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System i opowieść.  
Filozofia narracyjna w myśli J.W.J. Schellinga  
w latach 1800 – 1811

(Summary)

Wrocław 2007

Wydawnictwo Uniwersyteu Wrocławskiego  
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# SUMMARY

## A SYSTEM AND A STORY

### NARRATIVE PHILOSOPHY

#### IN SCHELLING'S THOUGHT IN THE YEARS 1800–1811

The dissertation concerns the problem of the so-called narrative philosophy in Schelling's thought. This is an interpretative category taken from the book of a contemporary Belgian philosopher Marc Maesschalck, in which he discusses problems of Schelling's political and religious anthropology (*L'anthropologie politique et religieuse de Schelling*). Maesschalck has applied this category to analyse a form of a discourse of Schelling's unfinished work *The Ages of the World* (1811). According to this interpretation, narrative philosophy is a discourse which arises as an effect of a dialectical exchange of two orders: seeing and understanding. In his unfinished work Schelling pursued to tell a story of a creation and self-revelation of God's will throughout the history of the world. This is a so-called creative process (*Schöpfung*), a cosmic narration or a story told by wills, original forces of being which co-form a theogonical drama of creation and the history of mankind and finally lead to the spiritualization of all created being, to purely spiritual ultimate purposes.

This is the starting point of my research. In my dissertation I would like to prove a thesis that origins of the category of narrative philosophy are found in Schelling's early thought, so this early philosophy should not be reduced to a negative and critical thought, although this is the most popular and the most often interpretation.

I would like to consider Schelling's thought as a mental totality, although this totality includes many different motifs. According to my interpretation, a division for the so-called negative and positive (early and late) philosophy has rather an external and formal character. Moreover, from a very beginning I would like to consider this thought as metaphysics, even in the early, transcendental period, when Schelling was influenced by Kantian's and Fichtean's critical philosophy. I would like to analyse Schelling's philosophy mainly in the years 1800–1811, but with a reference to the very early and late periods, for example to the system of positive philosophy (*Philosophy of Revelation*). I show motifs which prove mental continuity of Schelling's thought in this period and which are connected with the problem of narrative philosophy, treated as a category which especially well renders a character and a spirit of this philosophy as well as Schelling's mental attitude.

In my opinion, the most important in this early period is *System of a Transcendental Idealism* (1800), in which Schelling gave his own version of the so-called transcendental system of knowledge. This is a critical and negative philosophy but I would

like to show that the idea of telling philosophy has its origins in this early, critical thought, in which we can find something like a division, a discontinuity or a mutation, although a deduction given by Schelling remains in his cardinal principles conceptual.

According to my interpretation, this problem is connected with the character of the principle of a deduction, which is not, like for example by Kant or by Fichte, purely ideal concept (a subject, a notion of selfhood), but rather an indifference of the subject and the object (I=I), of the ideal and real element. It means that this is a being or an absolute and Schelling's philosophy is in consequence metaphysical and only externally critical. Schelling's methodology, applied by him in a *System of a Transcendental Idealism* is critical but it covers a metaphysical point of view that becomes especially well visible when we analyse the principle of the system.

The character of the principle exerts an influence on the course of the whole deduction. For example in the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of *System of a Transcendental Idealism* (1800) gradually emerges something like the second origin of the system, which corresponds with the second part of the original indifference, with a real or an objective element of absolute being. This principle appears particularly in the last chapter of Schelling's systematic work, written in 1800, in which the philosopher writes about art as an organon and a postulated completion of a system of knowledge. This is a kind of an aesthetical utopia in which reality itself should be treated as a piece of art or so-called "universal ocean of poetry", in which exists a proper, poetical and at the same time spiritual matter of all discourses, branches of science and art, etc.

Such kind of an aestheticism appears also in a conception of history, presented in Schelling's work, too. This problem is connected with an ontological pluralism, characteristic for Schelling's conception of history. The history is a story or, more precisely, a drama, a screenplay in which an absolute spirit pronounces and reveals itself, although it makes it through the medium of particular actions of particular wills, actors in the theatre of the world or dispersed parts (*disiecti membra*) of God(-poet). They are agreed according to the rules of the preestablished harmony by God's Providence, what becomes clear particularly at the end, but at the time in which the events are happening, they mutually constrain one another.

