

Considering Schelling



FRANK ARUNDELL

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Has creation a final goal? And if so, why was it not reached at once? Why was the consummation not realized from the beginning? To these questions there is but one answer: Because God is a Life, and not merely Being

FWJ Schelling

“Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom,” 1809

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Who is Schelling? Those of us who have not had the privilege of studying philosophy most likely would never have heard of an individual by the name of Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling. With the wonderful world-wide-web we don't need to trek to libraries to find out who Schelling was, or is. All we have to do is to click on his name in any number of “browsers” and Schelling will come up for our interest. That is, of course, if philosophy peaks your interest. Philosophy has been around since humans began to reason, to put two and two together so to speak. It is the rationalization of our natural inquisitiveness with regard to our very existence, our accumulated knowledge, our moral and ethical behavior. It is our personal belief system — how we live our lives and deal with ever changing situations. More formally it is the study of the “fundamental nature of reality.” For what ever reason, we have found it much more rewarding than The Kardashians or other “reality” shows.

“The Ancient Greek word ‘philosophia’ was probably coined by Pythagoras and literally means 'love of wisdom' or 'friend of wisdom'. Philosophy has been divided into many sub-fields. It has been divided chronologically (e.g., ancient and modern); by topic (the major topics being epistemology, logic, metaphysics, ethics, and aesthetics); and by style (e.g., analytic philosophy). As a method, philosophy is often distinguished from other ways of addressing such problems by it's questioning-critical, generally systematic approach and its reliance on rational argument. As a noun, the term ‘philosophy can refer to any body of knowledge. Historically, these bodies of knowledge were commonly divided into natural philosophy,

moral philosophy, and metaphysical philosophy. In casual speech, the term can refer to any of "the most basic beliefs, concepts, and attitudes of any individual or group,"

Schelling

“Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling [German, 27 January 1775 – 20 August 1854] [later von Schelling] was a German philosopher. Standard histories of philosophy make him the midpoint in the development of German *Idealism*, situating him between Johann Gottlieb Fichte, his mentor in his early years, and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, his former university roommate, early friend, and later rival. Interpreting Schelling's philosophy is regarded difficult because of it's apparently ever-changing nature.”

“Schelling's thought largely has been neglected, especially in the English-speaking world, as has been his later work on mythology and revelation, much of which remains untranslated. An important factor was the ascendancy of Hegel, whose mature works portray Schelling as a mere footnote in the development of idealism. Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* also has been attacked by scientists for it's analogizing tendency and lack of empirical orientation. However, some later philosophers such as Martin Heidegger and Slavoj Žižek have shown interest in re-examining Schelling's body of work.” (Wikipedia)

We were drawn to Schelling because of our Roman Catholic version of pantheism and the reading of Coleridge who was greatly influenced by German Idealism.

German Idealism

In the history of philosophy just what is German Idealism? "German idealism is the name of a movement in German philosophic thinking that began in the 1780s and lasted until the 1840s. The most famous representatives of this movement are Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. While there are important differences between these figures, they all share a commitment to idealism, i.e., that *ideas are the only reality*. Kant's transcendental idealism was a modest philosophical doctrine about the difference between appearances of things and things in themselves, which claimed that the objects of human cognition are appearances and not things in themselves. Fichte, Schelling, and [particularly] Hegel radicalized this view, transforming Kant's transcendental idealism into absolute idealism, which holds that things in themselves are a contradiction in terms, because *a thing must be an object of our consciousness if it is to be an object at all.*" (Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy) The old familiar argument regarding this philosophical concept is offered with the thought experiment: "If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?" It raises questions regarding observation and the knowledge of reality where the "certainty" of things becomes an issue.

One can easily see how argumentation over what reality is can come into question, when man's belief in an unseen Creator/God becomes suspect within certain categories of philosophical thought. The problem of certainty in all respects goes back to the ancient Greek philosophers and—probably further back to the early thinking of the Middle East. According to (quatr.us): "We don't know as much as we might like to about the activities of Plato's Academy after the death of Aristotle. But between about 300 and 100 BC—almost up to the birth of Jesus—the Academy became known as the center of Skepticism."

