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## Review of *The Later Philosophy of Schelling* by Robert Brown

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It is true, as Yovel argues, that a vision of the totalization of the objects of the will fulfills a metaphysical need of reason. But it is wrong to impute to this vision or representation a moral worth, since the formal moral law has nothing to do with this or any other end but only with what is stipulated by the categorical imperative (P. 176)

Clearly Michalson has gone wrong at this point, and the essential reason is that he has misconstrued moral action. He tells us: "It is true, by Kantian standards, that every act of the will must *have* an object. But such an object—or material content—is present only in a *non-moral* capacity, since only the formal aspect, embodied in the categorical imperative, defines morality" (p. 176). Here he fails to recognize that a moral action never has a *given* (phenomenal) state of affairs as its object, but rather a transformation of the given into a new form which fulfills moral purposes. Thus, the real object of a moral act is a hypothetical moral state of affairs which it is possible to impose on the given order of phenomena. And this "object" is as much a postulate as is Yovel's ultimate ideal world order—the highest good as the regulative idea of history. In effect, then, to maintain that Yovel's interpretation of the highest good is illegitimate for the reasons given would be to insist that no moral action is possible at all within the Kantian framework. This will indicate the extent to which Michalson has gone astray.

Had he kept in mind Kant's comment about the necessity "to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith" (B xxx), Michalson's conclusions might have been more sound. For this faith is not merely religious faith but a confidence in the whole moral endeavor of man. In fact, Kant's epistemological limitations are "tailored to" the needs of morality, in a sense; and one of the important achievements of the first *Critique* is the assurance that an impasse of the kind suggested by Michalson *cannot* arise.

There are portions of Chapter 3 on the schematism, and of Chapter 4 on teleology, which might have been developed into a positive contribution to the understanding of Kant's project. But the work as a whole is much longer than it needs to be, and the attempt at negative criticism undermines the possibility of any constructive conclusions. Thus the uninitiated reader is more likely to be led astray than enlightened by Michalson's efforts.

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Robert F. Brown. *The Later Philosophy of Schelling. The Influence of Boehme on the Works of 1809–1815*. Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell University Press, 1977. Pp 295. \$16.50.

Brown's study is significant since it is the first sustained exposition of Schelling's philosophical development to appear in English. Its particular focus is on the middle of Schelling's career, the attempt in the years 1809–15 to appropriate Boehme's heterodox and poetic philosophy of God and with it to refashion the concept of philosophy as a "system of Reason." Brown contends that this cognitive reworking of Boehme's theosophy (1) is responsible for freeing Schelling from the arid pantheism of the so-called System of Identity (1801–6) and (2) decisively puts him on the path toward the theism of the Later Philosophy (1821–54) with its peculiar double methodology of a speculative and a historical approach toward the self-existent Actuality. The first part of the claim is not credibly argued, whereas the second is. Brown's title is rather misleading: the book is largely exegesis of the 1809 *Essay on Human Freedom*, the 1810 *Stuttgart Lectures*, and the 1815 draft of *Ages of the World*—works commonly called the "Middle Philosophy" or the "Philosophy of Freedom." While Brown does not actually enter into the exposition of the Later Philosophy, his most novel and insightful points concern the origin of the Later Philosophy in the phase of Schelling's enchantment with the concepts and visions of Jacob Boehme.

The study falls into two parts, a brief exposition of Boehme (heavily dependent on Alexander Koyré's *La Philosophie de Jacob Boehme*) and a more lengthy textual analysis of Schelling's writings from 1809 to 1815. The overview of Boehme's theosophic speculation is clear and cogent, but phrased in an abstract conceptual language that is far from Boehme's vivid images. Since it was

Schelling and Hegel who first “translated” Boehme into an abstract terminology, an already conceptualized Boehme will seem remarkably similar to Schelling. But such a doctrinal similarity is not at all interesting unless one is led to see in detail how and why Schelling turns back to philosophically disreputable theosophic sources such as Boehme and Oetinger for assistance and inspiration in the pursuit of his project of thinking through the nature of human freedom and the precarious nature of man as “spirit.” Brown misses a chance to display Schelling’s speculative originality in everywhere asserting a purely linear inheritance of Boehmean doctrine. It is not clear from his presentation that this “influence” is more than a matter of repetition, paraphrase, or perhaps plagiarism.

In the textual expositions that are the heart of his study, Brown shows how Schelling works his way from the abstract Absolute of the Identity-Philosophy toward the conception of a living, personal God who actualizes himself in a process of undergoing and overcoming opposition. Along this path, asserts Brown, Schelling draws upon six positions derived from or cognate to those of Boehme: (1) Will or freedom is ontologically prior to essence, and even to existence. (2) God’s being is grounded in an “other,” which, though divine, is yet distinct from God as actual, conscious, and personal. This “other,” Nature, is the locus of creaturely being, which is both free and responsible for its own good and evil. (3) Evil is no mere privation or secondary effect of finitude, but is disorder within being itself, namely, the dissolution of the structure of being. (4) God has two “centers” or points of origin, and he actualizes himself in a complex and temporal process of opposition/interaction between them. (5) Man is both *microcosmos* and *microtheos*; the ontological structures of God, human nature, and the existing world are all correlative. Finally, (6) the Creation is necessary in its essence (structurally parallel to God’s) but contingent in its existence (freely willed by God).