That means that Schelling – creator of the transcendental system of knowledge – becomes an adherent of a poetical and narrative vision of truth written out for parts. A God, a Demiurge(-poet) (the Craftsman of the universe from Plato's *Timaeus*) is the origin and the guarantee of such kind of truth, and its matter is found in a universal ocean of a poetry to which everything finally returns.

According to my interpretation, this is a prefiguration of the problem of narrative philosophy or an endeavour to tell the philosophy, connected with Schelling's later works, especially with *The Ages of the World* (1811). First I present some main and important motifs connected with the narrative philosophy, taken from Schelling's late thought, *Philosophy of Revelation*. I treat this late philosophy as a development and continuation of some principles applied just in the first version of *The Ages of*

*the World* from 1811 and – in consequence – as the last, most mature version of a living system or a system of times. The confirmation of such point of view is for example a substance of a system which is in the early as well as in the late philosophy an original freedom and also a methodology applied by Schelling in all these works, from 1810 till the end, that is to say, a trinitological dialectic of a system of times.

In the *Introduction* I refer to Schelling's conception of history. I consider this problem in a narrative way. The history is for Schelling not science or knowledge, because – according to his point of view – an apriorical science or a system is impossible in history. We can't foresee or deduce our free actions because we are free entities. Thus, history is possible to be thought only as a story or a pronouncement of a creative will which operates through the medium of an organism of wills, original forces of being, creative and cosmic potencies. Through history God, who is at the same time One and many, unity and plurality, many Elohim but only one Yahweh pronounces and reveals himself. He is many in a creation which is not possible without potencies, cosmic and creative forces, true and real actors in this drama. They correspond with a real part of absolute being, with a nature in God. But as that who reveals himself through his own work he is only one Yahweh, a God of an ethical religion or an original, substantial freedom to which all created being in the Future, the third age of a cosmic time will return.

This is a dialectic of the real and ideal element, the principle of creation and the principle of revelation, mythology and revelation, and the truth is an effect of a dialog of two orders. In this way I expose the problem of narrative philosophy which "arises in a dialectical exchange of seeing and understanding" (Maeschalck).

In the first chapter I discuss the problem of material principle (*hylisches Prinzip*) of Schelling's thought. This concept is taken from Harald Holz and corresponds most of all with Philosophy of Nature (*Naturphilosophie*), treated by Schelling as the second, real part of his transcendental philosophy. The real element of an absolute being is the principle of a deduction in a real row in which the spirit manifests itself as nature. This is also the basis (*Grund*) in a late philosophy, the nature in God, "the ground of His existence, an essence which is inseparable from God, but different from Him" (*On the Essence of Human Freedom*, 1809). This is something like the second, real absolute, which is not only a matter without qualities but also an intelligible principle, creative potencies, immediate causes of a cosmic process, comparable for example with principles of presocratic philosophy (*archai*), an invisible and creative nature, *natura naturans*, God's Wisdom through the medium of which He has created the world. This is also the matter of a creative process, *chora* from Plato's *Timaeus*, the third kind, a mediation of being and phenomenon which bears features of empirical and intelligible reality but is a kind of a being or a principle, eternal cause etc.

In the second chapter I discuss the problem of an absolute in Schelling's philosophy or, according to terminology applied by Barbara Loer, a rational absolute (*das vernünftige Absolute*). I present a deduction in an ideal row or an ideal part of a system of transcendental philosophy and then I refer to an objective or a real element of

absolute being which is the cause of a mutation of a system of knowledge which leads from a conceptual deduction to an aesthetical utopia and a drama of history. This real principle is considered as the principle of a mythological process and of all creation, for example as a universal ocean of poetry, the proper matter of all discourses and human history. I compare this second, real and poetical origin with an idea of a collective unconsciousness, in which exist archetypal forms of collective imagination. This is a reference to Jung's psychoanalytic theory of archetypes and to the contemporary psychoanalytical discourse, of which Schelling, as an adherent of an organic vision of nature and unconscious origins of human knowledge, was a forerunner.