Skeptics

“The Skeptics were a group of philosophers whose main idea was that we can't really know anything for certain about the world around us, or even about ourselves. Therefore, we can never know what is right or wrong either. Some of these ideas came from Socrates, who also thought that the wisest man is the one who realizes that he doesn't know anything.” (We must add here that this is a common misunderstanding of Socrates' thought) Skepticism really began with Pyrrho.

“Pyrrho of Elis [c. 360-c. 270 BCE) is usually credited with founding the school of skepticism. He traveled to India and studied with the “gymnosophists” the name given by the Greeks to certain ancient Indian philosophers who pursued asceticism to the point of regarding food and clothing as detrimental to purity of thought and also to naked priests from Ethiopia. From there, he brought back the idea that nothing can be known for certain. The senses are easily fooled, and reason follows too easily our desires. These concepts were continued by Pyrrho's student Timon (about 320-230 BC). Pyrrhonism was a school of skepticism founded by his follower Aenesidemus in the First century BCE (the time of Jesus) and recorded by Sextus Empiricus, who wrote the book series *Against the Mathematicians* (by some, translated ‘*Against the Professors*’), in the late Second century or early Third century CE (the time of the growth of Christianity).” [Wikipedia modified]. “You might say, if you can't really know anything, why bother studying philosophy at all? The Skeptics said the real point was not to worry about things they couldn't know or didn't have enough information to decide. Instead, people should relax and let go. If you couldn't know, then there wasn't any point in worrying about it. You should leave it in the hands of the gods.”(quatr.us).

It is an interesting real point— at least the skeptics certainly understood that there were “gods” with whom and in whose hands they could leave the “certainty” dilemma. It isn’t any wonder that the Epicureans and the Stoics outlasted the Skeptics until more modern times when radical-skepticism and the dictatorship of relativism, begun by agnosticism, especially with Hume who once again started to subvert philosophy and turn more than a thousand years of faith on its head.

In every normal human being there is always a healthy degree of skepticism commonly known as doubt, but not so much that it becomes the center of one’s life. In this age of hyper-physics and electro-magnetism, things that seemed impossible only months before appear to come to fruition. Who would have thought we would be looking at a flyby of Pluto which was discovered as recently as 1930.

In Considering Schelling we shall try to shed some light on German (Radical) Idealism as seen by Schelling without going into too much detail regarding his difficulties with Fichte and Hegel. Since most of us do not have post-graduate degrees in philosophy it wouldn’t make much sense to dwell on those differences. We will try to make Schelling’s views as clear as possible regarding this ancient argument between Nature and Spirit, between mind-over-matter or matter-over-mind. The four reliable sources we shall use will be:

1. “A History of Philosophy, Volume VII”, Frederick Copleston, SJ
2. “Philosophers Speak of God” by Charles Hartshorne and William L. Reese, Humanity Books, 2000;
3. “Panentheism” 2006 by John W. Cooper, Published by Baker Academic

4. “BRUNO” or “*On the Natural and Divine Principle of Things*” WFJ Schelling, Edited and Translated by Michael G.Vader 1984, State University of New York.

Why are we considering Schelling and his rivals other than just for the fun of the variations in philosophy and theology?

Papal Dilemma in Connection with German Idealism

After four dynamic papacies, excluding John Paul I, whose term didn't last very long, we now have Jorge Mario Cardinal Bergoglio [Francis I] elected the 266th pope of the Roman Catholic Church. Francis' sociological views appear to sharply differ from his two predecessors Saint John Paul II and Benedict XVI on certain doctrinal and societal matters regarding the faithful, specifically with respect to the “fundamental option for the poor,” and complications concerning divorced and remarried Catholics. These differences appear to be of a philosophical nature affecting the long standing more conservative posture of the papacy having a direct effect on dogmatic theology.