Brown frequently transgresses the limits of scholarly caution in suggesting an exclusively Bohemian origin for these elements in Schelling’s philosophy: (2) and (3) obviously bear the imprint of the “mystic shoemaker,” though (2) is better explained by Schelling’s Fichtean roots and the role that transcendental philosophy conceives the Not-Self to play in the evolution of consciousness. (1) can stand as an emblem of Schelling’s whole philosophical endeavor—before, during, and after his enchantment with Boehme. (4) and (5) are carryovers to the philosophy of spirit of the logic basic to the Philosophy of Nature and the Identity-Philosophy. As for (6), Brown himself emphasizes the deliberate voluntarism of Schelling’s *Ages* and notes that it distances him from Boehme’s necessitarian vision of the creation. Brown speaks more cautiously and more truthfully when he speaks of a congeniality or “natural affinity” between the categories and the problems of the two thinkers (p. 167, n.42). Schelling found in Boehme the basic structures his own thought had already developed, but expressed in a vivid poetic fashion. It is chiefly this poetic language which Schelling borrows and freely uses to express his more abstractly worked-out conceptions.

Brown’s study has both many virtues and many flaws. On the side of its virtues, I must note the general clarity of exposition and its success in isolating and explaining difficult concepts—*Freedom* and *Ages* are among the murkiest of Schelling’s writings. There are helpful excursions on Schelling’s terminology, though regrettably confined to the notes. Brown’s treatment of the works of the “Philosophy of Freedom” as the gestation of the Later Philosophy is a novel and fruitful interpretive approach. The work’s most obvious merit is that it approaches Schelling’s philosophical odyssey as a whole; armed with this book and Tillich’s brief *Schelling’s Positive Philosophy* the general reader will have a reliable guide to the problems and the conceptual structures of Schelling’s thought.

What may satisfy the general reader may not satisfy the scholar. Brown’s chosen theme, the historical linkage between Boehme and Schelling, is weakly and unconvincingly voiced. The “influence” or similarity is never directly established by direct textual comparisons but is merely asserted in a scattering of notes. Brown’s approach to both Boehme and Schelling is lacking in philosophical and historical depth; for example, while he does take note of Neoplatonic influences on the Middle Philosophy, Brown ignores the rich heritage of Leibniz, Spinoza, Kant, and Fichte which Schelling assimilates, criticizes, and transforms. And there are failures of scholarly detail too: Brown asserts that the concepts of “the potencies” and the “fallen” nature of individuals are taken from Boehme in 1809; both figure prominently in the Identity-Philosophy, as Brown himself states in a chapter devoted to Schelling’s early philosophical development. Finally, it is surprising that a work

whose preface is dated 1975 and for which the 1810 *Stuttgart Lectures* is a key text mentions the existence of unedited alternate versions but is unaware of their publication—*Version inédite des Stuttgarter Privatvorlesungen*, ed. M. Vefo. (Torino, Bottega d'Erasmus, 1973).

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José María Ripalda. *The Divided Nation: The Roots of a Bourgeois Thinker: G. W. F. Hegel*. Translated by Fay Franklin and Maruja Tillmann. Assen and Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 1977. Pp. 221.

Ripalda's principal theme is the state of the German nation in which Hegel's philosophy is shown to have developed stage by stage. This is a nation shaped by the Enlightenment, romanticism, and the French Revolution, and later disrupted by the Napoleonic Wars. The focus is upon the young Hegel—his social and intellectual milieu and his literary work—and there are frequent allusions to the works of his maturity.

Ripalda maintains at the outset that Hegel's scholarly work, as well as that of Christian Garve, upon which he regards it as having been based, must be understood as culturally acquired (p. 23). Left to conceive the term "culturally acquired" each according to his own tastes, few persons would take exception to this position, which might after all have been a way of affirming Hegel's concept of the historical self-consciousness. Ripalda appears to conceive cultural acquisition more narrowly, however, as later remarks will tend to confirm. The result is a kind of psychologization and sociologization of Hegel's system which seems scarcely to allow that he may at points have transcended the particularity of his personal circumstances to embrace principles worthy to be judged in respect to their universal and perhaps lasting import.

This bias is complimented by a regrettable disposition to relegate to "the madness of speculation" that in Hegel's conceptuality which fails to fall within the pervue of the author's vantage point. Certainly not every reader will find reason to accept the proposal that "the grandeur of Hegel which is still impressive today, lies in the fact that his entire life was a struggle to reach an understanding of capital. At the point where he loses himself to both his friends and his detractors in the madness of speculation, he first perceives the contours of capital" (p. 163). One searches in vain for what he means by "speculation" (nor does he seem to have taken account of Hegel's employment of the concept). It appears that he may mean something like "rumination."

This vantage point sets very definite limits to those aspects of Hegel's thought which prove highly visible, although it does not obtrude itself in such a way as to render the work without value to the reader who takes these into account. It sets the stage for emphasizing historical unfoldment, for example, but appears to leave the author blind to Hegel's concern to exhibit these stages as constitutive of presently experienced identities, and to a great deal else.

The concluding lines of the work, following immediately upon the above citation, are suggestive of the psychologization and sociologization to which I referred. They suggest as well that Ripalda has accorded very little attention to Hegel's effort to give dialectical expositon to the concretely actual, a central aspect of his declared program.

The uncontrollable impulse which led him to translate into speculation his first naive attempts in order to overcome more than personal lackings is that of abstractly nearing the supreme abstraction; of nearing it as concretely as it is itself concrete. . . . If Hegel still has not lost his spell, then neither has the great Abstraction. But now there are to [sic] many who don't accept it (Pp 163f )

In the introduction the author sets the divided German nation over against the Enlightenment, which forms its immediate background. The first of the two parts following, "The 'Divided Nation',"