, “Why Christians Should not be Libertarians”).

¹⁰¹ Cf. Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom*.

¹⁰² Cf. Marenbon, *Abelard in Four Dimension*.

¹⁰³ Cf. also Habermas, “Dialektischer Idealismus,” 189, who reads Schelling as holding that in creating man as free, God accepts a genuine risk.

¹⁰⁴ SW I 7:405–6/FS 68.

¹⁰⁵ Schelling will further develop this approach in his late Positive Philosophy; e.g. *Philosophie der Mythologie*, SW II 1:566–71.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. e.g. Alan Rhoda et al., “Open Theism.”

¹⁰⁷ I am indebted to Marcela García, Erasmus Mayr, and anonymous referees for the *Journal of the History of Philosophy* for their valuable comments on earlier versions of this text.