Walter Cardinal Kasper, a well known German Theologian, more liberal in his views than others in the Curia, has written a book titled MERCY: The Essence of the Gospel and the Key to Christian Life, 2012. On the cover of his book a quote from Francis says: “This book has done me so much good” The current pope seems to show partiality to Cardinal Kasper's liberal understandings. The question becomes how did this German theologian come to exercise a degree of influence over this Argentinian pope; and what, if anything, does that have to do with Schelling, Fichte, or Hegel?

Kasper's Background

“Kasper, was born in Heidenheim an der Brenz, Germany, and was ordained a priest on 6 April 1957. From 1957 to 1958 he was a parochial vicar in Stuttgart. He returned to his studies and earned a doctorate in dogmatic theology from the University of Tübingen and was a faculty member at Tübingen from 1958 to 1961. He worked for three years as an assistant to the conservative Leo Scheffczyk, a Pole, and the very liberal Swiss theologian Hans Küng, who was later banned from teaching by Vatican authorities (John Paul II) owing to his critical views on contraception, papal infallibility and other issues.”

“Kasper later taught dogmatic theology at the Westphalian University of Münster [1964–1970], rising to become dean of the theological faculty in 1969 and then the same in Tübingen in 1970. In 1983 Kasper taught as a visiting professor at The Catholic University of America. In 1993 he and other members of the German episcopate signed a pastoral letter which urged allowing divorced and civilly remarried German Catholics to return to the sacraments, to the disapproval of then Cardinal Ratzinger and Pope John Paul II. In 1994, he was named Co-Chair of the International Commission for Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue. (Wikipedia with modifications)”

“In 1979, Hans Küng's license to teach Catholic theology was revoked by Pope John Paul II, a Pole; a decision in which Ratzinger played a role as a member of the German bishops' conference.” One would have to conclude that at least some of Kasper's thinking was influenced by his former professor and boss Hans Küng's extreme liberal, theological views. Now, what of Pope Francis?

Francis' Background

Jorge Bergoglio was ordained on December 13, 1969. Continuing his studies in Madrid, he made his final vows as a Jesuit in 1973. After a short stint at teaching theology, Jesuit General Pedro Arrupe appointed him as Provincial to the Argentinian Province nominated for a six year term. Jorge was 37 years old. The second three years of Bergoglio's term as Provincial was the most brutal period of civil unrest in Argentina since the eighteen hundreds. In a short biography: Francis, Bishop of Rome, Fr. Michael Collins a Vatican expert wrote: "The Twentieth Century saw six military coups in Argentina. The first was in 1930 and the last took place in 1976. Fourteen dictators were imposed between 1930 and the end of the dictatorship in 1983. Following the 1976 coup, which overthrew President Isabel Perón, General Jorge Videla became de facto President of Argentina, at the head of a military junta. Videla was determined to destroy both leftist and right-wing groups which used violent methods against the government. The People's Revolutionary Army was the armed wing of the Worker's Revolutionary Party. The Montonero Perónista Movement was a leftist guerilla group, determined to undermine fascist governments by terror and violence."

"Many of the members were recruited from Catholic universities and other Church groups. They saw the violence as an unavoidable part of the class struggle which would eventually win freedom and respect for human rights. In 1970, the Montoneros had kidnapped and executed Pedro Aramburo, the dictator who had ruled between 1955-8. In 1972, the group planted a bomb at the Sheraton Hotel. The following year, Colonel Héctor Irabarren was killed while resisting a kidnap attempt. The Montoneros encouraged Juan Perón to return from his 17-year exile in Paris to lead the country once more. When Perón returned to Argentina, the group was split over his

policies. With Perón's death in 1974, Isabel took over the leadership of the country. She was unable to stop the violence and killings which multiplied during her presidency. Isabel Perón signed laws allowing Videla to act decisively to destroy the opposition."