In this way the deduction given in this "real" order as well as the historical screenplay invented by God(-poet) becomes also a story told by collective imagination which is a sort of a collective subject or the collective Ego. From this real and entirely autonomous principle history is deduced, through which pronounces God(-poet), an aesthetical utopia from the last chapter of *System of a Transcendental Idealism*, but also the Greek mythology, which for Schelling is one and the same thing as Homer (*Philosophy of Art*) and all mythologies of all nations. There is also something called private mythology, represented in Schelling's work by modern authors, like Shakespeare, Dante and Goethe.

In the third chapter I discuss the problem of a cosmic fall or a cosmic disaster, in consequence of which finite, empirical things secede from the original One, from the absolute being. This is the subject of a treatise *Philosophie und Religion*, written in 1804. In this text Schelling replaces a conceptual deduction with a sort of a cosmogony which becomes the true cause of the empirical world. I refer among others to Barbara Loer's analysis of this problem, to the so-called structural theory of an absolute. According to this interpretation, the cosmic fall is conditioned by the structure of absolute being, by a dialectic of the ideal and real element, considered as something like two equally true gods or two equally absolute principles. In this period emerges more explicit ontological pluralism and pluralistic tendency in Schelling's thought, which is connected with philosophical individualism.

This is a passage to the late, positive philosophy, to which belong *The Ages of the World* as well as lectures from *Philosophy of Revelation*.

In the fourth and last chapter I discuss once again the problem of narrative philosophy but with an immediate reference to the treatise *The Ages of the World*. In the first part of this chapter I consider an external or a formal side of Schelling's project of creating a philosophical epopee, a pursuit to tell philosophy. I refer to some important analysis of this problem, for example to Xavier Tilliette (*Une philosophie en devenir*), Manfred Schröter or Marc Maesschalck. I explain the main reasons for which this idea (also by Schelling himself) was treated as a defeat. In the second part of this chapter I analyse *The Ages of the World* and other works from this late, positive period, as a system of the ages of the world, as a philosophy. The narrative philosophy arises in a dialectic of creation and revelation or in a dialectic between figurative

and notional order, or – according to Tilliette’s thesis – in a dialog of a poet-historian and a philosopher, who finally wins this dispute.

In this last period Schelling’s philosophy becomes more substantial and metaphysical, although he does not abandon the idea of the system. But this is a real, living system, in which the truth and the reality are one and the same thing, so it should be rather told, like a story, not deduced, like philosophy. It is a narration, a cosmic and fabulous tale, through which wills or potencies, cosmic forces of an absolute being pronounce themselves. In the late philosophy these potencies constitute the real side of an absolute, while the ideal side is identified with an absolute freedom, pure eternity, and pure divinity.

These two elements, ideal and real constitute an original indifference, which is a principle of the whole reality and was also a principle of reality in Schelling’s transcendental philosophy. For example the second, real absolute, nature in God, could be compared with the second origin of a transcendental deduction, a universal ocean of poetry, in which archetypal forms of collective unconsciousness exist. But the transcendental philosophy is as a matter of fact a system of knowledge, while the late philosophy, the system of the ages of the world could be considered also as a sort of a theogony. This is a cosmic drama of a creation in which God gradually reveals his own personality. This is a story of God and his decision of creation and revelation through his own work. It is possible to distinguish in this story three stages which are at the same time concepts of trinitological dialectic of a living system. These are epochs or ages of a cosmic time – Past, Presence and Future, compared with three persons of God’s Trinity: the Father, the Son and the Spirit. In these concepts creative forces of being, principles of creation are transformed into principles of revelation.

According to Maesschalck’s interpretation, which is crucial for understanding my own thesis, a dialectic of creation and revelation is very important for Schelling’s late philosophy as well as for the conception of narrative philosophy. The formal frame of this dialectic and at the same time of the whole process of creation and revelation is a tendency to light up the original darkness, a dark, blind depth, a chaos of basis. God’s will pronounces itself through the medium of creative forces, through the nature and the history, through the institutions of social, political and religious life and at the end of this process the whole created being should return to God, should be given back to Him, must be recreated, spiritualized, surrendered to ultimate purposes, which have purely spiritual character.

This idea is connected with Kant’s concept of so-called “state of purposes” or “state of free spirits”, constituted by all those who act according to a really good, moral will or according to the moral law. The whole reality must be spiritualized and surrendered to this purely spiritual determination, to God as the Lord of Being (*Herr des Seyns*). Everything must finally return to the original freedom, to the substance of the system of times.