"While combatting the Marxist-inspired groups, the government was supported by the Argentine Anti-communist Alliance, founded in 1973 and led by José López Rega. The right-wing party sought to do away with all opposition to the governing powers, eliminating journalists, leftist guerrillas, union leaders, students, intellectuals, nuns and priests engaged with the poor and all other dissidents. During the period of [murder and mayhem], many priests and nuns became engaged in the struggle to obtain human rights for the dispossessed, the poorly educated, the unemployed and the disenfranchised."

"Despite the natural resources of South America and the Caribbean Islands, poverty is an inescapable reality. Centuries of exploitation by Spain and Portugal (Catholic countries) in the slave trade, corrupt foreign administrators and incompetent rulers reduced much of the population to poverty. Contemporary Argentina has suffered from decades of military and "democratically elected" rulers who have failed to advance the nation's prosperity and take advantage of its riches. During the 1960s and 1970s, corresponding to the political upheaval, some church leaders began to challenge the status quo. They protested against the exploitation of the poor and examined the structures which both led them into poverty and disenfranchised them."

"A number of writers emerged, reaching an ever-widening audience and informing them of the injustice of such social structures. One such writer, the Peruvian Dominican priest

Gustavo Gutiérrez wrote a number of books arguing that the obligation to eradicate poverty lies with the educated and those who have resources. His seminal work, *A Theology of Liberation* was published in 1971, and immediately gained a wide audience. Gutiérrez wrote with authority. His mixed ancestry included native Quechua and colonial Spanish blood. ‘Poverty is not fate,’ Gutiérrez argued, ‘it is a condition; it is not a misfortune, it is an injustice. It is the result of social structures and mental and cultural categories, it is linked to the way in which society has been built, in its various manifestations.’ Thus Christian engagement with the poor is not a choice, it is an obligation. The Christian is not called to share what is left over but rather to share equally, treating other humans with respect. Above all, it means channelling energies and talents on behalf of the needy. It is Christian solidarity and lies at the heart of the Gospel message.”

(Collins, Michael [2013-06-01]. *Francis, Bishop of Rome.*)

It becomes quite obvious, at least to us, why Francis would champion the poor and oppressed. His experiences in the tumultuous times of Argentina’s civil unrest, coupled with the theological understanding of the gospel’s “fundamental option for the poor” has always been important to the Jesuit mission. For us this is the nexus between Kasper’s “liberalism” and Francis’ positive response to it.

The Philosophy Angle

Kasper’s liberal leanings were called into question by a conservative Austrian philosopher soon after the 2015 Synod on the family was completed. The German Bishops had been recommending doctrinal changes in the church for several years since the more conservative popes were comfortably out of the way, and a more liberal man was in the chair of Peter.

“Dr. Thomas Stark delivering his lecture *“Historicity and German Idealism in the Thought of Walter Kasper”* in Vienna, contended that the controversial cardinal is one who filters St. Thomas Aquinas through the lens of Hegel and Kant, which Stark thinks is a mistake.”

“What are some of the philosophical underpinnings behind Cardinal Walter Kasper’s controversial proposal to grant certain divorced-and-civilly-remarried Catholics access to holy Communion in certain cases.

“This question was among those addressed at a colloquium held last fall in Vienna, as part of the launch of the German translation of the book *Remaining in the Truth of Christ*. The colloquium brought together representatives from the Cistercian Abbey of Heiligenkreuz, (Holy Cross) the German-speaking academic world and the traditional organization *Una Voce (One Voice) Austria*. The lecture examined the philosophical roots of the German cardinal’s theological thoughts, especially as they pertain to the controversial claims he made in his 2014 address at the extraordinary consistory in preparation for the 2014-15 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops on the Family.”

“The National Catholic Register sat down with professor Stark to discuss the contents of his lecture, his belief that Cardinal Kasper’s thought can ultimately be traced back to Hegelian philosophy [‘the rational alone is real’] and what this means for the German cardinal’s understanding of the Church’s teaching and practice.” The following are a few excerpts from that interview.

Pentin “Professor Stark, can you summarize your talk for the benefit of our English-speaking readers?”

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Stark “I asked myself if there are any roots, according to the positions in moral theology, in the philosophical foundation of Kasper’s theology. And then I came across an article that the famous Italian historian Roberto de Mattei had written in *Il Foglio*; and therein he said that one of the reasons why Kasper is taking his positions is because he is very much influenced by the late [Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph] Schelling. And I tried to find out whether there are any connections to Schelling.

So I delved more deeply into the whole topic, because I had already agreed to address Kasper’s position and his roots in the philosophy of German Idealism. My conclusion? I would say that one can clearly see that Kasper’s position is deeply rooted in German Idealistic philosophy, but I would say more so in Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel than in Schelling.”

“The problem with this philosophy is the relationship between history and truth. And the problem with Kasper’s position, as far as I understand him, is that he accepts historicism [where history is seen as a standard of value or as a determinant of events] just as a fact. He says, “Well, we are living in a time after historicism in the Nineteenth Century; history is the main framework in which we have to think and to live,” and he is quoting [Ernst] Troeltsch, who said: “the encounter between Christian life and Christian theology and history will be even more problematic than the encounter between theology and science that had already taken place a century ago.”

“In addition, he seems to just accept the status quo and says, as far as I understand him, ‘Well, we are living in times that are influenced by historicism, and we have to live with it, and then he historicizes truth and does many other confusing and perplexing things along these lines, I would say.’”

“I have said several times, As far as I understand him, because the problem with this sort of theology is that it is difficult to understand, not because one has to be very intelligent to understand it, but because it is not coherent, in my opinion. And one can only figure it out if one understands the language they use. I mean, it’s not only Kasper; it’s very many people of influence in modern theology. If one reads this language carefully, one can easily see an admixture of imitating [Martin Heidegger] and the influence of Existentialism, some pieces from [Emmanuel Kant] and [Hegel], which are read into Thomas Aquinas. They read Thomas through the lens of Hegel and Kant, which simply cannot be done, in my opinion. And they mix up various philosophical positions that really can’t be put together in a coherent, logical way.”

“The way they attempt to intertwine all of their theories forms a sort of pseudo-dialectic that is not really logical and coherent, and they put it in such a way as to provide an opportunity to get away with novel theories without being under the critical view of the magisterium, because they can always shift to the right and then to the left, as need be.”

Pentin “How do we see the principles you’ve just described play out, for example, in Cardinal Kasper’s proposal to allow remarried divorcees to have access to holy Communion?”

Stark “Well, this is obvious. They say, ‘We cannot change doctrine, but we must change the pastoral application of doctrine or which is contradictory, because you can’t change practice without altering doctrine, because practice follows directly from doctrine.’ So this is pure fantasy. For anyone who thinks on this for a moment, it becomes clear that it simply can’t be

done. You have to change doctrine in order to change the moral teaching.”

Pentin “Including the Sixth Commandment and the Church’s doctrine on the holy Eucharist?”

Stark “Of course. Yes. So they are essentially destroying the whole sacramental structure of the Church by pretending to be addressing mere “pastoral” considerations. It is a ruse.”

Pentin “Is it consistent with Pope St. Pius X’s 1907 encyclical on the doctrines of the modernists, *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (The Doctrines of the Modernists)? In that encyclical, he talks about agnosticism being the beginning of modernism.”

Stark “Yes, exactly! What St. Pius X wrote about Modernism is of outstanding value to understanding these men. It is exactly what he says.”

Pentin “So would you go so far as to say that Cardinal Kasper is an agnostic?”

Stark “I would say Kasper is a Modernist, which includes a sort of agnosticism.”

Pentin “Would you go so far as to call it apostasy?”

Stark “Well, this is a strong word, but I certainly fail to understand how this line of thinking does not lead to apostasy, at least objectively speaking. What else can I think of someone who writes that dogmas can essentially become outdated and pointless or that they even can be stupid? And yet this is what I was quoting just today. Or somebody who says, Well, one of

the effects of historicism, which he openly accepts, is that ancient holy Scriptures or texts lose their validity”?

Pentin “You spoke in your lecture about a dichotomy between finding salvation in Christ and finding salvation in progress. Can you say a few words about that?”

Stark “We have certain periods of history, and according to the New Testament, the periods are the following: First, God created the world. After a while, original sin happened. And then a different sort of history began, and this is the history in which we find ourselves to this day. And the question is: How will it all end? And there are two metaphysical concepts, as far as I see, regarding the end of history: that which is written down in the last book of the New Testament, where we are informed by God himself, because it is God’s word, that history will culminate in a huge catastrophe when the world falls away from God; and then Christ will come back after the Antichrist has reigned for — I think the Church Fathers say — three and a half years, or something like that. This is one concept.”

Pentin “So the question is: What is the climax of history in this concept?”

Stark “The climax of history is the time between the incarnation of Christ and his ascension into heaven. This is the climax of time, the fullness of time. And then there is a different way of explaining history and the climax of history, which has it that the climax of history will be reached at the end of history because history is a process of perfection.”

Pentin “This is Hegel, isn’t it?”

Stark “Yes, this is Hegel. And at the end of history, the climax of history will be reached. And someone who made a modern version of this concept of history in theology was Teilhard de Chardin, who said we are on our way, in process, to the so-called Omega Point, whereby creation and God will be reunited, but because of a process of self-perfection, which takes place in history. And this is the polar opposite of what the New Testament — the inspired written word of God — tells us. And again, Cardinal Kasper tries, as far as I understand him, to join these two concepts under one hat, which are absolutely contradictory. He tries to make one mega story out of all of this, which just doesn’t work. You have to decide what you believe.”

Pentin “Has the fullness of time already taken place, and are we facing the reign of the Antichrist sometime?”

Stark “Who knows when, maybe next year, maybe 500 years. You have to decide what you believe. What is the sense of history? One or the other? And all concepts which try to mix these two interpretations of history are just illogical nonsense.”

(Edward Pentin is the *National Catholic Register*; Rome correspondent.)

Comment

As long as Professor Stark is practically accusing Cardinal Kasper of apostasy based on Hegelianism we should briefly look into the differences between Schelling and Hegel so as to show how Schelling fits more readily into this unfortunate controversy. Yet, it seems to us this is more of a conservative/liberal issue rather than a formal philosophical one. The press is always more than willing to turn theological differences in the

Roman Church into broad schismatic inferences, (even the Catholic Press) rather than honest exchanges among the accredited exegetes in the hierarchy. It's no surprise then that Dr. Stark, as a conservative thinker, is opposing what he sees as Kasper's liberal errors. For Stark, many hundreds of years of Aristotelian Thomism known as "scholasticism" and still taught by the Dominicans must not be eclipsed by "modern" theological thinking that appears to bend with the times. However, if the gospels are to be considered sacred writings, which in our estimation they are, they cannot be stuck in middle-ages sociology. As we all know "time changes and we change with it." Spiritually, on the other hand, they were written for all time. Jesus said: "Heaven and earth will pass away but my words will never pass away." (Mark 15:31, Matt. 24:35, Luke 21:33) Along with this excerpt, it's good to include another. Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." (Mark 2:27)

If you're graced to be a believer, following St Anselm, you believe so as to understand rather than the other way around. This is where a skeptical philosophy parts company with faith based theology. It has always amazed us how philosophy, (the love of wisdom), strictly a human endeavor, continuously unpacks what God thinks, and who God is in his relationship with the human race. Be that as it may we will parse the differences between Schilling and Hegel with the help of a paper that we found titled:

The Re-Emergence of Schelling by Matthew David Segall from Footnotes2Plato online.

Segall is a doctoral candidate in philosophy, cosmology, and consciousness at the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco. Though we did not read the full paper we

believe the specific chapter quoted covers the subject quite well.

It must be remembered that all the German Idealists were the sons of the *Protestant Reformation*. In our opinion the church should have compromised with Luther, the Augustinian, on societal grounds based on a full understanding that many of its Prelates and clergy at the time had gone way beyond spirituality. The huge fiasco became a political event. Erasmus said it all in *In Praise of Folly* written in 1509 printed in 1511. Ironically it was the Germans and Swiss who were “reformed,” as the northern half of Europe embraced Protestantism.

The difference between Hegel's and Schelling's system of philosophy: By Matthew David Segall:

Early in his philosophical career while still a high school teacher in Nuremberg, Hegel suggested that, as a schoolmaster of philosophy, he is committed to the belief that philosophy like geometry is teachable, and must no less than geometry have a regular structure.

Many commentators on the philosophical dispute between Hegel and Schelling cite this statement to illustrate the nature of their disagreement: while Hegel was bent on the formalization of the system into a deductive science, Schelling all but transformed science into art in order to prevent the blind necessity of the system from subsuming the creative freedom and personality of its author.¹²⁰ If the very next sentences of Hegel's statement are included, however, it becomes apparent that he was not as unaware of the important role of individual creativity as the previous sentence lets on:

“Philosophy...no less than geometry must have a regular structure. But again, a knowledge of the facts in geometry and

philosophy is one thing, and the mathematical or philosophical talent which procreates and discovers is another: my province is to discover that scientific form, or to aid in the formation of it.”

The differences between Schelling and Hegel are important and should not be overlooked, but nor should they be overplayed. Despite either’s public criticism of the other’s ideas, their positions are often difficult to clearly distinguish without lapsing into caricature. Their personal lives from beginning to end took shape in the dialogical alembic of an intense and tumultuous friendship. They were both close students, perhaps the closest, of each others’ published texts. Hegel appropriated the historical-dialectical method brilliantly displayed in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) largely from what he learned in Schelling’s *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800). Indeed, the *Phenomenology*, a literary work of art, can be read as an attempt to make good on Schelling’s absolutization of aesthetics (=the study of appearance, i.e., phenomenology) and his prophesy of the coming of a poet who would sing society the new mythology of reason. On the other hand, the *Phenomenology*’s disingenuous dismissal of intellectual intuition, the keystone of Schelling’s early philosophy, had a pernicious effect on the public perception of his system, an effect that has lasted to this day.

As Hegel’s own philosophical project developed and took form over the next few decades, the identification of the method of philosophy (=the science of logic) with that of geometry became increasingly important to him, backgrounding his earlier Schellingian acknowledgement of the irreducible role of the creative discoverer in the eternally beginning life of the system. By 1831, Hegel’s creative genius, once capable of the revelatory poetry of the *Phenomenology*, had calcified into the

formulaic certainty of the Encyclopedia. “Knowledge in geometry,” says Schelling, is of a totally different nature than that in philosophy... Everyone who has reflected on the field of mathematics knows that geometry is a science of a logical character, that between the presupposition itself and its consequences there lies nothing else in the middle save mere thought.

For Schelling, it is freedom that distinguishes the philosophical from the geometrical method. His discomfort with Hegel’s purely logical approach, however, was not a rejection of systematic coherence. On the contrary, Schelling praised Hegel for his attention to detail and steadfast adherence to the necessary movement of the dialectic as it worked its way to a genuinely completed system. Schelling eventually realized that such a purely rational philosophy, concerned as it was with the essence of things rather than their existence, was precisely only the negative part of the whole of philosophy. The other part, positive philosophy, does not begin already caught in the conceptual net of self-reflexive reason; it begins, instead, with the ecstatic experience of wonder, an experience that compels thought to acknowledge its dependence on what Schelling referred to as the un-pre-thinkable (*das Unvordenkliche*):

“That which just exists is precisely that which crushes everything that may derive from thought, before which thought becomes silent, and before which reason itself bows down.”

Schelling’s opposition to Hegel’s system is not the result of its negative method, which if properly restricted to the sphere of logical possibility remains entirely valid. Schelling rejects only Hegel’s claim to have comprehended the fact of nature (=the existence of the actual world) solely through the purely logical and plainly demonstrable labor of reflective thought. Hegel’s ambitious philosophical project stumbles into error, according

to Schelling, as a result of his reliance on two fundamental “fictions” to be considered in turn below: (1) the animism of the Concept, and (2) the transition, or release (Entlassens), of logic into nature. To be clear, these fictions are in a different way crucial components of Schelling’s own philosophical project. While Schelling is explicit about the aesthetic and speculative status of the “likely stories” (eikota muthon) he tells in the course of philosophizing beyond the edges of conceptual reality, Hegel tends to, as it were, fake his fictions. In his *Philosophy of Religion* (1827), for example, Hegel mimes the conceptual skeleton of Böhme’s magnificent vision of the Trinity, pretending to have digested the fruits of mystical intoxication while all the while really remaining bound to “the purest prose and a sobriety totally devoid of intuition.”

Schelling’s fictions represent a sincere attempt to give voice to the silent mythos of nature, thereby raising her unconscious poetry to the power of awakened spirit. To the extent that Hegel claims to have grasped the Absolute once and for all through the purely logical exercise of clear and distinct ideas, his “fictions” lack deep feeling for the ancient darkness of nature and an aesthetic sensitivity to the irony of the mythopoeic discourse required to become acquainted with that darkness. It is as if Hegel, as the saying goes, “enlisted the floodlight of reason to go in search of darkness,” while Schelling patiently waited for his eyes to adjust to the night of nature’s abyssal past. As Schelling writes in *The Ages of the World*,

“Since the beginning, many have desired to penetrate this silent realm of the past prior to the world in order to get, in actual comprehension, behind the great process...[I]f anything whatsoever checks the...entrance into this prehistoric time, it is precisely that rash being that wants rather to dazzle right from

the beginning with spiritual concepts and expressions rather than descend to the natural beginnings of that life.”

Conclusion

Segall, a young man working on his Ph.D has done a very good job, in our estimation, of outlining the differences between these two great minds, one of whom, Hegel, and we cannot exclude Kant, have had a deep influence on “modern” philosophical thought, in our opinion. These were the philosophers of the Reformation. Based on Segall’s paper and many of our own observations from the sources given above we fail to see how Professor Stark can make a Hegelian connection to the activities of Cardinal Kasper with regard to the 2015 Synod on the Family.

After reading the Cardinal’s book MERCY very carefully, It would be difficult to presume him being anywhere near agnosticism. He has a very big heart, as does Francis, and therein might lie the worry expressed by more conservative Catholics both in the laity and in the clergy. We see the problem as one of Historical Authoritarianism being softened by Liberal Progressivism in secular philosophy and in faith based, dogmatic theology. His references to the fusion of Mercy and Justice in the book, i.e., “one cannot do without the other,” and with his insistence that Mercy is the heart of the gospels, preeminent in the mind of God so to speak, draws large question marks from his more conservative brothers, wondering where is the fusion? What happens to Justice? One can’t blame them for their concern after having experienced the wounding of the Church by “merciful prelates” who forgot about justice while moving pedophile priests around—conveniently overlooking the fact that pedophilia is a crime in a free society, to say nothing of the psychological damage to the

victims. In the Catholic Church dogmatism is not a hard line. The “deposit-of-faith” that has come down to us over the centuries has only been gleaned from the Word of God in the Scriptures, guided, as is believed, by the Holy Spirit as promised by Jesus Christ. No one can nor should deny the mistakes made by mere men in the name of God. Trust in the Father through Christ in the Spirit, with the mediation of Mary has been our faith since the first Pentecost.

When the Church gets too deep into intramural politics she steps away from her primary mission; that doesn’t mean she should not call out those who are practicing the “dictatorship of relativism,” rich, poor, prelate, priest or laypeople alike. Her mission has been more than plainly stated by her God and Founder Jesus Christ. Internal theological squabbles can be very destructive when they tend to arbitrarily drift from centuries of proven spiritual norms and become sympathetic to “post-modern” cultural and political factionalism.

*“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and **teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.** And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

Matthew 28: 19-20